

ART AND A DASH OF FICTION

Picture Books

MY WAR. By SZEGEDI SZUTS. New York: William Morrow & Company. 1932. \$4.
WILD PILGRIMAGE. By LYN D WARD. New York: Harrison Smith & Robert Haas. 1932. \$3.
THE SEAL IN THE BEDROOM. By JAMES THURBER. New York: Harper & Bros. 1932. \$2.

Reviewed by GUY PÈNE DU BOIS

A FEW years ago the popular magazines—probably believing the running man could not read intelligently—increased the space given illustrations. Now we have the pictorial novel. Two of the three books listed above—"Wild Pilgrimage" and "My War"—are of this order. Thurber's book is a collection of drawings, some of which have appeared in the *New Yorker*, bearing captions. Still some of these are story telling strips and one collection within the larger one entitled "The Race for Life" is at least a short story. The Szuts drawings have legends but these are given in the beginning of the book, not under them, and need, indeed, rarely be referred to. It is far more successful as a novel than the too theatrical Ward production.

Szegedi Szuts is a Hungarian artist whose exhibition at a gallery there recently won high praise from London critics. He is not confused by art or self-conscious in it. He felt the horrors of the war bitterly and his story is in the end a bitter one. But it has its moments of joy, of youth in love, of youth proud in the trappings of soldiering. Lynd Ward's story, on the other hand, has a *parti pris*. He is more conscious of art than of life. While doing an essentially expressionist job he seems to have feared that too much interest in life, and the recording of it, might contaminate the purity of his art. And his tale with its cast-iron figures and trees and factory chimneys is much too sad to be true. Mr. Thurber's book is not in a class with the other two. It is to be feared that he will sometime learn to draw, to make his puppets resemble the people of everyday life. When this happens they will be taken out of that Thurber world in which they now live and the wonderfully ludicrous situations in which they can now find themselves will no longer be tenable. It is to be hoped that this will not happen soon.

Gaddo Gaddi

THE ISAAC MASTER, a Reconstruction of the Work of Gaddo Gaddi. By FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR. (Princeton Monographs in Art and Archaeology, XVII). Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1932. \$8.

Reviewed by FREDERICK M. CLAPP

THIS is an exception among archaeological books. Written with clarity and ease, it presents with lightness, vision, and humor, an important and intricate problem. Mr. Mather, the charm of whose critical writings is known to so many, appears here as an exponent of the most probing research.

The decoration of San Francesco at Assisi was a turning-point in European art, contemporary with a new feeling for life—a new sense of humility, simplicity, and fervent hope. Such moments are rare. They transform art.

Documents about the church are few, legends confused, and the history of the frescoes obscure. In part they are obliterated. Various attempts have been made to disentangle the styles of the painters who worked there. None has been satisfying nor is the accepted chronology reasonable. Some writers have held that Cavallini, as revealed in the Sta. Cecilia frescoes, influenced much of the work, but Mr. Mather's thesis is more interesting and more carefully studied. He finds the outstanding frescoes preceding Giotto's to be those of the life of Isaac. These he provisionally gives to "The Isaac Master." Painted in a new technique, with a new intensity of observation, they are masterly in execution, and imply study of surviving fragments of the classic world and of early Christian mosaics in Rome.

Mr. Mather then makes clear the likeness between these Isaac frescoes and the episodic mosaics on the façade of Sta.

Maria Maggiore. He shows that tradition gives the latter to the Florentine, Gaddo Gaddi, though recent times have disregarded Vasari and ascribed the whole façade to Rusuti who signed its "Christ in Glory."

We pass then to the mosaics in the Florentine Baptistery. From the relationship of these to Assisi and Rome, Mr. Mather establishes the nature and development of Gaddi's genius. The word is used thoughtfully; for, when a logical chronology is worked out, Gaddi stands out as the great precursor of the modern age, the inspiration of Giotto, the spiritual ancestor of Massaccio, Leonardo, Cézanne, and, in a word, of all painters who have felt vivid representations of mass to be the real problem of painting as an art.

That makes Gaddi the first artist to break with the linear-decorative forms of the Middle Ages and seek in plasticity the truth of form. It gives him an unexpected eminence and wrecks the critical work of those, including Van Marle, Thode, and Venturi, who see in the tender, timid Cavallini the molding force that was finally fully expressed in Giotto's eighteen frescoes of the life of the saint.

Many other relationships come to light in this admirable piece of research. Mr. Mather knows the period as few do. His trained eye and clear head make it possible for him to give body and force to hypotheses that would otherwise dangle in mid air. And he is at pains to tell us when hypothetical threads are spun out thin.

Admirers of the *poverello*, and students of his mystic revaluation of values, will be interested in this book, if they know the vast church that imprisons his anarchical dream. In the world of art studies the book will be much discussed.

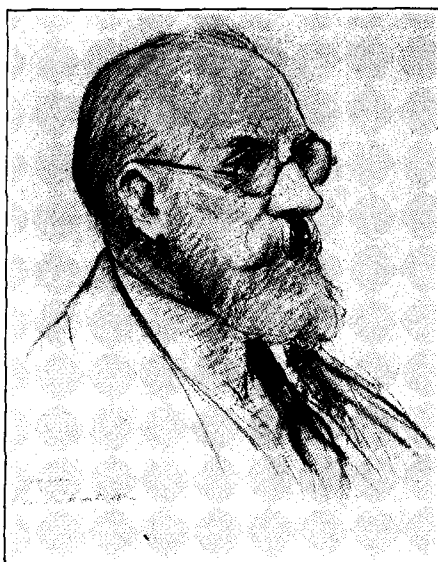
To measure its import we must remember that "The Isaac Master's," or really Gaddo Gaddi's, work at Assisi has been ascribed to the young Giotto by such students as Thode, Zimmerman, Herminin, Toesca, and Berenson.

Matisse

THE ART OF HENRI MATISSE. By ALBERT A. BARNES and VIOLETTE DE MAZIA. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1932. \$5.

Reviewed by FRANK JEWETT MATHER

THIS is one of those closely knit studies in analysis which characterize the critical work of the Barnes Foundation. The methods of Matisse's picture making are presented clearly, consistently, and in every technical aspect, and each chapter is followed by a summary, sometimes not much shorter than the chapter itself, while apart



HENRI MATISSE.
 Reproduced from "Drawn from Life."
 by S. J. Woolf (Whittlesey).

from the general analysis of Matisse's design, many pictures are separately and more elaborately analyzed. All this involves, from the point of view of the general reader, an inordinate repetitiveness, but for the special student, for whose instruction apparently the book is written, the procedure has obvious advantages.

On the critical side Matisse is treated as a consummate virtuoso in decorative design—a judgment which no unprejudiced person is likely to controvert. In Matisse the emphasis of all decorative possibilities involves a sacrifice of more general and important meanings inherent in his subject matter. In short, for the authors, his amazing resourcefulness and versatility lead him away from the greater meanings, and make him an artist of the lesser sort—what Sir Joshua would have called a painter in the "ornamental manner." All the same Matisse is to be regarded as the most important of contemporary artists. Here an ultimate consoling bouquet seems to be handed to the painter by critics who are suddenly aware that they have been too much his candid friends.

Much stress is laid upon Matisse's very astute consultation of the most various traditions,—Byzantine, Coptic, Persian, Japanese, Chinese, Negro. Much of this was already in the air, but the treatment admirably reinforced by well-chosen illustrations is refreshingly concrete and complete. That Matisse has always fully assimilated his favorite traditions is the constant contention of the authors. From the evidence they offer, most readers may feel that Matisse is rather an egregious eclectic than, even as a decorator, fully creative.

Much is made, too, of a principle of "transferred values," by which the picture tends to ape the preciousness of other arts—mosaic, tapestry, Persian tiles, flags, cretonnes, negro sculpture, and these transfers are ingeniously demonstrated by the illustrations. The authors approve a procedure the merit of which is most questionable. A good case could be made for the Matisse being always inferior to the exemplars from which they derive. For example it may be doubted if any Persian or Japanese Matisse is anywhere near as fine as a fine Persian or Japanese thing. In short, the transferred value may seem always to be reduced—to be vitiated by eclecticism.

On all such matters the authors while holding their own positions clearly and strongly, present the whole evidence so that the reader may draw his own conclusions. If a seminar were to be conducted anent the art of Matisse, this book would give an ideal point of departure. The authors are to be congratulated upon their sureness of touch and selection.

A Picaresque Tale

A YANKEE ROVER. The Adventures of Jonathan Drew During the Years 1824-29. By CHRISTOPHER WARD. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1932. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

THE best feature of these narratives of a Yankee wanderer which Mr. Ward is writing is the gusto they show for the varied scenes of American life a hundred years ago. Because they were written with keen enjoyment they can be read with enjoyment. The contrasting colors of Southern plantations, Eastern cities, and Western frontier, the picturesqueness of rough human types, the flavor of provincial dialects, the adventures then to be encountered in lawless communities, have touched the author's imagination. He would like to have been alive in 1825. He makes the reader wish that he also had been a foot-free traveller when the Erie Canal was just open, the South was covering new territories with cotton and slaves, the Mississippi was becoming alive with steamboats, buffalo were still being shot in Iowa, the Santa Fé trail was growing crowded, and our population was catching the full impulse of the Jacksonian spirit.

This second volume of Jonathan Drew's peregrinations shows the same merits and defects as the first. It is obviously written out of a synthetic inkbottle. The author has ransacked dozens of old travels, autobiographies, histories, and gazetteers—but above all, travels—for materials; he has carved out what he wanted with eager hand, and sometimes the origin of whole blocks is patent to anybody who knows the literature of the time. He has crammed his pages with adventures, till Jonathan Drew enjoys three or four

times as many as even the most reckless and enterprising youth could have found. Though he has drawn many skilful sketches of American types, he has not really created a single character—has not



CHRISTOPHER WARD

breathed the breath of life into Drew himself. His picture of America a century ago is a melodramatic picture. So much for the faults of the book; but every fault is counterbalanced by a virtue. The tale is racy, it is authentic, it has a strong narrative interest, and taken simply as a panorama of the rough-and-ready aspect of America in 1825-30, it is equally instructive and entertaining. It is to be read full pace, for broad effect, without pausing to think of improbabilities or blemishes; and when so read, it produces a marked impression. The readers for whom it is designed will rise from it with a fuller understanding of our national past, a better appreciation of the qualities our ancestors showed in hewing a civilization out of the wilderness.

Mr. Ward is at his best in his quieter, more descriptive chapters; he is at his worst when his zest for action leads him into violence piled on violence. These gouging matches, bowie-knife duels, hairbreadth escapes from robber gangs, Indian battles, and prairie fires may suit adolescents, but an adult taste prefers more sober fare. Fortunately we are given it. The present story opens in the South, with a graphic sketch of Charleston people and manners and with some scenes of slave life that are neither sentimentalized nor coarsened. There is a good account of White Sulphur Springs at the beginning of its heyday. Better still are the descriptions of Ohio River traffic and of navigation on the lower Missouri when Independence was a new town. The outfitting of Santa Fé caravans, the sights and sensations of the slow journey to the Southwest, and the aspect of Santa Fé itself, are vigorously set forth with material drawn from Gregg and many another old book. Encounters with Kaws and Comanches give Mr. Ward an opportunity to treat of Indian life and character. Altogether, it is an engaging book, and we shall gladly follow Jonathan Drew in another volume into the eighteen-thirties.

Writing in her "Life of Lord Oxford" of a railway journey with her father immediately after Asquith's defeat in the general election of 1924, Lady Bonham-Carter says: "I looked across at father in an agony of solicitude (for I knew how the good-byes had moved him), then, meeting his calm gaze, I realized suddenly that he had already made his peace with events. Groping wildly for a lifeline that might draw me into smooth waters by his side, I asked in as steady a voice as possible, 'I suppose you haven't by chance got an old P. G. Wodehouse in your bag that you could lend me?' A smile of instant response, mingled, I thought, with relief, lit up his face as he replied triumphantly: 'Being a provident man, I have got in my bag, not one, but four brand-new ones!'"

The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received.

Fiction

THE ADVANCES OF HARRIET. By PHYLLIS BOTTOME. Houghton Mifflin. 1933. \$2.

At seventeen Harriet Greke is certain that direct methods in love work best, having proved the theorem on her native heath, on the squire's son, Cyprian. But in Paris, where she goes to join her elder half-sister, Anne, she encounters a perplexing code of ethics when she attempts to ensnare Pierre and to come between Anne and her admirer, Michael Ainley. She is led to the fountain of French wisdom by Pierre, by Anne, by Madame de Brissac, and others—but is incapable of drinking much therefrom. Before the rebellious Harriet has done, every fragile piece in the china-shop is threatened with destruction. Phyllis Bottome writes dexterously and with insight of French life, and "The Advances of Harriet" will surely be popular among readers of light fiction.

THE LONELY MAN. By GILBERT FRANKAU. Dutton. 1933. \$2.50.

In this swank tale of love and the secret service Mr. Frankau lavishes his gilt and glamour on that lonely man of mystery, Marcus Orlando, member of Department Y, and the last of a long line of kings. Worshipping woman as *casta et pura*, Marcus has just divorced his second wife, Lalage, when he meets Alix Ingram. When Alix, too, shows a foot of clay Marcus accepts a perilous mission to Angora. There he encounters Alix's betrayer; recites his tale of woman's infidelity to his old friend Mustapha Kemal; and in Trans-Caucasia risks worse than death. Through it all he asks if love be flesh-thing or soul-thing, and mutters, "Kismet, Kismet." But "in the coolth of the evening," as Mr. Frankau says, all ends happily.

DAMNED IF THEY DO. By HELENA HUNTINGTON SMITH. Morrow. 1933. \$2.

Miss Smith's book is less a novel than a tract: a study of marriage versus career; domesticity and babies versus freedom and the maintenance of individuality. As such, it may be appraised from two viewpoints—its success as a novel; its success as a tract.

Since the book is primarily didactic in concept and execution, it deserves attention first on that score. The quotation from Euripides's "Medea" provides a keynote: "Sooner would I stand Three times to face their battles, shield in hand, Than bear one child." In common with many before her, the author has discovered the primitive and bloody horrors of childbirth, its inevitable sequelæ: weariness of the flesh and spirit, lack of freedom, loss of attractiveness. The cause and its results she sets down here with a surprising lack of imagination; she takes a random shot at the old-school physician, drags in stray characters to express various sidelights on the problem, indulges in obvious sym-

bolic comments. She sets forth self-evident conclusions with an air of discovery: that the bearing of children is a chain for the woman (unjust, undignified, humiliating, painful); that the barrenness of a woman can be just as undignified, humiliating, painful, and unjust—Damned if they do . . . and if they don't! No new light is shed on the subject of parturition and perhaps it never will be, for there remain a few things still beyond human understanding and evaluation.

As a novel, "Damned If They Do" is adequate and commonplace. It is still within the province of the artist to illumine the intricate relationships of human beings and by the synthesis of his insight and his art, stir emotion in the reader. To this presentation, in fiction, of the marital difficulties of Marny and her husband Brad, and the complications introduced in the person of the other woman, Kay, Miss Smith has contributed little insight, a few more obstetrical details, a very ordinary understanding of life and small art.

International

RUSSIA AND ASIA. By PRINCE A. LOBANOVOV-ROSTOVSKY. Macmillan. 1933. \$2.50.

The author of this volume, an assistant professor of history in the University of California, at Los Angeles, has given us an excellent survey of a vast and intricate field of international activity. When we realize that Russia is in contact with other countries of Asia from Turkey to Japan and that she has had intimate if not violent relations with all of them either under the Czars or under the Soviets, we the more readily appreciate the magnitude of the task and the skill with which the author has brought a vast amount of material into proper perspective.

It is not only in proper perspective but it is readable and understandable. More books like this would make it easier for the people of this country to comprehend the import of various world problems and the manner in which they impinge upon our own welfare. It is particularly timely as a background for the present position of Russia with regard to the conflict between China and Japan.

Chinese statesmen must time and again have paralleled the thought of Li Hung Chang after he had visited Russia in 1896: "If Russia did not want to control us in all our home affairs what a strong alliance would be possible between us." Japanese statesmen might also find something there to ponder over.

BELLES LETTRES

The Epistolary Novel. G. F. Singer. Univ. of Pa. Pr. \$3.

MISCELLANEOUS

America on Trial. P. Phelps. New York: Powers. *Shorthand Letters of Samuel Pepys*. Transcribed and ed. E. Chappell. Macmill. \$2.75. *Scottish Abbots and Social Life*. G. G. Coulton. Macmill. \$3. *Earth Oil*. G. Egloff. Cent. \$1. *Youth and Sex*. M. Booth. Morrow. \$2. *Scotland Yard*. A. F. Neil. Doubt. Dor. \$2.50. *Norwegian Sailors in American Waters*. K. G.

Northfield. Minn.: Norweg.-Am. Hist. Ass. \$2.50. *Toward the Understanding of Karl Marx*. S. Hook. Day. \$2.50. *Deck Sports*. M. H. Feddersen. Hale, Cushman, & Fli. \$2. *Business—a Profession*. L. D. Brandeis. Hale, Cushman, & Fli. \$3. *London*. E. O. Hoopp. Hale, Cushman, & Fli. \$2.50. *The Story of the Garden*. E. S. Rohde. Hale, Cushman, & Fli. \$4.50. *The Mystery Puzzle Book*. L. Wren and R. McKay. Crow. \$1.50. *Can Business Build a Great Age?* W. Kixmiller. Macmill. \$2.50. *Language*. L. Bloomfield. Holt. *Agricultural Systems of Middle Europe*. Ed. O. S. Morgan. Macmill. \$5. *Forced Labor*. W. Wilson. International. \$1.50. *The Young Stamp Collector's Own Book*. E. P. Butler. Bobbs-Mer. \$2.75. *The Great Technology*. H. Rugg. Day. \$2.50.

FICTION

Banana Bottom. C. McKay. Harp. \$2.50. *Hag's Nook*. J. D. Carr. Harp. \$2. *The Great Crooner*. C. B. Kelland. Harp. \$2. *In God's Land*. M. A. Nexo. New York: Peter Smith. \$2.50. *The Years of Love*. M. Widdemer. Far. & Rin. \$2 net. *Man and Wife*. B. Brown. Kend. \$2. *Ranchero*. S. E. White. Doubt. Dor. *Around the Corner*. A. Pound. Sears. \$2.50. *Lake of Fire*. L. Houser. Kendall. \$2.50. *A Watch in the Night*. H. C. White. \$2. *Outside Eden*. J. C. Squire. Knopf. \$2.40. *White Man, Brown Woman*. T. L. Richards and T. S. Gurr. Dodd, Mead. \$3. *New Road*. M. Colby. Vik. \$2.50. *The Ladies' Road*. C. Hinkson. Longm. Green. \$2.50. *The Green Scamander*. Hought. Mif. \$2. *City Without a Heart*. Hought. Mif. \$2. *One, None, and a Hundred Thousand*. L. Pirandello. Dutt. *On the Hill*. L. Gibbs. Appl. \$2. *Human Nature*. E. Wharton. Appl. \$2. *Murder on Shadow Island*. G. Weston. Far. & Rin. \$2 net. *Wilderness Walls*. J. Rolyat. Dutt. \$2.35. *Solal*. A. Cohen. Dutt. \$2.40. *The Wrong Murder Mystery*. C. Berry. Dutt. \$2.

Children's Bookshelf

IN spite of the countless efforts no memorable story has ever been written by merely stringing together a grandfather, a hired man, a hay wagon and four children and calling the result Happy Days on the Farm. "Cherry Farm" by Mary W. Thompson (Stokes, \$1.50) is no better and no worse than the usual Happy Days and the little dressed up girl and the smart alec boy from the city all jump in the hay, are chased by a bull, and hunt for treasure on a rainy day. But somehow they are not alive. There is one nice chapter in which Lucy takes a root of catnip to a city friend to plant in her garden, and the most surprising results occur. Wanda Gag should have illustrated that bit. "Cherry Farm" is very light summer reading.

In "Pyxie" by Ethel C. Phillips (Houghton Mifflin, \$2) is a little eight-year-old boy who lives in the pine woods of New Jersey. We meet him as his life is changing from an irresponsible existence in the woods with gypsies to that of the adopted child of Miss Mattie, who sends him to school in clean overalls and encourages him to read books from the travelling library. His creator is not satisfied with so much improvement in a year but she must make a hero of him, too, which seems unnecessary for one so young.

"The Four Young Kendalls" by Eliza Ann White (Houghton Mifflin, \$1.75) is a tale of four city children and their learning to like their new stepmother and of her tactful management of them and their pets in a new house in the country. If I were a child I should want to know much more about the children's private adventures and a good deal less about their stepmother. Surely they must sometimes have slid down the laundry chute or jumped off the garage roof or made a hut.

"Two Boys," written and illustrated by Lincoln Fay Robinson (Doubleday, Doran, \$1.50), is a book to praise wholeheartedly. The words without the pictures or the pictures without the words stand far above the average child's book of everyday life. The story is of the author's own childhood and not so far distant at that, as he is only lately out of Harvard. He and his older brother went to live on a farm when they were four and seven or thereabouts. The crayon drawings on every page show their daily life for several years, and what a life it was from the day they drove up to the door of the farm with a grand flourish in a surrey with an elegant fringed canopy. From that moment on what things there were to do and investigate! Nine-year-old George says, "That doesn't seem like a book to me because they only did the same things we do, and that boy's hair doesn't stay combed any better than Richard's does. Evidently these boys in the book had parents because they went on Bird Walks which someone must have put them up to, and they had Perry Pictures which someone must have given them, but both parents were busy attending to their own affairs such as an architect office or having a baby, and did nothing to interfere with their children's growing up and looking at the Dipper and writing stories and poems, beyond housing, feeding, and clothing the creatures. I'm sure the author cannot be induced to do a Twins' Series but perhaps he will take the time to set down his schoolboy adventures as amusingly as he did these earliest memories.

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