

## 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

PENCIL DRAWINGS BY WILLIAM BLAKE. Chosen by GEOFFREY KEYNES. New York: Random House, 1927. \$12.

Here are seventy-five reproductions in collotype of Blake drawings chosen and annotated by Geoffrey Keynes. Most of the drawings have been taken from various public and private collections, and have been hitherto known to but few. The collotype process insures an almost exact facsimile of pencil drawings. The book has been exquisitely printed in London at the Nonesuch Press and has been imported by Random House at 20 East Fifty-seventh Street, the American selling agent for the Nonesuch Press limited editions. Six hundred copies of this demy quarto have been allotted to America. This year of Blake centenary commemoration two other beautiful and interesting Blake items are available from the Nonesuch Press, namely Mona Wilson's "The Life of Blake" at eighteen dollars, and the Unlimited Centenary Edition of the "Complete Prose and Poetry of William Blake," first printing two thousand copies, at five dollars. "The Complete Prose and Poetry" is all in one volume. The English edition is in a particularly attractive flexible red binding. The Random House binding of the American edition is blue boards, but the appearance is very neat. In the much larger book of drawings the subjects vary from Blake's first sketch for "Glad Day" to the latest of his "Visionary Heads" and the sketches for "Illustrations of the Book of Job." This is a truly splendid item for Blake collectors. It is one of the finest Nonesuch Press books that we have seen.

GOthic ARCHITECTURE IN ENGLAND AND FRANCE. By G. H. WILKINSON. Harcourt, Brace, \$4.

### Biography

THE RELATION OF THOMAS JEFFERSON TO AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY, 1783-1793. By WILLIAM KIRK WOOLFERY. Johns Hopkins Press, 1927.

This is a good piece of spade-work in historical scholarship. It treats, mostly by original research, of Thomas Jefferson's contact with the practical problems of American foreign policy after 1783, in his capacity of Minister to France and subsequently as Secretary of State under President Washington. The author expounds these problems, cites Mr. Jefferson's views of them and his method of intellectual approach, and shows by way of conclusion that his line of direction was, without any important exception, the one finally followed by the United States Government.

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER AND DIPLOMAT, HORACE PORTER. By ELSIE PORTER MENDE, in collaboration with HENRY GREENLEAF PEARSON. Stokes, 1927. \$5.

Although written by a daughter of the man whose life it details, this biography is an objective presentation, informative and entertaining. Just what part the collaborator played in its writing cannot be stated nor does it matter. Any restraining influence he may have exercised has been so wisely employed that the chapters retain a glow of vitality not always found in formal biography. Porter was born in the year in which Queen Victoria came to the throne and he died in the year of the inauguration of President Harding. His father was a Governor of Pennsylvania and he himself, after service in the Civil War in which he finished as a member of Grant's staff, became one of Grant's secretaries at the White House and, under McKinley, Ambassador to France.

The book is liberally sprinkled with letters, some of which, like those written from Paris just preceding our war with Spain, are of historical value. It has also its colorful scenes, such as that of the marriage of Queen Wilhelmina and receptions by the Kaiser and the Czar. Anecdotes are not plentiful, but those which are included are well worth the space. The book gives a charming picture of a man who was a good soldier, an able diplomat, and a rare gentleman.

TWELFTH CENTURY CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERISTICS. By MARTHA J. ROSS TEEL. Four Seas, 1927. \$3.

Obviously the author of this slight volume was possessed in making it by a laudable enthusiasm for the twelfth century and by

a commendable patience in collecting the eight hundred pages of notes which she admits excerpting from sources ranging all the way from "Britannica, 9th and 11th editions," to "Harvard Studies in Classical Philology: Charles H. Haskins" (*etc.*). But unfortunately her enthusiasm and patience were unmatched by any competence for the task she set herself. Without grasp or perspective, with no ability to characterize or interpret or, for that matter, even to narrate—sentences as faulty in construction as they are undistinguished in diction occur on almost every page—she has wielded her paste-pot and scissors, casually jumbling together significant facts, irrelevant details, true judgments, and copious direct quotations (often from unedited sources). All this is the more to be regretted because her book seemed from the extravagant claims made for it to fill a very real need by providing a popular but authoritative account of the life and times of such men and women as saint Bernard, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry II of England, and Roger I of Sicily. In the present instance, however, the desire to write such a book has pathetically outstripped the capacity to do so.

### Drama

AN INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA. By JAY B. HUBBELL and JOHN O. BEARY. Macmillan, 1927. \$3.50.

Professors Hubbell and Beary have accomplished as well as could be expected the clearly impossible task of compressing into one volume a history of European drama from the beginning to the present time, illustrated by the texts of typical plays. This book is not likely to be of much value for college courses in the drama, but it may prove useful in general survey courses. For the needs of the latter it might better have stuck to the English drama. Is it, for instance, worth while to write a chapter on "The Classic Drama of France" and include, to represent it, only "Le Tartuffe"? Surely if but one play could be given, it should have been one of Racine's. We have in English plenty of comedies that illustrate the Molière type, but nothing like "Phèdre." The anthologist must not be censured for failing to please every taste, yet Farquhar's "The Beaux' Stratagem" strikes one as an odd choice to exemplify "The Drama of the Restoration."

Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer" might well have been omitted in favor of more adequate illustration of the Elizabethan drama ("Dr. Faustus," "Volpone," and "Philaster"), or "The Drama of the Nineteenth Century," which offers merely "Iolanthe." Nor does the inclusion of plays by Alice Gerstenberg, Susan Glaspell, and Harold Williamson seem justified in a volume that leaves out any play by Aeschylus, Euripides, Terence, Corneille, Racine, Congreve, Wycherley, Augier, Strindberg, or Galsworthy, or by any Spanish dramatist—from Calderon to Benavente,—or by any Italian or German dramatist, with the sole exception of Hauptmann.

Perhaps these comments are too finical. No one could possibly do what the authors of this book have tried to do. Yet probably no one would come nearer achieving it than they have done.

SATURDAY'S CHILDREN. By Maxwell Anderson. Longmans, Green. \$2.

PICKWICK. By Cosmo Hamilton and Frank C. Rilly. Putnam. \$2.

### Fiction

CRIMSONED MILLIONS. By JOHN WILLOUGHBY. Clode, 1927. \$2.

Two murders, first that of a young millionairess, then that of her friend and physician, occurring in peaceful Captain's Haven, Long Island, arouse the police of the district to the utmost activity. A secret service man, working as spy against a dangerous gang of bootleggers, is falsely accused of the crimes, and escapes arrest by fleeing to New York. Here he secures the aid of Detective-Captain Viggiano who, going at once to the scene of the homicides, takes charge of the investigation in masterly style. The plot, from that point on, is most elaborately constructed, its main factors being an eminent explorer, a retired district attorney, underworld thugs, forged wills, and a third murder. The tale is one of the kind which gradually gives away just enough of its mysterious inside stuff to keep the reader avid for more.

(Continued on next page)



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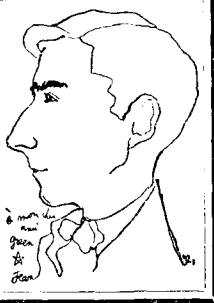
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HARPER & BROTHERS

## The New Books Fiction

(Continued from preceding page)

A BACKWOODS PRINCESS. By HULBERT FOOTNER. Doran. 1927. \$2.

Hector Blackburn was the last of the powerful free traders to hold sway in the Canadian Northwest, and when sudden death claimed him, his vast holdings fell into the unprotected hands of Loseis, his eighteen-year-old daughter. His enemy, a villainous rival trader, hastens to the dead Blackburn's post where, under pretense of befriending the girl, he attempts to seize control of the whole works. But his base designs are balked by Loseis and her sweetheart, a young government geologist. The action is of the stand-up, give-and-take, nothing-barred variety, one side gaining a little ground, only to lose it again to the other, and for such as the tale professes to be, it should pass muster.

THE VENETIAN KEY. By ALLEN UPWARD. Lippincott. 1927. \$2.

On the strength of his performance here recorded, Sir Frank Tarleton, an official British authority on poisons, does not seem qualified to rank with the leading crime specialists of contemporary fiction. He here pursues an infinitely complicated, heavily masked investigation into the death of a dishonest nobleman, who has been murdered in the strong-room of his home by poisoned needles fired from a spring gun. The motive clearly suggested by the evidence is revenge, so Tarleton begins digging into the victim's disreputable past, meanwhile keeping up a pretense of amicable relations with the unsuspicious murderer, and finally, out of pity, permitting the latter to go free. Tarleton had better brighten up his future activities considerably, if he hopes to retain the interest and esteem of his followers.

WOLF SONG. By HARVEY FERGUSON. Knopf. 1927. \$2.50.

This book is not for the reader who likes to have a story deal with people that "one would like to meet." It is an unshaven, hairy novel giving off an atmosphere of sweat and stale whiskey. Mr. Ferguson (remembered favorably for his "Hot Saturday") presents to us New Mexico of the bad old days of the 1840's, and through our acquaintance with Sam Lash we learn of the lives, thoughts, and bestialities of the trappers from the mountains, of their fights with the despised greasers on pe-

riodical trips to the outlying towns for "white liquor and brown women." The slight narrative (with not enough momentum to keep the novel on a steady march) tells brokenly of the animal attraction between this Lash and Lola Salazar, sheltered daughter of Spanish wealth and aristocracy. The book will probably stand or fall in the eyes of each reader by its recreation of early American manners and morals, as well as by its descriptions of the mountain country. As a whole, "Wolf Song" is alive without being significant, and colorful without having a pattern. Undeniably there is character and observation. But we feel a lack of climax and of restraint. In most cases, we fear, the novel will be read with interest, but looked back upon with disappointment.

## International

THE BREAKDOWN OF SOCIALISM. By Arthur Shadwell. Little, Brown. \$3 net.

BOLSHEVISM, FASCISM, AND DEMOCRACY. By Francisco Nitti. Translated and revised by Margaret M. Green. Macmillan. \$2.75.

SOME WORLD PROBLEMS. By Arthur F. Winnington Ingram. Longmans, Green. \$1.60.

SOCIAL CURRENTS IN JAPAN. By Harry Emerson Wildes. University of Chicago Press. \$3.

SELF-LEGISLATED OBLIGATIONS. By John Grier Hibben. Harvard University Press. \$1.

THE GROWTH OF CANADIAN NATIONAL FEELING. By W. Stewart Wallace. Macmillan.

A CHINAMAN'S OPINIONS. By Hsueh-ung. Stokes. \$3.

THE COMING CRISIS. By James R. Kays. Chicago: Buxton-Westerman.

## Juvenile

A MERRY-GO-ROUND OF MODERN TALES. By CAROLINE D. EMERSON. Dutton. 1927. \$2.

The general conception of this book of short tales is an excellent one and the format and numerous line drawings by Lois Lenski so thoroughly humorous and delightful that it seems a pity the stories themselves could not have been a little better. Not that they are not well written, in a determinedly sprightly, well-made way of their own, but they fall just short of possessing the charm and whimsicality and vitality which go into the making of a really distinguished and lasting juvenile. One is conscious of the author behind them all, not of the author's personality (and after all it was more than anything else Milne's own personality and Hugh Lofting's that made their verses and tales so popular with all ages of readers) and it is as if one felt this particular one making a great effort to show that modern machinery and happenings can be as quaint and stirring to the imagination as the more conventional paraphernalia of juveniles.

Miss Emerson is right in feeling that the modern automobile and engine, the washing machine and steam roller, are capable of romance. Very little has been done to utilize their possibilities in children's books up to now. We can imagine their figuring in the most engrossing of tales, but that is not the case here. Young readers will undoubtedly be amused and pleased by the tales of "The Timid Truck," of "The House That Would Not Stay Still," "The Train That Would Not Stay on the Track," and all the rest, for they are entertaining and thoroughly readable, planned and executed by one who knows what children like to hear and how to tell it to them. But this does not mean that it is good enough to take its place with the best of the old. The delicacy and beauty of Hans Andersen are not here; nor the vigor and spirit of the more recent "Rootabaga Stories." It is an attempt in the right direction, however, even though it savors a trifle self-consciously of the modern experimental school room.

BRAVE DOGS. By LILLIAN GASK. Thomas Y. Crowell. 1927. \$1.50.

UNCLE SAM'S ANIMALS. By MARGARET FRANCES FOX. Century. 1927. \$2.

The first of these volumes is a collection of dog stories, some of which, like Rob Roy, are well known, told in episodic and much abbreviated form. Each story is a series of poorly connected incidents in the life of an animal, so shortened and cut as to be negligible. The tales though weakly related are romantic and may thereby have a certain appeal to the boy of ten.

"Uncle Sam's Animals" is a volume of greater worth. It describes a variety of unique animals, most of them of historical interest, which come under government jurisdiction. The stories of Balto of Nome fame, the Alaskan seals, the camel experiment in the Southwest, the marauding wolves of cattle days, and others are well narrated. They are understandingly written for a boy of ten to fourteen. The natural habits of the animals are accurately described and the book is historically correct. A good book for boys.

## If "BOSS" TWEED were a novel—

this is how one critic declares he would have reviewed it: "While it is impossible to deny its absorbing interest it remains an improbable tale whose fantastic characters defy belief."

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Concluding a review of a shelf of the season's most notable biographies, Edmund Pearson in the Outlook, wrote:

"If I were asked to vote for the book in this list of greatest enduring interest I should name 'Boss' Tweed."

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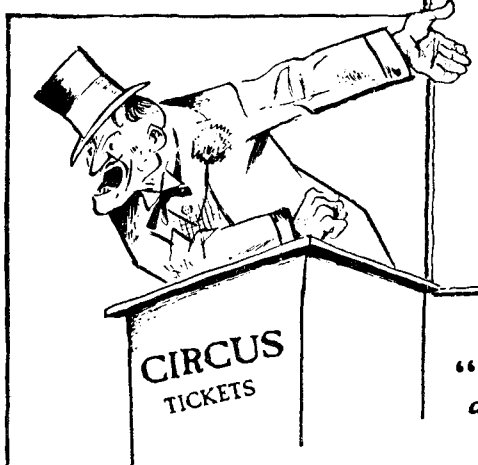
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