

The New Books

Fiction

(Continued from preceding page)

in order that numerous other men and women may be introduced into the story and their affairs dealt with. The strongly contrasted feminine types seem to have been drawn from living originals; an atmosphere of vivid reality pervades the tale, and it is written throughout with distinction. But even these favorable factors fail to obviate one's impression that the book, in large part, is needlessly slow-going and preoccupied with trivialities rather than with grim essentials.

THE GREAT PERMANENCE. By GRHAM SUTTON. McBride. 1929. \$2.50.

A gifted young girl's quest of ideal beauty, urged on by desire to express her deepest longings in the art of vocal music, is the theme of this sensitive and eloquently written novel. Terry the motherless daughter of a hard-drinking Irish baritone, has passed her early life with him in France, touring the provinces with a third-rate opera company. When she is sixteen, her musical education already well advanced, her voice richly promising, the company is disbanded, and her father takes the girl to Ireland. There, in the leads, they head a traveling dramatic troupe, playing the "smalls" in repertoire. While they are in Dublin, Terry falls profoundly in love with an unstable young poet and actor, but he cares for another, and that disappointment, coupled with growing hostility between her father and herself, causes her to strike out on her own. She joins the chorus of an English revue, and during the three years which follow, in which she becomes a successful concert singer, varied experiences of life and people bring her gradually nearer to that goal of permanent, spiritual contentment she has always sought to attain. At last, wistfully and poignantly, the consciousness dawns within her that she has realized her ideal.

MEN CALL ME FOOL. By DAN TOTHEROH. New York: Doubleday, Doran. 1929. \$2.00.

To the romance that has ever lurked in the heart of the clown and the soul of the jester Mr. Totheroh has added the glamor and adventure which held sway in the court of mediæval France under Francis the First. The son of the Trisquet, the famous and hideous fool, and a beautiful gypsy, young Trisquet fares forth to seek his fortune with his sword. A typical fortune of adventure and fore-doomed love for the daughter of a nobleman. Upon the death of his father young Trisquet is commanded into motley by the king. But he is still manly and because he slew the blue boar with his wooden sword in the great hunt, he has an advantage over the king. The tale is sad, but it has an infectious vivacity and a fleet humor that lift it above sentimentality. For all its flamboyance, the irony implied in the title gives fair warning of a serious sympathetic view of the interesting relationship between the jester and those he was hired to amuse.

THE LIVES AND DEATHS OF ROLAND GREER. By RICHARD PYKE. New York. A. & C. Boni. 1929. \$2.50.

Mr. Pyke seems more properly a psychiatrist than a fiction writer. The whole book, except for the last chapter, might be what a psycho-analyst had deduced from the confessions of a neurotic, half-frenzied patient. As a case study, "The Lives and Deaths of Roland Greer," if proved authentic, might be of value, but when offered as a novel it brings us face to face with the question of the place of a neurotic character, a clinical experiment, in fiction.

The bare outline of Roland's case is this: his mother, neurotic and further warped by early widowhood, ruins his chance for a normal childhood and continues to mess up his adolescence and early manhood by her tirades and her emotional appeals; an affection Roland has for his elder brother grows ruinously into an acute obsession; sisters and mistresses also war upon him, until, filled with overpowering loves and hates, conscious and unconscious, he achieves liberation through gruesome suicide.

The author is definitely explaining the details of all this to the reader; he uses no device of indirect narration to convey an illusion of actuality, yet, by a somber vividness, he brings all forth with sickening reality; the reader is physically nauseated, mentally dismayed. In a good cause the reader might suffer such reactions and think to have gained some understanding of humanity, to have downed a bitter, yet tonic, dose. But "The Lives and Deaths of Ro-

land Greer" definitely lacks a width of scope relating its details to humanity.

- VIRGINIA'S BANDIT. By Elsie Singmaster. Houghton Mifflin. \$1.50.
WINTER. By Friedrich Griese. Longmans, Green. \$2.
AWAKE AND REHEARSE. By Louis Bromfield. Stokes. \$2.50 net.
COLD STEEL. By M. P. Shiel. Vanguard. \$2.50.
THE HEAVEN AND EARTH OF DOÑA ELENA. By Grace Zaring Stone. Bobbs-Merrill. \$2.50.
JOSCELYN OF THE FORTS. By Gertrude Crotonfield. Dutton. \$2.
THE WILD OAT. By J. S. Fletcher. Doubleday, Doran. \$2 net.
MURDER BY THE CLOCK. By Rufus King. Doubleday, Doran. \$2 net.
THE MAN IN THE WHITE SLICKER. By Leonard H. Nason. Doubleday, Doran. \$2 net.
STRANGE MOON. By T. S. Stripling. Doubleday, Doran. \$2 net.
MAYPOLES AND MORALS. By Frederic Arnold Kummer. Sears. \$2.50.
BLACK MAGIC. By Paul Morand. Viking. \$3.
DESIRE. By Gladys Johnson. Macrae-Smith. \$2.
PERMANENT WAVE. By Virginia Sullivan. Macrae-Smith. \$2.
THE KEYS OF ENGLAND. By W. Victor Cook. Dial. \$2.
THE SHOJI. By Kikou Yamata. Translated by J. and S. F. Mills Whitham. Dial. \$2.50.
ONE OF THOSE WAYS. By Mrs. Belloc Lowndes. New York: Knopf. \$2.50.
THE MURDER BOOK OF J. G. REEDER. By Edgar Wallace. New York: Doubleday, Doran. \$2.
WANDERERS. By Knut Hamsun. New York: Knopf. \$1.
MIR-GOROD. By Nikolay Gogol. Translated from the Russian by Constance Garnett. New York: Alfred Knopf. \$2.50.
VENUS. By Jean Vignaud. Bobbs-Merrill. \$2.
A SAGA OF THE SEA. By F. Britten Austin. Macmillan. \$2.50.
THE DOUBLCROSS. By Armstrong Livingston. New York: Rae D. Henkle Co. \$2.
ILLUSION. By Arthur Train. Scribner's. \$2.50.
ONLY SEVEN WERE HANGED. By Stuart Martin. Harper. \$2.
BANJO. By Claude McKay. Harper. \$2.50.
THE BOOK OF BETTE. By Eleanor Mercein (Mrs. Kelly). Harper. \$2.50.
OUR PUPPET SHOW. By Francis de Croisset. Harper. \$2.50.
MORTAL MEN. By Burnham Carter. A. & C. Boni. \$2.50.
THE COAT WITHOUT SEAM. By Maurice Baring. Knopf. \$2.50.
ROBBERS AND SOLDIERS. By Albert Ehrenstein. Knopf. \$2.50.
THE BANDITS. By Panait Istrati. Translated from the French by William A. Drake. Knopf. \$2.50.

History

RIVALRY OF THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN OVER LATIN AMERICA (1808-1830). By PROFESSOR J. FRED RIPPY. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press. 1929.

Professor Rippy has already made himself indispensable in the study of our relations with the other nations of the American continent. The present volume will take its place with "The United States and Mexico" and "Latin America in World Politics" as a standard work of reference in its field.

It does not, however, present as exciting a story as either of the previous volumes. Its presentation as a series of lectures necessarily imposed some limits, and the nature of the material covering British-American rivalries in the various sections of South and Central America and Mexico reduces it almost to a compilation of quotations from various ministers, plenipotentiaries, and consular officers. Their correspondence is perhaps chiefly remarkable for the unjustified suspicions which each side aroused in the minds of the representatives of the other.

There was, of course, considerable rivalry over South American trade, and behind that a fundamental antagonism between the British monarchical system and the American republican system, each unduly fearful of the ambitions and the power of the other. But the most vital point of conflict was over the question of sea law. British leaders were deeply concerned lest the United States should draw the Latin-American republics into an organization, however informal, which would insist upon the American interpretation of the rights of neutrals as against the long-established British practice of blockade.

This issue has recurred on frequent occasions for over a century and is as alive today as it ever was. But it is also significant that it could have persisted for nearly a century and a quarter without bringing the two protagonists into actual conflict. Those who worry over the strained relations between the United States and Great Britain today may find consolation in the fact that the following statement, made to the Duke of Wellington in (Continued on page 1008)

The Wits' Weekly

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

Competition No. 59. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the most amusing and instructive Literary Alphabet for College Freshmen. Not more than four lines should be devoted to any one author or letter of the alphabet. The whole should be written in rhymed verse corresponding more or less to the type of "A was an archer who shot at a frog, B was a butcher who had a big dog." (Entries should reach the Saturday Review office, 25 West 45th Street, New York City, not later than the morning of May 20.)

Competition No. 60. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the most convincing original sonnet built around the following rhyme words—dust, horse, course, must, mistrust, source, force, gust; speed, sides, heed, rides, steed, provides. (Entries should reach the Saturday Review office not later than the morning of June 3.)

Attention is called to the Rules printed below.

Mr. Davison hopes, this summer, to compile for publication in volume form an anthology of the outstanding pieces that have been printed on this page since its inception. Will prize-winners and others whose entries have been printed here during the past two years please be so kind as to mail him their present addresses? The records of the "Wits' Weekly" are unavoidably incomplete and, no doubt, out of date. Typewritten copies of prize poems, etc., comments, and suggestions will be gratefully received.

The results of Competition No. 57 (Song for May Day) will be announced in the next issue.

This week we print a number of poems left over from recent competitions.

A BELATED VALENTINE
(To E. D., who complained of the author's failure to send him a Valentine)
What! do thy damsels slight thee,
Those weekly wont to write thee
For game or for pride
Or pennies beside,
Now a chance is come to requite thee?

Shall she that maketh merry
With rhyming dictionary
And sets her to sing
Through summer and spring
Be mute in February?

Nay, bid her speak, though she be
Grave spinster or blooming Hebe,
Or Deborah freak'd
Where her pen hath leak'd
Or the blue-socked witch of a Phoebe.
Then know we are Cupid's martyrs;
For thee we'll hang in our garters;
For thee we'll drain
Again and again
Our last bright drop of Carter's.
DEBORAH C. JONES.

PROHIBITIONIST'S DRINKING SONG
Now since we've grown so very, very strong,
In spite of all our foes,
Let's mock them with this very song
And taunt them, thumb and nose.
(Chorus) Oh, we are very, very set
It shan't be very, very wet,
And boozers know where they can go
To be very much drier yet.

He that would be very, very slick,
And go the bootleg way,
May he be padlocked very quick,
His boodle snatched away.

Our water is so very, very pure,
We lack the germ excuse,
The only one—Doc's very sure—
For alcoholic juice.

You that are still very, very dry
May have a drink that's neat,
As press and billboard verify—
So pick your sparkling treat.

Fill the bumper very, very full
To honor Volstead's name,
And all who find it very, very dull
Shall swallow all the same.
PHOEBE SCRIBBLE.

BALLADE OF DEAD POETS
It was the height of my ambition
To get for me a concubine
Euterpe sweet and in addition
Sweet Errato, the choice of nine
He-men in ten, so I opine—
Ah, what a life she would have led
one!

But why should such a life be mine?
The only good bard is a dead one.

Euterpe thinks it is her mission
To flirt with every paltry Schwein-
Hund, posing as a word magician,
Without a trace of the divine
Afflatus—bards whose verses whine
As do spent bullets—how I dread one!
Old verse is heady as old wine;
The only good bard is a dead one.

A poet needs a good mortician
To make his fame forever shine;
Or, in a state of inanition,
He need not heed sharp tongues malign;
Though savage critics should combine
To put him down a poor misled one,
Why should he live to peak and pine?
The only good bard is a dead one.

Complaisant as contented kine,
The living poets! Have you read one?
If all of them were good, how fine!
The only good bard is a dead one.
R. DESHA LUCAS.

PARADISE LOST
(Baritone Solo, to be accompanied by a Lugubrious Guitar)
Dey's catfish swimmin' in de ribber,
Laxd!
Dey's bees fotchin' honey to de comb,
But de bees an' de fishes, dey won't
mean nothin'
When a cullud man's los' his home,
O Laxd!
Po' black man los' his home.

Dey's a houn' dawg bayin' in de hol-
low, Laxd!
Dey's banjos ringin' in de gloam;
But de songs in de moonlight are
songs of sorrow
When a cullud man's los' his home,
O Laxd!
Po' black man los' his home.

I'll staht off early in de mornin',
Laxd!
Dey's nobody carin' whar I roam;
But my cabin's so lonesome, I jes'
kaint bear it—
I'm de cullud man's los' his home,
O Laxd!
Po' black man los' his home.
HOMER M. PARSONS.

SMALL WORDS
(A Monosyllabic Sonnet)
Small words are those that have so
much to say
If we but know their use. Think of
the joy
Their first book brings to the young
girl and boy:
Those big, tall A B C's so bright and
gay;
The tales of pigs that run and dogs
at play—
Of cats that chase the rats, and see
how coy
The frog is on his log! Each word
a toy
To him who plays with words and
goes his way.

Small words are best, I think. Birth,
love and death,
And joy and grief make all in all
the sum
Of what we know and do not know.
The breath
Of life stirs in us, and thought stirs
the mind
With words, and small words are the
best to find—
Best, if from words so small great
thoughts may come.
ELFRIDA DE RENNE BARROW.

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*.

W. B., *Saint David's, Pa.*, sends a letter for the club studying Australia in fiction, and I hope those who are interested in the subject will mark it for reference.

SHE is not altogether pleased with the selection of D. H. Lawrence's "Kangaroo" for purposes of documentation. "As an Australian, I think this book though true, gives a false idea of the country. 'Madeline's Heritage,' by Martin Mills, which was obtainable in New York and Philadelphia at Christmas, gives a very clear and true idea of the social life of the past from 1840 to 1921; it also shows the heritage of many Australians. 'For the Term of his Natural Life,' by Marcus Clarke, is suggested as being the history of another type of settler; these two books show the different lives of the early years. 'The Lone Star Rush' is a tale of the gold rush in Western Australia, which is quite different to the gold rush stories of this country. As Mr. Hoover was in Australia in the district in which this story is laid, and about the same year, it would be interesting to Americans. It could no doubt be obtained through the Macmillan Company. 'The Little Black Princess' and 'We of the Never Never,' both by Mrs. Aeneas Gunn, published by Hutchinson, London, are on lives out back of the center of Australia, where the flyers are reported to be lost. 'Timber Wolves' and 'Coast Landers,' are by Bertram Cronin; the first would act as a contrast to 'The Term of his Natural Life,' as it is on the timber industry of Tasmania today. 'Martin Cash, the Bush-ranger of Van Diemen's Land,' is a Tasmanian story of early days. 'Robbery Under Arms,' obtainable in New York, is very interesting. Katherine Pritchard's books are not what an Australian would recommend."

York, soon to visit
about Bruges and
Cologne, not guide-

Bruges," by Gilliat-
is history, legend,
combined. There is no
that I know of, but
Belgium in general in
which the city figures. "Belgium Old and New," by George Wharton Edwards (Penn), has beautiful color plates from paintings. "Flanders and Hainault," by Clive Holland, is one of the well-illustrated guides issued by the Medici Society; the photographs in this series are unusually good. "Belgium: its Cities," by G. Allen, and "The Spell of Belgium," by L. W. Anderson, are published by Page. "The Treasure House of Belgium," by Emil Cammaerts (Macmillan) is a large and freely-illustrated volume describing the nation's history, social life, literature and art. I do not find as much about Cologne in English as my admiration for this town would wish; "The Spell of the Rhine," by F. R. Fraprie (Page), "Towns and People of Modern Germany" by Robert McBride (McBride), and the large and expensive picture-book "Picturesque Germany" (Brenzano) are all I know, and of these it is but part. I wrote about Cologne myself in the *Publisher's Weekly* this summer, re-visiting the city after a long interval, and attending there the great "Pressa" exposition.

F. E. T., a psychiatric social worker in Philadelphia, sends me a copy of a letter she has sent to nine magazines devoted to the study of children, receiving replies she calls "surprisingly poor and impractical." I had seen the letter before; one of them sent it on to me and I dodged it. Now the problem is put up to me squarely; a girl of eighteen of average intelligence, just enough to enable her to get through high school, comes from a family of fairly high intelligence level, but low social and financial levels. By the latter is meant in this instance that there are emotional differences between the parents, and almost no opportunities for experiences and contacts outside home and school. The girl is fond of reading and it is desired to supervise it from a psychiatric standpoint—from a literary point of view Dickens, Eliot, Stevenson, and Dumas would do, but for psychiatric purposes books are needed which are in touch with contemporary life and which present, in the wider sense of the word, sex problems. The inquirer believes that an ideal book of this sort for a girl with a high school education would be Galsworthy's "Dark Flower";

simpler books, for a girl without high school education, are badly needed. What can I suggest; which of Tarkington, Dorothy Canfield? What about "The Interpreter's House"?

WHAT little I know of the approaches through literature to a heart between hay and grass has mainly been gathered from spontaneous confidences of young people at this time of life. Older people ask me about books; children tell me about them. "Have you read 'Men of Iron'?" cries John of the sixth grade, bending upon me a bright appraising eye, ready with reasons why I must lose no time in making good that loss. Sometimes what Clemence Dane calls "the power of mobility—the ability to let emotion break through," so holds out against the inhibitions of the 'teens that under the influence of a strong enthusiasm it may break into words. If you have been so fortunate as to have established relations of mutual respect with a child (by not putting on airs), some day you may have a report on a book that has roused such enthusiasm in an adolescent.

Such a report lately came to me from the Northwest. The writer is not likely to read it here; she is another lambkin not of

this fold. She lives in a small town with a wild Indian name and a tame isolated existence, far from what cities call "everything." There is a high school, however, and out of this came a note, dated 8:30 on a Monday morning and written in pencil, from which the following outburst is taken:

I have just finished reading a real book. Its truth, its actual vitality took me off my feet like some unknown wind. You mentioned it in "Adventures in Reading"—it's "The Old Wives Tale." Probably I was most interested in Sophia. I nearly lost faith in her when she and Gerald were in Paris, but somehow she never lost that driving power that was the Baines in her. . . .

Mary writes to me only under a full head of steam; in ink and at home, it appears, she can't write naturally, but half an hour before the last bell rings she may be impelled to report—

There was one other thing I managed to read in vacation, Ibsen's "Doll's House." There's something about the play—perhaps it's the suspense—that just held my attention to the last. . . . Do you like history? I haven't had much, but I think it's as romantic and thrilling and realistic as fiction. You once wrote to study as much English and French history as you could, because it was such an immense travel help. I'm going to.

The latest entrants into her hall of fame are "The Green Bay Tree," "Typee," and "An American Idyll"—by the way, this should surely be put in the way of the girl under discussion. Mary lives in a district where H. B. Wright yet holds the fort and

where, I doubt not, copies of "When Knighthood Was in Flower" might still be found in circulation. It will be noted that none of the books to which she so vigorously reacts were written with an eye to the adolescent mind. I can even believe that there are rural districts where Nora would find herself debarred from the society of the young reading person. But mark the phrases: "a real book," "its actual vitality," "something about the play." It is my conviction that the only books likely to do a young girl good would be described by her in some such terms. Beyond that, about all an adviser can do with real, vital books with something about them is to help the girl find her own book among them by the old method of trial and error.

There is no playing safe with generalizations in giving advice like this. You cannot, for instance, tell the girl to stick to the English classics. This is not because one of the classics is "Tom Jones," but because, as this observer has no doubt noted, when it comes to taking advice, a young person shies off from anything written before he was born. There is a book for girls called "A Summer in Leslie Goldthwaite's Life" into which Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney has incorporated one of the few absolutely fundamental ideals of character building to be found in juvenile fiction. Something in your life, she says, is bound to be crowded out; your character will depend upon what it is that you permit to be crowded out.

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WALTER LIPPMANN
Author of
A PREFACE TO MORALS



R. LIPPMANN'S new book was chosen unanimously by the five judges of the Book-of-the-Month Club, as the May "book-of-the-month" of that organization.

The book is not one for lazy readers. It was described by the editor of the *Book-of-the-Month Club News* as the "philosophy—simple, immensely refreshing, understandable, reasoned, and above all valuable—of a shrewd modern among moderns, a man who has read his philosophy and science, and has yet accepted them not too blindly . . . and who has succeeded in reaching these few bare heartening conclusions for himself".

A long pre-publication report about this book—the above is a quotation from it—went out as usual to our one hundred thousand subscribers. As far as we can judge at this writing, it seems that approximately sixty-five thousand will take the book, instead of any of the alternates reported upon by our judges.

This is the normal percentage of those who take the "book-of-the-month." About thirty-five thousand of our subscribers every month—a largely different group each time, of course, depending upon the books—avail themselves of their privilege of either taking an alternate, or no book at all, if none appeals to them.

This interesting record of how a weighty book, such as this, is regarded

by our subscribers is a pertinent commentary on the twaddle written recently—and declaimed—about the imaginary unconscious pressure upon our judges to choose more popular books, because we have so many subscribers. Below is some other direct and interesting evidence on this point: namely, the last twelve books chosen by our judges, going backward:

A PREFACE TO MORALS
By Walter Lippmann
HENRY THE EIGHTH By Francis Hackett
THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP By Joan Lowell
KRISTIN LAVRANDSATTER By Sigrid Undset
JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN By H. W. Freeman
THE CASE OF SERGEANT GRISCHA By Arnold Zweig
WHITHER MANKIND Edited by Charles Beard
HUNGER FIGHTERS By Paul de Kruif
THE CHILDREN By Edith Wharton
JOHN BROWN'S BODY By Stephen Vincent Benet
BAMBI By Felix Salten
THE INTELLIGENT WOMAN'S GUIDE TO SOCIALISM & CAPITALISM By George Bernard Shaw

Three guesses as to which was the most "popular." You're wrong! It was "Kristin Lavransdatter"! Indeed, that book has been far and away the best-liked choice our judges have ever made. This simple fact—astonishing to most people with preconceived ideas about this organization—is a beautiful bit of evidence as to the type of reader who subscribes to this organization.

BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB, INC.
386 Fourth Avenue New York City