

The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be received later.

Biography

FRANCIS JOSEPH I, The Downfall of an Empire. By KARL TSCHUPPIK. Translated from the German by C. J. S. SPRIGGE. Harcourt, Brace. 1930. \$3.75.

Of all the purely political results of the World War, the disappearance of the Hapsburg Monarchy is probably the most momentous; the extent of its social and economic significance has yet to be determined but there can be little question of its breadth. When we further consider that the chief factor of those holding the empire together was the dynasty, it is easy to discern the importance of Francis Joseph. Upon what he was or was not depended largely the fate of eastern Europe. Hence Herr Tschuppi's title: with Francis Joseph passed the dynasty (for Karl's brief reign was merely an epilogue) and inevitably the downfall of the Empire followed.

The author never forgets his underlying assumption, the identification of the Emperor with the empire. His biography, therefore, while it is rich in personal details selected for their value as cumulative evidence, is a biography of the state as much as of the individual. He begins with 1848 and ends with the death of the Emperor sixty-eight years later, November 21, 1916, when, as he avers, the empire "really died." There is so much of color in the story and so much of the personal in the author's treatment that the book can be read with interest even by those who know little of the background of Hapsburg history, a background without which it is impossible to explain the fateful errors that led to destruction. Serious scholars will also be grateful to Herr Tschuppi for his industry in the gathering of material and the objectivity of his presentation. He has a definite point of view; writes, as he says, in a "spirit of love and criticism," but is always insistent that the significance of this momentous chapter of history as well as of Francis Joseph's own personality, cannot be discovered by explanations but only by the presentation of actual facts. After all the pother over the "new biography" there is relief and reassurance in his method, colorful and convincing, permitting the drama to emerge from the ascertained facts instead of from the imaginative guesses of the biographer.

Fiction

PORTRAIT OF A REBEL. By NETTA SYRETT. Dodd, Mead. 1930. \$2.50.

Recalling with bitterness the disappointments, restrictions, and misadventures of her Victorian girlhood, Pamela Thistlewaite found happiness in allying herself with one of the earliest crusades for women's rights. She had been brought up in a man-dominated household, educated to nothing better than a simpering female incompetence, and in no way provided with defenses against the wiles of the world. Her disastrous experiences only made her wish to keep other women from stumbling into the very pitfalls that had so nearly snuffed out her own spirit and courage. Such is the story that Netta Syrett tells; it is a biography of a rebel—a rebel in practice and theory against the late Victorian notions of female propriety and prerogative.

The novel suffers from an attempt to cover too much ground. Setting out to relate the whole of Pamela's long and full career, it has to gallop a bit breathlessly in its later chapters. Throughout the narrative, the emphasis is on the history of an entire life, rather than on close-knit, intensive developments of character. This is not to say that Pamela's character is not carefully developed; on the contrary, it is consistent and well-rounded. On the whole, the novel manages to hang together fairly well, in spite of its lack of compactness, and it is almost always interesting; some of the minor characters are excellent, and many of the incidents have an undeniable vitality. Furthermore, we feel that it is a thoroughly honest novel, written sincerely from the author's heart.

IN THE RED. By ROY MILTON ILIFF. Stokes. 1930. \$2.50.

"Out of the Yellow" one might prefix to the title of this novel, narrating the story of a mother's pet who finally redeems his cowardice by dying for his country. If it is a first novel, it is a pardonably juvenile performance, psychologically false and told in the wrong medium. We are asked to believe that Ernie Baird was a sensitive and imaginative boy thwarted by a mother's love. We fail to find anything more than

mawkish sentimentality in him. A really sensitive spirit would have been outraged, by such a vulgar and crass environment, would have recoiled early from his selfish, preying mother, would have renounced that fragment of manhood because it was fostered by his mother's dependence on him.

There is not a shred of poetry in the book. Instead of conveying the inarticulate Ernie's craving for beauty in some subtle manner, the author forces upon his hero such irritating outlets as "Doggone it." As a matter of fact, Mr. Iliff deprives himself of the correct mode of expressing that sense of beauty by employing the stream-of-consciousness method. Had he written his tale objectively, he might have been able to suggest all that Ernie himself was unable to express. Incidentally, in the beginning, the saga of a character at the age of five, to be carried through until he was twenty-one, entails recording accurately the changing thoughts and all the intricacies of a growing child, a task for a Chekov. In attempting to photograph Ernie's mind through the vicissitudes of time, Mr. Iliff has only succeeded in making him talk out of character.

Stylistically, the book damns itself. Mr. Iliff's cinematographic method, his broken, disjointed, and unfinished sentences, his stammerings and stutterings, his onomatopoeic Arfs and Mfs and Blams and Plops retard rather than assist the reader towards conviction. There is no attempt at craftsmanship or any of the literary refinements. Fully as cheap and melodramatic as the characters is the scenic background.

The most charitable thing one can say about the book is that it is charged with energy and that it includes many pithy truths. But these truths are served on such a soiled and untidy platter that one's appetite is taken away.

EXIT. By HAROLD BELL WRIGHT. Appleton. 1930. \$2.

Mr. Wright early vaccinates himself against criticism, observing that the sophisticated and worldly-wise will "laugh with hard laughter" at this story, calling it sentimental bosh, "and they will not hesitate to cry it down before the world." But "I know that I am not so skilled in the art of writing as these proud, unemotional dealers in words; I am only more honest." If honesty is a purely subjective quality, no one can dispute that Mr. Wright has it; he sets down what he sees, and his popularity indicates that millions of other people see the same things, at least after he points them out.

What he points out in this story is that all the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players, and that possibly the best thing a man can do is to make a good exit; also that a great artist must be a great soul, and that the love of money is the root of all evil. The emotional high point of the story is the scene in which the hero, too virtuous to fondle the fleshly form of his beloved who is wedded to another, fondles instead the wire dummy on which she has been fitting the dress she is making, and thus betrays his secret (though of course nothing comes of it, since she is virtuous too). As between Wrights, some prefer Harold Bell and some Willard Huntington; others, well able to get along without either, may still admire them both for their success in meeting widespread consumer demands.

THE CHARIOTEER. By JOHN PRESLAND (Gladys Skelton). Appleton. 1930. \$2.50.

What begins as a realistic picture of domestic life in Brighton before the war—done with malicious insight, but much sympathy—presently becomes a tale of the rivalry between two sisters, Shirley and Fredegonde Bellairs, concert artists and ultimately mistresses of the same man. The story rises to a wildly melodramatic climax; and by way of relief, in its later half, there is nothing but the picture of the struggles of Mohun Fortescue, who was in love with Shirley, against his hereditary dipsomania. The contrast between the sisters is done well enough, but when they come to personify the Spirit of Man and the Beast in Man the reader feels not only that it is not worth going on, but that it was not worth coming that far.

The author deserves citation, however, for two rare merits—she depicts a Russian who, though otherwise he behaves most Russianly, does not talk about his soul; and she says *in mediis rebus*, a phrase which most novelists seem to believe exists only in the accusative.

(Continued on next page)

» » These are Just Out « «

John Marsh; Pioneer

The Life Story of a Trail Blazer on Six Frontiers

by George D. Lyman

The thrilling biography of a hitherto neglected hero of the West. Scholar, Indian fighter, smuggler, this man who was finally murdered for his hidden fortune lived a life that outstrips the wildest imaginings of the novelist. Illustrated. \$3.50

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editor of "The Journal of Modern History"

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by James A. Tobey

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The New Books
Miscellaneous

(Continued from preceding page)

ROPE, KNIFE AND CHAIR. By GUY B. H. LOGAN. Duffield. 1930.

Mr. Logan has found an alluring title for his new collection of murder histories. Unfortunately for this reader his accounts are too brief to work up a full and satisfying thrill. In order to be able to lose yourself in a murder you must be told all about it. In this book of moderate length fifteen cases of varying degrees of interest are dealt with. Surely the author would have been better advised to omit the more commonplace crimes such as Allaway's, John Williams's, and David Roberts's, and give more space say, to the ineffable Jesse Pomeroy. There's a murderer! a phenomenon of horror that stimulates one's curiosity to the highest degree. Jesse Pomeroy deserves a whole fat book to himself. He only gets sixteen pages of this one. Also it was made in America. We don't have to go abroad for our murders.

The author rather damages his tales by giving vent to moral strictures upon murder and murderers. All murder fans, I think, will agree that this is beside the mark. It is really not necessary. We will not become murderers through the reading of murder books; on the contrary, such books provide a safety valve for our homicidal tendencies, if any. Murder fans are notoriously the gentlest of men. Catch a murderer reading a murder book! The conscious mind deplores murder and regulates our lives accordingly; the unconscious revels in murder and, restive under control, finds release in a rattling murder book. For that reason moral homilies are impertinent. The authors we love best are those who attend strictly to their tales, and let the moral implications take care of themselves.

BEFORE AND AFTER PROHIBITION. By Millard E. Tydings. Macmillan. \$2.

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND. By M. A. DeWolfe Howe. Harvard University Press. \$2.50.

PEN NAMES AND PERSONALITIES. By Annie Russell Marble. Appleton. \$2.50.

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THE ARYABHATIYA OF ARYABHATA. By Walter E. Clark. University of Chicago Press. \$2.50.

IDEAL MARRIAGE. By Thomas H. Van de Velde. Covici-Friede. \$7.50.

THE CHEERFUL CHERUB. By Rebecca McCann. Covici-Friede. \$2.

War

BRITISH DOCUMENTS ON THE ORIGINS OF THE WAR, 1898-1914, Vol. VI: Anglo-German Tension, Armaments and Negotiation, 1907-12. Edited by G. P. GOOCH and HAROLD TEMPERLEY. London: H. M. Stationery Office. 1930.

The latest volume in this vitally important series covers, as the title indicates, the period when British relations with Germany assumed the position of chief significance in foreign policy, a period of constantly increasing tension. As might be expected, the main question of discussion was naval armament; the papers revealing the course of negotiations designed to provide for limitation by mutual agreement between Great Britain and Germany, as well as those dealing with the German proposal for a political formula preliminary to such limitation, are published in great fulness. Of only slightly less significance are the documents dealing with Persia and the Baghdad Railway. The history of the Morocco crisis of 1911, which nearly brought the two nations to the verge of war over Agadir, is reserved for a separate volume. The interest of the volume can be guessed from the fact that very full, if not absolutely final light is thrown upon such events as the Kaiser's visit to Windsor in November 1907, the *Daily Telegraph* interview, the Gwinner-Cassel negotiations of 1909, the Haldane Mission of 1912.

Any attempt to generalize upon the question of war responsibility as affected by this volume would be premature and must wait upon the completion of the series. It is impossible, however, to escape the feeling that Great Britain and Germany, having passed through the terrific tension of this period, were on the high road to discovering a *modus vivendi* if only the situation had not been disturbed by external factors arising from Austro-Russian rivalry in the Near East. The thesis that the war should be regarded not as an affair between the Western Powers but as an Eastern conflict is at least tentatively strengthened.

The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquires in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, 2 Bramerton St., Chelsea S.W.3, London.

Albert P. Lang, Brookline, Mass., comes to the aid of C. M. G., Boulder, Colorado, with a book about strolling actors.

"A BOOK of short stories of stage life in Ireland" says he, "entitled 'Fish and Actors,' exemplifies the trials and tribulations of actors of the barnstorming order, or what are technically called 'fit-up' actors. An introduction of thirty-two pages gives explanatory matter concerning the strolling players, their modes of life, the construction of their meagre scenery, and other details that I think will interest the inquirer. Such 'fit-ups' are prevalent in England and Scotland. The book was published in 1925 in England, and was issued later by Brentano of New York. The author is Graham Sutton, whose previous works were 'Who Travels Alone' (a novel) and 'Some Contemporary Dramatists.'"

C. H., Hugo, Okla., asks for books on folk drama in America and elsewhere, but especially in America.

"CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS" (Holt), of which several volumes have appeared, come as near to true American folk drama as we are likely to come in a country that was, so to speak, born middle-aged. The introductions to these volumes, and to the plays given in them, will be found valuable in this study. See also "The Little Country Theatre," by Alfred Arvoid (Macmillan), which describes among other matters the composition of plays by students at an agricultural college of the Northwest, out of material and on themes arising from their everyday life. For the subject in general, a pamphlet just published by the press of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C., will be of high usefulness. This is "Folklore," by Ralph Steele Boggs, an outline of folk literature for individual and group study. It costs fifty cents and may be used as a club program, books consulted being listed.

T. H., Montreux-Territet, France, asks for books that give detailed, practical instruction on how to write a moving picture text.

ONE may as well admit—though I am glad to see that France has not admitted it—that the talkie will edge out the silent film from the field. In that case one saves time by beginning with Pitkin and Marston's "The Art of Sound Pictures" (Appleton), the pioneer book on how to write for them. The publications of the Home Correspondence School, Springfield, Mass., on this subject, especially "Writing the Photoplay," "The Feature Photoplay," and "Photodrama," have been widely used. "Sound Motion Pictures," by Harold B. Franklin (Doubleday, Doran), shows their manufacture from laboratory to screen.

M. H., Gainesville, Florida, studying Spanish painting from 1200 to 1900, asks if any one book covers the entire period, or if two or three could do it collectively—books in print and not beyond an individual pocketbook. In addition, the titles and authors of biographies of Goya, Ribera, Velasquez, El Greco, and Murillo would be appreciated, and, in especial, anything on the School of Madrid.

C. H. CAFFIN'S "Story of Spanish Painting" (Century) is a popular account much used in public libraries. "The School of Madrid" is the subject of a book with this title by A. de Beruete y Moret (Scribner); in the same series is "Painters of the School of Seville," by Sentenach y Cabanas (Scribner). "The National Gallery: The Netherlands, Germany, Spain," by C. J. Holmes (Harcourt, Brace) is a scholarly, well-illustrated work on the examples of these schools in the gallery on Trafalgar Square, where some fine specimens of Spanish painting are to be found.

"Goya as Portrait Painter," by Beruete y Moret, beautifully illustrated, is published in a limited edition by Houghton Mifflin. Stokes's "Francesco Goya," is published by Putnam, and "The Proverbs of Goya" by Houghton Mifflin. Two small and inexpensive books, E. V. Lucas's "Velasquez" (Doubleday, Doran) and S. L. Bensusan's "Velasquez" (Stokes) are each in a series in which similar volumes on Murillo, by the same critics, appear; E. M. Hurl's "Murillo" is published by Houghton Mifflin. The only biography of El Greco in English seems to be the novelized version of his life and work, "The Bird of God," by Virginia Hersch (Harper), which keeps quite closely to the record, but Julius Maier-

Graefe's "The Spanish Journey" (Harcourt, Brace) should be added to the El Greco books—oh, let us be learned about it, and say the books about Dominico Theotocopuli—for this eminent and genial German critic started his journey in search of Velasquez canvases and transferred his affection to El Greco en route.

R. H. T., New York, asks me to suggest a thoroughly interesting new book for a bookish person, preferably non-fiction.

ONE I could choose, and I suppose I must be that sort of person, would be "The Englishman and his Books in the Early Nineteenth Century," by Amy Cruse; it has just appeared in London, but I suppose, as her other books were so rapidly published in America, that this one soon will be. It tells just what people—not bookish people—did read by and large when the great names were getting into the histories of literature; it is often amusing, always fascinating—if you like people and books—and informing in an easy, comfortable way. "Those Earnest Victorians," by Esmé Wingfield-Stratford (Morrow), is another that will keep any reader of Victorian novels dashing on from chapter to chapter; it is far more sympathetic than Strachey's "Eminent Victorians"—though by no means sentimental—and does not take the biographical method but proceeds by subjects such as "The Squire and his Relations," "The Cult of the Double Bed," or "The Gothic Revival" to take that background out of the fiction of the day and set it before the reader in full color, not neglecting its political features. And if this person should have missed at the time of its first appearance the best book about the conduct of an actual bookshop that I have read, Madge Jenison's "Sunwise Turn" (Dutton), he should be told that a new edition of it has just been brought out, and I don't know better reading for the bookish or for book-sellers either. "A Human Comedy of Book-selling," she calls it, and I call it charming and have done so from the first. Owen Wister's "Roosevelt" (Macmillan) is another book that fills this bill; people who love books are likely to read gladly about people who unfeignedly loved them and this "story of a friendship" is full of gay and bouncing bits. I would be glad if the reading-club that has just asked me for a list of books to read aloud would add this to the one I have sent them; I can seldom print requests from clubs in this column, though many are answered by mail, but an equipment of books to last through a whole winter would spread over more space than I have at my disposal. In one respect—I trust in no more—this department is like an iceberg; five-sixths of it is below the surface.

B. de M. M., Washington, D. C., replies to E. L. M. of the same city, in regard to lives of Hamilton that he is now reading a copy of "Life and Times of Alexander Hamilton," by Samuel M. Smucker, A. M., Philadelphia, G. G. Evans, 1860, copyrighted in 1856 by J. W. Bradley, Philadelphia, and is reading it with pleasure during the hot weather. "I believe I love its old-fashioned flowery expressions and courtesies of speech."

Friends of this department are asked to overlook any incoherencies that may have slipped into this instalment. The Reader's Guide has just set up an office cat of distinguished antecedents, born, so to speak, to the purple, for his mother is Angeline, the office cat of the *Times*, famous as the best ratter in E.C.4, and he was born in a steel file in one of its editorial offices. Angeline's kittens are always in demand and this edition was largely over-subscribed, but claims were waived in favor of the *Saturday Review of Literature* as a gesture of international amity, a sort of paws-across-the-sea. His name, for obvious reasons, is John Walter; he is at present some six inches long exclusive of tail, but his charm and intelligence are out of all proportion to his size. Of these I say no more: my Puritan reserve begins to crack. His passage is already booked on the *Ile de France*.

One of the most complete histories of the development of Russian art that is available has recently made its appearance in Philipp Schweinfurth's "Geschichte der Russischen Malerei im Mittelalter" (The Hague: Nyhoff). The volume consists of some 480 pages of text, a list of illustrations, and an index. It is profusely illustrated.