

The New Books

Belles Lettres

THE HEART OF EMERSON'S ESSAYS.

Selections from his complete works. Edited with an introduction and notes by Bliss Perry. Houghton Mifflin. 1933. \$3.

Although the fact seems to be unmentioned, this volume is with minor exceptions a reprint, selling for three dollars, of Professor Perry's much less expensive "Selections from the Prose Works of Ralph Emerson," published in 1926 in the Riverside College Classics. In reprinting, a few unimportant changes have been made. The brief bibliography has been shifted from the front to the back of the book. For the older section headed "Letters" there has been substituted a section headed "Out of Doors," containing the essays "Country Life," and "Concord Walks," hardly comparable in intrinsic value to some of the great essays omitted. Most of the other selections are well chosen. To the scanty and not very critical bibliography have been added references to Rusk's forthcoming edition of Emerson's letters, and to studies of Emerson by Sakmann, Russell, Michaud, Carpenter, Van Wyck Brooks, and Parry himself. In the Introduction the word "student" is changed to "reader" in designating the person addressed; the change is well advised, since the volume is one much better suited to the needs of the general reader than to the needs of the student. For the eight-page Introduction is of the sort which the former will describe as charming and uncontaminated with pedantry, while the latter will be apt to regard it, when compared with recent studies of Emerson, as perfunctory, lacking in precision, and as evading the great problems in the interpretation of Emerson's thought by repeating Dodges such as "he refuses labels and classifications." Our scholarly journals contain precise and exhaustive studies of the influence on Emerson of such factors as the frontier, science, current views of evil, American politics, romanticists such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Carlyle and current theories of literary expression and criticism; but none of these important modern studies seem to be mentioned or drawn upon. The book will be, however, a pleasant and reasonably sound introduction to Emerson for the middle-aged novel-reader who finds vague generalities enjoyable. H. H. C.

Biography

DOCK WALLOWER. The Story of "Big Dick" Butler. By Richard J. Butler and Joseph Driscoll. Putnam. 1933. \$2.50.

A gigantic London-born Irishman who fought his way—not infrequently with his fists—from the slums of the New York waterfront to a seat in the Assembly, who helped Harry Thaw to escape from Matteawan, who was head of the long-shoremen during the war, and who heard the shots which killed Herman Rosenthal, with whom he had been talking only a few minutes before, has obvious biographical possibilities. He and the writer who undertakes to translate the action and the color of his life and personality into print are also under the temptation to exaggerate, if not to invent. In this volume the reader is put on his guard at the outset by the ambiguous statement that what "Big Dick" relates "is the gospel truth, mellowed and strengthened by age like the whisky of which he is so fond." The book, however, is doubtless essentially accurate and it is certainly entertaining, with its stories of ballot-box stuffing, "beating up" of opponents, and wire-pulling, and graft.

"Old days" are likely to seem more picturesque than those of the present, especially to one who has lived in them, and hence it is not surprising, if a bit amusing, to see "Big Dick" ranging himself with *laudatores acti*. In doing so he makes an occasional slip, as when he remarks, "Elections nowadays are sissy affairs. Nobody gets killed any more." Only a few days ago somebody got killed in New York in connection with a primary election. He also makes the statement that "there's no better practical politician in the country" than John F. Curry, the leader of Tammany Hall. If this statement was ever true, it is left looking silly by recent developments. Grafting, he finds, has had to change some of its methods. You can't simply collect and put the money into the bank, because that leaves a record. So does a check. Then there is the income tax law. Nor can you safely buy real estate or other tangible property,

because such transactions are easily traced. Even if you take cash, you have to inspect it to see that it is not marked. "The safest way to do is to spend the money as fast as it pours in." Many grafters have always followed that course, including "Big Dick." R. J. D.

Fiction

A WICKED WOMAN. By Anne Austin. Macmillan. 1933. \$2.

Miss Austin, highly successful with murder mysteries, now tries a different sort of murder story. Naomi Trice, maltreated wife of an East Texas poor white, kills her husband under circumstances that would have won her an acquittal from any jury on earth. Too ignorant to realize this, and tormented by a revival-trained conscience, she makes a bargain with God—given ten years to bring up her five children, she would thereafter be ready to confess her crime if the remains were ever discovered.

This may be plausible enough, given Naomi's background; but what follows strains credulity beyond endurance. Naomi is instantly and unfailingly successful, her children are all preternaturally brilliant, she becomes a civilized person. (All this in Waco, whither she had moved from Beaumont after the killing.) Improbable luck is balanced by improbable misery; Naomi retains her sense of sin, does her best to keep her children from loving her, and persistently refuses the man she passionately desires even though he is faithful to her with nothing to go on but a kiss every two years. Even the author seems to realize that this last is a bit implausible; but she asks you to swallow all the rest, including a couple of newspaper editors who seem to have more leisure to devote to working for Naomi than any newspaper editors known to this reviewer ever had for anything. It is pretty hard to sympathize with a heroine whose only misfortunes are in her own, or her creator's imagination. Eventually, in the murder trial which clears Naomi, Miss Austin gets back to her own stuff, and does it very well. E. D.

THE FLUTTER OF AN EYELID. By Myron Brinig. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. \$2.

"South Wind" was published in 1917, and ever since then novelists have been trying to improve on it. This one, about a colony of halfwits in Southern California, is a little honey. Some people may read it with the idea of getting the dope on certain local celebrities, thinly disguised, but these are even less interesting here than in the newspapers. Myron Brinig's previous novels showed signs of a serious talent. Try this, by way of contrast:

He observed that she had a way of fluttering her eyelids with their long golden lashes.

"And you?" he dared to address her at last. "What do you do?"

"I give and receive pain," she said.

"Ah, that's interesting," said Caslon, already in pain.

Lad said nothing. . . . Another young woman, a few yards away, dressed in a severe, tailored suit, was also receiving pain from Sylvia. Above the heads of the two young women and the young man, the leaves of a pepper tree rustled in torrents of impetuous desire; nearby, the cacti were phallic in shape. The sun had an aphrodisiacal glow and warmth.

Like it?

E. C.

LEAVE THE SALT EARTH. By Richard Warren Hatch. Covici-Friede. 1933. \$2.25.

This is the second novel in a group, collectively titled "The Bradfords," of which the first was called "Into the Wind." In "Leave the Salt Earth," the story of the Bradford family is carried on into the 'seventies. The new England family, traditionally active in shipping and farming, feels here the influence of new conditions, when ship-building is no longer profitable and when the soil is insufficient to support a large family. One of the young Bradfords strikes out in the steel mills, and after a time at Pittsburgh returns to kill himself—accidentally—in a desperate and foolhardy attempt to prove that the adopted daughter of the family, Ellen, really loves him. Thomas goes to sea for a time, but in the end realizes that the day of the sailing ship is past, and goes to work in Boston as a printer.

The story is told with meticulous finish, in carefully rounded episodes that veil, but do not obscure, its lack of much inner (Continued on following page)

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WHERE BOOKS ARE HEADING

By
HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

Mr. Canby has written this very interesting article for the next issue of THE SATURDAY REVIEW. He discusses the way books are reflecting the new trends of life in America and the dangerously critical situation in Europe during the past few months and whether this leads toward literature or away from it. One thing is certain, some very exciting books have recently been published and others are about to appear. You will want to read this article.

NEXT WEEK
IN

The Saturday Review
of LITERATURE

25 W. 45th St., New York City

(Continued from preceding page)

vitality. The splashes of romantic color seem a bit too conscientiously applied. We get a breath of New England—the real New England, of sailing ships and rocky hills—but very little of its vigorous, lusty life. C. S.

DESCRIBE A CIRCLE. By Martin Hare. Harpers. 1933. \$2.

Miss Martin Hare wrote a novel called "The Enchanted Winter" which lived up to its title. "Describe a Circle" is typically disappointing, in the manner of so many second novels. It isn't bad; it just isn't much of anything. Fanny, the heroine, chucks her wealthy middle-aged lover with the purpose of finding the good life; she goes through several mild little episodes, and ends by falling in love with some one much more uncongenial than the one she gave up in the first place. The idea is to be a pleasant little English comedy, but like English cooking it succeeds only in being English. E. C.

Poetry

RUSSIAN HEROIC POETRY. By N. Kershaw Chadwick. Cambridge University Press (Macmillan). \$4.

Russia possesses a rich and varied store of popular ballads, the two most important divisions of which are the *byliny* and the historical songs. The *byliny*, the oldest and the most interesting class of the ballads, deal with subjects of earlier date than the formation of the Muscovite state; many of them concern heroes connected with the court of Prince Vladimir of Kiev, who ruled in the tenth century, a smaller number have their setting in the free city of Novgorod. They treat of only about forty subjects, preserved in almost countless variants. After the sixteenth century they gave way to the "historical songs," which, though they preserve the general technique of the *byliny*, are poorer in imaginative quality, tending to become a mere chronicle of events, a sort of oral newspaper.

Hitherto there has been available in English only one volume devoted entirely to translations of the Russian ballads, Miss Hapgood's "Epic Songs of Russia," first published in 1886. Miss Hapgood fashioned out of the *byliny*, to which she confines her attention, a good story book, which gives an adequate idea of the content of the most important ballads, but hardly any conception of their style. Mrs. Chadwick's volume is far more satisfactory. In it, following closely the texts found in the Russian collections, to which she refers accurately, she gives literal, line for line translations of selected ballads, ranging in subject from the mythical Svyatogor to the campaign of Nicholas I against Warsaw in 1831. Her introductions and notes are in general competent, setting forth the condition of ballad poetry when it was collected from the peasantry in the nineteenth century, and giving some information as to the present views concerning it. In a word, her book deserves a hearty welcome from all English readers interested either in folk lore or in Russian literature. G. R. N.

Religion

FAITH: AN HISTORICAL STUDY. By Stuart Means. Macmillan. 1933. \$2.50.

The Pastor Emeritus of Saint John's Protestant Episcopal Church in New Haven, Conn., has poured the fruits of over thirty years of study into a book which traces the forces that mould the different forms of expression which faith has taken throughout the history of the Church. The result is a compact and readable book which reveals not only a wide acquaintance, but also a deep sympathy, with the thought of the great minds of the past. Dr. Means begins with the origin and development of the concept in Judaism, and then describes its full flowering in the New Testament. He follows the course of faith through the difficult second and third centuries. Its fortunes through the break-up of the classic world, the age of the Schoolmen, and the time of the Reformation, are shown as they are reflected in the lives and thought of Saint Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Martin Luther respectively.

The book is valuable not only for the intrinsic worth of its scholarly approach, but also for its interesting excursions into the mystery religions, Manicheism, Pelagianism, and the monastic movement. The author reveals a rare gift of insight into the manifold influences which went to make up these systems. His debt to Harnack, whose "Apostles' Creed" he has translated, is manifest. It is to be regretted that he does not introduce any of the conflict which faith has had in modern

times with science, or that he does not introduce any of those movements which are affecting faith today, particularly in Germany. Irrespective of these limitations, Dr. Means has written an interesting book, full of sound scholarship, one which is as useful as it is interesting. E. D.

Science

THE WORLD OF FOSSILS. By Carroll Lane Fenton. Appleton-Century. 1933. \$2.

The world of fossils to Dr. Fenton is no dry assemblage of stones and bones, but the epic of life itself, of the origin, heyday, and extinction of race after race of living beings. He tells of their lives, whence they came, what they looked like, how they lived and how they died, and of their importance in the evolution of the stream of life. In this spirit he has drawn the illustrations, to show how the animals he tells of looked in their natural environments. Their history he begins in the Cambrian seas, some six hundred million years ago, when the trilobite, a distant relative of our modern horseshoe crab, was the dominant form. At this period the long evolution of living forms was already well on its way, which is something Dr. Fenton should possibly have emphasized more for the benefit of the layman so as to make clear that, after all, even Cambrian life had a long and honorable ancestry.

Following the trilobites, the author traces the rise of successively higher forms, each from a lowly beginning, and tells the story of typical examples; the armored fish, weird and sluggish amphibians, and their descendants the reptiles which took to the air, the sea and, as gigantic and bizarre dinosaurs, ruled the earth. These in turn vanished, leaving the stage to the mammals; and the mammals themselves, Dr. Fenton believes, are already on the decline. Man himself, far from being a unique development, repeats the old story of a succession of races spreading over the land,—fighting, warring, ending in extinction for some races while a more generalized type was left to propagate a new form of dominant life. So destructive is the new genus *Homo* that its coming Dr. Fenton sees as the greatest calamity the earth has sustained, one from which only insects and germs have benefited. But "in this power to destroy lies man's chief guarantee of a future" says the author, with the qualification that "... the course of life will cease to hold if his species, at least, does not die."

Professor Fenton rounds out his tale by telling how animals, long since gone from the face of the earth were preserved in mud and sand, to be excavated now, millions of years later, from the rocks into which those sediments have hardened. Nor does he neglect to tell the reader how the paleontologist goes about his task of hunting for those same bones, and the care with which he must frequently extract them from their stony cases. A brief history of the study of fossils, a list of references for further reading and of good fossil collections, a glossary of names, and an index complete the book. Dr. Fenton has done an excellent piece of work in popularizing the story of fossils so soundly and so readably, for the benefit of the layman. S. F. K.

Latest Books Received

ART

Rockwellkentiana. R. Kent and C. Zigrosser. Harcourt. \$3.75.

BELLES LETTRES

America in Search of Culture. W. A. Orton. Little, Brown. \$3.

BIOGRAPHY

Thomas Jefferson. G. Lisitzky. Viking. \$2.50. Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence. J. M. Murry. Holt. \$2.50. The Great Doctors. H. E. Sigerist, M.D. Norton. \$4. John Henry Newman. J. E. Ross. Norton. \$2.75. Dolly Gann's Book. D. Gann. Doubleday. \$2.50. An Astronomer's Life. E. B. Frost. Houghton. \$3.50.

ECONOMICS

The Economic World Today. Ed. F. Morley. Univ. of Chic. Pr. \$1.

EDUCATION

Types of Prose Writing. Ed. C. H. Stoves and De W. T. Starnes. Houghton. \$2. Heath Readings in the Literature of Europe. Ed. T. F. Cross and C. H. Slover. Heath. Readings in the Modern Essay. Ed. E. S. Noyes. Houghton. \$1.40. Social Development in Young Children. S. Isaacs. Harcourt. \$4. Healthy Childhood. H. C. Stuart. Apple. Happy Childhood. J. E. Anderson. Apple. Busy Childhood. J. C. Foster. Apple. Molders of the American Mind. N. Woelfel. Columbia Univ. Pr. \$3.

FICTION

Pilgrim Cottages. C. Roberts. Apple. \$2.50. To Live Alone. D. M. Kaye. Stokes. \$2. Describe a Circle. M. Hare. Harp. \$2. The Ladies. S. Hopkins. Harpers. \$2. The Proselyte. S. Ertz. Apple. \$2.50. Solid Citizen. McC. Huston. McBri. \$2. Five Fatal Days. J. Woodford. New York: Carlyle House. \$2. Winners. R. B. Chamberlin. Abington. \$1.50. Beyond Love. F. B. Linderman. Day. \$2. From an Ozark Holler. V. Randolph. Vanguard. \$2. Chinese Destinies. A. Smedley. Vanguard. \$3. Gentlemen, Hush! H. H. Knibbs and T. Lummis. Houghton. \$2. A Nice Long Evening. E. Corbett. Apple. \$2. Madame Clapain. E. Estaunie. Apple. \$2.50. Quentin Durward, Ivanhoe, Kenilworth, Sir W. Scott. Modern Library. \$1. Three Lives. G. Stein. Modern Library. 95c. The Way Beyond. J. Farnol. Little, Brown. \$2.50. The Broad Highway. J. Farnol. Little, Brown. \$2.50. F. P. I. Does Not Reply. K. Siomak. Little, Brown. \$2. No Castle in Spain. W. McFee. Doubleday. \$2.50. The Curse of the Wise Woman. Lord Dunsany. Longmans. \$2. The Woods Colt. T. Williamson. Harcourt. \$2. The Avengers. A. E. Macmil. \$1.50. Flush. V. Woolf. Harcourt. \$2. One More River. J. Galsworthy. Scrib. \$2.50. Cash Item. C. Brody. Longmans. \$2. The Dark Garden. M. Eberhart. Crime Club. \$2. Hell's Desert. F. H. Spearman. Doubleday. \$2. Three Cities. Sholom Asch. Trans. E. and W. Muir. Put. \$3. Gay Life. E. W. Delafield. Harp. \$2.50. Comrades of the Storm. P. B. Kyne. Kinsey. \$2. Eyes of the Wilderness. C. G. D. Roberts. Macmil. \$1.90. Oil for the Lamps of China. A. T. Hobart. Bobbs. \$2.50. A Wicked Woman. A. Austin. Macmil. \$2. She Saw Them Go By. H. W. Chapman. Houghton. \$2.50. The Veil of Veronica. G. von Le Fort. Sheed. \$2.50. Red Clay. F. A. Kummer. Sears. \$2. Old San Francisco. R. Comfort Mitchell. Apple. 4 vols. \$5.

GOVERNMENT

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FOREIGN

Thomas Mann's Novel, Der Zauberberg. H. J. Weigand. Apple.

HISTORY

Introduction to Western Civilization. Ed. G. A. Hedges. Doubleday. \$3.50. The Jails of Virginia. F. W. Hoffer, D. M. Mann, and F. N. House. Apple. \$5. The Two Franklins. B. Fay. Little, Brown. \$3.50. War Memoirs of David Lloyd George. 1914-1915. Little, Brown. \$4. The Right of Search and the Slave Trade in Anglo-American Relations, 1814-1862. H. G. Soulsby. Johns Hopkins Pr. \$1.75. The Stream of History. G. Parsons. Scrib. \$3.

INTERNATIONAL

The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror. World Committee for the Victims of German Fascism. Knopf. \$2.50.

JUVENILE

Pepito the Colt. R. Orton and D. Thorne. Houghton. \$1. Get-a-Way and Harry Janos. M. and M. Petersham. Viking. \$2. No. 11 Joy Street. Ed. M. Lynn. Apple. The Apprentice of Florence. A. D. Kyle. Houghton. \$2. Chinese Rhymes for Children. I. T. Headland. Revell. \$2.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
UNTHINKABLE Francis Sibson (Smith and Haas: \$2.)	Survivors of ill-fated Antarctic expedition find derelict steamer with crew of skeletons—one with its fist clenched.	Thriller, not detective yarn, and capitably done. Closing chapters on what adventurers find at home amazingly good.	Excellent
S. S. MURDER Q. Patrick (Farrar & Rinehart: \$2.)	Girl reporter on ocean voyage writes letters to sweetheart about a poisoning and a drowning and her deductions.	Stands high among popular aquatic mysteries. Lively dialogue, spooky atmosphere, and puzzling problem.	Very good
MURDER AT MOCKING HOUSE Walter C. Brown (Lippincott: \$2.)	Policeman and unknown man disguised as wealthy rounder found dead in mansion dining-room and Steve Harper finds few clues.	Society intrigues and marital philanderings tend to gum action of otherwise excellent thriller.	Readable
THE DARK GARDEN Mignon G. Eberhart (Crime Club: \$2.)	Crafty, astute Chicago detective, solves questionable murder of eccentric old lady on fog-shrouded Lake Shore estate.	Notable for breath-taking suspense, clever sleuthing, real characters, and an air-tight solution.	You'll shudder