

S OF THE SPRING II.

By AMY LOVEMAN

THE Spring, belated and even now only timidly coming forth, is besetting us as we write, in the warm sunshine streaming in at the window, the posies we could hardly resist on the street, the leisurely throngs we saw on the Avenue. We felt like trying our luck in the Park where perhaps lurked adventure such as Robert Nathan focussed around the carousel in his novel of a year or two ago, "The Orchid," but, poor slave of the word that we are, we returned to our desk and our book list. Well, we'll take our wandering impulses out in recommending a tale that shows what can befall even in prosaic New York if only one has determination enough to yield to one's impulses. It's "The Square Root of Valentine" (Norton), by Berry Fleming, and it recounts the amazing experiences of a youth who stole forth early of a morning to see what his great colossus of a city was like before its millions were astir and walked straightway into intimacy with Eros and Psyche and nymphs and gaiety and inconsequence, and altogether proved what a wonderful place the world can be if only men can disengage themselves from their unessential selves. Here is a fantasy that should please those who like on occasions to elude on the pinions of fancy the ineluctable grind of life. There's another book about to appear which should also appeal to those who enjoy giving rein to their imagination, "The Place of the Lion" (Norton), by Charles Williams, which opens with a delightful scene and continues to a deeper undertone. If you are in search of gay reading that yet has enough satire to give it bite and that under its trifling hides acute observation and intimate knowledge of the facets of present-day life, Christopher Morley's ingenious "Swiss Family Manhattan" (Doubleday, Doran) ought to entertain you hugely. Elmer Davis's amusing, if frothy, tale of

the youth who set forth for Florida with next to no money in his pocket but exceeding fertility of resources to stand him in its place, has enough of its author's never failing brilliancy of execution to make it good entertainment. It bears the title, "White Pants Willie," and is published by Bobbs-Merrill. A companion volume to it as amusing reading is Clarence Buddington Kelland's "Speak Easily" (Harpers).

The Spring, as you see, has started us off on the paths of dalliance. And we linger too long on the description of a few books when a long array of others is clamoring for attention. It is high time that we were reaching the announcement that there is a new volume by Rudyard Kipling making its bow almost this very day. "Limits and Renewals" (Doubleday, Doran) is a collection of stories with interstitial poems, and though we cannot feel it the equal of some of those volumes that won glory for its author around the beginning of the century, still it is a book to rejoice in. Here, in several instances at least, is Kipling, if not at his best, at his very good, and here is what might be almost regarded as a cross-section of his art, so representative is it in the variety of its stories of the whole of his work. It is a book which admirers of Kipling will not regret and will want to read.

That public which wishes to keep always abreast of the latest work of the authors who have achieved reputation and are the subjects of current literary discussion will find temptation for their leisure in Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" (Doubleday, Doran), a satire on a civilization unified and standardized in Fordian fashion which is brilliant at times and scathing always; Louis Bromfield's "A Modern Hero" (Stokes), the story of a ruthless business career; John Dos Passos's "1919" (Harcourt, Brace), a kaleidoscopic, disjointed, but impressive work; Booth Tarkington's "Mary's Neck" (Doubleday, Doran), whose title refers to a summer resort in Maine and which throws into juxtaposition summer residents and natives of the region; Anne Parrish's "Loads of Love" (Harpers), a book which though it shows the same ability to satirize personality as did her earlier novels is nevertheless rather light weight; John Cowper Powys's "A Glastonbury Romance" (Simon & Schuster), a novel of ample length devoted to one small nook of the world; William McFee's "The Harbourmaster" (Doubleday, Doran), and William Faulkner's "Light in August" (Harrison Smith), which is not to be issued for some weeks yet.

There are several novels of English life—quiet annals—that stand out as worthy of attention: Francis Brett Young's "Mr. and Mrs. Pennington" (Harpers); J. D. Beresford's "The Old People" (Dutton), the first of a trilogy, we believe; "Mr. Darby" (Harcourt, Brace), by Martin Armstrong; Naomi Royde-Smith's slight but delicate "The Mother" (Doubleday, Doran), still in galley proof when we saw it, and not, we think, yet ready for publication; F. O. Mann's "The Old Woman Talks" (Harcourt, Brace), a book in which the author of "Albert Grope" again proves that he has power; Helen Ashton's low-voiced but effective "Bricks and Mortar" (Doubleday, Doran); Storm Jameson's "That Was Yesterday" (Knopf); H. W. Freeman's "Fathers of Their People" (Holt), which places its action among the yeoman population; Norah Hoult's "Apartment to Let" (Harpers), which, on the other hand, plays in a London boarding house; A. J. Cronin's "Three Loves" (Little, Brown), another interesting but more or less melodramatic novel by the author of last winter's great success, "Hatter's Castle"; "Maids and Mistresses" (Knopf), by Beatrice Kean Seymour, and "The Fortnight in September" (Stokes), a gentle book to issue from the pen of R. C. Sherrieff, author of "Journey's End."

Two novels which have met with great favor in England both from critics and public, and which are now receiving much eulogistic comment on this side of the water, are Louis Golding's "Magnolia Street" (Farrar & Rinehart), a long book confined to a tiny section,—the two sides of a London street on one of which the residents are Jews and on the other Gentiles; and "The Running Footman" (Macmillan), by John Owen, a moving tale,

told with skill and feeling, and enriched by an interesting historical background.

The historical novel, though not represented in large numbers, has not been neglected in the Spring list. One of the best of the season's books as straight story is a work of this sort, Stewart Edward White's "The Long Rifle" (Doubleday, Doran), a tale of the Santa Fe trail and the Rocky Mountains, with Daniel Boone in the background, and the fur traders in the place of interest. The fur men play their part, too, in Gilbert Gabriel's "I, James Lewis" (Doubleday, Doran), a tale of John Jacob Astor's Astoria, while in "Among the Trumpets" (Houghton Mifflin), Leonard Nason, using the United States cavalry in France in 1918 as the protagonists of his book, has written stirringly of a later period. The war also serves as background, though it plays a remote part, in an excellent novel shortly to be issued, "The Fountain" (Knopf), by Charles Morgan. We read the book in manuscript before the publishers had set it up, and followed with fascinated attention the story of the English officer interned in a Dutch castle whose exile was illumined by his love for the English wife of a German officer. It is a book of rare felicity and thoughtfulness of spirit, an impressive work, and is eminently deserving of its selection by the Book-of-the-Month as one of its choices for the forthcoming months.

But to get back to the American scene. There are, first of all, a number of novels with the South as locale which demand notice. High among them in quality stands "Call Home the Heart" (Longmans, Green), by Fielding Burke (a pseudonym which disguises the personality of Olive Tilford Dargan), a book admirable in its first half, but, as art, weakened in its second by its propagandist tendency. It is a tale of the North Carolina mill regions which in its later sections reads almost like a transcript of newspaper reports. Julia Peterkin has a new novel in her familiar vein with the plantation again as background, and a good novel it is, this "Bright Skin" (Bobbs-Merrill). Maristan Chapman's "The Weather Tree" (Viking) also deals with a section and people made familiar by the author's earlier tales, while Erskine Caldwell's "Tobacco Road" (Scribners), a grim and sordid tale, is laid in Tennessee.

Leaving the South behind and coming to other parts of the country, we have a group of novels dealing with American life in its familiar relations which make interesting reading. The Century Company has two books shortly to be issued, both dealing with the farmer, the first, "State Fair," by Phil Stong, a tale of the Corn Belt, brief, racy of the soil, and spiced with humor, and the second, "Years of Peace," by Leroy Macleod, a longer and more ambitious book, with some fine psychological portrayal and a narrative which as it unfolds reveals in convincing fashion the forces and necessities which govern its characters. Family life, which is the core of both these novels, is again the centre about which revolves the action of Helen Hull's "Heat Lightning" (Coward-McCann), the best work Miss Hull has as yet produced, and one which gains its effectiveness from the restraint of its tone.

We forgot before, when we were speaking of historical novels, to mention two books which certainly ought to have been included in the list; the first, not yet issued, we saw in manuscript form, and found ourselves reading with much greater assiduity than our lack of time justified. It is Helen Grace Carlisle's "We Begin" (Harrison Smith), a tale of the Pilgrim Fathers, and a good, vivacious story it is, with artistry enough to hide its careful documentation under a swift-moving narrative. Miss Carlisle is here amazingly different from the author who wrote the also effective "Mothers Cry." The other book we should have mentioned before is Christopher Ward's swinging story of a young New Englander of the early nineteenth century who fared forth to find his fortune in the newly opened Middle West. "The Life and Adventures of Jonathan Drew" (Simon & Schuster) is a fine, picaresque tale, like Miss Carlisle's covering up an exhaustive study of source material with a happy flow of incident.

But we must haste, and not linger so
(Continued on next page)

Scribner Books

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EDWIN MARKHAM IS EIGHTY

THE Dedication to Edwin Markham's latest book of poems, *New Poems: Eighty Songs at Eighty*, (Doubleday, Doran) reads as follows: "I affectionately dedicate this volume to the cordon of friends who have so generously given their time and strength to organize and consummate the celebration in honor of my 80th birthday at Carnegie Hall, April 24th—the day on which I will be eighty years and one day old on life's romantic road." April 24th means, of course, tomorrow evening at 8:15, when the Dean of American Poetry will speak to a large audience concerning his life work. The receipts of the evening will take Mr. and Mrs. Markham on their first trip abroad. The "Publisher's Note" in the poet's new volume next recapitulates the facts concerning that remarkable poem of Markham's which caused such a furore from coast to coast in the early dawn of this century, "The Man with the Hoe." The present volume is Markham's fifth, but he has not published a book for twelve years. Most of the poems here were written within the last five years, some of them within the last year. During that time Markham has composed some striking long poems which he will bring out later as chapbooks and which are not included here. One of the best was his "The Ballad of the Gallows-Bird" published in 1926 in *The American Mercury*.

Markham has retained unusual vigor both in his personality and in his writing. He has always been a dogmatic poet, but with a great liberality of spirit and an accomplished knowledge of versification. He has never surpassed his "Hoe" and his "Lincoln" poems. They were the work he was primarily born to do. His lyrics, sonnets, and epigrams are interesting though many of them slide off the mind. The last-named method of expression is perhaps best illustrated in this volume by the following:

THE THIRD WONDER

"Two things," said Kant, "fill me with breathless awe:
The starry heaven and the moral law."
But I know a thing more awful and obscure—
The long, long patience of the plundered poor.

Here also is a brief lyric which seems to me well-condensed:

IMPERIOUS LOVE

The lesser gods are decorous
And with a meek petition wait;
But Love comes, fixing his own hour,
And hammers at the gate
He comes, announcing final terms,
And never cries his purpose twice;
For he has half of earth to give,
And all of Paradise!

Elsewhere I must admit that, while I admire the energy of this poet and his idealism, I find much work that dates considerably in language and manner of expression. The craftsmanship is not adept enough, the moral too obvious. But then the poet has already made his mark.

NEW POEMS FROM ALLEN TATE

Allen Tate has established himself as critic and biographer and has published one book of poems, "Mr. Pope and Other Poems," prior to the volume now under my eye, "Poems 1928:1931" (Scribner). The epilogue poem in the former volume is here pruned as the prologue, apparently to preserve continuity between the two books. Quite frankly I do not understand certain phraseological feats that Tate performs. The poem of which I have just spoken, "Ignis Fatuus" ends:

What is the riot
When the pigeon moults his ease
Or exile utters the creed of memory?

To me this kind of writing is both inexact and inexpressive. It is startlingly self-conscious, but that is all. In certain poems Mr. Tate dispenses almost entirely with punctuation, and while, in "The Traveller" dedicated to Archibald MacLeish, this predilection does not present difficulties to the reader, I find that it presents a number in such a poem as "The Eagle." But proceeding past several poems that I do not possess sufficient patience completely to follow, including the symbolically irritating poem that has

something to do with Alice in Wonderland, I come upon a well-described moment of death-pondering in "The Oath," and a poem called "The Wolves" which displays unusual imagination concerning fatality, mortality, superstitious fear. In between, a short poem called "The Paradigm," while to me confused, nevertheless contains considerable insight into the ways of lovers:

For in the air all lovers meet
After they've hated out their love,
Love's but the echo of retreat
Caught by the sunbeam stretched above
Their frozen exile from the earth,
And lost. Each is the other's crime:
This is their equity in birth,
Hate is its ignorant paradigm.

The John Donneishness of the above is obvious, and it is in the mode to be Donneish. But though we cannot praise Mr. Tate here for any originality, we must admit his accomplished absorption of a method.

In the second section there is distinct beauty in a vision of young forebears of the poet's:

In the hollows where the forefathers
Without beards their eyes bright and long
Lay down at sunset by the green river
In the tall willows amid bird-song

And the long sleep by the cool river
They've slept full and long, till now the air
Waits twilight for their echo—the burning shiver

Of August strikes like a hawk the
crouching hare.

Again, I do not see the slightest improvement wrought by the omission of, to me, necessary punctuation, but the choice of words and the music of this passage are undeniably beautiful.

CREDITS AND DEBITS

"Records," dream and vision, are two strange and haunting poems; and after the unsuccessful "Causerie" we come upon a memorable musing on vanished Americans and a picture of a mother watching by a son's deathbed that takes us inside their minds in unsparing and well-nigh unforgettable fashion. "Sonnets of the Blood" is an interesting sequence though so personal and intimate as to be cryptic. One of the sonnets stands out with precise clarity:

My brother, you would never think me vain
Or rude, if I should praise your dignity,
Perhaps I shall not. Dignity's the stain
Of mortal sin that knows humility.
Let me praise rather the hour when you were born
Since if it's vain 'twere only childlike so
I've heard that in the dark before that morn

Considerate death would hardly let you go
But you have lived as if to vindicate
Once more our slavery to circumstance
Not by contempt of that prescriptive fate
But in your bearing toward its hour of chance,

Which is a part so humble and so proud
You'll think but little of it in your shroud.

In spite of the weak ending, this sonnet has a quality of utterance for which Mr. Tate usually strives but only infrequently achieves. The "Ode to the Confederate Dead," in spite of encomia it has received, and of its ambitious attempt, does not move me half so much. What I principally seek in poetry, the expression of genuine emotions with strength and simplicity, I do not find in this poet, whose virtues are other. His chief fault is an obscurantist pedantry, though he communicates well, upon occasion, the strangeness of life and, faintly, its irony. He writes, however, like a man in a library. His intellectuality seems to have been wrought to such a pitch as constantly to incommode and hamper the poetry that is in him. He is far too full of taking thought. T. S. Eliot is responsible for a good deal of such poetry. And yet in this small book there is a strict meditation of the thankless muse by which many comparatively slovenly craftsmen might well profit.

Books of the Spring II.

(Continued from preceding page)

long over the American scene that we forget there is a foreign one. Still we must tarry a moment longer less inadvertently we fail to mention, if we postpone doing so now, the fact that among the volumes promised for the near future which should be eminently worth seeing is Claire Spencer's "The Quick and the Dead" (Harrierson Smith). Readers of "Gallows' Orchard" will know what a clean-cut and effective art is likely to be manifest here.

But to get back to that fiction of foreign lands of which we were on the verge of speaking a moment ago. There is excellent reading here, in Jeno Heltai's striking tale of Budapest, "Czardas" (Houghton Mifflin), and that other tale of Hungarian life, but this time of the life of the pushtas, "People of the Plains" (Little, Brown), by Pal Szabo; in Bruno Brehm's "They Call It Patriotism" (Little, Brown); Alexander Tarasov's story of love in the Soviet State, "Chocolate" (Doubleday, Doran), Leonid Leonov's "Soviet River" (Dial), Felix Salten's "The City Jungle" (Simon & Schuster), a book which it is needless to say concerns itself with animals; Vicki Baum's "And Life Goes On" (Doubleday, Doran), and, for lovers of Colette, in "The End of Chéri" (Putnam). The long promised final volume of Proust's "The Past Recaptured" (Boni), is announced again. As yet we have seen neither galley nor page of the book.

And now we draw to an end of the space for our fiction. Yet there are books we meant to include in our enumeration to which we find we have given nary a word.

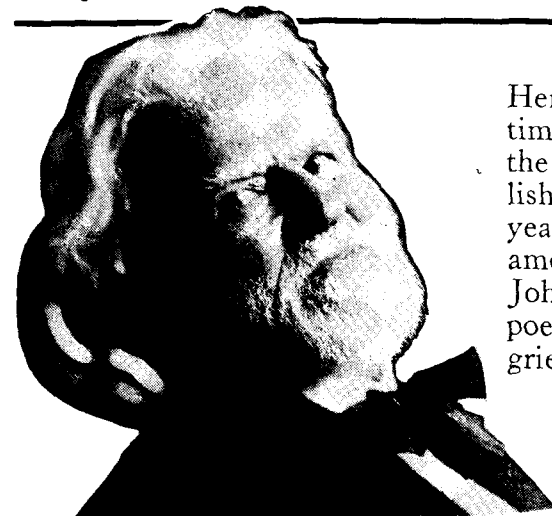
We'll list them, at least, for you, though we have no leeway to discuss them. Here they are: "Passing Strangers" (Harcourt, Brace), by Felix Riesenberger; "The Master of the House" (Cape-Ballou), by Radclyffe Hall; "The Birthday" (Cape-Ballou), by Samuel Rogers; "Family Name" (Dial), by Arnold Lunz; "Stormbury" (Macmillan), by Eden Phillpotts; "The Month of May" (Century), by Jane Dashwood; "Broken Arcs" (Holt), by Erica Zastrow; "November" (Roman), by Gustave Flaubert (now first appearing in English); "The Mother" (Henkle), by Yusuke Tsurumi, a best-selling Japanese author; "Women Live Too Long" (Harcourt, Brace), by Vina Delmar; "Unclay" (Viking), by T. F. Powys, a book mingling humor and allegory, and setting forth what happened when Death came to the village; and Marguerite Steen's "Unicorn" (Century).

Alas and alack! We forgot the detective stories, and we are far too fond of indulging in literature of the kind ourselves to allow such an omission to go unretrieved. Here is a selection of titles from the still constant flow of mystery tales: "The Dr. Thorndyke Omnibus" (Dodd, Mead), by R. Austin Freeman (there's good hunting here); "Murder in the House of Commons" (Houghton Mifflin), by Mary Agnes Hamilton; "Miss Pinkerton" (Farrar & Rinehart), by Mary Roberts Rinehart; "Peril at End House" (Dodd, Mead), by Agatha Christie; "The Tragedy of X" (Viking), by Barnaby Ross; and "The Greek Coffin Mystery" (Stokes), by Ellery Queen.

William Edwin Rudge make the following announcement to subscribers to "The Private Papers of James Boswell": "After the first six volumes were published, and while volumes VII, VIII, and IX were in the press, additional manuscripts of James Boswell were discovered in an old croquet box at Malahide Castle. The owner communicated with Colonel Isham who immediately acquired these papers by pure chance. Of completely unpublished matter they included twenty-two letters by Boswell, Lord Kames, Lord Lonsdale, Richard Penn, etc., approximately one hundred and fifty pages of Journal, and Boswell's manuscript material for writing his proposed Life of Lord Kames. All the new material following in date later than the ninth volume will be included without extra expense to subscribers. This has meant a virtual doubling of the size of the volumes as originally planned. Even so, it now appears that there will not be space in volume XVIII to include the index. For this reason we announce an additional volume, No. XIX, which will go to subscribers without cost." According to the terms of the contract with subscribers, Colonel Isham was under no obligation to include any of the new material, but he decided that its importance was such that it should be a part of the edition.

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