

The Clearing House

Conducted by AMY LOVEMAN

Inquiries in regard to the choice of books should be addressed to Miss LOVEMAN, c/o *The Saturday Review*. A stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply.

CHESS INSTEAD OF WAR

WHEN William James suggested a moral equivalent for war he didn't, we suppose, regard chess as qualifying for that purpose. Yet the ancient Hindus, at least the Buddhists among them in whose belief killing under any circumstances was held to be criminal, are said to have invented chess as a substitute for battle. Would that the Germans would so see it, and a generation of Nathan der Weises arise to make it popular! In our ignorance we had always cheerfully accepted the theory that the game first saw the light in Persia, but on investigation we find that in all probability it merely sifted through to the Persians from the Hindus. Its birthplace, indeed, seems as much in dispute as Homer's. All this we discovered in the course of our peregrinations through the *Encyclopædia Britannica* to which we turned after having secured the title of a "book on chess for a half-grown boy" for S. T. B. of *Ballard Vale, Mass.*, merely to see whether its article might prove of additional help to the youngster. It's rather too advanced for him, we believe, though its diagrams might prove of interest to him. The book that he will find useful is *CHESS STEP BY STEP* (Dutton), by Frank J. Marshall and J. C. H. MacBeth, which begins with men and terminology and works up to illustrative games, setting forth and explaining various openings and defenses. This work is simple yet comprehensive, and should stand the beginner in good stead.

ON THE LINKS

This is our sports week, apparently, for in addition to an inquiry on chess we've had a request from N. S. K. of *Bala-Cynwyd, Pa.*, for a book or books on golf which may be considered authoritative. It's gratifying to find sources of information so divergent as Brentano's and Abercrombie & Fitch in complete agreement as to the best volumes—brain and brawn in perfect unison. Both these founts of knowledge recommend *GOLF*, by Bob MacDonald, *GOLF FUNDAMENTALS*, by Seymour Dunn, and *THE GAME OF GOLF*, by Joyce and Roger Wethered, Bernard Darwin, Horace Hutchinson, and T. C. Simpson. The first named volume, *GOLF*, published in Chicago by the MacDonald Golf School, is a lavishly illustrated and detailed work, by one of the most successful professionals of the Middle West. It is, however, expensive, costing ten dollars. Mr. Dunn's volume, *GOLF FUNDAMENTALS*, published by the author in Lake Placid, N. Y., where, as well as in New York City, he has taught the game, is a scientific analysis of it, presenting, along with other illustrations, compass drawings plotting the course of the ball, etc. This costs five dollars. *THE GAME OF GOLF* (Lippincott: \$6), whose authorship, as we noted above, is multiple, contains a history of the game, instruction for playing it, and directions for the building of a course.

PLAYS OF VARIOUS NATIONS

Having thus summarily dispatched play, we'll go on to plays, and the inquiry of V. F. S. of — Well, we're at a loss for V. F. S. hasn't put an address on his letter, and we haven't the self-addressed envelope which no doubt accompanied it at hand. However, in the words of the poet, we'll "shoot an arrow into the air" and trust that it will reach its mark. V. F. S. wants five modern plays, "preferably international as to authorship, but not necessarily modern in 'ethical' character" for a study club of intelligent women. There's an interesting assortment to choose from, of course, and our selection has perforce been rather arbitrary. We think, however, that the club would find rewarding consideration of Hauptmann's *THE SUNKEN BELL*, which is contained in the volume of symbolic and legendary plays in the set of Hauptmann's works (Viking), edited by Ludwig Lewisohn; Maeterlinck's *BLUE BIRD* (Dodd, Mead), in the Alexander Teixeira de Mattos translation; *MAN AND MASSES* (Doubleday, Doran) under which title Ernst Toller's *MASSE MENSCH* has been published in English; *SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR*, by Pirandello, which is in the book called *THREE PLAYS*

(Dutton), and Bernard Shaw's *SAINT JOAN OF THE APPLE CART* (Dodd, Mead), to select from Shaw's more recent plays. If the club wants American plays it might take Marc Connelly's *GREEN PASTURES* (Farrar & Rinehart), or Eugene O'Neill's *STRANGE INTERLUDE*, or *MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA*. It will find an interesting collection of American plays in the recently issued *REPRESENTATIVE AMERICAN DRAMAS—NATIONAL AND LOCAL* (Little, Brown), edited by Montrose Moses, and if it wants to go back as far as Oscar Wilde for witty and entertaining comedy it can secure *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST* or *LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN* in inexpensive editions from French or Putnams. It may interest the club to know that Ernst Toller, who is one of Germany's proscribed writers, is shortly to arrive in this country. Herr Toller was one of the outstanding figures of last summer's P.E.N. Club meeting in Dubrovnik (as beautiful under its post-war name as under the more familiar Ragusa), where his impassioned address confirmed the international delegates in their disapproval of Germany. His trip through Jugo-Slavia, we understand, was a triumphal progress, with cheering crowds awaiting him at railway stations, and groups of students lifting him to their shoulders.

We were about to pass on to another question when suddenly we realized that we had made no mention of Noel Coward; there's to be an omnibus edition of his plays issued by Doubleday, Doran in the fairly near future which can be counted on to contain entertaining reading if the club wants light and amusing badinage. And Eugene O'Neill's latest success, the comedy, *AH, WILDERNESS!* which the Theatre Guild is presenting to full houses, has just been issued in book form (Random House). The movie rights of the play, our friends of the theatrical world tell us, have recently been sold for a sum that sounds as if the depression had fled around the corner. Suddenly, our informant says, the theatrical business has felt a stirring of new life. Even poor plays are running to crowded houses, and there's a general attitude of interest and expectation. We hope it's indicative of a general revival.

EARLY ENGLISH LITERATURE

We've been shying away from the request of R. D. J., *New York City*, for guidance in the study of early English literature (from about 700 to 1400) merely because the field it opens up is so large that we have felt that once launched upon it we shall write on and on to the exclusion of everything else. And yet there's no need of consuming so much space, for R. D. J. can find in the *CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE* (Macmillan) not only the most authoritative brief survey of what he desires but excellent bibliographies that will furnish him direction for further study. The period in which he is interested is covered by Volumes I and II, the first of which runs from the beginning to the cycles of romance, and the second of which carries on from that point to the end of the Middle Ages. As to the special books on the "religious, social, and cultural life of the people" which R. D. J. desires he can turn to that standard and fascinating work, *Traill's SOCIAL ENGLAND* (Putnam), *ENGLISH WAYFARING LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGES* (London: Unwin), by Ambassador Jusserand (whose autobiography, by the way, is about to appear, and a delightful volume it is); and George G. Coulton's *SOCIAL LIFE IN BRITAIN FROM THE CONQUEST TO THE REFORMATION* (Cambridge University Press). Volume XXXV of the *HARVARD CLASSICS* contains early English chronicles and romances, issued by P. F. Collier. There's always Stopford Brooke's *HISTORY OF EARLY ENGLISH LITERATURE* (Macmillan), of course, to resort to, and if R. D. J. has a well-stocked library in his neighborhood he can consult such works as the eight volumes of *A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN ENGLAND*, and Hallam's *INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE OF EUROPE*, a work which had great prestige in its day. But there! We knew we oughtn't to get started on R. D. J.'s question. We'll send him an addendum to this paragraph in due course by letter.

Noteworthy New



Scribner Books

The Conquest of a Continent

by **Madison Grant**

author of "The Passing of the Great Race"

The first history of America in terms of race. Who settled America, where they came from, why they came, where they settled, their racial characteristics, what they did toward building the nation—the whole mighty panorama of American growth graphically pictured and analyzed, with warnings about present dangers and constructive suggestions for future preservation of our national unity.

With 14 maps. \$3.00

What I Like

Selected and Compiled

by **William Lyon Phelps**

A 700-page collection of prose pieces selected by William Lyon Phelps from the writings that he personally enjoys. It ranges from Homer to Ring Lardner: from Sir Thomas Malory to Christopher Morley—a vast amount of good reading that you can dip into anywhere and find something that you will enjoy.

\$2.75

The Dawn of Conscience

The Sources of Our Moral Heritage in the Ancient World

by **James H. Breasted**

author of "A History of Egypt," etc

Going far below previous historical horizons, Dr. Breasted, through his researches in the "Past," proves that the moral sentiments of civilized society originated in ancient Egypt long before the long-accepted "age of revelation." His book is as readable as it is scholarly and breathes new life into civilizations that were old 5000 years before the Christian era.

Illustrated. \$3.00

Bare Hands and Stone Walls

Some Recollections of a Side Line Reformer

by **Charles Edward Russell**

An outspoken history of American "lost causes" since the '80's, "a record of fifty years of revolt against man's inhumanity to man," filled with portraits of forgotten men "done with a bounce that might make Sinclair Lewis envious. . . . A story which is worth your money if you want to know the American past."—*John Chamberlain* in *The New York Times*.

Illustrated. \$3.00

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, NEW YORK



BORIS GODUNOV

By **Stephen Graham**
(author of *Ivan the Terrible*)

The enigmatic Tzar, made famous by Feodor Chaliapin, comes to life in these pages—a narrative of stormy intrigue, authentic and sharply dramatic.

\$2.50 Illustrated

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Books of the Fall

By AMY LOVEMAN

THE exigencies of space brought us to an abrupt halt last week just as we supposed we had come to the end of our list of biographies of the Fall season. But alas and alack, no sooner had we dispatched our copy to the printer than we discovered we had omitted mention of three volumes which certainly should have been enumerated with the others. We hasten to repair our negligence by stating now that few among the works of recent weeks has had the interest or the excellence of the life of Sidney and Beatrice Webb (Houghton Mifflin), by Agnes Mary Hamilton; that all followers of reform and zealots for it ought to find much to hold their attention in Charles E. Russell's "Bare Hands and Stone Walls" (Scribners), and that not only former Yale men but a far wider public should derive enjoyment from A. G. Keller's "Reminiscences of William Graham Sumner" (Yale University Press) whose "forgotten man" has turned up again so vigorously in these past months. And while we're about it—confessing our omissions—we'll take the opportunity of sliding in out of place reference to certain volumes of fiction we had intended to include on our list and forgot in the press of writing. We had meant to state that George Milburn's collection of short stories, "No More Trumpets" (Harcourt, Brace), Erskine Caldwell's "We Are the Living" (Viking), and Dorothy Parker's forthcoming "After such Pleasures" (Viking), all deserved attention. And we forgot of all things H. G. Wells's "The Shape of Things to Come" (Macmillan), an interesting Utopian forecast, and Winifred Holtby's amusing satire, "Mandoa, Mandoa!" (Macmillan).

Now that we've confessed our sins and we hope redressed them, we turn to recent works of history. Two of the most striking volumes in this field are in the form of collections of pictures, "The First World War" (ominous title), a book which Simon & Schuster issued not long ago and which contains an admirably selected succession of photographs revealing the course of the war on all fronts and its incidence upon the civilian pop-

ulations, briefly but affectively captioned by Laurence Stallings, and "The American Procession" (Harpers), a work for which Agnes Rogers has selected photographs presenting the history of the United States from 1860 to the present day and her husband, Frederick Allen, has supplied a running commentary. These are both books of the highest interest. Readers of the earlier volumes of Mark Sullivan's "Our Times" (Scribners) will welcome "Over Here", the fifth volume in the series, which like its predecessors, is lavishly illustrated and overflowing with interesting incident. There is shortly to appear a work which lovers of the Renaissance should turn to with eagerness, Ralph Roeder's "The Man of the Renaissance" (Viking), which, built around the personalities of Savonarola, Machiavelli, Aretino, and Castiglione, constructs a vivid picture of the civilization of their day.

Those who are looking for discussion of more contemporary affairs will find material to their taste in Klaus Mehnert's "Youth in Soviet Russia" (Harcourt, Brace), Harold Nicolson's "Peacemaking" (Houghton Mifflin), an account of the Versailles Conference; in the comprehensive and striking survey by G. D. H. and Mary Cole, entitled "The Intelligent Man's Review of Europe Today" (Knopf), in Walter Lippmann's "Interpretations" (Macmillan), and in Carleton Beals's "The Crime of Cuba" (Lippincott). In connection with Mr. Mehnert's book on youth in Russia we should have mentioned that a new volume is shortly to come from the pen of Maurice Hindus. "The Great Offensive" (Smith & Haas) is a fascinating portrayal of affairs in the Soviet republic at the present day, written with the same animation and the same telling selection of detail which marked Mr. Hindus's earlier books. With his volume might be read Michael T. Florensky's "World Revolution and the U. S. S. R." (Macmillan).

There is a miscellaneous group of publications in the field of belles lettres and the arts which deserves mention and readers. It includes Logan Pearsall Smith's illuminating and stimulating "On Reading Shakespeare" (Harcourt, Brace), "Rockwellkentiana" (Harcourt, Brace),

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The New Books

Belles Lettres

JOSH BILLINGS; YANKEE HUMORIST. By Cyril Clemens. Webster Groves, Missouri: International Mark Twain Society. 1932. \$2.

Josh Billings, or Henry Wheeler Shaw, as he was christened, is a familiar name to most of us, but there are few today who could quote any of his aphoristic sayings, once so popular. His books are out of print, and it has been a half century since his huge, stooping figure last stepped forward on the platform to deliver his famous lecture on "Milk," not a word of which dealt with the subject. But we remember Josh, together with Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, and a host of his other contemporaries, as a typical American humorist—whatever that may mean.

The qualities which we usually associate with our national humor were born on the frontier, whether in Connecticut in the early days or in Missouri or California later. They are principally overstatement, dialect, and an underlying homely wisdom. Josh Billings had all of these; but Mr. Clemens has found in him something else which many of his fellows lacked, the art of the aphorism. He has pieced out his life by gathering the few data still available, and by supplementing them with the recollections and comments of many who knew the man or his work. The result is not a story of incident or action, for the early years when Shaw was in the west are almost wholly undocumented. But a portrait of John Billings the lecturer emerges, and the characteristics of his work are clearly defined. When we realize that some of his sayings, which sound so crude and spontaneous, were pondered for three hours, then written in regular English, and finally translated into homespun, he seems less the clown and more the conscious artist. Such technique suggests Emerson and Poor Richard; and Mr. Clemens has spared no pains in pointing out the kinship. By placing his humorist in the American tradition of aphoristic writing, he had made an incidental, but important, contribution to our literary history. R. E. S.

Biography

THE ENGLISH ECCENTRICS. By Edith Sitwell. Houghton Mifflin. 1933. \$4.

These odd characters are mainly from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Some of them are already familiar, such as Porson, Beau Brummell, Herbert Spencer. Others one may or may not have met with before, such as John Mytton, Edward Wortley Montagu, Thomas Lake Harris (in the "Life of Laurence Oliphant"). But most of them will be new to most readers. The chapters on Quacks, on Sportsmen, and on Men of Learning are particularly good reading. Anything about that terrific scholar, Porson, is apt to be delightful. Captain Philip Thicknesse, the man of many quarrels, Margaret Fuller, and Charles Waterton, have each a chapter to themselves. Margaret Fuller and T. L. Harris are Americans; Margaret Fuller is included because Miss Sitwell wanted to write about her. One remembers any number of notable English eccentrics who are not mentioned. She does not intend to exhaust the subject, but only to present her private collection. It is quite the right way to deal with eccentrics.

Of phenomenally aged folk, one has often read of Thomas Parr, (152); but Louisa Trusco, who died in 1780 at 175, seems to hold the record, with Henry Jenkins next at 169. Miss Sitwell chronicles eleven in the eighteenth century whose ages ran from 130 to 140. As she does not question the authenticity of any I take it they are regarded as established, though I have the impression there are skeptics on the whole subject. In the same chapter with the Ancients are grouped also the Ornamental Hermits. Some of them were employed as features in Gothic landscape, like ruins constructed over bosky dells in the interests of pleasing melancholy. I do not remember whether or not Beers mentions them in his "History of Romanticism." The only ornamental hermit I ever met was in Capri, on the point of the eastern cliff where stands the gilded statue of the Madonna del Succorso. Whether there is a hermit there still under Fascism I have never heard. He was a rather depressed old man in a Franciscan gown, but you could buy of him a bottle of wine which, shared with the visitor, would act favor-

ably on his spirit. John Mytton was a sportsman, but the classification is inadequate. He reminds one of Turgenev's story, "A Desperate Character."

The only eccentrics whom Miss Sitwell dislikes are the misers, and the one she likes best is Charles Waterton, traveller, naturalist, and twenty-seventh inheritor of his ancestral seat, Walton Hall; a "chivalrous, wise, loving, and gay saint," who at eighty still climbed to the tops of trees to look at bird's nests, danced in the snow, and threw his slippers over his head. His adventures were innumerable and all his oddities engaging. A book by a Sitwell is necessarily stylistic, a little sophisticated. Miss Sitwell's purple patches however are not purple, but carefully subdued, and even at times slightly obscure. They do not greatly matter. The portrait of an eccentric is more important than any reflections that may be draped around him. Miss Sitwell's reading in out of the way eighteenth century material is truly enviable. A. C.

Fiction

PAN IN THE PARLOUR. By Norman Lindsay. Illustrated by the Author. Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. \$2.50.

In the first place, Norman Lindsay is an excellent draughtsman. He is secondarily a writer. His essays in the field of the novel have been various. In "Every Mother's Son" he gave us a rather grim analysis of what might be called "Main Street life" in Australia. In his recent "The Cautious Amorist" he produced a self-illustrated volume of considerable hilarity, a book to whose total effect both his talents as a writer and as a draughtsman contributed. The present story would appear to be of the latter order, save that it is not exactly hilarious—in fact leans back toward "Main Street." The illustrations are livelier than the text. They will help the reader. The story is concerned with sexual mixups in the Australian township of Quittagong, seemingly brought to a head by the intrusion of an irritatingly epicene youth, Laurence, who visits the town as the nephew of one of the characters. Apparently he is meant to be the little Pan in the parlor, his influence contributing to the disorganization of several married families, though the seeds of their dilemmas were actually sown before his arrival upon the scene. The book's structure is lopsided.

There is a man who raises chickens when he should be doing something scientific, and a man who writes novels he himself has to print since nobody buys them; and a Roman courtesan sort of wife of the latter, and a wife with a most annoying habit of speech of the former; and there are several other girls and several other men, and a barmaid, and so on. And the present reviewer couldn't really bring himself to care very much about the destinations of any of these characters.

Mr. Lindsay has certain observations to make, concerning the sexual discomfort of the married state as applied to certain types of individual, that contain some sapience. He looks at life with sophisticated humor and thoroughly relishes a bit of naughtiness now and then. He is a convinced pagan. But none of the people he presents to us seem really worth bothering much about. This reviewer will return to "The Cautious Amorist" when he feels larky, and let Quittagong continue to stew in its own juice. Not that there isn't good writing in the book. But the people seem essentially heavy, even in their squabbles, in at least one case of adultery, and in their reconciliations. The flesh governs them and the story rather too importantly for our taste, and the humor is somewhat slapstick. This may be a harsh judgment. But Mr. Lindsay can certainly be funnier—just as in "Every Mother's Son" he could write more interesting realism. W. R. B.

WHITE PIRACY. By James Warner Bellah. Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. \$2.

Written in the quick, sparkling patter of a Broadway show this book moves fast and amusingly. The head of an old Maryland family remakes the fortune which his ancestors dissipated, and builds a colossal "road house" for his two sons and his daughter. Marriages are made and unmade, seductions gayly encouraged, and the whiskey flows freely. Mr. Bellah has Oppenheim's genius for making all his characters likable, drunk or sober. Young and sophisticated, but never blasé, they live with the carefree joy of young

DARK HAZARD

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F. P. A.

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N. Y. JOURNAL

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