

## 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 *probator*, 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)



## 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*. Mrs. Becker's summer headquarters will be at 2 Bramerton St., Chelsea, London.

F. A. W., New York, writes, "I understand that there is a good classical dictionary, a German translation, I believe, that is superior to other such works."

OSCAR SEYFFERT'S "Dictionary of Classical Antiquities, Mythology, Religion, Literature, and Art" is published by the Standard Book Co., New York, revised edition nine dollars. The one most used in libraries seems to be "Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities," edited by Harry Thurston Peck, published by the American Book Company for eight dollars. The one most popular for desk and school use is the inexpensive "Smaller Classical Dictionary" in "Everyman's Library" (Dutton), abridged from the grand old standby, Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology."

F. G. H., Chapel Hill, N. C., asks for a book dealing with table manners, "one that gives every detail of the art of mannerly eating," and if no book deals entirely with this subject, would like a book of etiquette that could be highly recommended.

HELEN HATHAWAY'S "Manners" (Dutton) could be highly recommended by me, and has been to several inquirers by mail. It goes into details to an extent that many a book on behavior scorns to do, forgetting, perhaps, that when one is confronted with a social problem new to him it helps him not at all that it is an old story to numbers of other people. Indeed, the sense that he is the only person left on earth who does not know what to do on this occasion is usually what sends him to an etiquette book. So the section on table manners, though by no means long, leaves very little to chance.

The motto of Miss Hathaway's excellent manual might have been that of the house-painting industry: "Save the surface and you save all." Before any indignant moralist protests that this encourages insincerity, let him calm down, recall what weather can do to a house if too much of it gets in through the cracks, and ask himself if the souls of many of us are not protected against a like seepage and strain by an appropriate and frequently renewed coating of convention.

F. J. P., Atlanta, Ga., asks, on behalf of a reading-club, for a life of Nathaniel Hawthorne "that will give more than the dry cold facts—rather more of a human side."

THIS means, of course, a new life, the distinguishing feature of much new biography being that the last thing it gives you is the facts, dry or wet. However, the author of "The Scarlet Letter" has been faithfully dealt with by both his recent biographies, Lloyd Morris's "The Rebellious Puritan" (Harcourt, Brace) being a full-length portrait, Herbert Gorman's "Nathaniel Hawthorne: a Study in Solitude" (Doran), a rapid and revealing sketch. I suggest both, either having the good quality of leaving the reader quite willing to take another book about the same man. Mr. Morris's life has been having favorable reviews on its recent appearance in an English edition. At the outset of either book looms the figure of his mother, the voluntary recluse whose career reminds us what a change has been made in our heroines by housing conditions. It strains the mind to imagine where the Mrs. Hawthornes and Miss Havishams who shut themselves up in their own rooms for life when bereaved or deserted, would manage to get the proper seclusion from the family in a present-day family-apartment. Or with a present-day family.

C. A. K., University of Pennsylvania, asks who publishes A. E. W. Mason's "The House of the Arrow," saying, "This was (and is) the outstanding mystery story of my experience."

"THE House of the Arrow" is published by Doran. It has lately rolled into another incarnation and as a play is packing the vaudeville theatre on the Strand with audiences that should by this time be choosy in crimes. For of all the theatre crazes through which I have lived in one city or another, the most overwhelming is the one that has raged all the year in London for plays that are in effect detective stories on

the stage. At the peak of the rush I am told that fifteen murders were taking place simultaneously, in the first acts of as many plays. It has indeed come to such a pass that on any first night, even of the mildest drawing-room comedy, the experienced theatre-goer looks over the cast to make his choice of the murderer, and feels that there is something irregular if no occasion for his acumen arises. "The Trial of Mary Dugan" (lately published by French in book-form) seems to have first place in popularity, but A. A. Milne's "The Fourth Wall" has sailed past its hundredth performance and is still going strong. Being at the Haymarket, next door to the American Express, it is the first theatrical entertainment witnessed by my countrymen. This location was one of the reasons why "The Man with a Load of Mischief" flattened out in New York: all the New Yorkers had seen it.

I have lost, in the process of moving the office for the summer, the letter of an inquirer writing a thesis on the work of Gerard Manley Hopkins, and asking further information on the circumstances of his life. But meanwhile I had referred the question to Louis Untermeyer, who writes:

I AM happy to note an American interest in Gerard Manley Hopkins—to me one of the great modern metaphysical poets whose failures are more admirable than most poet's successes. None of his poems appeared during his lifetime. He was born in 1844 and died in 1898. Thirty years after his death, his verse was collected and edited by the poet laureate, Robert Bridges, who (apparently) was more concerned with Hopkins's curious rhythms and fantastic schemes of prosody than the force and intensity of his imagination. "Modern British Poetry" (p.36-39) is the only anthology I know containing a résumé of Hopkins's work. The only other source of information is the original work: "Poems of Gerard Hopkins, Now First Published with Notes by Robert Bridges" (1919). The preface contains the very matter which your correspondent seeks.

M. B., Pittsburgh, Pa., asks for a list of works on logic, for one who has already an elementary acquaintance with the subject, and one of books on psychology to supplement the brief reading-course indicated in the booklet by E. D. Martin in the "Reading with a Purpose" series.

AS the inquirer says that his acquaintance has been with the older writers, I suggest as a beginning for a reading-list of newer books the lucid and ingratiating "Outline of Logic," by Boyd H. Bode (Holt): this is the book I keep on hand to lend to such as ask me for exercises in thinking straight. H. E. Cunningham's "Textbook of Logic" (Macmillan) is an inspiring work for a comparative beginner. It tends to develop the disposition to think for one's self—and really to think.

I. M. Bentley's "The Field of Psychology" (Appleton) is a good book for one who wishes to preserve something of the old and sympathize with something of the new. There is a wide range of interest in the collection of material for collateral reading in beginners' courses contained in the nearly 700 pages of Robinson's "Readings in General Psychology" (University of Chicago). A. G. Tansley's "The New Psychology and its Relation to Life" (Dodd, Mead) is concerned with the subconscious, not altogether Freudian. Instead of one of the many books about Freud, why not take the information from headquarters, in his "General Introduction to Psychoanalysis" (Boni & Liveright)? This is certainly explicit enough. If I were taking such a tour as this I would try the road offered by L. T. Hobhouse in "Mind in Evolution" (Macmillan): it takes a reader far and starts him a long way back. The interest in social psychology fostered by Dewey's "Human Nature and Conduct" (Holt), may be turned upon W. E. Hocking's "Human Nature and its Remaking" (Yale), in whose new edition Professor Dewey's famous book is discussed; a slant toward behaviorism sends one through J. B. Watson's book on it, issued by the People's Institute and his "Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist" (Lippincott), to the recent application

(Continued on next page)

## With Malice Toward None



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[ The 4th of a *Pensive Persecution* submitted for the Pulitzer Prize for the MOST MODEST BLURB of 1928. ]

ONCE every Five Years even the most tranquil blood may dangerously sparkle . . . and as HENRI DE MONTHERLANT says, *On ne fait un chef d'oeuvre qu'avec ses nerfs*. . .

SO, at the Beginning of the *Fifth Volume*, B. M., gallantly saluted C. S.—the sight was so charming that a member of the Editorial Staff, idling near, was moved to perpetuate it in India ink. . .

FOR to Whom, if not to C. S., the Charter Subscribers, who have made this magazine possible, does B. M. (THE BUSINESS MANAGER) pay his homage due? And to Whom but C. S. would B. M. confide his secret pleasure in the good stuff the *Fifth Volume* will contain. . .

THE picture is only a clumsy offhand imitation of one of VERA WILLOUGHBY's enchanting drawings, published in London by PETER DAVIES . . . but it suggests the pretty episode. . .

MORE than an episode, though, for after the obeisance (or whatever it was) C. S., blushing slightly, found that B. M. had left in her hand a dainty little scalloped paper saying:

THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, \$3.50 a Year, but C. S. can renew, at the rate of \$6 for 2 years. Write to B. M., SRL, 25 W. 45th St., N. Y. C.