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The New Books

Miscellaneous

(Continued from preceding page)

the eighty-five centimes tax) at the end of an apathetic afternoon at the Hôtel Druot. The moral, therefore, is "Train your taste, and then you'll be ready for gorgeous bargains when they come your way. Mr. Menzies's illustrations leave nothing to be desired in this particular high virtue; they are very beautiful, very beckoning; the text, too, is readable enough, though lacking the brilliance of Litchfield's style, or the easy "chattiness" of Mr. Hayden's books. The chapters on the different Ages—Oak, Walnut, and Mahogany, will be both interesting and instructive for American collectors, and, since English porcelains and potteries are fast becoming such a vogue in this country, readers here will find the various lists of marks and makers fruitful in information.

THE SALT-BOX HOUSE. By Jane De Forest Shelton. Scribners. \$2.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION. By A. F. Myers and O. C. Bird. Doubleday, Doran. \$1.50.

YOUR EYES AND THEIR CARE. By Edgar S. Thomson. Appleton. \$1.50.

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL SPEAKING. By William P. Sandford and Willard H. Yeager. Shaw.

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PRACTICAL SPEECH-MAKING. By E. D. Shurter and C. A. Marsh. Houghton Mifflin. \$2.

THE VILLAS OF PLINY. By Geoffrey Bret Harte. Houghton Mifflin. \$7.50.

THREE NORMANDY INNS. By Anna Bosman Dodd. Putnam. \$4.50.

THE MILLIGAN CASE. Edited by Samuel Klaus. Knopf. \$5.

THE STORY OF SUPERSTITION. By Philip F. Waterman. Knopf. \$3.50.

THE BOOKMAN'S MANUAL. By Bessie Graham. Bowker. \$4.

BANKERS BALANCES. By Leonard L. Watkins. Shaw.

MORE FAMOUS TRIALS. By the Earl of Birkenhead. Doubleday, Doran. \$4 net.

NEWSPAPER REPORTING OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS. By Chilton Powlette Bush. Appleton. \$3.

THE QUACKS OF OLD LONDON. By C. J. S. Thompson. Lippincott. \$4.

DIABETES AND ITS TREATMENT. By Frederick M. Allen. Funk & Wagnalls.

WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT EYES. By F. Park Lewis. Funk & Wagnalls.

CARE OF THE MOUTH AND TEETH. By Harvey J. Burkhardt, D.D.S. Funk & Wagnalls.

A BALZAC BIBLIOGRAPHY. By William Hobart Royce. University of Chicago Press. \$5.

THE DELPHIC MAXIMS IN LITERATURE. By Eliza Gregory Wilkins. University of Chicago Press. \$3.

TRAINING FOR GROUP EXPERIENCE. Recorded by Alfred Dwight Sheffield. Inquiry, 129 East 52nd Street, New York.

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE. By I. David Cohen. Century. \$3.

DICTIONARY TO THE PLAYS AND NOVELS OF BERNARD SHAW. By C. L. and V. M. Broad. Macmillan. \$4.

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE IN GREAT PICTURES. By James Carter. Funk & Wagnalls. \$2.

Sociology

THE CHALLENGE OF THE AGED. By ABRAHAM EPSTEIN. Macy-Masius: The Vanguard Press. 1929. \$3.

The social problem is, apparently, a vicious circle. Reform on one front tends to throw another out of alignment at another point. In Mr. Epstein's book we are told, for example, that medicine and improved environmental conditions have indubitably increased the span of life; but this very improvement, an increase in the period of life from forty to fifty-eight years since 1855, has accentuated the problem of old age. The cityward drift, speeding-up processes in industry, and even laws to safeguard the interests of the worker, all tend toward elimination of the aged from profitable employment.

Mr. Epstein's book is an eloquent plea on behalf of those who are neglected because of their years. He presents facts which are seemingly irrefutable, and he deduces from these facts unanswerable arguments on the side of old-age insurance. It is one of the curious anomalies of social history that the United States, the wealthiest and presumably the most advanced of industrial nations, is also the tardiest of all in recognizing the plight of those who constitute industry's human scrap-heap. Seven of our states have old-age pension laws on the statute-books, but pensions are actually paid in but two. On the other hand, "there is hardly a Eu-

ropean nation which lacks a comprehensive plan of social insurance or pensions." Mr. Epstein shames us with his facts, but he does more: he points the way toward solutions. This is one of those rare books which one would like to see placed upon the required reading-list of all prospective legislators. Our industrial executives will probably neglect it, since they seldom go toward social reform face-front. Consequently, if its mission is to be fulfilled, it will need to be read by those socially-minded citizens who persist in viewing industry in human rather than stock-market terms.

Brief Mention

NECESSITY makes strange bedfellows, whether that necessity arises from the exigencies of political office, economic stringency, or merely the incompressibility of type. Therefore we bring into one column such disparate volumes as a collection of humorous stories by Irvin Cobb, an anthology of selections from the writings of the Church Fathers, and an account of the forming of the association for the preservation of Mount Vernon. The last-named work, entitled "Mount Vernon on the Potomac" (Macmillan: \$4), is a chronicle of the efforts made by Ann Pamela Cunningham to unite the women of the South in an organization for the purchase and maintenance of the home of the first President. It is told by Grace King, who introduces into her record letters and quotation that incidentally cast light upon personalities and events of the years in which the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association was forming. The book has little interest for the general public, but should have some appeal for the patriotic women who are making themselves responsible for keeping in condition one of the shrines of the nation. Likewise of limited scope, but a volume beautiful in its typographical dress and in its lavish array of pictures, is Gertrude Whiting's "Tools and Toys of Stitchery" (Columbia University Press: \$10). Miss Whiting, beginning in lively vein with an interesting chapter on the beeswax that is used in needlework, continues in more matter-of-fact fashion to describe the other implements used in stitchery, presenting at the same time considerable detail bearing on the articles sewn as well as the tools employed for their manufacture. Tucked away into more specialized information is considerable spicy comment.

A work of far more general interest is the translation (the first to be made into English), by Eileen Power, of "The Goodman of Paris" (Harcourt, Brace), a treatise on moral and domestic economy by a Citizen of Paris. This fascinating book was composed about 1393, by a wealthy member of the *haute bourgeoisie* for the instruction of his young wife. It is in three sections, the first dealing with religious and moral duties, the second with household management, and the third presenting a treatise on hawking. The entire volume is of exceeding interest, but the second, in especial, which sets forth the whole duty of woman as wife and housekeeper, and which is a portrayal of the manner of regulation of a well-ordered medieval household, makes entrancing reading. We recommend it to all who would gain an insight into a long-past age.

Another volume which should prove welcome in many a library is "Fathers of the Church" (Dutton), a selection which F. A. Wright has made from the writings of the Latin Fathers. An illuminating introduction and brief prefatory sketches of the Fathers from whose works extracts are presented add to the value of a book that has culled from writings generally regarded as forbidding matter of vivid interest. From the wisdom of the Church Fathers to the "Random Thoughts of a Man at Fifty" (Knickerbocker Press) is a leap indeed. Mr. John Harsen Rhoades, who in a book thus entitled presents "tips on life from a Wall Street Banker," has made a catch-all of his volume. In it are bits of verse, anecdotes usually pointing a moral, maxims and aphorisms, none of them of any particular originality or force.

The last book on our list is good entertainment, a collection of humorous stories, by Irvin Cobb, gathered together under the title "Irvin Cobb at His Best" (Doubleday, Doran), all of which have previously seen publication in periodicals. Among them are "Speaking of Operations," a good-humored satire that will draw smiles from those securely beyond the suffering of the experiences about which it is built, "The Life of the Party," a gay and amusing tale, and "A Plea for Old Cap Collier," a clever argument in favor of the old-fashioned dime novel of the Nick Carter variety.

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The religious Book Club's selection for February. \$4.00

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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*.

J. H. B., Scranton, Pa., asks where to find information regarding the details and construction of the new bridges of New York?

ONE who wishes only the main data about bridges in New York City—size, cost, date, builder, etc.—will find them in most convenient form in our old friends the "Eagle Almanac" and the "World Almanac." He can get more in a paper by Dr. Alfred D. Flinn, entitled, "Engineering Activities and Achievements of New York City," in volume 76 of the Transactions of the American Society of Civil Engineers. For more than this he must follow each bridge through some engineering journal, such as *The Engineering News-Record*.

G. H. H., New Haven, Conn., asks for a list of the more prominent Negro writers of prose and poetry publishing within the last ten years; he is familiar only with the work of Countee Cullen.

I COULD give an offhand list that would include James Weldon Johnson ("God's Trombones"), Claude McKay ("Home to Harlem"), Langston Hughes ("Fine Clothes to the Jew"), William Stanley Braithwaite, the anthologist; W. E. B. DuBois ("Dark Water" and "The Dark Princess"), Walter White ("The Fire in the Flint"), Jessie Fauset ("There is Confusion" and "Plum Bun"), Jean Toomer ("Cane"), Eric Walrond ("Tropic Death"), Eulalie Spence, playwright ("The Fool's Errand"). But the recent contribution of colored writers to American literature has been too important for such summary treatment: I prefer to send this inquirer to a bibliography, "The Negro in Contemporary American Literature," by Elizabeth Lay Green, one of the admirable extension bulletins published at fifty cents apiece by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, N. C. The editor says that the course outlined "has no sociological aim other than the sympathy coincident with any recognition of artistic attainment," and that she has prepared this material for study as "something native to the life of America, something vital and alive, part of our strength and tradition," to be cherished as such. Besides chapters on the writers I have just named, there are sections on plays and novels written by white authors such as Eugene O'Neill, Paul Green, Julia Peterkin, and Dubose Heyward. Appended is an excellent list of books, plays, and magazine articles bearing on the subject, and there is a valuable chapter on the documentation of the negro newspapers of this country. This is not a source book like "The New Negro" (Boni) but its references are so well chosen as to make it an excellent starting point for reading or study.

Since it appeared, Jessie Fauset's novel, "Plum Bun" (Stokes), has once more presented the case of the woman of color who "passes"; this time it gets the nearest to equable and well-poised treatment that it has yet received in fiction. That it should maintain an Olympian calm is too much to

expect, or to desire, when the situation is itself so stormy, but it does keep its temper and thus give the story a chance of being judged for its human rather than for its social and craniological values. Two recent novels by white authors will no doubt appear in later editions of this list: Dubose Heyward's "Mamba's Daughters" (Doubleday, Doran), a sympathetic record of the social and cultural rise of three generations, and Julia Peterkin's brilliant "Scarlet Sister Mary" (Bobbs-Merrill).

C. E. W., Pittsburgh, Pa., has been kept by the critics from reading Dreiser until quite recently: then he took a look into "An American Tragedy"—and until he finished it, begrudged the time he had to give to other things. "I grant all I've read about his discursiveness. . . . but for all that I found the 'Tragedy' one of the most impressive things I've ever read. Now, since I liked it so much, do you think I would like his other books? The question is asked in self-defense: I don't want to waste time being bored if I can dodge it." This is in a letter thanking me for having put him on the track of the "Life and Times of Anthony à Wood," the third volume of which he is just joyfully reading. I mention this to "place" him in regard to reading habits.

I ANSWER letters like this, as one reader to another, far more often than the files of this review would indicate. Indeed, I am replying to this in print only by way of lifting a corner of the curtain on the direct-mail activities of this department. People write to me so often for advice like this because I have no special authority for giving it and they no obligation for taking it.

I have never been bored by a Dreiser novel, though I have often left one unfinished. This was because my temper had become too upset at his method of dumping a cartload of building-material on an eligible site and calling it a house—a method that my temperament and training keeps me from admitting even to kinship with art. But I too read "An American Tragedy" with an absorption deep as my admiration; it may not be art and I may not like it, but I know what is alive. I was carried along, though with my feet dragging, by "The Genius," and by rereading "Sister Carrie." These are, then, the novels I suggest that this reader select, by which to discover if he be a predestined Dreiserite. Great numbers of readers are—but not, I fancy, many who find, as I do, a curious, cool pleasure in eighteenth-century English literature and French music. Or for that matter, those who sympathize with the judgment of the critic who "hefted" an unread manuscript; "Too many words."

THE inquirer about vibrations has already received help from two directions. E. H., Pittsburgh, Pa., who is interested in theosophy "not as a devotee but as a diversion," suggests "The Textbook of The-

osophy," by C. W. Leadbeater (Chicago, Theosophical Press, 826 Oakdale Avenue, 1925). "I have no doubt," this correspondent says, "that a letter to the Theosophical Press would bring a response with more pertinent suggestions than this, since the work is basic and does not deal solely with vibrations, but with the manner of their origin and their function in the life of a soul. The transition from one world to another and the reincarnation of the spirit all involve vibrations of many sorts, and from this standpoint the work is likely to prove a foundation for more advanced reading." And R. M. N., Durham, N. C., says that for one interested in theosophic vibrations there is a novel dealing with those phenomena, called "Dread Dwelling," by Richard Crompton.

J. H. P., Tyler, Texas, asks for books or other references on South American art, music, and literature, and for several authoritative works on South American history.

THE SOUTH AMERICAN REPUBLICS," by Dawson (Putnam: 2 vols.), is considered one of the best general histories of South America in English, covering the period of the Wars of Independence. Among books suitable for class study on early Spanish exploration and settlement are the two large volumes of the "History of the New World Called America"—"The Discovery" and "Aboriginal America"—by Edward John Payne, published by the Oxford University Press; the second volume of three comprised in Roger Bigelow Merriman's "Rise of the Spanish Empire in the Old World and in the New" (Macmillan); and John Fiske's "The Discovery of America" (Houghton Mifflin). These, though of long standing, are in print; more recent publications include W. S. Robertson's "History of the Latin American Nations" (Appleton), J. Warshaw's "The New Latin America" (Crowell), which is historical and political; "Republics of South America," by James G. Herman (Harper), an account of their history, governments, and economic conditions. Clayton Sedgwick Cooper's "Understanding South America" (Doran) is intended to facilitate social and economic relations, matters which may also be made clear through a book by Tancredo Pinochet, "The Gulf of Misunderstanding; or North and South America as seen by Each Other" (Boni & Liveright, 1920). Other aspects of life are treated, as well as these, in chapter 8 of Samuel Guy Inman's "Problems in Pan-Americanism" (Doran).

The best source of information in English on the art and literature of South America is the Bulletin of the Pan American Union, published by this association at Washington, D. C. A list of articles that would be useful would be too long to print here, but the Pan-American Union answers questions on special points of interest, and back numbers may be obtained at 25 cents a copy. Coester's "Literary History of Spanish America" (Macmillan) was a pioneer work and makes a fine base of operations.

Spanish-American music is in the main that of Spain, which in turn bears evidences of strong Moorish influence. Italian, and to a lesser degree French, composers have also exercised an influence, and of late there has been a tendency to imitate the Germans.



What should the Well-Read Man or woman read this week?

THIS question has recently been answered in a very wonderful way by a group of famous literary folk—Sinclair Lewis, George Jean Nathan, Rebecca West, Zona Gale, and many others. These people now contribute to a fascinating weekly magazine published by the New York Herald Tribune, called "BOOKS," which is taking the country by storm.

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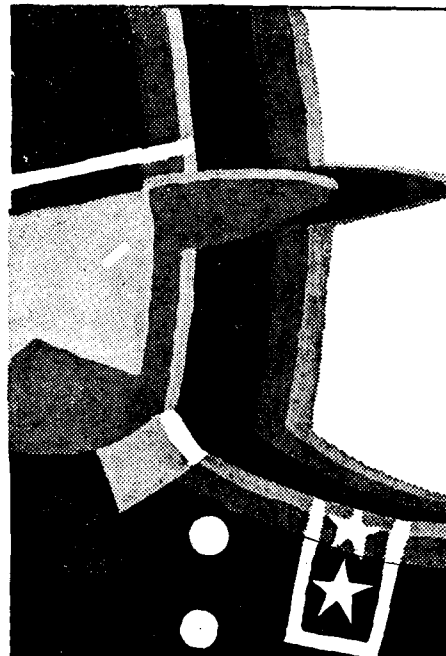
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