

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.

Belles Lettres

SHORT CIRCUITS. By STEPHEN LEACOCK. Dodd, Mead. 1928.

This new miscellany of Leacock's is not his most obstreperous or successful humor, though one will find food for laughter therein. Leacock's humorous books number nearly twenty now, and even the best of drolls, as he has been at times, cannot maintain the pace forever. On the other hand, any book of Leacock's for an idle hour is better than none. Take his revamping of the old songs in "Children's Poetry Revisited," some of his observations in "Save Me from My Friends," and so on. They would brighten any gray afternoon. The way of the professional humorist with a reputation is hard, for his audience continuously expects him to keep hitting on all six—or eight—cylinders. His best, on the other hand, springs from a spontaneous idiocy, an inspired lunacy, which cannot be constantly controlled. We are glad, nevertheless, that Leacock continues to put forth his work. For we are sure there are other inspired flashes yet to come.

Biography

THE ASSASSINATION OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE. By SAMUEL A. TANNENBAUM. Privately Printed. New York: The Tenney Press, 35 West 17th Street.

Mr. Tannenbaum here offers a new view concerning the demise of the great author of "Tamburlaine." We shall not expound his theory here, as his pamphlet is worth buying for this exposition. It is scholarly and the development of his theory has received the attention and aid of authorities.

DUNS SCOTUS. By C. R. S. HARRIS. Oxford University Press. 1927. 2 vols. \$15.

This is the first recorded work to be written in English—to the shame of the British Isles be it said—upon one of the greatest of British philosophers. Duns Scotus, "the Subtle Doctor" of the fourteenth century, whose name was known to the unlightened wits of a later generation merely as the original of the word "Dunce," has had his full share on the Continent of the recent renewed interest in medieval philosophy. But this interest, largely a product of the Catholic Neo-Scholastic movement, has not yet penetrated deeply either England or America, where there are still writers to be found who refuse the title of philosopher to any of the medieval thinkers or who make a solitary exception in favor of Aquinas. Mr. Harris has therefore performed a real service in this study of a great man forgotten in his own land for centuries.

The two large volumes of Mr. Harris's work are detailed and well-documented. A special merit lies in their elaborate footnotes, containing comparative passages from many lesser medieval philosophers whose writings are difficult of access. If his statement that the Scholastic philosophy reached its highest point of development in Scotus rather than in Aquinas must be looked upon as a bit of parental exaggeration, nevertheless he succeeds in showing that Scotus was on many points the more critical of the two thinkers. Curiously enough, he also shows that, if anything, Scotus was more closely in touch with Catholic needs than was the rival whom the Church has chosen as its orthodox defender. It is no reproach to Mr. Harris that he has borrowed freely—with full acknowledgments—from the writings of Werner, Prantl, Minges, Grabmann, Gilson, and others; rather he is to be reproached that he has not utilized their work more thoroughly. His inclusion in the Scotist canon of several writings which have been adjudged spurious by the most recent group of Continental critics—particularly his rejection of Longpré's argument against the "De Rerum Principio" partially on the ground that to accept it "would alter considerably our conception of Scotus's position"—was surely ill-advised. The weight of present authority is against him, and the fact that he bases many of his conclusions on these doubtful works makes it necessary to use his volumes with a caution which would otherwise have been needless.

YARNS OF A KENTUCKY ADMIRAL. By Hugh Rodman. Bobbs-Merrill. \$5.

Fiction

THE BLADE OF PICARDY. By FRED McLAUGHLIN. Bobbs-Merrill. 1928. \$2.

The setting of this tale is Mexico during the fall of Maximilian's empire. Wholly conventional, the novel goes through the commonplaces of honor, love, and sword-play competently and exhaustively. Mr. McLaughlin writes respectably enough to evade specific adverse criticism, but he gives us nothing whatsoever that might by the most charitable be called fresh or interesting.

ONCE MORE, YE LAURELS. By DAVID CORT. Day. 1928. \$2.

For many reasons this book is to be highly commended. It is a first novel that does well—very well—by its author; it shows him to be a writer of originality, power, and trustworthy literary instinct. If he fails at any point it is because his patterns are intrusive and because his work lacks a certain human warmth. But his virtues are definite and gratifying.

The novel is the chronicle, through five generations, of a frustrated family; each generation misses artistic success by the smallest of margins. The last, to whom Mr. Cort devotes half the book, is in a way the sum of the futilities of the four preceding generations. This last failure, Dorney Dorney-Peters, is not an appealing young man, but the history of his impotence becomes an arresting narrative.

The dominant impression left by "Once More, Ye Laurels" is that of Mr. Cort's resolute artistry. The novel is so carefully planned and executed that it becomes patently artificial, but this excess of form is better—how much better only a book reviewer knows!—than the wandering, undecided chronicles that are commonly endured. Tight, trim, careful, Mr. Cort's first novel is welcome for its notable craftsmanship, and welcome no less for its gracious exposition of defeat.

THE WOMAN WHO INVENTED LOVE. By GUIDA DA VERONA. Dutton. 1928. \$2.50.

Guido da Verona is one of Italy's best sellers today although his name, like that of Ibáñez in Spain—and with even better reason—evokes the smiles of the *literati*. At home, it is generally said that his public consists of shopgirls and idle women. His sales, however, are too large to substantiate that charge. No, the man is versatile, clever, and commercial-minded. A writer of the "speak-you-cursed-woman" school, he provides inhibited and frustrated readers with vicarious emotions. And he knows that long, perverse, voluptuous kisses pay.

This is the story of the daughter of a usurer, an "ambiguous, complicated woman," who marries a titled lover and then, in order to hold his favor and for other reasons too inscrutable to chronicle, yields to the advances of an old Roman prince and "invents love" for him. It is a pleasure to relate that she meets in the end with a highly satisfactory and richly deserved death. Before that, however, revenge, jealousy, passion, rape, and murder have deliquesced in an atmosphere of cheap salacity. The result is a lush mess guaranteed to please anyone with a taste for overripe fruit.

Juvenile

MISS ANGELINA ADORABLE. By Mary Graham Bonner. Bradley. \$1.50.

THE PUMPKIN SHELL. By Estelle Thomson. San Diego: Canterbury. \$2.50.

TALES OF TROY AND GREECE. By Andrew Lang. Longmans, Green. \$2.

THE SWORDS OF THE VIKINGS. By Julia Davis Adams. Dutton. \$2.50.

BLIND MAN'S BUFF. By Francis Lynde. Scribner's. 1928. \$2.

BARRY GOES TO COLLEGE. By Earl Reed Silvers. Appleton. 1928. \$1.75.

KATAHDIN CAMPS. By C. A. Stephens. Houghton Mifflin.

PEGGY TAKES A HAND. By Gladys Allen. Doubleday, Doran. \$2.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON. By Howard Hicks. Macmillan. \$1.50.

JUPIE FOLLOWS HIS TALE. By Neely McCoy. Macmillan. \$1.75.

THE BEGGING DEER. By Dorothy Rowe. Macmillan. \$2.

(Continued on next page)

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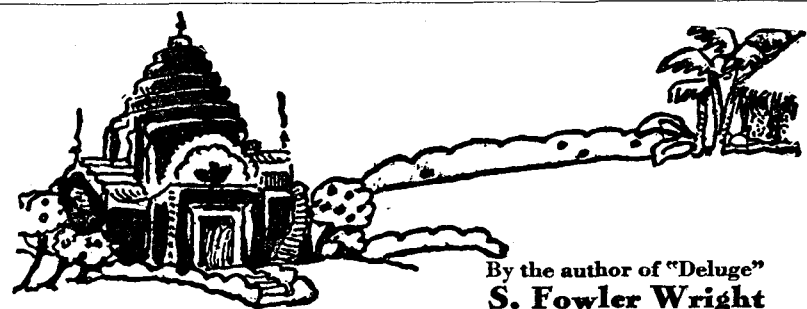
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THE ISLAND OF CAPTAIN SPARROW

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The New Books

Foreign

(Continued from preceding page)

LA LITTÉRATURE FRANÇAISE CONTEMPORAINE. By ANDRÉ BILLY. Paris: Colin. 1927.

It is hard to escape a certain feeling of melancholy in perusing a fairly complete history of contemporary literature, or at least not to ask with Leconte de Lisle: "What is all that which is not eternal?" When Renan made his famous remark about the study of literary history replacing the study of literature, was he fresh from a book like André Billy's? This little volume of two hundred pages discusses the poetry, the novel, and the ideas of the twentieth century, and passes in review some six hundred contemporaries. Unlike René Lalou, who would record his rather severe judgment of the merit of his subjects, our author declares that his aim is to give to each and all credit for effort.

Now of effort he finds God's plenty. He is a useful, although slightly superficial guide across the labyrinth. He groups his writers according to the tendencies they represent. For the poets we have the various schools of the small change of symbolism. There is sufficient quotation from the leaders to enable us to form some conception of their aims. The second part, dealing with the novel, is less satisfactory for, in his zeal for completeness, M. Billy offers little more than an annotated bibliography. Lack of an index renders this almost valueless even for reference. Yet the brief introductions to the various *genres* are occasionally suggestive. For instance: "With the English, adventure has always a healthy, sportive character, while with us, taste for adventure betrays a morbid sensibility." That will at least start us to thinking of exceptions—which may prove the rule. And again: "The provincial novel is generally pessimistic; the regionalistic is optimistic. . . . The so-called Parisian literature is in its decadence, while the provincial is enjoying an unprecedented vogue. For, as Paris becomes more and more cosmopolitan, it seems that the provinces are awakening to their essential originality."

The last part of the book, in which the main currents of thought are traced, would be more successful if the author had sacrificed minor efforts to give a fuller treatment to the true champions. In the conclusion the disappearance of poetry is noted and explained by the fact that excitement is overabundant in modern life. "We feel less the need of asking from lyricists the hour of forgetfulness which a dash in the automobile offers us."

UNE PROVINCIALE EN 1830. By MARCELLE TINAYRE. Paris: Hachette. 1928.

Madame Tinayre's latest volume inaugurates a series entitled "A Hundred Years Ago." It is founded on family records to which a slight color has been added—romantic biographies are the rage at present and this one evokes a certain nostalgia. At least we wonder how much romancing will be required in the year 2030 to make our age appear as charming. So many thrills were possible when so many taboos fenced about the education of an "accomplished young person"! The author's great-grandmother was a masterful woman "very terrible and very good," unencumbered with the new-fangled notions introduced by Rousseau, very punctilious in her observance of the code of provincial nobility, possessing withal a keen eye for business. Yet in theory she held that woman was made to obey and to suffer,—and she endeavored to bring up her daughter Naïs accordingly. Hence the rapture of the daughter at her first surreptitious contact with the young romantic literature, devoured at night by the light of candle ends, with the constant danger of detection.

An indulgent father and an uncle, a beau of the old régime by no means ready to renounce his pretensions to charm, complete the household. At the age of seven Naïs is sent to a convent where the mother had learned to tread the straight and narrow path. But even convents will change, and one of the sisters holds her wards spellbound with occasional bits of Chateaubriand's "Genius of Christianity." A distant relative of Naïs is her only playmate. The girls are utterly different, for Palma has been "educated" according to the principles of "Emile." (The quotations are from Naïs' mother.) A cousin from Paris falls heir to the halo emanating from glimpses of the romantic heroes, but wiser heads never confounded love with the serious business of family responsibilities. So the last page of the book is the wedding announcement of Naïs and an iron manufacturer whose

official visit is recorded at the end of the preceding chapter. The variety of characters and the sympathetic rendering of the atmosphere of the time when romanticism was a rosy infant make this little volume as entertaining as instructive.

ANTHOLOGIE DE LA NOUVELLE POÉSIE AMÉRICAINE. By EUGÈNE JOLAS. Paris: Kra. 1928.

The tendency of the French to disregard literatures other than their own has, since the war, been replaced by a great interest in activity abroad, particularly in America. The first wave of translations emphasized the novel; from J. O. Curwood to Sherwood Anderson our storytellers have been carried across the sea; it is therefore pleasing to note that Kra have supplemented their "Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie Française" with an even fuller "Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie Américaine." It is fitting that French poets, whose work, in the original or in translation, has so largely influenced our own versification, should have an opportunity to examine the American output (though Bernard Fay, who mentions the debt in his preface, might have indicated, in passing, the earlier French levy on Poe); and it is hard to imagine a better man for the task, both of selection and of translation, than Eugène Jolas, who is in a sense a native of both countries, and is a poet in both tongues.

The anthology, deliberately broad in its scope, represents 126 American poets, omitting, of widely known names, only Clement Wood. Among the minors, the editor's personal taste (he is editor of *transition*) accounts for the large sprinkling of radicals; and indeed the greater number of his triumphs in translation are in free verse. E. E. Cummings is admirably caught; T. S. Eliot's "Portrait of a Lady" also; while portions of Harriet Monroe's "The Hotel" match sound and meaning more effectively than the original. (Often a second-rate poet improves in translation.) It is to be regretted that, in the regular forms, M. Jolas does not more often reproduce rhyme and meter, for where he does he is at times surprisingly successful; who would expect, for example, the surging and shifting pulse-beats of Vachel Lindsay's "The Congo" to flow into a language so differently rhythmic from our own as French?

Save for Robert Frost, the better-known poets are presented through their best known work: Robinson by "Richard Corey"; Eli Siegel by "Hot Afternoons Have Been in Montana"; Jeffers by the climax of "Roan Stallion"; Edna St. Vincent Millay by "God's World." The poets themselves range from the earliest of our now established contemporaries to those more recently recognized: Countée Cullen, Langston Hughes, George Dillon, Isidore Schneider; and beyond to writers—Bravig Imbs, James Feibleman, Evan Shipman—whose names are almost as new to us as to the French. A fuller study of our important poets will doubtless be accorded later; for a first panoramic view of American verse, M. Jolas's volume has rich reward for the French—and somewhat to suggest to ourselves.

SPINOZA. By Charles Appuhn. Paris: Delpeuch. FLORANTE AND LAURA. By Epifanio de los Santos. By George St. Clair. Manila: Philippine Education Co.

History

IN QUEST OF THE WESTERN OCEAN. By NELLIS M. CROUSE. Morrow. 1928. \$6.50.

This is a one-volume attempt to summarize the efforts of explorers to discover a way round or through the New World. It deals mainly with the English who tried to go around the continent, and with the French who tried to cross it. Little is said of the Portuguese and Spanish, since they abandoned their endeavors at an early period. The book begins with John Cabot, touches on the Cortereals and the voyage of Breton fishermen to Newfoundland, goes at some length into Cartier's discovery of the St. Lawrence, and discusses early cartography. It continues with the English attempts at the Northwest passage in the sixteenth century—with the Muscovy Company, Humphrey Gilbert, Frobisher, and Davis. The traditions of the fictitious Strait of Anian, which blend at last with Bering Straits, are noted.

The early and long-continued belief in the proximity of the South Sea to the Atlantic Ocean is discussed, from the early Virginian explorations, through the attempts of Champlain, to the voyage of La Salle, Joliet, Marquette, and Hennepin. It shows how the desire to reach the East was a constant factor in exploration, as when the English crossed the Appalachians from Virginia, expecting to find the ocean just be-

The Wits' Weekly

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

The Wits' Weekly will appear next week.

Competition No. 39. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best short lyric imitating the mood and manner of Mr. A. E. Housman. (Entries should reach *The Saturday Review* office not later than the morning of August 13.)

yond the mountains, and how it was fundamental in the charter of the Hudson's Bay Company. It continues the narrative to 1770 and concludes with the discovery of the Coppermine River by Hearne.

It is not a simple task that the author has attempted. He has done a great deal of research, and while many of the questions with which he deals are more or less controversial, he has dealt fairly with them. The book is a manual primarily. There is no romance in it; the great spirit which moved these explorers has roused no kindred eloquence in the author. He treats his subject matter like a pedagogue in the classroom. Perhaps this is inevitable due to the amount of material to be crowded into a small compass, yet one feels that it is not so that John Fiske or Francis Parkman would have done the work.

Miscellaneous

THE LITTLE BOOKS OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE. Vols. 1-12. Doubleday, Doran. 1928. 75 cents each.

The first dozen of these booklets—ultimately to "cover all subjects of all times"—are: "Protestantism," by Dean Inge; "Catholicism," by the Rev. M. C. D'Arcy; "The Life of Christ," by the Rev. R. J. Campbell; "Myths of Greece and Rome," by Jane Harrison; "The Development of Political Ideas," by F. J. C. Hearnshaw; "A History of India," by Edward Thompson; "The Earth, the Sun and the Moon," by George Forbes; "The Mind and Its Workings," by C. E. M. Joad; "The Body," by Ronald Campbell Macfie; "The Races of Mankind," by H. J. Fleure; "Man in the Making," by R. R. Marett, and "A History of Russia," by Prince D. S. Mirsky. They are really "little books," containing only about seventy pages each. What can one say in seventy pages on such large topics? A good deal, if one has been carefully selected and properly coached as the authors of these volumes evidently have been. They have steered a bold and successful course between the Scylla of sketchiness and the Charybdis of over-condensation. Naturally, the print is rather small, but it is a delight to have a book which is so easy to handle and which can even be thrust into a pocket.

THE GREAT ROLL OF THE PIPE for the Fourteenth Year of the Reign of King Henry the Third. Michaelmas, 1230. Edited by CHALFANT ROBINSON. Princeton University Press. 1927.

There are two sorts of books concerned with history: the first sort contains historical narratives; the second contains the materials out of which historians make historical narratives. The writers of the first expect to find readers and even hope to make money. But the editors of such a volume as this, which is the forty-second volume of the Publications of the Pipe Roll Society, using infinite patience and laboriously acquired skill, must find their reward in a sense of service rendered to history and the appreciation of a very limited number of fellow craftsmen.

Interesting things there are in this record of taxation which raised the money for the English invasion of France seven hundred years ago, but they are disguised, in the manuscript, under symbols, with many contractions and condensations, and a technical Latin.

"The Great Roll of the Pipe" contains the record of the annual accounting by the sheriff of what had been spent, of what the king's debtors had paid, and of what they owed. For instance, there is here recorded the expense of arming the accused persons who were to have trial by battle and also the equipment of the king's *probandor*, who won his own pardon from the gallows by fighting for the crown in legal duels which were really an appeal to the justice of God, who would not, it was believed, allow the innocent to be overthrown. Here are curious records of payments made to the king, not in money, but in a very miscellaneous list of articles, hawks, dogs, horses, gilded spurs, gloves, arrows, pepper, or cranes.

Just what use the king made of the cranes does not appear, unless they were to be chased by the hawks. In short, the volume is a mine of information about the life of men long dead.

A hundred pages of index, in double column, of names, places, and subjects, including the modern equivalents of the thirteenth century place names helps the use of a volume edited with great accuracy and scholarship by Professor Robinson.

Philosophy

INSTINCTS AND EMOTIONS. By ROGER W. BABSON. Revell. 1928. \$2.

The author of "Instincts and Emotions" is a psychologist in the same sense that the man who sells you your newspaper is a journalist. Here is a startling psychological fact: how does it happen that a man trained in the coolest and most objective of sciences, namely statistics, in which precision, objectivity, controls, are the very essence of appropriate technique, will so completely fail to carry over into another department of knowledge these precious trainings and precautions? An important discovery of experimental psychology, rather disheartening to the educator, is the demonstration of little or no "transfer of training." There is no intellectual guarantee that a man who proves himself superior in methods of thinking in mathematics will *therefore* reveal an equal competence when he discusses history or heredity. In the latter cases he may simply prove himself a babe in arms, as James Harvey Robinson sagely pointed out in his "Mind in the Making."

A psychologist with a decent respect for accuracy in the use of concepts will not sanction Babson's loose-tongue use of "instincts." His attitude towards his subject has a Y. M. C. A. and pseudo-spiritual hortatory flavor. He sanctions religious dogmas that are no longer meaningful to educated minds. His salesman-like solicitude for the soul's salvation does not commend itself to the critical mind as either profound or psychologically valid. In parts this book is a contribution to what might be delicately referred to as consolatory buncombe. Unfortunately, there is a growing tendency in prosperous America to endow psychology with magic properties for making men healthy, wealthy, and wise. It will soon be necessary for psychologists possessed of intellectual integrity to take a firm stand against the rapid spreading invasion of their significant field of inquiry by a group of writers to whom the new psychology is magic and religion.

THE METAPHYSICS OF PRAGMATISM. By Sidney Hook. Open Court. \$2.

PSYCHOLOGY AS SCIENCE. By H. P. Wild. Holt. \$2.50.

PSYCHOLOGY. By H. L. Hollingworth. Appleton. \$3.

PHILOSOPHY TODAY. Edited by Edward Leroy Schaub. Open Court. \$3.75.

THE FIVE GREAT PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE. By William de Witt Hyde. Macmillan. \$2.50.

A PHILOSOPHY OF IDEALS. By Edgar Sheffield Brightman. Holt. \$2.

PSYCHOLOGY, ANCIENT AND MODERN. By George Sidney Brett. Longmans, Green. \$1.75.

Poetry

SONGS OF INFANCY AND OTHER POEMS. By MARY BRITTON MILLER. Macmillan. 1928.

The poems that give their title to this book contain the most original idea, although some of them are in too mature a language to suggest the infant. They are not as successful as Elizabeth Madox Roberts's poems of a slightly later age of childhood in "Under the Tree." When the author writes in her own person she does not seem to us to write so differently in manner, though to be sure the matter is different. In general, this book has made but slight impression upon us, though the general idea of the infancy poems interested us at once. The intuitive imagination in the verses does not seem to us extraordinary.

(Continued on page 14)