

## The Compleat Collector

(Continued from page 693)

a way of envisaging the whole subject, of combining precision of information with clearness of perspective, that no other nationals can approach. The latest bibliographical proof of this is a "Manuel du Bibliophile Français, 1470-1920," by M. F. C. Lonchamp. The best evidence of the way in which data is packed into the 600 pages of text, with adequate illustrations, is the fact that the detailed index to this text occupies an additional 140 pages. Moreover, it is written in narrative form, and is not a mere epitome of information.

There must be some books left in English garrets, when a single mail brings catalogues from bookshops in Leamington Spa, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, Toubridge, Chelsea, Bayswater, and Oxford, besides London proper and the Scotch cities. The offerings, to be sure, are not very thrilling, but by the same token the prices are not prohibitive, and the buyer who knows what he wants, with a little catholicity in his collecting, always stands a chance of finding something a little better than what he started to look for. For example, E. M. Lawson & Co. of Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, issues list 45 as a folio fold, with only some 150 unpromising titles. But tucked away at the end is John Donne's copy of a Gospel Commentary of 1616. Next to this is "A Rare and Accurate Treatise concerning the taking of the Fume of Tobacco", 1637, while nearby is a copy of the first edition of Richard Ford's "Handbook of Spain," with a letter from Ford to George Borrow. Half a dozen minor metropolitan dealers fail to provide a single piece to match these.

## The New Books

## Poetry

(Continued from page 692)

Starrett is well-known as a poet and almost as well-known as a book-collector and an editor of some connoisseurship. His verse usually has either a twinkle in its eye or is wrapped from nose to toes in the black cloak of the *macabre*. He does several things rather well and is an absorbed observer of the oddities of life.

The first poem in this group, "Presbyterian Hell," *The Saturday Review* had the pleasure of publishing. It is a gorgeous bit of humor. And there are several sonnets that should be given particular attention, viz.: "Galley Slave" and "Newspaper Portrait." They are entirely successful. The last lines of "Advice to a Beginning Poet" and "Sky Writer" evoke the desired thrill. Collectors of rare things would do well to secure this pamphlet. For all his individual contributions to contemporary poetry and prose, Mr. Starrett has not yet made an emphatic mark; but occasional inspirations of his, and they occur to him not infrequently, have a relish all their own. His is a thoroughly entertaining mind.

**BITS O' VERSE IN SCOTS.** By WILLIAM P. MCKENZIE. Toronto: The Ryerson Press. 1927.

Mr. McKenzie has had several volumes of verse published, now out of print. This edition is one of the Ryerson Poetry Chap-Books. The author is a Scotchman, who was schooled in Canada, a graduate of Toronto University. He writes in Scotch dialect. His verse is pleasant and racy of the soil; though not of major merit. We quote the octave of his concluding "L'Envoy to Scotland," the only poem of his not in dialect:

*My forbears knew the land of song and story;  
They walked the banks of Tweed, saw  
distant blue  
Of Eildon Hills; and tales of derring-do  
Would boast, and tell of many a Border  
foray;  
Fair Edinburgh's town and Castle hoary  
And heroes of old time they loved anew,  
Mountains and lochs and troutling burns  
they knew,  
And moonlit aisles of Melrose in their  
glory.*

OXFORD POETRY, 1927. Edited by W. H. Auden, and C. Day Lewis. Appleton.

NOAH AN' JONAH AN' CAP'N JOHN SMITH. By Don Marquis. Appleton. \$1.

QUEENS AND CRICKETS. By Mildred Whitney Stillman. Duffield. \$1.25 net.

PRIAPUS AND THE POOL. By Conrad Aiken. Cambridge, Dunsten House.

THE BEST POEMS OF 1927. Edited by L. A. G. Strong. Dodd, Mead. \$2.

TOTTLE'S MISCELLANY. Edited by Hyder E. Rollins. Harvard University Press. \$5.

WITHOUT A FIG LEAF. By Alice McGuigan. Vinal.

OTHERS ABIDE. By Humbert Wolfe. Doubleday, Doran. \$1.50.

DRAMALAND. By Lin William Price. Vinal. \$1.50.

SELECTED POETRY. Written by students of the Thomas Jefferson High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.

LAURELS GIFT AND OTHER POEMS. By Michael Doyle. Milwaukee, Towle Publishing Co.

THE NARRATIVE POEMS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. Brentanos. 2 vols. \$10.

MYRTLELLA. By Brooks More. Boston, Cornhill. \$1.

## Religion

REVELATION AND INSPIRATION. By BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD. Oxford University Press. 1927. \$3.

It may sound brutal, but it is probably true that this collection from various sources of papers by the late (1887-1921) professor of "Didactic and Polemic Theology" in the Princeton Theological Seminary (not, be it noted, in Princeton University), would never have seen publication had it not been provided for in the author's will. Here we have undoubtedly learned and scholarly dissertations, from a conservative mid-Victorian Presbyterian point of view, about the Bible. It would be well for people who scorn what is known as "Princeton Fundamentalism" to read some of this material. It shows that Fundamentalism is not as silly in the hands of scholars as it was in the hands of Mr. Bryan. But there is no doubt that the work is both dated and dull.

A NEW GOD FOR AMERICA. By Herbert Parish. Century. \$2.

THE ONE BOOK. By Warwick James Price. Winston.

THE JESUITS. By H. Boehmer. Philadelphia. Castle Press. \$1.25.

THE CONTACT BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE. By John William Draper. Appleton. \$1.

THE BIBLE UNLOCKED. By Henry Martin Battehouse. Century. \$3.50.

IN JUNE WITH THE FINITE. By Thomas L. Masson. Century. \$2.50.

THEY BELIEVE. By a Number of Authors. Century. \$1.25.

THE HERESY OF ANTIOCH. By Robert Norwood. Doubleday, Doran.

THE NATURE OF EXISTENCE. By J. McT. E. McTaggart. Macmillan.

CHRISTIAN HUMANISM. By Russell Henry Stafford. Chicago, Willett, Clark & Colby. \$2.

FOLLOWING CHRIST. By Charles Lewis Slattery. Houghton Mifflin. \$1.

THE HOLY COMMUNION. By Bishop Slattery. Houghton Mifflin. 75 cents.

THE CHURCH IDEA. By William Reed Huntington. Houghton Mifflin. \$2.

THE AGONY OF CHRISTIANITY. By Miguel de Unamuno. Payson I. Clarke. \$2.

THE OLD TESTAMENT. Edited by J. M. Powis Smith. University of Chicago Press. \$7.50.

BEST SERMONS. Book IV. Edited by Joseph Fort Newton. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50.

RELIGION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE. By Shertwood Eddy. Doran. \$1.50 net.

THE RELIGION OF TIBET. By J. E. Ellam. Dutton. \$1.50.

THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT. By Ernest Fremont Little. Abingdon. \$2.

LOVELL LEADS OFF. By Ralph Henry Barbour. Appleton. \$1.75.

CHRIST AT THE ROUND TABLE. By E. Stanley Jones. Abingdon. \$1.50.

THE LIFE OF JESUS. By Ernest Renan. (Everyman's Library). Dutton. 80 cents.

## Travel

CLEARED FOR STRANGE PORTS. By MRS. THEODORE ROOSEVELT, SR., MRS. KERMIT ROOSEVELT, RICHARD DERBY and KERMIT ROOSEVELT. Scribners. 1927. \$3.50.

This is a collection of sketches in which four members of the Roosevelt family tell in brief and straightforward fashion of their varied experiences as travelers and hunters in many parts of the world. Although big game are hunted and great distances traversed, the record of succeeding days contains few dramatic events. For charm of manner Mrs. Kermit Roosevelt's essay, "Where the Elephants Are," is perhaps most outstanding; and Mrs. Roosevelt, Sr., has succeeded in compressing a lively joy of life into her "Odyssey of a Grandmother." But the chief interest of the book lies in the personality of the authors who have been so often in the public eye. This being so, the reader will doubtless regret the rigidly modest impersonality of their narratives.

LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI. By MARK TWAIN. Harpers. 1927. \$2.50.

This is one of the specially illustrated holiday editions of classics for which the firm of Harper & Brothers is noted. Frank Schoonover has furnished the colored frontispiece and Walter Stewart has supplied the illustrations in this instance. We cannot say that we find any great distinction in Mr. Stewart's illustrations, but it is pleasant to have a reissue of Clemens's history of the great river. "Life on the Mississippi" is a glamorously interesting volume and one of Mark Twain's greatest contributions to American literature.

## Points of View

## A Note on History

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:  
SIR:

History as an art has been discussed in your columns recently. May I call your attention to California's great epic, the tragedy of the Donner party in the winter of 1846, and the failure to treat this unparalleled episode as an account of the greatest heroism? Sophocles never wrote a drama of human fate that equals the authentic history of this pioneer tragedy.

In "California: An Intimate History" (Boni & Liveright: 1927). Gertrude Atherton devotes about two pages of her work to this subject. Unfortunately she seems to have followed a version first published in the *California Star*, San Francisco, April 10, 1847, which for downright horrors is not equaled in our most lurid newspapers today. "One emigrant took the body of a child about four years old to bed with him and devoured the whole before morning, and the next day he ate another about the same age before noon."

This version has been a dark cloud over California's pioneer epic for eighty years. These horrible exaggerations have saddened the lives of the survivors and in some instances have closed the mouths of those who could speak. To C. F. McGlashan, a Truckee newspaperman, is to be given the chief credit of lifting this version of unwarranted horrors into one of the best authenticated histories written, according to a Stanford University professor of history.

Before 1879 he interviewed every survivor who would talk and gives an account of nobility and heroism in a step by step battle with relentless fate and the malevolent elements of that terrible winter that ended in life's most unhappy choice—cannibalism or death.

Mrs. Atherton centers the charges of cannibalism against one poor victim, Lewis Keseberg, "who was ordered to remain and look after Captain and Mrs. Donner. . . . A third relief found Keseberg looking like a gorilla, acting like a maniac, and no Mrs. Donner. They found her later in the camp kettle and a bucket salted down." This man was seven miles away from Captain Donner's camp with his heel so badly injured that three relief parties had to abandon him. Picture this man, well educated, having perfect command of three or four languages, well, but for that Achilles heel, facing fate as Oedipus did. Loyalty to life for his family's sake forbade the release a merciful revolver could give. Fate seemed to keep him for a long life of ceaseless anguish.

The epic quality of this part of the tragedy is lost sight of if Keseberg is made to seem unfeeling. Mrs. Atherton does not record what appears even in the most unfavorable relief account . . . "Keseberg gathered together the bones and heaped them in a box, blessed them and the cabin, and said 'I hope God will forgive me for what I have done. I could not help it; and I hope I may get to heaven yet.'" This record of reverence to the remains of his companions of the overland trail on whose bodies he was compelled to subsist, alone in that cabin, unable to move out of it, absolves this man of being a fiend, he had the soul of nobility in him. Here we find the epic quality and the problem of human fate quite overlooked in the popular version of the Donner party. Life's most unhappy choice—cannibalism or death? Can a human being live under these circumstances and retain a noble nature? Yes.

The majority of the survivors of the Donner party were driven by dire necessity to make this choice. Herein is fate confounded. Some ate and lived, some ate and died, some did not eat, and lived, and some did not eat, and died. The prayerful Patrick Breen was driven to it to save his children, though his wife would not eat. Lots were drawn on those bitter Sierra snows by the "forlorn hope" party, but who could kill lovable, magnanimous Patrick Doland? Later W. F. Graves, like the noblest of the Greeks feeling his strength ebbing, required with his last breath a solemn promise from his daughters, that this lot should fall to him. It is possible that the only overt act on the living was in the deaths of two starving Indians who had but a few hours to live.

The lurid and exaggerated report of an early day newspaper, suggesting the fashion of 1847—a morbid reveling in horrors—should not have been repeated in 1927 in a California history. Art has not been

served as history should serve it. A remarkable chance has been missed to enoble a page of pioneer history into an epic, for no more glowing faith in humanity can be kindled than the dire rehearsal of the tragedy that befell these pioneers of 1846.

The best two histories of these events are "History of the Donner Party," by C. F. McGlashan (Truckee, California. 1879-1880) and Elisa P. Donner-Houghton's account of the tragedy that befell the party led by her father, Captain George Donner. (A. C. McClurg & Co. 1911).

ARTHUR HEEB.

Los Gatos.

## Miss Atherton Adds

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:  
SIR:

Mr. Heeb has asked me to append a few words to his article. I can only repeat what I have said to him; that although a given event may make the epic appeal to one person, it is the privilege of another to find his epics elsewhere.

I wrote a history of California in one volume and was forced to confine myself to the men and the events that had made the state famous. It would have been a waste of time and space to go into minor details.

But there is no reason why the Donner Party should not have a book to itself, and I hope that Mr. Heeb will write it. It is very dramatic as he tells it, and it is always a pleasure to see the wrong made right.

GERTRUDE ATHERTON.

Los Gatos, California.

## Hardy's First Novel

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*,  
SIR:

In time we may see as many men put up for the honor of rejecting Hardy's first novel as there are cities said to claim great Homer dead. Most of the recent notices I have read attribute this act to Meredith. John Morley, however, believed he had done it. In "John, Viscount Morley," by John H. Morgan, on page 84, Morley is quoted as saying:

"I 'read' Hardy's first novel when he submitted it to the Macmillans, was impressed, but rejected it, and then got him to come and see me, and was the cause of his writing another and a better one."

Incidentally, Hardy's opinion of Morley is not without interest. In the same book the following remark is credited to Hardy: "If Morley had left politics alone he might have been the Gibbon of his age."

R. P. LANE.

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