

The New Books

Poetry

(Continued from preceding page)

THE NIGHT EXPRESS. By ARTHUR CREW INMAN. Dutton. 1927. \$2.

Mr. Inman has had an excellent idea for this book, has drawn on genuine experience, and his expression is often vigorous.

Some of his descriptions are vivid. He is rather better at achieving a cumulative effect in his descriptions than at writing distinguished poetry taken line by line. Poetry, in the strictest sense of the word, "The Night Express" is not, but it echoes the experiences and conveys the glamour of railroad travel to those who, as the flap of the jacket words it, "cannonade across the magic of the star-strewn dark" on their way East or West.

WILDWOOD FABLES. By ARTHUR GUTTERMAN. Dutton. \$2.

From the great Tyrannosaurus to the Jersey mosquito Mr. Gutterman, one of the most delightful rhymesters of our day, celebrates beasts large and small in this little volume. There is seriousness and wisdom in some of the verse and wisdom mixed with nonsense in some of it. Mr. Gutterman is an enthusiastic woodsman, and his rhymes are no mere product of the study. We can recommend his work to all lovers of the open as well as to those who rejoice in perusing a master of rhyme and metre. The poem in the volume that appealed most to our light mind is one that the late Lewis Carroll might have been proud to sign. It is called "Futility," and here are two verses of it:

*And still beside the purling stream,
In care of doughty ram and bull,
The cows went right on breaving cream,
The sheep went right on sprouting wool.*

*I groaned, "I know the way you feel;
We just drag on till something stops;
And still the calves keep making veal,
And still the lambs keep growing chops."*

But that is a mere nonsensical peak midway the book. Both before it and after there is plenty of variety of mood and a fine, fresh, piney-woods atmosphere.

Science

A POPULAR ACCOUNT OF FOSSIL PLANTS. By FRANK H. KNOWLTON. Princeton University Press. 1927. \$3.50.

The evolution controversy having died down, except among the ignorant or bigoted, the appearance of a book on fossil plants can be viewed calmly and from a non-controversial attitude. Nearly all our knowledge of the evolutionary history of the plant kingdom has come from studies of the rock-written evidence unearthed by the paleo-botanists.

Of these the late Dr. Knowlton, who died only a few months before the present volume appeared, was one of the greatest. For years he was the custodian of Mesozoic plants at the National Museum, and, among professional botanists, his monumental "Catalog of Mesozoic and Cenozoic Plants of North America" is standard. This latest book puts all that knowledge and experience of the fossil record of plant life into non-technical form. And on that score the book compares favorably with earlier efforts of Scott and the incomparable Dawson. Knowlton's book states the main facts of fossil botany, the making of a fossil, and the horizons in which they are found. But of the intensely dramatic nature of these processes, of the all but breathtaking significance of the long trail from the coal measures to our modern flora, there is scarcely a hint. From much this same material Berry in his "Tree Ancestors" made an absorbingly interesting story. Erudition need not kill good writing about science, but it has very nearly done so in this book.

THE ANIMAL MIND. By FRANCES PITT. Stokes. 1927. \$4.50.

This is a most readable book on the behavior of the higher animals, based upon personal observations made in the field and under the artificial conditions of confinement. The author has not only been a keen observer of animals under natural conditions but has also kept many of the smaller mammals and birds as pets and reared many from the day of birth so that she has been able to determine in a measure the behavior of animals not under the influence of paternal instruction.

As a result of these observations, the conclusion is drawn that among the birds and mammals, experience plays a more important rôle in determining action than do instincts. The relative importance of instinct and intelligence is open to question, although observers generally are agreed that instinctive actions are frequently modified by experience—even microscopic forms frequently react differently as a result of experience. To this extent they may be said to have a certain degree of intelligence which has a controlling influence in behavior. This would seem, however, far from proving "thinking" on the part of those creatures which profit by experience, a process which the author unqualifiedly asserts they exhibit. Certainly very few modern psychologists would go to the extent which Miss Pitt does in ascribing thoughts and emotions to the wild creatures.

She appreciates the individuality of many wild animals with which she is intimately acquainted but is hardly justified in her conclusion that "without intelligence you cannot have individuality."

The book makes delightful reading not only on account of its facts but also be-

cause it fairly vibrates with the English countryside, with the beauties of the ample fields and gardens in which she has given her pets free run, and where she has watched in unhurried manner the daily life of birds and beasts. Some of her extravagances regarding the mental powers of her beloved animals may be forgiven because of the wholesome atmosphere engendered by the contact with wild creatures and untrammelled Nature.

Travel

IN THE HEART OF SPAIN. By THOMAS EWING MOORE. New York: Universal Knowledge Foundation. 1927.

What is the heart of Spain? Commercially speaking it is, perhaps, Catalonia with its thriving port of Barcelona; politically it must be Castile enthroning the capital city of Madrid; educationally it might be Leon whose principal city, Salamanca, has been a seat of learning for seven centuries; historically, the choice, possibly, would again fall on Castile wherein stands proud but crumbling Toledo, the ancient seat of the Visigoths. To Mr. Moore the real heart is Andalusia of the genial south which cradles Seville and Cordova and Granada, beloved of travelers. Andalusia with its great monuments of the past, the custodian of the supreme architectural achievements of the Moors, a land that embodies the beauty of mountains and vineyards, and cities of a patrician race.

The author sketches the historical background of Andalusia, which is one with that of its sister provinces of Spain, of the successive peoples who marched into it as conquerors and left their impress of race in the medieval vigor of the people—Iberians, Celts, Phenicians, Romans, Visigoths, and Moors. His tour through Andalusia begins at Gibraltar and Algeciras and follows the wild gorge of the high sierra to Ronda, that most remarkably situated town in Europe, whose majesty of setting and historic interest would seem to justify more adequate treatment than is given to it. Seville is next visited and for half the length of the book the city's splendors are described and its people are shown at work and play and worship. In great detail the famous fiestas of Holy Week are described with their medieval pageantry, their elaborate ceremonies and lively fairs, and carnivals which are held on other occasions during the year. Andalusian dances and music which are features, chiefly, of the music halls and of societies organized to perpetuate national art are described.

A short chapter on Spanish art is remarkable chiefly for the omission of El Greco's name from the roster and from the discussion of the great masters of Spanish painting, an oversight that will irritate those modern critics who consider El Greco's work to equal if not surpass that of Velasquez and Murillo, and to a large art loving public whose belated recognition of the genius of this master is all the more ardent for being withheld so long.

From Seville the footsteps of Columbus are followed across country to Palos, from whence the great navigator set sail on his momentous voyage of discovery, and to La Rabida where, in the immense Franciscan monastery, he and his son received hospitality for six years prior to his departure for the New World.

Cordova and Granada are also visited but in their comparatively brief descriptions, the author, presupposing too much familiarity with them on the part of the reader, has not adequately visualized the glories of the incomparable Mosque and marvelous Alhambra or recreated a picture of the gleaming cities in which they rest, towns which are among the most picturesque in Spain. The journey includes some of the lesser towns of Andalusia and ends at Cadiz, "the whitest city in the world." The final stages of Mr. Moore's pilgrimage were made by motor, and he gives a number of practical hints for those who would travel in this manner.

THE DRAGON AND THE LOTUS. By Crosbie Garstin. Stokes. \$2.50.

GEORGE WASHINGTON: Colonial Traveler. By John C. Fitzpatrick. Bobbs-Merrill. \$5.

MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA. By Harry A. Franck. Dansville, N. Y.: Owen Publishing Co.

THE JAPANESE EMPIRE. By Harry A. Franck. Dansville, N. Y.: Owen Publishing Co.

CHINA. By Harry A. Franck. Dansville, N. Y.: Owen Publishing Co.

ALGERIA FROM WITHIN. By R. V. C. Bodley. Bobbs-Merrill. \$4.

SEEING ITALY. By E. M. Newman. Funk & Wagnalls. \$5 net.

EUROPEAN SKYWAYS. By Lowell Thomas. Houghton Mifflin. \$5.

ITALY FROM END TO END. By H. Warner Allen. Dodd, Mead.

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The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*.

R. J. M., *San Francisco, Cal.*, asks for a list of books which would indicate the attitude taken by the philosophers toward women and their place in society.

AN idea of the attitude not only of the philosophers but of their epochs toward the place of women in society, may be obtained rapidly and in a most ingratiating manner, from "A Short History of Women," by John Langdon-Davies (Viking). Possibly its manner seems ingratiating to me because I have read so many books on this subject that were intermittently or continuously bad-tempered, and this is calm, however incisive. It is a book to be enjoyed by anyone with an interest in biology or in economics.

G. V. L., *Brookline, Mass.*, asks if there have not been brought out, within a year or so, one or two modern editions of *Theocritus*, and if there is an edition with both text and translation, to be given to someone as an introduction to *Theocritus*.

THE edition with both text and translation is the one in the Loeb Classical Library, in "Greek Bucolic Poets" (Putnam), in which the English version is by J. M. Edmonds. There is an attractive translation by Andrew Lang of "Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus," with an introductory essay on the first-named, in the Golden Treasury series published by Macmillan. The modern editions asked for are evidently "Theocritus: Idyls," translated by R. C. Trevelyan, and published by Boni & Liveright in a limited edition for five dollars, "Greek Idyls. Pastorals, Songs, Mimes, Tales, Epigrams, of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus," in rhymed verse with a critical introduction by D. M. Robinson (Maxwellton; \$10) and "The Idyls of Theocritus with the fragments of Bion and Moschus," translated by J. H. Hallard, in the Broadway Translations published by Dutton (\$5).

M. J. D., *Woodstock, Ill.*, asks for a book giving the duties of a social secretary.

"THE SOCIAL SECRETARY," by Elizabeth Myers (Brentano's), gives a detailed description of the duties and responsibilities of this position. A companion volume is "The Social Letter" (Brentano's).

G. E. C., *Dover, N. J.*, asks for a list of recent biographies for reading and discussion in a club that has greatly enjoyed Ludwig's "Napoleon."

WHETHER this group will so greatly enjoy Ludwig's "Bismarck" (Little, Brown), depends upon its ability to admire a just and temperate presentation of a personality, regardless of any repellent qualities in the personality itself. This is one of the biographies that are histories as well: for more than one reason it sets itself a far harder task than either of those that came before it. Vladimir Poliakoff's "The Tragic Bride" (Appleton) is also of the material of history: it follows his life of the Dowager Empress Marie, of Russia, "Mother Dear" (Appleton), and justifies the expectation that everyone who read the earlier book must have had, that the most understanding biography of the Empress Alexandra would be written by this author. In this moving but never sentimental record we have it: Mr. Poliakoff, the famous "Augur" of the *London Times*, speaks out of a profound and many-sided knowledge of his subject, and with a spirit peculiarly Russian, however cosmopolitan his manner. This spirit shows most strikingly in the curious mingling of attraction and repulsion with which he approaches the chapter on Rasputin, but its value is evident in all his judgements of Russian character and national psychology.

The "Shelley" of Professor W. E. Peck (Houghton Mifflin) will take its place among the great literary biographies. Another fine example of the literary biography with which this year has been distinguished is Michael Sadleir's "Anthony Trollope" (Houghton Mifflin). We have had at least two biographies for purposes of rehabilitation, or at least revaluation: Elizabeth Haldane's "George Eliot" (Appleton), and Honoré Willise Morrow's "The Father of Little Women" (Little, Brown). In the former, a reasoned analysis of a much misunderstood personality is combined with an evaluation, from our present standards, of novels that were marked at first far too high and then far too low. In the latter study, Bronson Alcott is rescued from the

ridicule of his contemporaries and the light laughter of "The Mauve Decade" long enough to remind us that after all he was many years ahead of his time in educational matters and that the laughter that silenced him retarded our educational processes by many a year. One might call Mary Agnes Hamilton's "Carlyle" a biography of this sort, for it is intended to restore Carlyle to an audience who thinks it has outgrown him, or that he has no message for the strenuous life of today.


But the most provocative biographies of the season are by no means intended to bring back their subjects to popular approval. Paxton Hibben's "Henry Ward Beecher" (Doran), for instance, looks the Tilton case square in the evidence, as squarely as ever Mr. E. L. Pearson looked at the case of Lizzie Borden, and with much the same result on the verdict of the reader. "Commodore Vanderbilt" is not given to hosannas, and how far from an eulogy is "Boss Tweed"! After the records of our recent history, such as Mark Sullivan's "Our Times" (Scribner), now in its second delightful volume, the pleasant prattlings of Henry Collins Brown in "In the Golden Nineties," and other volumes of (Valentine's Manual), the grim record in Don Seitz's "Dreadful Decade," and a line of other such books, every one sure of an audience, come the biographies that further document our studies of our middle distances. Among these Gamaliel Bradford's sympathetic study of "D. L. Moody" (Doran), stands out by reason of its ability to recognize and to point out essentials and distinguish them from passing and relatively superficial matters. Lewis Browne's "That Man Heine" (Macmillan), is as much a study of Jewish psychology as of an individual's life: if it does not explain the poems—and what book could?—it at least gives something of their background.

H. H., *Columbus, Ohio*, is making such study of modern German writers as is possible without familiarity with the language. With what translations could such an equipment be made?

TWO of the most important books in the German language for a long time are available in excellent English translations: Oswald Spengler's "Decline of the West" (Knopf), and Count Keyserling's "The Travel Diary of a Philosopher" (Harcourt, Brace). "The Spanish Journey" (Harcourt, Brace), is an admirable introduction to the art-criticism of Julius Meier-Graefe, and also admirably translated. With the biographies of Emil Ludwig the English-speaking world is familiar. In translated novels, we take what we can get, and that gives us a good deal of Thomas Mann—very little as yet of his brother Heinrich. This was forcibly brought to my mind when I met Heinrich Mann in Paris some months since, and trying for conversational purposes to bring something that he had written back to my mind, brought up something by Thomas every time I dredged for it. At last I desperately admitted this to him, and he said I was not to worry, because everyone was like that and he was used to it. We have of Thomas Mann not only the recently translated two-volume "Magic Mountain" (Knopf), but the far finer "Buddenbrooks" (Knopf), which I should by all means read. There is a new Sudermann novel, "The Mad Professor," but there seems no particular reason for excitement over it. In "The Jeweller of Baghdad," by Fritz Wittels (Doran), we have a sardonic, improper, and improving study of a nature forever inventing exquisite tests for love, such as torture love out of existence; the beauty of the language is unusually well preserved in the translation. The most important novel from Germany lately, however, so far as giving us a picture of life there now is concerned, is undoubtedly "The Gateway to Life," by Frank Thiess (Knopf). This is a novel of adolescence, the first of a series that will carry the hero further on in life; it is, however, already so up to the moment that it looks back upon the *scantervogel* movement as a romantic incident in history rather than as the force in present-day life that the usual American reader thinks it is. If Weckkind's "Awakening of Spring" has frightened anyone away from German novels of adolescence, he should be assured that young love in this story is the most appealing feature of the book.

B. J. Z., *University of North Carolina*, says that G. E. L. will find in the translations of the "North Sea Poems" of Heine the opposite-page arrangement that he asks for. "This edition was published," she says, "by the Open Court Publishing Company in 1917, if I remember correctly. Mr. Untermeyer refers to the Jones translation in the preface to his own. The introduction to 'North Sea Poems' is a brilliant piece of analysis." S. N. D., *Smith College*, adds to the advice given E. D., *McNary, Arizona*, on a Greek grammar and reader, "The First Year of Greek," by James T. Allen (Macmillan), saying that it is an excellent book for students more mature than schoolboys; it introduces almost from the first reading of intrinsic interest, bits of Plato or Menander, and contains in itself all grammatical material necessary for a beginner. "Or," he continues, "if a student prefers to approach Greek through Homer, there is C. Pharr's 'Homeric Greek,' which is so arranged as to allow him to begin the Iliad in the original almost immediately." The poem about the "Wooden-headed Lunatic" has been identified, and E. M. F., *Harrisburg, Pa.*, has sent a fair copy of all its eight stanzas, which will be forwarded to the correspondent who so desired it. It is called "The Figurehead: a Salt-sea Yarn," and appeared in *Punch*; W. R. B., writing on the letterhead of this review, believes the author to be Crosbie

Garstin, author of "The Owl's House" (Stokes), and other colorful romances, adding "the only other person, it seems to me, who could have written it would be Cecily Fox-Smith." M. W., *New York*, adds to the novels of illegitimacy the "leisurely and delightful 'David Penstephen' of Richard Pryce," saying that as a novel of the right kind of courage and adjustment to the situation it should be as helpful as "Annette and Sylvie," and that while she has always suspected it of being a *roman à clef*, she has never found the *clef*. To the same list E. R. P., *New York*, adds "The Book Without a Name" (Brentano), purporting to be the journal of an unmarried English lady to her son. This new novel to take the subject seriously, "Venture's End" (Harcourt) has a rich vein of unconscious humor. Some writers are born humorous, some are so by intention, but some, like Karen Michaelis, are funny without knowing it. F. R. P., *Manohet, Mass.*, whose opinions on children's books I have learned to respect, says that one seldom mentioned by the authorities is "Skeezies and Pal," by Frank King (Reilly and Lee); and that he believes that even though some of the characters are taken from the author's comic strips, the book is "superlatively good." And J. C., *Asheville, N. C.*, reports that "Vathek" may be obtained in the Abbey Classics Series, 231 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, for one-fifty, and is all that Belloc claimed for it.



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