

Foreign Literature

He set Mencken's hair on fire!

"I invaded Will Durant's first book," says H. L. Mencken, "in the full expectation of passing a placid hour in a decorous seminary. I came out with my hair on fire. The author knows a juicy word from a stale one. . . . A book of rare tang and vivacity; an oasis in the wilderness of academic pishposh."

Durant's latest, now famous book, *The Story of Philosophy*, ranks first on the non-fiction best-seller list for the entire country. Mencken thought so well of it that one review copy was not enough. The Bad Boy of Baltimore promptly paid his local bookseller five dollars for another copy of

The Story of Philosophy

By WILL DURANT

586 exciting pages—21 full-page illustrations—the lives and opinions of the major philosophers from Socrates to Santayana—10th large printing, 42nd thousand, published by Simon & Schuster, Thirty-seven West Fifty-seventh St., New York

Two German Anthologies

EWIGER VORRAT DEUTSCHER POESIE. BESORGT VON RUDOLPH BORCHARDT. Munich: Verlag der Bremer Presse. 1926.

THE GERMAN LYRIC SINCE GOETHE. An Anthology by MAXIMILIAN BERN. With an Introduction by WILLIAM ROSE and a chapter on Metre by HENRY GIBSON ATKINS. London: Librairie Hachette. 1926.

Reviewed by A. W. G. RANDALL

OF anthologies, in most important languages, we have lately had so many that newcomers need to possess special qualities to ensure acceptance. Both of these recently published volumes can claim such qualities, particularly the first, which we can at once heartily recommend to any student of German poetry who wants the pure gold of German poetry from the beginning, and does not need any critical apparatus or biographical material. Herr Rudolph Borchardt, translator of Dante, Swinburne, and Landor, and poet and lyrical dramatist of delicate sensibility, comes forward to essay for German poetry what was exquisitely done a year or two ago for the best age of German prose by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, in his "Deutsches Lesebuch" (issued by the same firm of publishers, with their distinctive and distinguished typography)—namely, to give a collection of all that verse which, in his opinion, has achieved permanence by its intrinsic beauty. His model is admittedly the "Golden Treasury of English Songs and Lyrics," which the sound judgment and absolutely correct taste of Palgrave and Tennyson succeeded in making the perennial collection of all English lyric poetry which was "neither modern nor ancient, but true and speaking to the heart of man alike throughout all ages."

Herr Borchardt's plan differs in certain details from Palgrave's. The English anthologist began with the Elizabethans; the German collector must look earlier for a really rich send-off for his book, and he finds it in the lyrics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the midst of this exquisite love-poetry he suddenly inserts Goethe's "Gretchen."

Ach neige,
Du Schmerzenreiche,
Dein Antlitz gnädig meiner Not,

the first intimation that he is going to be much freer than Palgrave from the trammels of historical arrangement and mere representational selection. After this he proceeds again more or less chronologically through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, lyrics of love and gallantry being interrupted by Luther's "Feste Burg," to be resumed again and continued until we reach the delicious "Mund und Auge" of an unknown Alsatian poet of the early seventeenth century:

Das Aug hat Macht und Kraft
Und kann gar viel erringen
Doch bleibt die Meisterschaft
Dem Mund in allen Dingen
Der Liebe Grund besteht im Mund.

After this we hear the solemn spiritual note struck in the lyrics of Gerhardt and Mayfart, a note which Herr Borchardt, in his commentary at the end of the collection, asserts is the main characteristic of German poetry at its highest. Except for the perfectly just juxtaposition of Eichendorff's "Greisenlied" with Grimmelshausen's "Trost der Nacht"—such accurate arrangement, like the placing of jewels on exhibition, is a remarkable feature of Palgrave's collection and has here been most successfully imitated—the pages that follow are more or less in order of date.

It is usual to criticize an anthologist more

for what he omits than for what he includes. This would be ungrateful in this case, so rich is the treasure offered, were it not for the fact that Herr Borchardt has raised the challenge himself. He has given the best of Goethe, Schiller, Eichendorff, Lenau, Rückert, Brentano, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Hölderlin, Kleist, and, alone among living poets—although he avers a wish to have given, had he been able, Stefan George—Hugo von Hofmannsthal. But there is no Chamisso, or Heibel, or Geibel, or Fontane, or Liliencron; no Arndt, no Nietzsche. For most of these omissions Herr Borchardt produces a defence which, too long to discuss here, strikes the writer as sound. He has made his aim the selection of beautiful German poetry, not poems by German writers, however popular and however "inevitable" in the average anthology. German composers have given a certain adventitious sentimental value to many German poems, Chamisso above all, and stripping their words of this, Herr Borchardt finds no permanent residue of poetical value. Not that he does not admit that certain really beautiful poems, two of Daumer's for example, immortalized by Johannes Brahms, have been helped to fame by music. But they must be capable of going alone. Incidentally we venture the opinion that Goethe's "Über allen Gipfeln" and "Ganymed" fulfil this condition—but they are not here.

Most challenging to the reader of the ordinary anthology, however, is Herr Borchardt's attitude to Heine. Not only the hackneyed lyrics—inseparable in our memory from Schumann's music—are not here, but there is not even the "Wallfahrt nach Kevlar," nothing but two fragments and four others of the less familiar lyrics, pure gold, admittedly, but in scant supply. Herr Borchardt's defence is a sound criticism of Heine, whom he accuses of a lack of real inspiration, of a too calculating attitude in regard to the effect desired, of artistic insincerity, in fact. It is not at all a new charge, of course; the intrusion of Heine's personality into his lyric vision has been a subject of debate ever since his day, and it is not yet ended. But to find the anti-Heine side taken so practically and decisively comes as rather a surprise. It is the only criticism we would make against a collection which is a permanent enrichment of German literature, and as this enrichment is due to the anthologist's personal taste of which his bias against Heine is merely one side, and a defensible side at that, perhaps we had better not labor the point more.

Those who want plenty of Heine, and Heibel, too, and many other poets ignored by Herr Borchardt, will find what they seek in Herr Bern's anthology. This was first issued in 1877, and has seen many revised editions since, of which this is the latest, but it still bears the marks of its early origin by the undue space given to a number of later nineteenth century German poets. This criticism apart the collection is a well-balanced, representative collection of the best lyric poetry from Goethe's death to the present day. It has on the present occasion been made more valuable for the student by a competent survey by Dr. William Rose, and a technical account of German metrical form by Professor H. G. Atkins. All the numerous verse-forms discussed by Professor Atkins may be practically investigated later on in the anthology, which thus becomes a useful practical handbook for the academic investigator.

M. Georges Grappe has succeeded in writing a very taking story in his "Un Soir à Cordoue . . ." (Albin Michel), in which he introduces considerable Spanish atmosphere—even more, perhaps, than an ordinary visitor would find there. The hero is a French Consul who falls in love with an unknown Spanish beauty seen for an instant on the street in Cordova. He tries in vain to find her again and finally, in visiting the "alcade mayor"—a strongly drawn type of Spanish gentleman—he discovers his unknown innamorata in the official's wife. A story of intrigue follows. The curious phase of the tale lies in the fact that the lady believes absolutely in conjugal fidelity, and will not break faith, but prefers to murder her husband and join her lover, which she does. But a murderess, however beautiful and seductive, does not appeal to the French Consul. A story that is not always probable but is extremely interesting.

British authors' ignorance of American journalism is always hilarious. In *Daphne Bruno*, a novel by Ernest Raymond, one of the characters finds in a Swiss hotel "eight numbers of the New York Evening Journal, which seemed to be an important literary paper."

—John Mistletoe, *Consensus of Denigrations*.

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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

THE MONUMENTS OF CHRISTIAN ROME from Constantine to the Renaissance. By **ARTHUR L. FROTHINGHAM**. Macmillan. 1925.

This well known book, a trustworthy guide of the educated tourist through the mediæval monuments of Rome and of the Campagna Romana, was first printed in 1908, and has now apparently been reissued without changes. The book does not need to be recommended to the reader again. It is an excellent presentation and analysis of Roman Christian art in all its aspects but that of the minor arts. The author knows how to analyze and how to give a vivid picture. It may be that in his presentation a little overemphasis is laid on the Roman aspect of the art of the spiritual capital of the Christian world, but this overemphasis is useful as it stresses a point which is rather neglected in the histories of mediæval art. It is a pity that Mr. Frothingham had not a chance to revise this delightful book before his recent death. With his wonderful knowledge of Rome, and her monuments he would certainly have incorporated in it the abundant new evidence which has enlarged our knowledge of late Roman and early Christian art in the last two decades.

THE EARLY ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF THE CATHEDRAL OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA. By **Kenneth John Conant**. Harvard University Press.

CHATS ON NAVAL PRINTS. By **E. Koble Chatterton**. Stokes.

BUSINESS ETHICS. By **James Melvin Lee**. Ronald Press. \$3.25.

EVOLUTION IN MODERN ART. By **Frank Rutter**. Dial Press.

Belles Lettres

AS I LIKE IT. By **WILLIAM LYON PHELPS**. Scribners. 1926. \$2.

There is nothing new to say about Mr. Phelps, in connection with this latest product, or by-product, of his active and casual pen. His method, though his medium happens to be a monthly magazine, is precisely the method of the newspaper columnist. He writes at ease for a constituency of whose indulgence he is perfectly confident. Anything serves for his theme, and everything goes with his audience. He is not a thinker of depth or a writer of high distinction; but he is a good rough-and-ready commentator on men, books, and things, with a pleasant turn of humor, and an excellent opinion of his own opinion.

As a familiar essayist (and his undoubted scholarship is neither here nor there in this connection) his great asset is not any excellence of style or originality of substance. It is his unmistakable gusto, his unaffected relish for all kinds of things and people. And after all, abruptly as he lays down the law, erratic as his judgments often seem in matters æsthetic, it is seldom that the twinkle leaves his eye. He is a little mad about Archibald Marshall and A. M. Hutchinson, but he can keep on smiling about almost anything else, including the west front of Westminster Abbey.

TRANSLATION. By **Edwin Muir**. Viking Press. \$2.

FALLODON PAPERS. By **Viscount Grey**. Houghton Mifflin. \$2.50.

ALFONSO THE SAGE. By **J. B. Trend**. Houghton Mifflin. \$4.

OLD KENSINGTON PALACE. By **Austin Dobson**. Oxford University Press. 80 cents.

SOME DICKENS WOMEN. By **Edwin Charles Stokes**. \$4.

YOUNG PEGASUS. Edited by the Intercollegiate Literary Magazine Conference. Dial Press. \$2.50.

VICTOR HUGO. GOLGOTHA. By **Edgar Saltus**. Covici.

Biography

ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON. As Seen By Some Friends. Putnam. 1926. \$2.50.

This symposium, under the editorship of E. R. Ryle, Benson's godson and an old Eton pupil, is a fitting tribute to the memory of a man who was not only beloved by a large circle of personal friends but who, on account of his writings, was affectionately regarded by a countless host of unknown readers throughout the English-speaking world. Out of the various papers here presented the portrait emerges of a large-framed, large-hearted man who possessed to an extraordinary degree the quality of kindness and the knack of friendship. The chapters dealing with the years when

he was a successful housemaster at Eton reveal Arthur Benson as a born schoolmaster, and he had in abundant measure the highest reward of such in the love and esteem of his old pupils. In later years, as fellow and finally Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, his relations with undergraduates were equally happy. There were two distressing periods of mental illness in the last third of Benson's life, but apart from these his career was singularly fortunate in its placid usefulness.

Between the man and his works some of the friends who have written here out of the fullness of their affection have felt bound to distinguish. Percy Lubbock has affectionate praise for the man, but discriminating criticism for his books, while the Right Honorable Edward Lytton, also writing with deep affection, is, if not a harsh, at any rate an austere critic of Benson's literary product.

The fact is that the man and the writer were two different people. Arthur Benson among his friends was a man of the world, a fellow of infinite jest, robust in mind as he was in body. It puzzled and irked those friends to find him writing with the almost cloying sweetness, the vague introspection, the touch of effeminacy that characterized nearly all his essays. And he, in turn, "could never understand the complaint of his friends that they found another man, not him, in these easy-going mellifluous pages with their rather faint and solemn discourse—another man, most unlike the masterful, combative, richly humored man we knew." Benson paid the price of his own amazing fluency. For him there was nothing arduous in authorship; it was, as Mr. Lubbock says, "a delight and a treat to which he looked forward throughout the day." Once he immersed himself in his study with pen and paper, the words gushed out in a never-failing stream. The pages as they were filled were thrown into a waste basket, whence at the end of the orgy of writing they were gathered up and sent to a typist. There is little evidence that when the manuscript came back any serious revision was undertaken. Benson

(Continued on next page)

Just Off the Press

Two Plays—

DAVID

By D. H. Lawrence

"Lawrence has taken the Biblical narrative and extended its implications. . . . The play is composed with the subtle word magic that gives the writing of D. H. Lawrence intense reality."—*New York Sun*. \$2.00



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"Pungent with wisdom, festooned always in verbal delights, it sets one thinking and it sets the pulses dancing."—*Thomas H. Dickinson*. \$2.00

And Some Stories—

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"Three or four [of these tales] are worthy of the great Russians, from whom he differs, however. . . . His clarity, his tragic gaiety, and his exhilarating narrative gifts are completely individual."—*Romain Rolland*. \$2.50



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In Canada from the Macmillan Co. of Canada, Ltd., St. Martin's House, Toronto



THIRD PRINTING ALREADY!

John Farrar in *The Bookman* for September says:
"‘Walls of Glass’ is as interesting a story as I have read in many months; more constantly interesting, in fact, than the other novels by better known authors reviewed in these pages . . . Barretto proves himself to be a first class novelist."

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By **LARRY BARRETTO**

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Isabel M. Paterson in *The New York Herald Tribune* says: "Mr. Barretto's sense of character and his capacity for clear thinking are rare and valuable. . . . He is certainly among the limited number of those worth while."

Lilian Ford in the *Los Angeles Times* says: "Mr. Barretto succeeds in writing a novel that is instinct with life and that holds the attention of the reader."

Ernest Boyd in *The Independent* says: "When the book is laid aside one realizes that a real human problem has been studied, an unusual situation has been presented, with never a protestation of the superiority of the author and his age over other people and other times."

R. V. Haller in the *Portland Oregonian* says: "It is a poignantly powerful novel. The characters are boldly portrayed, the crucial situations convincingly presented. 'Walls of Glass' can be recommended as an outstanding current novel."

Jane Frances Winn in *The St. Louis Globe-Democrat* says: "One is not likely to forget the very human woman, Sophy Deming."

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