

Round about Parnassus

By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

REALLY they have yet to better "The Oxford Book" as an anthology, and as a type of anthology. William Stanley Braithwaite has tried it, with, for instance, "The Georgian Book," full of famous things, but, like all Braithwaite's collections, too inclusive. Quiller-Couch did better than Palgrave, and sometimes we think that his is the paragon of all anthologies, though they be as many now as the sands of the sea. Yet his taste cannot be said to be impeccable, even in "The Oxford Book." Only, he made fewer mistakes than anyone who has followed him, in covering as wide a range as he did.

Today, queerly enough, we have two books before us, one of which is labelled simply "Poems by Q." The other is "Braithwaite's Anthology and Yearbook of American Poetry for 1929." It is about three times as large in mere bulk. Well, we declare for "Poems by Q," chastely habited in blue by the Oxford University Press. It is worth your two dollars and a half. "Q" is, of course, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. He is by no means a great poet. He is a minor figure in his creative work in the great English roll of song. But what he has set out to do he has done well. On the whole, it is scholarly work. It is precise work. And all the better for that. These are quiet numbers, mainly. And some of them are such old favorites of ours! It is years since we happened upon that fine romantic novel of his, "The Splendid Spur," and read the poem imbedded in it that is Shirley transformed and you can front the leaguer of the years by itself. "Not on the neck of prince or hound," it still begins grandly,

*Nor on a woman's finger twined,
May gold from the deriding ground
Keep sacred that we sacred bind:
Only the heel
Of splendid steel
Shall stand secure on sliding fate,
When golden navies sweep their freight.*

"Trust in thyself!" is the burden of it. It has great phrases, such as,

*So shall Charybdis wear a grace,
Grim Ætna laugh, the Libyan plain
Take roses to her shrivelled face.*

Quite as resoundingly fine is Q's "Chant Royal of High Virtue," which we learned later in life, save that we still incline toward his earlier version using "becrowns" in the last line rather than "becrowns." The Envoy is all we have space to quote here:

*Young Knight, the lists are set today!
Hereafter shall be time to pray
In sepulture, with hands of stone.
Ride, then! outride the bugle blown!
And gaily dinging down the van
Charge with a cheer—Set on! Set on!
Virtue is that becrowns a Man!*

Martial again is "The Captain," though written of the soul. These poems are splendidly ancient. Then there are the ballad of "Sabina" and that poem already in other anthologies (we first read it in Stedman's Victorian one), "The White Moth." These serve to show "Q's" power in interpreting the tragedies of the heart. And how many years is it that we have been hunting for a verse quoted once in some magazine story, at last to find it here in "The Masquer in the Street." How it dazzled forth from those magazine pages, so that we knew it must be the work of a very fine craftsman indeed, and behold, here it lives again:

*Rubies ripped from altar-cloths
Leered adown her silk attire;
Her mad shoes were scarlet moths
In a rose of fire.*

Quiller-Couch has also a command of the eerie, a fey strain. There is, too, of course, "The Soldier," from the Rumanian, that is strangely haunting. Two lines of it have gone with us for years. They are:

*How went the battle, I wonder?
—And that he will never learn!*

For Quiller-Couch does not truly belong to our century. His heart more truly is "with old, unhappy, far off things and battles long ago." Even when he sings of Oxford, his Alma Mater, it is in Victorian terms:

*Yet if at last, not less her lover,
You in your hansom leave the High—*

It is strange to think of him persisting in the days of taxi-cabs! He is the last, one also thinks, of the courtly religious poets.

*But through the grille
"Where is thy Robe?" said He
"Wouldst eat thy fill,
Yet shirk civility?"*

One of the best, though the most bodeful of the love poems, is "Saturn," from "Exmoor Verses." When one has winnowed the book carefully one may have but a thin palmful of grain, but how golden it is!

Thomas Moul's selections, and he has been selecting "The Best Poems of the Year" for the last three years,—this is his fourth volume,—are very idiosyncratic. The present book starts off with Vachel Lindsay's "Virginians," probably, as we said last week, one of the best poems he has done recently; but the volume is a mélange of techniques, and of peculiar choices. Moul's collections, however, by their very inclination toward oddity, always have a certain tang. This book is dedicated "To the Memory of Charlotte Mew and Elinor Wylie, Poets," yet rather than the latter's superb "Hymn to Earth," that appeared in this periodical, her "Self Portrait" is reprinted from *The New Yorker*, that spirited, chivalrous, and witty caricature of herself in a much lighter mood. Robert Frost's "Acquainted with the Night" is almost the best gleaning of serious verse from the established poets. The juxtaposition of D. H. Lawrence's "When I went to the Circus—" and Robert P. Tristram Coffin's, "An Aeroplane against a Daylit Moon," is interesting in contrasting such different styles. (Coffin's middle name is, by the way, misspelled "Tristan.") James Daly introduces the most modern arrangement of words upon the page. Altogether, however, there seem to be more traditional verse-forms present than experimental ones. In "Interconnection," by R. E. Hieronymus, and "Front-Page Stuff," by H. Bonar, we have modern material,—and yet, in reading them, we somehow feel how "gladly from the songs of modern speech," etc., etc. Samuel Hofenstein's "Cloud" likes us better, save for some phrases; yet he, in all conscience, is modern enough!

Midway of Braithwaite's anthology is Lew Sarett's "Mountain Hamlet." It is extremely well done. So many of the poems in this volume start out with their best foot foremost and stumble in their stride. That is hardly true of "Hymn to Earth," here reprinted, which we spoke of above, nor is it true of the work of Winifred Welles, or, naturally, Robinson, or Orrick Johns's "Evening"; and whenever Elizabeth Coatsworth writes of a cat we are completely satisfied. But naturally this is not profoundly to assay this weighty tome. There is in it, for instance, a great deal of interesting work that has previously appeared in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. Somehow, it is perhaps a renegade confession, we have ceased reading this little magazine for some time. Now, by the glimpses we catch of what it has contained in a year, we must own that Miss Monroe has been working hard at the old stand. She always did have an eagle eye for the new-comer. And we must say also, in behalf of this our own periodical, that the poems chosen from it do not show up at all badly beside the others.

Here, at least, is profusion. Each one will judge the contents of this book according to his own predilections. Whoever has a theory as to the nature of contemporary magazine poetry must prove it by the evidence in this volume. We still marvel at the unending patience and assiduousness of the compiler. For large as this collection is, it represents a choice from a far larger bulk of material. In the course of a year we read a good deal of verse ourselves, but nothing approaching the amount Mr. Braithwaite must read. It might well sicken him with poetry forever! And yet the large body of what he has chosen is respectably written. It is of great variety in theme and treatment. The collection is spade-work well-done for future anthologists and historians of American poetry. That is all one could well ask. If the choices hardly seem always inspired, why that is to be expected. The book remains an American phenomenon. But it is hardly a book to sit down with and try to read through in an evening. It must be taken in sips or one easily acquires the colic.

Recommended:
POEMS BY Q. Oxford University Press. 1929.
SELECTED POEMS. By CONRAD AIKEN. Scribners. 1929.
DEAR JUDAS. By ROBINSON JEFFERS. Horace Liveright. 1929.

Uncle Sam's Camels

By LEWIS B. LESLEY

A fascinating account of the efforts of the United States Government to solve the problems of far Western transportation before the days of the railway by means of camels imported from Asia. This little-known episode of United States history is fraught with all the romance of pioneer days and the colorful vistas of the Great American Desert. It furthermore brings to light the more than half-forgotten years in the life of Jefferson Davis in the days before the Civil War. Illustrated. \$4.00 a copy.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

2 RANDALL HALL,
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

This AVIATION Business



by Ernest Dichman

"It is a textbook as well as a great story of adventure masquerading as a semi-technical book . . . simple, concise and altogether interesting."

—Dayton News



BRENTANO'S
Publishers, N. Y. (\$3.50)

The TRAVEL BOOK for CHRISTMAS

THEN I SAW THE CONGO

by Grace Flandrau
author of "Being Respectable"

Here is a thoroughly modern African Adventure. Two American women cross "darkest Africa" and find that bright equatorial sunshine clears up a great many illusions fostered for their greater glory by gentlemen adventurers and yarn-spinning sailors. The highly interesting and dramatic illustrations from the moving pictures taken on the trip by an experienced cameraman. Read what William McFee and Kermit Roosevelt think of Grace Flandrau's Congo book.

HARCOURT, BRACE & COMPANY, 383 MADISON AVE., N. Y.

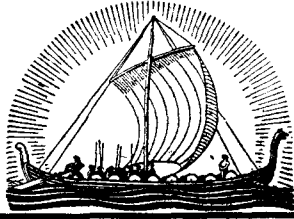
"Grace Flandrau is better than Gide," says WILLIAM MCFEE in the N. Y. World. "She has seen the Congo and, marvelous to relate, she reproduces it with fidelity, humor and pathos in this new book—a fresh and stimulating travel book about a trip across Equatorial Africa from the Congo estuary to Mombasa. . . This is the high-water mark in African tropical writing—a triumph of intelligent news-gathering and dramatic description."

"She shows up the lurid tales of adventure and mystery," says KERMIT ROOSEVELT in the Saturday Review, "and she replaces them with the very real drama that is everywhere to be found."

"A vivid record of what Africa is today,"—N. Y. Herald-Tribune.

\$3.50





The most UNPOPULAR of British writers

"the boldest, most original and unpopular of British writers," says *The Bookman* of R. B. Cunningham-Graham. UNPOPULAR . . . because he has been, as Edward Garnett says, "more than fifty years ahead of his time. UNPOPULAR . . . and yet a favorite of Conrad, Stephen Crane, Theodore Roosevelt, William Morris, Shaw, Beerbohm . . . and yet W. H. Hudson called him "the most singular of English writers" . . . and yet Glenway Wescott claims that his prose is "the most individual, the humanest that a living man has written in English—sometimes I think it is the finest."

UNPOPULAR . . . but that is fast being altered with his new volume containing a selection of his best work—the perfect introduction to this fine writer.



Thirty Tales & Sketches

By R. B. Cunningham-Graham

Selected by Edward Garnett

"Here is a book to buy, to have in the house like a safe provision against a needy day. There is something in it to fit almost any mood—except the satisfied complacent one. It is for those who like to roam the world around, from Spain to Scotland, from Paris to the Argentine pampas, in the company of a sharp-tongued, honest man who is at home everywhere apparently. . . . A book full of 'reading aloud' material."—Heywood Broun in *The Book-of-the-Month Club News*.



The Pageant of Life

"In the book are pictures of many things, as vast desert places, pampas like seas of grass, far stretching Scotch moors with gray granite boulders, blue and sun-sparkled waters with ships on them, villages hidden away in warm folds of the hills with straw-thatched roofs and flower gardens, but chiefly of men; and all is done in the way of one who sees straight and who sets down in plain words what he sees. For it is the glory of Graham that for him nothing of the real is dull or tame. . . . Gifted with great vitality, rich with infinite delicacy, endowed with a wide and clear vision and filled with intention, he sees life as a pageant in which he must take an active part."—Charles Finger in *The Saturday Review of Literature*. \$3.00

Give VIKING BOOKS



This way to a new experience
in reading

ANIMALS LOOKING AT YOU

by PAUL EIPPER

Photographs by HEDDA WALTHER

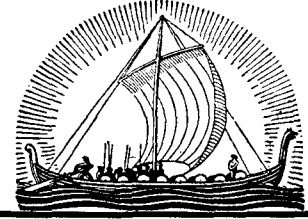


Go to your bookstore and ask to see a copy of this volume. Look at the pictures. Then read a random paragraph. Whether it be the story of the ape-man's weird song or of the war of the pelicans; of the mating of the animals or of the marvels of the sea; of the mourning elephant or of the demented polar bear, you will find beauty and a fascination that you never knew existed in an animal book. Heywood Broun says "his book carries you along with him in his almost rapturous experiences among animals both wild and kindly. Out of his own intense pleasure in his work he distills for you a vicarious enchantment. Incidentally, the photographs made by Hedda Walther are an enchantment in themselves." "This is to the non-fiction field of animal books what Kipling's 'Just-So Stories' were to the imaginative," says *The Montreal Star*. Ernest Thompson Seton calls it "remarkable and valuable, new and extremely original." Thomas Mann, Gerhart Hauptmann, Jacob Wassermann, Mr. and Mrs. Martin Johnson, zoologists, critics, artists, pay tribute to this unique book.

\$3.00 at all bookstores.



THE VIKING PRESS
18 East 48th Street, New York City



Your entertainment is now complete

The last volume has just appeared in *The Collected Works of Saki*, that irrepressible humorist whom Mrs. May Lamberton Becker described as "a habit rather than an author. Once you get it fastened on you, you'll read everything he wrote as fast as it comes out." In eight volumes, which you can buy singly or all together in a Christmas box, sparkles the wit of the author of whom Christopher Morley said: "No one is so morose or introvert that his tonsils cannot be wrung by Saki's arsenic merriment."



The favorite of favorites

Elinor Wylie was loud in her praise of his books; Alexander Woolcott still speaks of Mrs. Packletide's Tiger from *The Chronicles of Clovis*—the riotous tale of a dowager who did a hunting go; Elmer Davis, Edward Hope, Hugh Walpole, G. K. Chesterton, A. A. Milne, H. W. Nevins, Maurice Baring, J. C. Squire—but why go on. Read for yourself, as samples of what lies in store for you, *The Schartz-Metterklume Method* from *Beasts and Super-Beasts*—the story of a debutante who accidentally became a governess; *The Background* from *The Chronicles of Clovis*—wherein a human being becomes a work of art and is therefore unexportable; *The Guests* from *The Toys of Peace*—the story of a Bishop who objected to a leopard having a meal in his bedroom; or any one of a hundred and some stories, two novels, several plays, sketches and introductions by leading English authors.



The Collected Works of SAKI

THE CHRONICLES OF CLOVIS
Introduction by A. A. MILNE

BEASTS AND SUPER-BEASTS
Introduction by H. W. NEVINSON

THE TOYS OF PEACE
Introduction by G. K. CHESTERTON

THE UNBEARABLE
BASSINGTON
Introduction by MAURICE BARING

REGINALD AND REGINALD
IN RUSSIA
Introduction by HUGH WALPOLE

WHEN WILLIAM CAME
Introduction by LORD CHARNWOOD

THE SQUARE EGG
Introduction by J. C. SQUIRE
Biography by E. M. MUNRO

THE WESTMINSTER ALICE
Introduction by J. A. SPENDER
Illustrated by SIR F. CARRUTHERS GOULD

In a uniform edition
Boxed at \$14.00 per set.
Separate volumes \$1.75 each

GIVE BOOKS



LAUGHING BOY

by OLIVER LAFARGE

"A first novel of sheer beauty and power." *The Forum*. "A true story of primitive love, admirably rendered, with that complete mastery over the material which conceals from the reader the profoundly studious extent of the writer's knowledge." *Mary Austin* \$2.50

THE TRAGIC ERA

by CLAUDE G. BOWERS

"As interesting as any romance by Dumas or Stevenson, and containing some of the most lurid and poignant pages of American history yet penned. The hectic and melodramatic phases of the Reconstruction have never been described with such striking detail and such ability to recreate the past." *The Atlantic*. Illus., \$5.00

THE LETTERS OF
CECIL SPRING-RICE

This intimate biography of the most famous of British Ambassadors includes over twenty-five thousand words of unpublished Roosevelt letters. "He combined a genius for friendship with a gift of writing letters that make history live and will live in literature." *London Times*. 2 vols., illus. \$10.00

THE GOTHICK NORTH

by SACHEVERELL SITWELL

A study of medieval life, art and thought. "Mr. Sitwell's book is so charmingly conceived and so brilliantly written that any reader might well content himself with the pictures created; but there is a further theme and that is his delicate tying up of that past period with today." *N. Y. Times*. Illustrated, \$5.00.

ETHAN ALLEN

by JOHN PELL

Ethan Allen was more than a backwoods chieftain who emerged from the wilderness at the head of a band of uncouth adventurers, captured a fortress, shouted an epigram, and disappeared again into obscurity. John Pell has done full justice to one of the most picturesque Americans in a sound and lively biography.

Illustrated, \$5.00

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO.

Books of Special Interest

Problems of Heredity

HEREDITY AND PARENTHOOD. By SAMUEL CHRISTIAN SCHMUCKER. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1929. \$2.50.

Reviewed by MAYNARD SHIPLEY.

IN spite of the flood of semi-popular scientific works—and also of popular semi-scientific works—on heredity, there is still room for a clear, succinct, and authoritative exposition of what really is known today on that complex subject. This Dr. Schmucker has given us, in what is really two books, bound as one; the first dealing with the problems of heredity in the most comprehensive sense, the second with the origin and evolution of sex and love, and the practical questions that all parents are called upon sooner or later to answer.

The first part of the work is a successful attempt to answer in simple language such questions as: Why are we what we are? Is our peculiar personal make-up the result of nature, or of nurture, or of a combination of both? How far is natural (hereditary) endowment subject to environmental (including educational) control or modification? "I suppose," says the author, "there is little doubt in the minds of most people, that, in a general way, most of our qualities can be accounted for by inheritance. 'He is a chip of the old block' is a common enough saying and belief. It is our peculiarities, our unexpected characteristics, that must be explained."

The modern study of "fraternal" and "identical" twins has thrown a flood of light upon the problem of heredity versus environment. Dr. Schmucker presents some highly interesting new data along these lines, derived from his own experiences with such twins, students at Teachers College.

The chapter on "The Problem of Alcohol," so vexed a question at this time, is discussed with the author's characteristic broad-mindedness and impartiality, and should be read with profit by all who are seeking light on this subject—which ought to mean all of us, for we are all vitally affected by it in one way or another. Closely connected with this same problem is the chapter "Is Criminality Inherited?" Both questions are highly complex, and no final answer can be given in so many words. There are almost as many theories of the cause of criminality as there are criminals; and the controversy anent alcohol is even more confused. "The one fundamental difficulty is," as Dr. Schmucker points out, "that the problem is so tied up with our long held opinions and with our emotions that many of us feel our convictions are religious, and hence cannot be mistaken. To doubt them is blameworthy. To hold them open is in itself irreligious. We are so convinced of the righteousness of our cause that we are anxious to emphasize everything that looks in our direction and to set aside everything that looks as if it might point the other way."

Important data on both sides are presented by our author, however, with apparent impartiality, and the reader is left to draw his own conclusions.

None of these questions can be dealt with intelligently unless due recognition is accorded the Mendelian laws and the general mechanism of transmission of heritable traits, so far as known. This question Dr. Schmucker handles admirably; if there has ever been written an easier approach to Mendelism than the one in this book, I, at least, have not found it. The same praise may be given the exposition of sexual evolution and the delicate human problems arising from the growing complexity of our modern life, where the author displays an open-mindedness and freedom from emotional bias that cannot be lauded too highly.

Very little fault can be found with this excellent popular work, aside from differences of opinion to which the author is as entitled as is the reviewer. It may, however, be mentioned that according to the latest researches Dr. Schmucker is in error in ascribing an actual lengthening of human life to "the sociologist and the hygienist." Professor C. H. Forsythe, of Dartmouth, has recently published graphs and data which show that this widely accepted view is a misconception—that "the average length of life in this country is now actually decreasing."

Another statement with which issue may properly be taken is Dr. Schmucker's fear of the social results of sterilization of the feeble-minded. As I pointed out recently in an article in *The American Mercury*, the researches of Popenoe and Gosney, the only real authorities on this subject, show no dire effects, at least in California, the

chief testing ground of such experimentation.

These, however, are minor defects, in no way detracting from the value of this remarkably well written book. The theistic bias of the author may even be regarded as a recommendation (though it is sometimes unnecessarily intruded into purely scientific discussion), since it is the already theistically-inclined lay reader who is being addressed. On the whole, "Heredity and Parenthood," fully illustrated and well indexed, is undoubtedly the best popular work of its kind now in English print. It is to be hoped that it will offset the unfortunate effects of some other more or less recent treatises which seem to have been written purely from their authors' prejudices and predilections, rather than from actual study of the subject, as Dr. Schmucker's has been.

An Extraordinary Episode

THE BLOCKING OF ZEEBRUGGE. By CAPTAIN A. F. B. CARPENTER. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co. 1929. \$2.50.

Reviewed by T. H. THOMAS

THE author trusts that the reader will be tolerant of omission and repetition, and will forgive the rather obvious shortcomings of a literary nature which appear all too frequently in the book. A judicious reader will take the author at his word, read straight ahead with the story, and enjoy the spirited details of one of the most extraordinary episodes of the war. Although undertaken for a carefully considered purpose and with the most thoroughgoing study and preparation of the seafaring problems it involved, the blocking of Zeebrugge was a splendid shindy of the sort an intricate and highly mechanized war could rarely offer: an old-fashioned adventure, recalling the Spanish Main rather than the wireless and submarine setting of 1918.

It having been decreed that the blocking of the tiny port would seriously hamper the operation of German U-boats in the Channel, the Dover Patrol had to face the problem of bringing good-sized vessels inside a harbor protected by mine-fields, torpedo boats, and fortress artillery, with a breakwater garnished with six-inch guns lying directly in front. Having achieved these impossibilities, the ships would have to steam in between the jetties of a narrow river entrance—again under artillery fire at close range—and sink themselves in such a way as to block the channel. It was altogether fitting that one of the three old cruisers chosen for the task bore the name of *Iphigenia*, and that the assault should be opened not by battleships but by motor boats and launches spreading smoke screens. Although attempted more than once in previous wars, no such thing had ever succeeded, and the layout of the ground in this case seemed to offer every reasonable prospect of failure. Nevertheless, one rainy night in the spring of 1918, the cruiser *Vindictive* appeared out of the darkness some three-hundred yards off the Zeebrugge mole,—with motor boats shooting back and forth between distributing smoke screens, and with the 6-inch German battery at point blank range. In the resulting excitement, the *Vindictive* steamed past the battery, made fast to the mole and landed storming parties. With her hull sheltered by the mole, the cruiser thereupon engaged battle with everything in sight, and with every variety of weapon, from flame throwers to field howitzers, while for good measure an old submarine loaded with high explosive gently rammed herself in under the trestle connecting the mole with the mainland. Having emerged into lifeboats, her crew thereupon blew to pieces the submarine and the trestle over her. In the midst of these fireworks, the three old cruisers made their way in between the jetties and deftly blew out their bottoms across the channel, sealing up effectively the German submarines moored in the river—to cap the climax the crews made their way outside in rafts with almost no casualties. The smaller craft still covered by smoke screens then drew off from the fray to a rendezvous outside. The *Vindictive* having remained there for an hour, drew off from the mole with the help of two Liverpool ferry-boats and again at point blank range of the 6-inch guns, passed safely out to sea, joined up with the rest of the quaint Armada, and returned under her own steam to Dover.

It is as a dashing feat of arms that the story offers its main interest, but the author nevertheless discerns the true moral: even the most complete technical apparatus will collapse in the confusion and bewilderment of surprise and what happens then turns—as in the year 1—upon the human factor.