

## The New Books Fiction

(Continued from preceding page)

aunt, decides to open Goodwind, her beautiful ancestral home, and give a house party for her niece and her college friends. Oliver Varn, a young novelist whom Leigh refused in New York, is invited; also Nan Sabot, a show-girl, with whom, Leigh later learns, Stephen is in love. One day, without warning them of his coming, Stephen appears at Goodwind, mentally restored but in very poor health. Leigh now has to choose between a loveless marriage, which she considers to be her duty, or Oliver. Her Aunt Belle, a beautiful but ineffectual woman, pleads with Leigh to uphold the family honor; her Aunt Beulah says, "Choose to be anything, but not magnolia . . . magnolia with beauty but without color." From this point, Miss Taylor works out a quite conventional ending.

Miss Taylor writes well in places, especially in her expository passages; some of her characters, in particular Buddy Wade, who imbibed incredible quantities of liquor and was tricked into marrying Claudia, a girl who knew what she wanted and got it, during one of these drinking bouts, are also well done. But that is about all that one can say of "Not Magnolia." In retrospect it appears a slight and disappointing novel.

**THE MADELEINE HERITAGE.** By MARTIN MILLS. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill. 1928. \$2.50.

The three volume novel is dead, long live the three volume novel! "The Madeleine Heritage" is a one volume novel in form only: it has enough characters, it covers enough time, and it traverses enough space to fill three bindings instead of one. Martin Mills has undertaken a difficult task in tracing, through five generations, the influence of an aberrant French mixture with the conservative Anglo-Saxon blood of the Montforts. For he has to show not only the various manifestations of the Gallic strain as it appears in different individuals but also to show how its outcroppings are affected by further dilution, by changing times, and by different environment. It is necessary to introduce an incredible number of characters and, since it is a consanguineous group of which he treats, there is considerable repetition of given names, which makes it almost impossible to keep these Montforts of Farleigh-Scudmore distinct. At times one cannot see the woods for the trees and then again it is equally hard to see the trees for the woods. This inevitable genealogical and chronological confusion (imagine the Rougon-Macquart series in one volume) does not preclude excellent and clear-cut delineations of individuals and vignettes of family life. Mr. Mills has presented and contrasted his epochs with splendid restraint. The sense of passing time and of the particular "times" of each generation is present throughout the book and, closely related to this, the gradual aging of the characters is very convincingly depicted, with a few romantic exceptions. The author may be annoyed that his central theme does not appear as clear to the reader as it undoubtedly does to him, but the reader will find the novel interesting enough in its parts to compensate for its elusive quality as a whole.

**SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY.** By DAWN POWELL. Brentano's. 1928. \$2.50.

A boarding-house on the wrong side of the railroad tracks in a small town furnishes Dawn Powell with the locale for "She Walks in Beauty." And this locale furnishes the reader with the clue to the intent of the novel. It is written in the Winslow-Suckow tradition and, in part, very well so written. Individual portraits of eccentrics who obtain bed and board at Aunt Julie's hostelry are striking and complete; all that Dawn Powell sees in them she easily transcribes to her pages. They are striking not because Mrs. Powell has brought out new elements in their character nor because she has viewed them from a new psychological angle, but because she has selected "odd" characters to begin with, and the portraits are complete because the author has set the boundaries so near the starting-point that the distance between is not difficult of accomplishment. The mentally man-obsessed old maid, the physically man-obsessed young trollop, the gibbering and decrepit philosopher, the small-time vaudeville group, and the Main Street aristocrats, have been done again, have been well done again, but only from the shiny surface slant that the talons of "Winesburg, Ohio" seem

not even to have scratched. In Aunt Julie and Linda Shirley, the rock-bound little beauty, the author has escaped her limitations and has created individuals rather than types. The "happy ending" of the aspiring Linda is a gratifyingly turned bit of irony, the perfect arsenic-flavored meringue. It is unfortunate, but apparently inevitable that books with as much merit as "She Walks in Beauty" come in for harsher criticism than their inferior contemporaries, because they say so briskly and explicitly what they want to say that one cannot help wishing they wanted to say something more important.

**THE FOX WOMAN.** By Nalbro Bartley. Doubleday, Doran. \$2.

**FOUR-AND-TWENTY BLACKBIRDS.** By Howard Vincent O'Brien. Doubleday, Doran. \$2.

**THERESE.** By Francois Maurice. Translated by Eric Sutton. Boni & Liveright. \$2.50.

**PRELUDE TO A ROPE FOR MYER.** By L. Steni. Jonathan Cape. 7s/6 net.

**THE MYSTERY OF TUNNEL 51.** By A. Wilson. Longmans. \$2.

**THE DARK GOD.** By John Chancellor. Century. \$2.

**ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.** By Judge Henry Neil. Chicago, Ill.: The Bible House.

**ARMED WITH MADNESS.** By Mary Butts. A. & C. Boni. \$2.50.

**CONDEMNED TO DEVIL'S ISLAND.** By Blair Niles. Harcourt, Brace. \$3.

**CATHERINE-PARIS.** By Princess Marthe Bibesco. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50.

**WOMAN IN FLIGHT.** By Fritz Reck-Mallece-wen. Translated by Jennie Covan. Boni & Liveright. \$2.50.

**THE TORCHES FLARE.** By Stark Young. Scribner's. \$2.50.

**THE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM.** By James Oliver Curwood. Doubleday, Doran. \$2.

**THE HAWK OF COMO.** By John Oxenham. Longmans. \$2.00.

**THE CLOSED GARDEN.** By Julian Green. Harper. \$2.50.

**ISLANDERS.** By Peadar O'Donnell. Jonathan Cape. London: 6s. net.

**MEN AT WHILES ARE SOBER.** By Stephen Rauschenbush. Albert and Charles Boni. \$2.50.

**UNDER FIRE.** The Story of a Squad. By Henri Barbusse. Everyman's Library. Dutton. Cloth, 80c.

**MADAME BOVARY.** By Gustave Flaubert. Everyman's Library. E. P. Dutton. Cloth, 80c.

**ARROGANCE.** By Léonie Aminoff. Dutton. \$2.50.

**GOLDEN TALES FROM FLAUBERT.** With a Preface by George Saintsbury. Dodd, Mead. \$2.50.

**THE BEST CONTINENTAL SHORT STORIES OF 1927.** Fourth Annual Issue. Edited by Richard Eaton. Dodd, Mead. \$2.50.

**LIGHT IN THE WINDOW.** By John P. Fort. Dodd, Mead. \$2.

**LAND POOR.** By Kate Speake Penney. Vinal. \$2.

**GREAT FRENCH SHORT STORIES.** Edited by Lewis Melville. Boni & Liveright. \$3.

## History

**THE HISTORY OF HITCHIN.** By REGINALD L. HINE. Vol. I. London: Allen and Unwin. 1928.

This is an attractive type of local history, well printed, well illustrated, pleasantly written, and enlivened with copious extracts from local records. The manor, the church, and a Carmelite priory give body and distinction to the theme, the agrarian aspects of which are familiar to readers of Seeborn's "English Village Community." This volume is above the average of such works, having the advantage of suggestion and advice from the late Sir Paul Vinogradoff and other scholars of eminence.

**FEUDAL GERMANY.** By JAMES WEST-FALL THOMPSON. University of Chicago Press. 1928. \$5.

This handsome and substantial volume of 700 pages is a credit to American scholarship. Save for Bryce's brilliant essay on the Holy Roman Empire and Herbert Fisher's able analysis of the Empire as a government, medieval Germany has had far less attention than it deserves from writers in English. Professor Thompson brings to his task a wide acquaintance with the contemporary sources and modern German special investigations, besides a familiarity with the general history of the period which makes possible much illuminating comparison with other countries. His work is neither narrative nor systematic, but a connected series of studies of significant phases of German institutions between the ninth and twelfth centuries, such as the church, the economic basis of political and social life, the struggle between local rights and imperial centralization. A curious chapter deals with the sentiment of Europe toward the Germans in the Middle Ages.

The freshest part of the book, at least for American readers, is devoted to the eastward expansion of Germany from the Elbe to the Oder at the expense of the Slavs. With a full realization of the importance of this theme in the general perspective of European history, the author treats it in

(Continued on next page)

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## The Wits' Weekly

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

Competition No. 31. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best Elegy on the old Back Bay Station at Boston. (Entries should reach *The Saturday Review* office not later than the morning of May 28th.)

Competition No. 32. Three prizes of five dollars each are offered for the best epigrams on one or all of the following subjects. E. Tunney's lecture on Shakespeare at Yale. 2. The forthcoming presidential election. 3. The death of Thomas Hardy. (Entries should reach *The Saturday Review* office not later than the morning of June 4th.)

Competitors are advised to read carefully the rules printed below.

### THE TWENTY-EIGHTH COMPETITION

A prize of fifteen dollars was offered for the best short poem in Analysed Rhyme. Out of nearly a hundred entries I have chosen fifteen to send to Mr. Frank Kendon, the inventor of the new rhyme, who has been asked to award the prize. The winner's name will be announced as soon as Mr. Kendon's decision is received from England. In the meantime a few of the outstanding entries must be printed. Readers who did not see my recent explanations of Analysed Rhyme may be interested in a brief re-statement of the details.\*

The poet takes two such words as "flame" and "brief," but separates the vowel from the consonantal sounds before looking for his rhymes. The "a" of flame is united with the "f" of brief; and the "e" of brief with the "m" of flame. This simple analysis produces the sounds "afe" and "eem" as a basis for the required rhymes. Thus safe, chafe, dream, gleam, and all true rhymes of these words, provide analysed rhymes for use in connection with brief, flame, and all their true rhymes. The principle can be best studied in the poem, quoted below, though not all of these are perfect examples.

A large number of the contestants failed to grasp the essential scheme. G. W. Mitchell, for instance, offered an excellent poem; but his intended rhyming sounds—"look," "dream," "seek," "do,"—were unacceptable. "Gloom," or a word of similar sound, was necessary instead of the final "do." Again, in one of his entries, Homer M. Parsons merely resolved the discords of certain half-rhymes which have long been allowed to pass as true rhymes.

*Soft may thy petals, rose of the shadows,  
Lie on her bosom. South wind, so gentle,  
Bearing the scent of the clover-clad meadows,  
Whisper my love to her. Night,  
Draw thy mantle.*

This only faintly avails itself of the advantages of Analysed Rhyme. Mr. Parsons utilises the new rhyme scheme more elaborately in another poem which is printed below. Perhaps the most elaborate entry was *Penelope* by Deborah C. Jones.

*All the clear lamplight on her hair's warm amber,  
Lady Penelope, when day was done  
Laid her still hands against the carved timber  
Of oak about the door, and watched where ran  
Red wine, ungrudging poured and careless cupped.  
Only Telemachus looked dark and thin,  
Uncordial near the door, his mind still wrapped  
(While his eyes watched) in some grim-binding slumber  
Of brooding dream; slack-muscled, sombre-lipped.  
Ah! Few the hours, Penelope; so soon  
Trampling and tumult, and the arrow's flight;  
Then long security, the quiet wine  
Of home, and at dusk the memory-breathing flute.*

\*These were cursorily discussed in a review of Frank Kendon's "Poems and Sonnets" (*SATURDAY REVIEW*, April 14); and in full detail in the essay "Analysed Rhyme" in Mr. Davison's volume "Some Modern Poets" (Harper & Bros.).

Miss Jones calls attention to the sonnet-like rhyme structure of this poem. The vowels rhyme aba abc abc, and the consonants aba beb cac. This is interesting; but there is perhaps more to be said for the form of sonnet which employs twelve analysed rhymes and two true rhymes in the concluding lines. E. Murray and G. W. Mitchell wrestled effectively with the ordinary sonnet convention in this alternative way. Other names that deserve honorable mention, pending Mr. Kendon's choice, are Marshall M. Brice, Dilys Bennett, Helen Lathrop, Dalmar Devening, Elspeth, B. L. Gardner, Katharine Garvin, M. L. M., and A. H. Wilson. Unfortunately there is no space in which to print their poems. Here, however is one verse of Homer M. Parson's imitation "By the Winter Hearth."

*When all the sky is dull as lead,  
And flocks of geese go flying South,  
And trees are stark in nakedness,  
And snowflakes spit, and wires hum loud,  
And frost is on the cattle's breath,  
And smoke curls up from every house,  
Then put the popcorn on the fire;  
Bring apples red, and redder;  
And toast your toes and drown your care  
In a jolly jug of cider!*

And "Snow on the Hills" by Frances H. Gaines, a poem perhaps rather under-sung.

*Softly as dusk the first white snow-jall came,  
With scarce a whisper all the still night through.  
At dawn, what dazzling glory in my room!  
What loveliness on all the landscape lay.  
Such kindly beauty, hiding all winter's starkness!  
The huddled trees wore warm new shawls of white;  
Dead garden, frozen field, now wore the likeness  
Of the shining clouds, strayed down to rest, apart.  
But ah, how soon this silence from the sky  
Will melt, and rush away from hill and field,  
Its new-found voice roaring, exultant, wild,  
"On to the river! Down to the sea, the sea!"*

Also L. M.'s "Song Against Summer."

*Again the roses,  
Again the rain,  
The glad heart praises,  
The sad makes moan.  
No new thing rises;  
All's as before.  
Yet paler the roses,  
Colder the fire  
Of the sun, and dimmer  
The glory of June.  
O Time, consumer  
Of paladin,  
Of prince and lady  
And mythic god,  
Of each fair body—  
O Time, unstayed  
By prayer or praises,  
To me alone  
Bring no more roses,  
No summer rain.*

All three poems, like most of this week's experiments, are insubstantial. But it would be unfair to expect much more than a trial tune from one who attempts a new instrument for the first time. It should be possible, however, with practice, to learn

to think in Analysed Rhyme no less than in ordinary rhyme, though never, perhaps, with quite the same ease. That remains to be seen.

### RULES

Competitors failing to comply with the following rules will be disqualified. Envelopes should be addressed to Edward Davison, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. All MSS. must be legible—typewritten if possible—and should bear the name or pseudonym of the author. Competitors may offer more than one entry. MSS. cannot be returned. The Editor's decision is final and *The Saturday Review* reserves the right to print the whole or part of any entry.

## The New Books

### Miscellaneous

(Continued from preceding page)

relation to other colonizing movements, including the settlement of the American West. "What the New West meant to young America that the New East meant to medieval Germany. Each region beckoned the pioneer, the young and lusty of every generation, who sought for cheap lands and new freedom in the wilderness. What Jackson and Clay, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois meant to the history of the United States between 1815 and 1850, that Albrecht the Bear and Leopold of Babenberg, Brandenburg, and Austria, meant to Germany in the twelfth century." The parallel is suggestive, but it must not be pushed too far; as in the case of most historical parallels, the differences are quite as suggestive as the resemblances. Professor Thompson does not try to soften the ruthless character of the German conquest, with its cloak of religion and its forcible imposition of German Kultur. At the same time he emphasizes the popular character of the movement toward the East, particularly its agrarian and commercial phases, which are illustrated by abundant maps and diagrams.

THE ELEMENTS OF CRIME (PSYCHO-SOCIAL INTERPRETATION). By BORIS BRASOL. Oxford University Press. 1927. \$5.

We are trying in America to-day to mete out justice to our Loeb and Leopolds, Remuses and Hickmans, under a doctrine of criminal responsibility which goes back to the McNaughten Rules, laid down in England in 1843 and conforming only remotely to present-day psychiatric concepts. Partisan alienists testify before inept jurors, while the public grows increasingly suspicious of psychiatry, in which, if it can be saved from both its friends and its enemies, lies the greatest hope of clearing some of the fog from our courtrooms.

M. Brasol is that *rara avis*, a trained prosecutor with a broad background of research, scientific rather than legalistic in nature. He is therefore able to perform the difficult and necessary feat of pointing the way to reconciling the legal aspects of crime with the social and psychological aspects. Concerning himself with studying the underlying causes of criminality and not with registering its external manifestations or describing modes of investigation and prevention, he analyzes in this work, first, the more important social causes and, second, the psycho-physical characteristics of the criminal.

The major social causes of criminality he finds in economic factors, although he disagrees with the Marxian theory of crime, in the virtual decay of religion, the tendency toward destruction of the family, the predominance of materialistic and mechanistic ideology in education, the spread of indiscriminating journalism, the perversion of literature and art, and the inadequacy of legislation. His discussion of these causes draws on both American and European evidence, but his conclusions are obviously weighted heavily by his opinions of the Soviet régime in Russia, from which he is now an émigré after serving as prosecuting attorney of the St. Petersburg Supreme Court. M. Brasol is perhaps too pessimistic over the present trend of social forces throughout the world. One can only agree, however, with his conclusions as to what constitute the major social factors promoting that egocentric tendency in the individual which he calls the generic cause of crime.

(Concluded on page 872)