

The New Books Religion

(Continued from page 610)

THE MASTER: A LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST. By WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE. Scribners. 1928. \$2.50.

The Rector of Grace Church, New York City, has made a painstaking attempt to write another life of Christ. His book is a combination of the sort of scholarship which a student gets secondhand from masters of criticism, and a not particularly novel homiletic interpretation. The style is boyish, with much of the charm which goes with adolescence, a charm which one hardly can accept as the equivalent of that maturity of expression which is properly expected from middle-age. The Christology of this book seems quite definitely Unitarian, although the author carefully refrains from using unmistakably Unitarian terminology. Arius would find it more to his taste than Athanasius.

CATHOLICISM AND THE MODERN MIND. By MICHAEL WILLIAMS. Dial. 1928. \$3.50.

Under this somewhat too ambitious title have been collected a number of the best essays written by the able editor of the *Commonweal*. Mr. Williams has a considerable popularity at the moment, some of which comes from real worth as a



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Catholic journalist and much of which is due to his not having much competition in that field. He is to be thanked for having provided us with at least some faint American echo of that group of aggressive and highly modern European apologists for the Roman see which includes men like Belloc and W. Lewis and Shuler and Bramond. Not that Mr. Williams is quite in their class. He has no such illusions about himself, and it is hardly fair to him to have his ardent admirers hailing him as more than he is. He remains a witty and intensely Catholic journalist. One thanks God for his fire, his cleverness, his courage. We could stand a good deal more of this sort of religious journalism without any loud complaint.

He says much in the present volume about Catholicism, but very little about the modern mind. After a while the reader perceives that the author more than suspects that there is no such animal. That does not seem quite fair, somehow. Of course the "religion of science" chatter all about us does indicate at least sluggish mentality, but there are thoughtful opponents of a Catholic philosophy in the modern world, and they are not as wholly negligible as our author would have us think. Nor is it wise deliberately to blind one's self, as Mr. Williams seems to do, in "Should a Catholic be President?" to the fact that morals does include politics and that an infallible moral teacher is bound to claim to be, in times of certain crises at least, an infallible political teacher. Mr. Williams does not always bother himself to discover exactly what are his opponents' contentions.

But, despite these occasionally glaring reversions into journalistic evils, these papers are great fun, and are provocative of thought. It is good to see him burn up in scorn those anthropologists, whose pretentious posings inspired G. K. C.'s "Everlasting Man," in a ribald chapter called "Professor Cock-eye." His "Prayer for Mr. Mencken," with its recommendation of that gentleman to the intercessions of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Blessed Robert Bellarmine, is not to be missed. It is enjoyable to listen to his reactions to Professor Babbitt and Lewis Mumford and Albert Nock and P. E. More—not to speak of Sinclair Lewis and Mr. Nathan. Here are lots of fireworks, and some few things more beautiful than fireworks.

The book was "compiled" in a trappist monastery, whither the author went, with a typewriting machine, to spend Holy Week. Most astonishing! Possibly the fathers may have felt like saying to him, as this reviewer does, "you have quoted to Mr. Mencken two mottoes of St. Francis de Sales which you might yourself ponder with profit: *If we must fall into some excess, let it be on the side of gentleness; and what is good makes no noise, noise does no good.*" An "army with banners" is more than a campaign procession.

Travel

THE WORLD ON ONE LEG. By ELLERY WALTER. Putnams. 1928. \$5.

A book of this character is usually regarded as something exempt from criticism, like Cæsar's wife and the performers at a benefit concert. It is all the more pleasant to report, therefore, that young Mr. Ellery has made his chronicle of a game fight against heavy odds an extremely interesting one. He has no need to claim any extra degree of indulgence for his misfortunes. They are scarcely mentioned up to the twelfth chapter, when he goes to the hospital with an infected heel, which was brought about by overwork and a towering ambition to make Rusty Callow's crew at the University of Washington. His previous ventures had included some narrow squeaks among irascible Mexicans, and with some playful fish canners whose gentle idea of hazing was to hold him under ice-cold water until he had blown forty bubbles. His none too complete convalescence took him to Hawaii, Australia, Egypt, Italy (where he said "Howdy" in so many words to Mussolini), France, and New York, where he landed with forty-five cents in his pocket and went straight to a publisher, his own Johnson to his own Goldsmith.

THE MAGIC ISLAND. By W. B. Seabrook. Harcourt, Brace. \$3.50.
THE LAND THAT IS DESOLATE. By Sir Frederick Treves. Dutton. \$4.
THE PEOPLE OF TIBET. By Sir Charles Bell. Oxford University Press. \$7.
CIRCLING SOUTH AMERICA. By Isabel Anderson. Marshall Jones. \$4.
BALTIMORE: A NOT TOO SERIOUS HISTORY. By Letitia Sackett. Baltimore: Norman, Remington. \$12.50.
A GLIMPSE OF GREECE. By Edward Hutton. Macmillan.

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A New Aladdin

THE STORY OF ALADDIN AND THE WONDERFUL LAMP. By JOHN KETTELWELL. Illustrated by the author. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1928.

TO one who has been long pent within the rigid confines of puritanic literature, it is electrifying to look into the fair and open pages of that treasure house of story, the Arabian Nights. It may well be, as Burton points out in one of his notes, that the life depicted in the Nights is that of a particular time in the life of a race, and not peculiar to the Arab. But there is something about the spontaneity of the stories, the rich humor and the fundamental absurdity of the situations, which makes them immortal. That their raciness and virility is not for our time—not yet, anyway—is no reflection on them, but our incomparable loss.

The story of Aladdin and his lamp possesses the spontaneity and the humor without those elements which—fundamental as they are—still divert complete editions of the Nights into that most curious of classifications, the Curiosa. It has been retold many times, so that a fresh reaction must have something to offer of fresh interest. And the present book is admirable because while holding close to the original it does have something of freshness about it—does in fact carry on to the reader much of the robustness of the tale.

Mr. Kettelwell's phraseology and nomenclature stick close to Burton: his prose style is just sufficiently grotesque to sound as if it belonged to the bedroom of Shariar—and that is the way it should sound. At the same time it does not attempt to be old-fashioned, for in general it is told in idiomatic prose. The slight expurgations are in no way serious; in fact, one wonders just why it was necessary to expurgate at all.

Mr. Hugh Walpole has contributed, or, as seems more likely, has been drafted into preparing an Introduction which consists mainly in explaining the ineptitude of introductions. It all seems too much like an attempt to boost a book which could do very well on its own merits. For the rest of the introduction Mr. Walpole calls rather fervid attention to Mr. Kettelwell's illustrations. That they are Aubrey Beardsley brought down to date seems to me rather faint praise. They, too, might be left to tell their own story, which they can do admirably. They are imaginative, with much good drawing in them, and when kept simple, like the tail-piece on page 89, are very much alive.

The format of the book is very good indeed, in spite of an ineffectual title-page. (A title-page ought really to be on better terms with the text pages it ushers in!) The text is set in that well-drawn type-face known as Poliphilus, of ample size, and the smooth, cream-colored paper happens happily to hit the mark of the occasion. The binding, in figured cloth, adds to the effect of a well planned book. It is a genuine pleasure to suggest that here is a book which is a thoroughly creditable housing of a good story.

A Shelf of Various Items

THE "List of Members" of the American Institute of Graphic Arts is just at hand, a typographic blend of modernism and good composition. The Institute is the foremost organization in America devoted to the graphic arts, with a wide and representative membership among printers, book collectors, and advertisers. Incidentally its "Keepsakes," of which there have now been issued thirty-three, possess considerable interest for the collector.

Two Charming Small Books

FROM the Harbor Press I have received two small volumes which show good planning and execution. "Extracts from the Diary of Roger Payne" is a *jeu d'esprit* of which its printers say, "its charm is as authentic as its truth is dubious." With such a warning one may read it with delight, the more so as the type is large, the

paper fine, and the binding appropriate. Of "Narcissus," three poems by Louis How, one may commend the delicacy of the format, but may especially call attention to the drawings by W. D. Teague, reproduced in color. Such work has been done before, and mostly in France, to be sure; heaven forbid that I should hail anything as new. But they—the illustrations—are good to look at, and considerably beyond what the American publisher thinks his customers want. Perhaps there is hope for the illustrated book in America yet! These two Harbor Press books are worth having.

The Bremer Press, Munich

BEGINNING in 1912, this press has issued a number of publications, printed by hand in limited editions, from private types designed by one of the founders of the Press, Dr. W. Wiegand. A recent announcement of the Press lists twenty-two titles, the latest being Luther's German Bible in five volumes, in a new black letter font. German skill in using type itself as the decorative element in books, aided as it is by the apparent cheapness and facility with which new type faces may be cut and cast in Germany, is exemplified by the work of the Bremer Press. Its types are legible and in the tendency of modern type design of the better sort to adhere to calligraphic models.

Hand-Press Printing

EVER since the complete mechanization of American printing-offices became a practical probability it has seemed as if the older, simpler, and frequently cheaper methods would die out. As has been said, the machine can do anything—except produce a work of art. So insidious is the machine that its product is almost accepted as "art" by virtue of its very mechanical perfection. The setting of type by hand, save for the smaller editions of commercial forms, has given place to the mechanical setting of type; and the hand-press, even for proofs, is almost obsolete. And yet, in the hands of competent workmen, hand-set type (for reasons heretofore advanced in these columns) is superior to machine-set, and if hand-printing is not superior to power printing, it is still true that the slow, individualistic methods of hand-printing, whether a hand-press is used or not, do provide superior work.

These remarks are brought forth by the increasing use of hand processes by individuals who resent the high cost, both in money and organization, of the completely mechanized printing-office, and who desire to work along individual lines. There are to-day a dozen or so hand-presses at work in this country. The output is small, and the quality usually not very high, due to the lack of technical experience, difficulty in securing satisfactory inks, and the psychological predominance of "Fordism." What one eagerly hopes for is a modest revival of the simpler ways of printing, not because such a revival means "progress," but because it means that the human equation is not to be completely submerged in the triumph of machine production.

That the product of the hand-presses is very far from perfect is easily provable. Such perfection as Mr. Garnett achieves at Pittsburgh is sufficient to show what may be done with the simpler methods. What does matter, however, even more than perfection, at the moment, is the spirit which prompts an occasional worker to adopt the older practices. The limited edition of Mr. McCarthy's "Goldsmith Catalogue" is a fine case in point. The thin booklet entitled "Poker," printed by Mr. Carl I. Wheat at his "Wheatstalk Press" in Palo Alto, is another—not very well done as modern standards go, but after all an evidence of the revolt of the worker in the handicrafts against the spiritual domination of the machine.

It is to be hoped that these individual presses will increase, that more and more men will realize that a few fonts of type and a hand-press are relatively inexpensive playthings.

German History of Printing

UNDER the title of "Geschichte der Buchdruckerkunst" the publishing house of Demeter in Hellerau near Dresden is issuing a notable history of printing from Gutenberg to the present day. The text is by G. A. E. Bogeng, and the work is appearing in thirty parts, five having already been issued. The text is set as a large folio, in Poliphilus type, and with the utmost severity in design. In fact there

are no headings or other paraphernalia in any of the parts issued so far. Presumably an adequate index will make the book workable for reference. This omission of the usual ornaments of book-making serves, however, to emphasize the illustrative features. Besides many reproductions of line blocks in the text, there are very finely printed heliotype reproductions of printed pages, in one, two, and three colors, that method of reproduction allowing the mar-

gins to be shown. The printing of the book is very well done indeed, and the heliotype types are quite up to the usual German standard.

Comment on the text can well be reserved for the completion of this monumental work, but so far the treatment seems adequate if not inspired. We shall look forward with interest to the completed book, because a definitive history of printing is very much needed, and if this proves

as important as it appears now, it should be translated into English and published with the German illustrations. R.

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But *The Inner Sanctum* feels justified in conceding here, without charge, that *Mantis* treats of love among the explorers in South Africa. It was on chapter fourteen of this book, in fact, that **ETHELREDA LEWIS** was working when a bearded hawk of gridirons sauntered up to her door . . .

Mantis has already been published in England and won the acclaim of such diverse publications as *Punch* [which compares it, favorably, with JOSEPH CONRAD], *The London Post*, and the most lordly critical autocrat of them all, *The Literary Supplement of The London Times*.

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Another new book published this week by *The Inner Sanctum* is *Phantom In The Wine*, a novel of gipsy fires, cossack cavaliers and snowy splendors, by **MICHAELINA MARFA-MOYA NAMOVICH**, only daughter of **BARON MICHAEL KASSIMIR-NAMOVICH** of old St. Petersburg.

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A SMALL book we have recently found stimulating is “A Pamphlet Against Anthologies,” by *Laura Riding* and *Robert Graves*, published over here by Doubleday, Doran. It contains many amusing remarks, though we ourselves cannot deplore anthologies as do these two earnest and convinced collaborators. There is a slight slip on page 81, probably due to the mental weariness induced by coming across the same poem embalmed in anthology after anthology. Yet on page 80 the authors have waxed rather superior concerning their knowledge of the original version of “Annie Laurie” as opposed to the version that everyone sings all over the globe. We have therefore the less compunction for picking them up on a peccadillo.

If you ask him (they say) who wrote ‘God’s in His Heaven, all’s well with the world’—

Well, we ourselves wouldn’t know who wrote that. We know that *Browning* wrote “God’s in his heaven,—all’s right with the world.”

In their chapter, “The Perfect Modern Lyric” Miss Riding & Mr. Graves expend much vigor in picking to pieces certain delightful poems and showing just how silly and badly-written they think them. They have their whack at *Yeats*, *Bridges*, *Masefield*, *de la Mare*, *Hodgson*, and others, concerning poems certainly not of the respective authors’ very best, but poems, nevertheless that have always given us, and continue to give, much pleasure. They endeavor by this analysis to define the ideal anthology-poem. But in spite of their entertaining reference to “the ‘simple village maiden’ of the ballad,” with respect to poems that “lose their name” again and again, by appearing in successive anthologies, we cannot see that a poem of certain merits does not remain a poem of certain merits, whether it become a household word or remain a solace to but a few truly discriminating souls, as they may consider themselves. This opens the ancient wide range of debate, ground trampled enough by warfare. But we seem to detect a certain snobbery in the attitude of these collaborators, for all their wit and intelligence. One does get frightfully tired of anthologies, of “predigested poetry,” of the well-worn “great examples,” true!—yet many people, and some of them “better men than we, my boy,” have made a first acquaintance with “noble numbers” in the pages of anthologies. Certainly the general public should not depend solely upon anthologies for an education concerning poetry. They should go to the originals. But no reasonable anthology pretends to be much more than either a casual arrangement according to personal taste or a mere lodge at the gates of the great estates of poetry. That there have been far too many anthologies covering the same ground again and again, none would deny. No obligation is, however, laid upon one to read them all . . .

Gilbert Cannan, who not so long ago was considered one of the rising young British realists, is by now—how tempus does fugit!—the father of a new novelist, *Joanna Cannan*, whose “*Sheila Both-Ways*” is to be published in March by Stokes . . .

Major Percival Christopher Wren has at length run out of titles containing the word “Beau” for his widely popular “Geste” novels. The fourth one, slated for February by Stokes, is called “Good Gestes.” Well, we had a suggestion to make, useless now,—we thought of timidly offering the appellation, “Yeay, Beau!” . . .

Claude McKay, the negro poet and novelist, having finished the work of fiction which will succeed “*Home to Harlem*” was lately in Fez (which he thought resembled Moscow somewhat), went thence to Marrakesh, and intends later to make a trip to West Africa. His new book is called “*Banjo*,” and ought to be out in March . . .

A new narrative poem by *Edwin Arlington Robinson*, “*Cavender’s House*,” is on Macmillan’s list for the Spring . . .

We have heard excellent things of *Siegfried Sassoon*’s “*Memoirs of a Fox Hunting Man*,” published by Coward-McCann, and of *Bill Seabrook*’s “*The Magic Island*” (of course the latter is a Literary Guild choice) published by Harcourt, Brace . . .

Seabrook’s description of the Voodoo rites

in Haiti is powerful and vivid. His book makes a splendid beginning. Toward the end our interest fell away, after he left Voodoo and turned to other matters. But his description of the Marine who has been crowned king of an island near Haiti is a striking picture . . .

Recently we spent the evening with *Sinclair Lewis*, now for a while in New York. *Lewis Brozine* who was present, and is, by the way, still a rabbi, told some entertaining stories. Later in the evening *Harrison Smith* of the new firm of Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, Inc., came in and discussed with enthusiasm the quarters of their organization at 139 East 46th Street. As for *Lewis*, he was pretty wearied out by reading for the press the last pages of his latest novel, “*Dodsworth*,” but despite that was wholly the benevolent host . . .

W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., recently announced the extension of their activities to a limited list of novels. Their initial publications of this sort will be two American first novels, “*These Are My Jewels*,” by *L. B. Campbell* and “*Let Tomorrow Come*,” by *A. J. Barr* . . .

Again we thank our missionary friend, the *Reverend H. G. C. Hallock*, for a Merry Christmas greeting from Shanghai inclosing a poster of a Chinese King, Ming Wong, with the priest his guide at the mythical Yuih-Koong or Moon Castle. This will form a companion-piece over our desk for a poster of the Chinese god of War which he sent us earlier . . .

We surrender to *G. W. Page* of Los Angeles, California, who takes us to task for spelling “lavender” with an *a*, as “lavendar.” “Don’t shoot, Dan! we’ll come down!” . . .

Opportunity’s retrospective review of negro accomplishments in literature in America during the past year, printed in their January issue, is both interesting and valuable . . .

Palms, a poetry magazine to which we have often referred, published by *Idella Purnell* in Guadalajara, Mexico, some time ago announced a prize of one thousand dollars, to be awarded the best poem by a subscriber, the contest closing on January twentieth. That struck us as a really generous award! . . .

“An Anthology of Revolutionary Poetry,” (Miss Riding and Mr. Graves please note!) will be published on the first of February by a committee of which *Henry Reich, Jr.* is chairman. *Marcus Graham* is the compiler and editor. He has brought together nearly four hundred poems in a book which also includes translations from fifteen languages. The first edition is limited, \$2 per copy for the regular cloth-bound edition and \$4 for the de luxe edition. All money orders, drafts, or cheques should be made payable to the treasurer of the Committee: *Nicholas Moskowits*, Box 3, West Farms Station, N. Y. . . .

We are treasuring a cheque for fifty five cents sent us by *Lawrence B. Smith* of Osage, Iowa, to buy ourselves some English Ovals. He is an English Oval alumnus, it seems. Well, cheerio, Philip Morris & Company, Ltd.,—what do we get for the ad? . . .

The Viking Press has removed from 30 Irving Place to 18 East 48th Street, into larger quarters. In February they’re bringing out several new “*Saki*” volumes, “*The True Heart*,” by *Sylvia Townsend Warner*, and an American first novel by one *Jonathan Leonard* . . .

In the January *Bookman*, *Rebecca West* points out that the character of *Meyer Wolfsheim* in “*The Great Gatsby*” by *F. Scott Fitzgerald*, was evidently inspired by *Arnold Rothstein*, the gambler recently killed in the Park Central . . .

The “*Private Papers of James Boswell*,” a new discovery, are now being printed in several handsome volumes, planned and designed by *Bruce Rogers* and published in a limited edition by *William Edwin Rudge* of 475 Fifth Avenue. The first volume is now ready for delivery. Subscriptions to the set are being entered rapidly; only 570 sets are to be printed. Full particulars and a prospectus describing the books will be sent on request by Mr. Rudge . . .

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