

The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Art

A SHORT HISTORY OF ITALIAN ART. By ADOLFO VENTURI. Translated by EDWARD HUTTON. With 300 illustrations. Macmillan. 1926. \$4.

Professor Venturi's unflinching enthusiasm and eloquence are conveyed with only slight attenuation in Mr. Hutton's English, and readers who know their Italian art pretty well and do not know the author's monumental "Storia Della Arte Italiana" will read this brilliant survey with pleasure. What the beginner will make of it is another question, and the book seems planned for the beginner. A chief essential in a beginner's book is a sense of proportion and emphasis. These are wholly lacking. The author pursues at will and at length lines of archaeological novelty and personal predilection, often hitting off the most important topics with a paragraph or an epigram. The mere distribution of space tells the story. Giovanni Pisano receives no less than fourteen pages; Michelangelo, thirteen; Cavallini and Giotto, twelve each; Botticelli, five; Raphael and Titian, four each; Fra Angelico, Masaccio, Donatello, and Leonardo da Vinci—three each; Giorgione, one. It all reminds one a little of the poet who did the Iliad in triolets, but Professor Venturi's literary skill carries the matter off plausibly and his text is reinforced by abundant illustrations of a superior order.

OLD MASTERS AND MODERN ART. Vol. II. The Netherlands, Germany, Spain. Illustrated. Harcourt, Brace. 1926. \$7.50.

In this volume the accomplished director of the National Gallery pursues the leisurely gait set in the former volume on Italian painting, and the reader is the gainer thereby. His point of departure is always the pictures in the National Gallery, but he readily extends his survey outwards, and from the point of view of pure criticism his estimates of particular painters are often

quite complete. Having chiefly in mind the lessons that a contemporary painter may draw from the practice of the old masters, he varies his approach flexibly, often digressing into the archaeological and purely aesthetic fields. For example, his suggestion of the long winter and small scale of the Dutch country house as making for small pictures treated as so many open windows is both novel and just. He helps us to grasp the fine quality of the neglected Dutch painters of city scenes and architecture, and says the true word about the superficiality of the too popular Hobbema and Wouvermans. He contributes something new to the unsolved problems of the technique of the Van Eycks. He has an uncanny rightness of judgment in the most diverse fields and a mellow and undogmatic fashion of writing. For one who must read amid interruptions, this is a delightful sort of book. One always carries away something substantial from the briefest browsing. The large octavo is of good English make, though a little heavy in the hand, and is well and fully illustrated. In certain reasonably disputed attributions, notably under Dürer and Velasquez, Sir Charles stands stoutly behind his labels. But no one who knows the pains of directorship will blame any director for standing behind his labels just a little longer than the standing is good. The alternative is an almost daily relabelling, and confusion.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF AUGUSTE RODIN. By ANTHONY M. LUDOVICI. Illustrated. Lippincott. 1926. \$3.

For most of the year 1906 the author of this book was Rodin's private secretary. To the task Mr. Ludovici brought an intellectual detachment which few in close contact with the master were able to maintain. Upon this cold but scrupulously just attitude rests the value of an otherwise scanty sheaf of reminiscences. From such a survey emerges the figure of a very great craftsman chiefly concerned with restoring the organic modelling—modelling from in-

side out—of the Greeks and the Gothic sculptors, deeply engrossed with emotional meanings, deficient in monumentality. As a person we see neither the serene Olympian of Juliette Cladel nor yet the Titan in senile decay of Marcelle Tirlé. We have instead the picture of a consummate craftsman in a very limited field, already somewhat bewildered and beginning to be spoiled by adulation, subject to unreasonable suspicions and fears, yet essentially simple and good, a temperament carrying curiosity to what in a more complicated character would have been obscenity. What we have in this book is rather a critical estimate supported by personal observation than reminiscences. One passes without a literary jolt from Mr. Ludovici's narrative of his secretaryship at Meudon to his final chapter which is avowedly critical. It is one of the most just and searching essays on Rodin's great but ambiguous genius. No one else has duly stressed Rodin's importance as re-asserting a humanistic ideal at a moment when in the name of science on one hand and of temperament on the other French art was becoming completely dehumanized.

THE COLOR PRINTS OF HIROSHIGE. By Edward E. Strang. Stokes.

MASTERPIECES OF GREEK DRAWING AND PAINTING. By Ernst Pfuhl. Macmillan. \$10.50.

FIFTY FAMOUS PAINTERS. By Henrietta Gerwig. Crowell. \$3.50.

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HOMILIES AND RECREATIONS. By John Buchan. Houghton Mifflin. \$3.

CARLYLE AND MILL. By Emery Neff. New Edition. Columbia University Press. \$3.50.

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AMERICAN LITERATURE. Edited by Robert Shafer. Doubleday, Page. \$4.50.

THE FRIENDLY YEAR. By Henry Van Dyke. Scribners. \$2.

THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW. By Don Herold. Dutton. \$1.25.

Biography

MEMORIES OF A HAPPY LIFE. By William Lawrence. Houghton Mifflin. 5.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. Vol. VIII. Letters, 1803-1812. Edited by Roger Ingpen. Scribners. \$140 the set.

MY LIFE AND TIMES. By Jerome K. Jerome. Harpers. \$4.

JOHN WANAMAKER. By Herbert Adams Gibbons. Harpers. \$10.

EIGHT YEARS WITH WILSON'S CABINET. By David F. Houston. Doubleday, Page. 2 vols. \$10.

THE LIFE AND POEMS OF NICHOLAS GRIMALD. By L. R. Merrill. Yale University Press. \$4.50.

LETTERS OF A ROMAN GENTLEMAN. Selected from the Correspondence of Cicero and translated by Arthur Patch, McKinlay. Houghton Mifflin. \$4.

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(Continued on next page)



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INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN THE INTELLIGENCE OF SCHOOL CHILDREN. By Mary M. Wentworth. Harvard University Press. \$2.
HOW TO STUDY IN COLLEGE. By Leal A. Headley. Holt. \$3.
ENGLISH PROSE AND POETRY. Selected and annotated by John Matthews Manly. Ginn. \$3.

Fiction

- BLUE HAND. By EDGAR WALLACE. Small, Maynard. 1926. \$2.

It seems to us that Mr. Wallace here heavily overdoses the reader with standard prescriptions for mystery melodrama. He also calls into play a vast deal of strident hoity-toity, which seems to be unjustified by contributing anything helpful in the unloading of the plot. A snoopy lawyer's clerk, with strong detective instincts, determines that one Digby Groat is a black villain, and sets out to prove him so. The missing heiress, thought long dead, whose fortune Groat and his mother have enjoyed for many years, is restored to life, a menace to the well-being of her enemies. To save himself from impending disaster, Groat abducts the girl, seeks to escape with her from England by aeroplane and yacht, but is nabbed in the nick of time by the hero. Reluctantly, we admit that the story appears to us no better than that.

- STRANGERS. By DOROTHY VAN DOREN. Doran. 1926. \$2.

Were there ever before in the world so many "first novels" in one season? And so many of them very well written,—but after that is said, what more is there to add? "Strangers," by Dorothy Van Doren, is a sincere effort and is without the glaring faults of many first attempts; still, it is doubtful if it will warm many readers to enthusiasm. The four persons making up what the jacket refers to as a "sex quadrangle" remain nebulous for all their constant eating and going to bed (the book becomes positively orgiastic in its minute description of food buying, preparation, and consumption), and one feels that it matters fairly little whether they do or they don't "do that for which the language had no adequate word, only vulgar or cruel or comic words, and meaningless scientific evasions"—a possibility which they discuss *ad nauseam*. They have that most unhappy characteristic of ceasing to exist entirely when the author's pen is off them for a moment. But none of these strictures apply to the story of Paul and Rachel which runs with a beautiful integrity through the sound and fury of "the quadrangle." Both of these young people live with a vitality which temporary absence from the scene of activity is powerless to dispel. Their story (aside from that deadly preparatory remark about the slipperiness of the floor!) is worthy of a better environment,—indeed, it could well stand alone,—and perhaps Mrs. Van Doren in years to come will emulate George Moore and reclaim this particular *object d'art* from the debris of "Strangers."

- SMITH EVERLASTING. By DILLWYN PARRISH. Harpers. 1926. \$2.

The average citizen who neglects every other item in the news in order to read about some trifling matter already known to him—the weather, the fire next door, the baseball game he has just witnessed—will perhaps find some pleasure in identifying his wife, his cousins, his uncles, or his aunts among the everlasting Smiths of this novel. The Smiths as a family represent the quintessence of mediocrity. Harmless, commonplace, well-intentioned people they are, their women busy with sewing, jelly-making and meaningless tasks, self-imposed, their children speaking little pieces at school, their men gathering together to exchange familiar opinions expressed in familiar platitudes. Not much happens to any of them in this tale—they meet at birthdays and funerals, they go visiting, they discuss importantly the insignificant details that make up their lives, one of them almost rises above the general level, only to slump back again.

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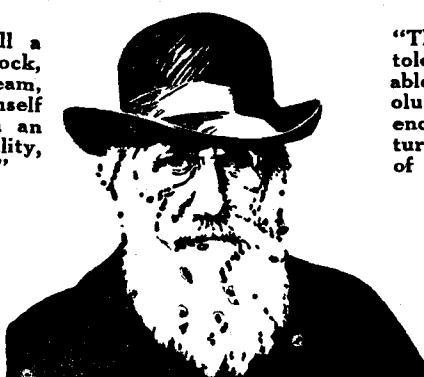
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