

els, still preserved in part in the Cathedral of Grenada. They included Rogier, Bouts, and Memling. Adaptations of the Flemish manner in Spain run from actual copyism.—Professor Post identifies an exact copy of a tiny Jan Van Eyck,—to assimilation of the northern figure style with the old Spanish decorative tradition. It is a pretty dreary art—that of the Gallejos, Masters of Burgos, etc. Only the author's devotion as a specialist could maintain the level of placid interest and curiosity at which he unflinchingly writes. Now and then a reader is caught by an expressive detail, only to remind himself that the best Spanish character painting of this style is, on the most favorable estimate, hardly as good as that of third rate Italian provincial painters—say Cozzarelli or Niccolò Alunno.

On the scholarly side Professor Post follows that tradition of probity, cautiousness, and thoroughness which marks the many encyclopedic works which proceed from Harvard. Such a book is simply a boon to the specialist, and especially a godsend to the harassed graduate student envisaging a general examination. It is a survey of a relatively new and neglected field, a book of pioneer spade-work like that of Crowe and Cavalcasello for Italy, seventy years ago. Indeed the author combines in his own person many of the qualities and some of the defects of these two famous path breakers. The fluid condition of the subject may be judged by the fact that these two new volumes offer no less than 160 pages of necessary addenda to the first three.

Science and Scientists

PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF CONTEMPORARY SCIENCE. By C. E. M. Joad. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$3.75.

Reviewed by F. S. C. NORTHROP

IT is well to remember that science involves the knower as well as the known. And theory which science proposes must provide for the existence of scientists and their knowledge of that which their theories prescribe. In addition, scientists, being human beings, are concerned with what ought to be as well as what is. Hence any adequate scientific doctrine must eventually provide a theory of knowledge and of values.

This book of Mr. Joad's brings the scientific conceptions of Jeans, Eddington, and Russell into conjunction with these two matters. The reader will find it the best introduction by way of science to the epistemological issues with which philosophers concern themselves. No book gives one a better sense of the importance and natural relevance of these more technically professional issues. If philosophers are prone to overemphasize the importance of epistemology, it is equally true that scientists and laymen neglect it. In "Philosophical Aspects of Contemporary Science," Mr. Joad treats this phase of the situation with consummate clarity and great effectiveness.

At no place does this appear more obviously than in his treatment of the position of Eddington. It is no exaggeration to say that when Mr. Joad gets through with the author of "The Nature of the Physical World," there is very little of the latter's position that can be found. What is true of Eddington holds also for Jeans, and, to a lesser extent, for Russell.

But to suggest that Mr. Joad's analysis is devastating, is not to say that his book fails to be constructive. In revealing the difficulties in the conceptions which he attacks, Mr. Joad takes one to the epistemological issue involved, and once having revealed this phase of the scientific situation, he proceeds to outline a positive theory. This theory is that the knowing relation in all phases of knowledge and in all fields of experience is always the same, and is such that the thing known is always other than the knowing subject. This thoroughgoing realism applies to sense data, perceptual objects, such as tables and chairs, scientific objects, such as electrons, and to esthetic and religious objects as well.

This epistemological theory leads him to a pluralistic theory of reality, and to some excellent comments on value. The latter item is worth consideration. Mr. Joad's fundamental thesis with reference to value is that the "idealistic theory" which would make it and the world of science a construction of the human mind degrades value and thereby degrades man. It is born, he holds, of a narrow anthropomorphism which would reduce all to the level of man, whereas value itself being other than man challenges hu-

man imperfections and spurs one on toward superhuman efforts. The same criticism against the "idealistic theory" of religion.

This bare summary should be sufficient to inform the reader that Mr. Joad's book possesses depth and importance, and provides a contribution to contemporary thought concerning the nature of things, which merits serious attention.

One warning may be given. The book tends to assume that the philosophical conceptions of Eddington and Jeans are representative of the philosophical outlook of contemporary science. Mr. Joad refers in his preface to Whitehead and regrets the omission of his ideas. This is a very serious omission and should temper the assumption emphasized in the last part of the book, that the conceptions of Eddington and the discoveries of modern science are synonymous.

Another warning must be noted. Mr. Joad's thesis is that we know only sense data immediately, and that these suggest to us physical objects such as tables and chairs which in turn suggest to us scientific objects such as electrons and protons. It is usual to call the immediately perceived world of sense data, the phenomenal world. For some unspecified reason Mr. Joad calls it the physical world. This forces him to give the world of physics with its tables and chairs and scientific objects a different title. Thus by a mere trick in the handling of nomenclature he seems to show that the world of physics is a non-physical world. The reader will not be misled by this use of terms.

Technique in Fiction

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY NOVEL.

By J. W. Beach. New York: Appleton-Century. \$3.50.

Reviewed by HARLAN HATCHER

THIS book is good enough to make one wish it were much better. Its subject is the technique of the twentieth century novel, and that is a pertinent field for study during the last thirty years. Our novelists have experimented with seemingly every possible method for enlarging and enriching the form of fiction. Often they have been too far in advance of their readers who are, as a class, artistically lazy and sometimes hostile to the new. Any book that attempts to close this separation and to enrich the pleasure of the reader by broadening his understanding of the art behind a good novel must be praised for its worthy purpose.

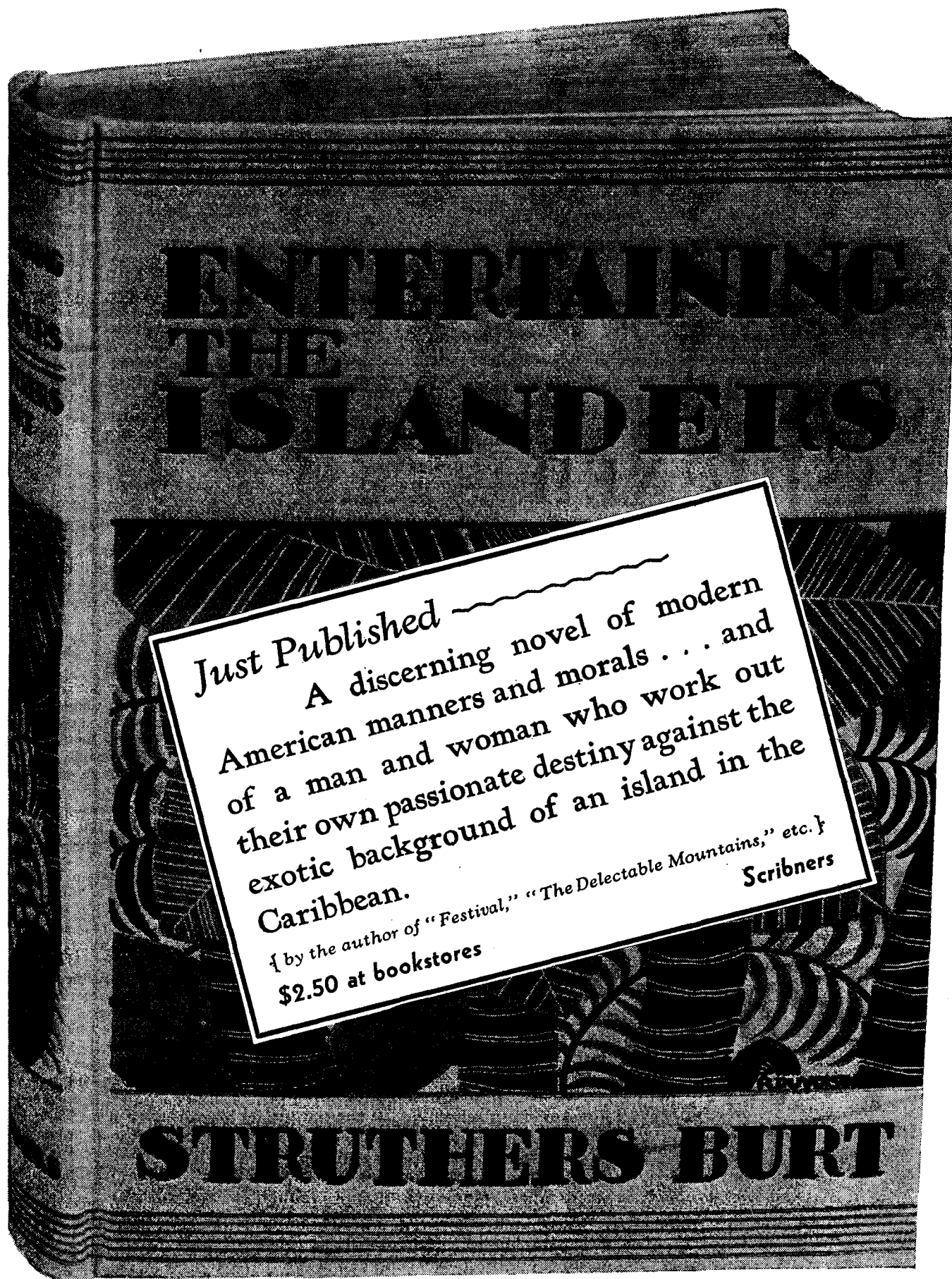
Sometimes, and in its own way, this book is excellent. It covers an enormous field, including most of the great continental as well as the English and American novels. That is no light task. It also reaches back to Fielding and forward to the best seller current on the day of printing, with a section on Faulkner and a mention of "The Good Earth." It tries to isolate and classify the various methods and techniques which have developed in this complex and extensive mass of fiction.

In his discussions of disparate materials, Professor Beach displays a wide but dis-

criminating taste and a fine sense for the technique of the novel. He does well by Dreiser in a particularly good chapter. The section on Joyce contains, within the limits of its space, the best discussion of the method of "Ulysses" that has so far appeared. Great praise must also be offered for the chapters on James, Conrad, and Lawrence, where keen literary criticism is united with an excellent technical analysis.

These things are so good that we wish the whole book were better. But it is not well written. It is rambling, academically talkative, and, in the first third, musty and weighted down with classroom notes on the Fielding to James writers. In this section particularly the style sprawls, and the reader is likely to be irritated by excessive classification and academic jargon.

Further dissatisfaction arises from a confusion of purpose. Much of the book is given over to brief reviews and plot summaries, although the announced purpose is a study of technique. These book notes are often deft, always competent, sometimes illuminating, but they are not always assimilated into the body of the work, and they sometimes seem to be mentioned merely for the sake of mentioning. Strangely enough, among all the novelists who swarm these pages, there is no mention of Ruth Suckow, Kay Boyle, nor Lionel Britton, who have done technically striking things in the novel. On the other hand, Dos Passos rates two complete chapters and a place beside Wassermann, not to mention nearly two score of briefer mentions throughout the book.



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The New Books

Biography

THE STORY OF THE BORGHIAS. By L. Collison-Morley. Dutton. 1933. \$4.

The history of the Borgia family who gave Europe in the century of the Renaissance two popes, a choice collection of wasters and cutthroats, and finally a saint, is here gathered into a single compact and readable volume. Naturally the interest centers on the second pope of the family, Alexander VI, and his offspring, particularly the much married Lucrezia, and Machiavelli's hero, the egregious Cesare, and their familiar story occupies, in fact, nine-tenths of the book. Probably no three persons of their period have been so much written about with such inconclusive results. The disagreement about their characters and acts began in their lifetime and has continued ever since, and although Lucrezia has finally been cleared of the most lurid scandals concerning her, by the labors of Gregorovius whom Mr. Collison-Morley follows in the main, the most contradictory opinions about her father and brother are still vehemently asserted.

Through this maze of argument Mr. Collison-Morley picks his way, attending in the main to balancing the contemporary authorities, though, perhaps from a desire not to impede his narrative, he spends less time than one would wish in criticizing them. His method of judging the scandals about the Borgias is to believe about half of them, and this is perhaps as near to the truth as human fallibility can get with such conflicting evidence. But it leads to some queer results, such as the remark that the best reason to believe Cesare murdered his brother the Duke of Gandia is that no proof has ever turned up, or the decision that probably the Borgias did try to poison some people but that they were not very good at it. After all, Mr. Collison-Morley is guessing like the rest of us: he has studied the sources and read (vide his excellent bibliography) most of the secondary works. And he is still pretty much in the dark. He has not only failed to discover any new fact of importance—that was, perhaps, to be expected—but he has no clear picture in his own mind of these strange persons, no illuminating insight into their background and their problems and what they might have been. And this may be why the Borgias all seem rather pale and unreal in his pages, and why his book remains merely a competent and scholarly handbook instead of a contribution to knowledge or to our sympathetic understanding.

Fiction

THE PLEBEIAN'S PROGRESS. By Frank Tilsley. Covici-Friede. 1933. \$2.25.

The depression has been in bloom long enough now to have borne literary fruit, and Mr Tilsley's novel is a substantial sample of what will undoubtedly be an ample harvest.

In essentials, it relates a tale of almost unmitigated hard luck that befell Allen Barclay, British subject, a young man dowered with sufficient intelligence to have, given the breaks, made his way through life successfully, according to current standards—that is, made a financial success of it. He not only does not make such a success, but he ends on the scaffold, and the progress of this plebeian the author makes convincing at every step, sensibly avoiding the implication that this end is inevitable for all, conditions being as they are.

There was a weak spot in Allen, but mostly he was bewildered. His first step downward came as the result of what we generally call bad luck, but of what Mr. Tilsley ascribes, perhaps justly, to the rottenness of the system. Thereafter, Allen's weakness assisted in his further degradation. A failure at selling accessories for a telephone (on a commission basis), vacuum cleaners, even shoe-shines, he ran the gamut of poverty and despair to land a small job as secretary to a restaurant corporation. By then, however, he was so deeply in debt that he could no longer resist the temptation to augment his income by paltry manipulation of the accounts. He intended to pay it back, God knows, but before he had a chance, he was found out. Despair crystallized, prosecution hung over him, hunger had undermined his stamina, he sought a way out, killed his wife, went to the gallows.

"The Plebeian's Progress" is more convincing as a tract than as a novel. It hammers home with passionate insistence

facts that need no further emphasis, facts that still fail, as the author vehemently declares, to jar the majority of human beings out of their inertia. It is earnest, competent, interesting, and uninspired, and its failure as a work of art lies not in Mr. Tilsley's occasional tendency to be flip, nor in the indubitable truth of his assertions, nor his passionate allegiance to a cause, but merely in his failure to have assimilated his material, to have presented it in a perfect form, in his limitations as an artist.

MRS. BARRY. By Frederick Niven. Dutton. 1933. \$2.50.

Remarkably integral in mood and execution, Mr Niven's novel quietly and persistently explores the character of its protagonist, Mrs. Barry, Glasgow widow and mother of one small son. It is the story of many lives, though focussed almost entirely on one—lives that pass unobtrusively from the cradle to the grave and call forth little attention to their passing.

Mrs. Barry had come down in life; once accustomed to affluence, penury found her just the same—unmoved to hysteria, eternally competent to make adjustments, eternally watchful for the welfare of her child. As far as it is humanly possible so to be, Mrs. Barry was completely selfless; she cared for her lodgers as zealously as she cared for her son. Only herself she neglected, but even death did not surprise or upset her. Forewarned by a month or so, she proceeded, in the same doggedly magnanimous fashion, to make provision for Neil, and then she passed.

That is the story—a story as unobtrusive as Mrs. Barry herself, that should not, however, pass unnoticed in the press of more sensational matter. "Mrs. Barry" is the expression of a mature though limited talent; solid and sincere in its presentation of virtues that have strangely come to be taken for granted despite their rare appearance on the surface of our lives, it deals competently with the life of one of the unheralded millions that surround us every day.

THE RIFFIAN. By Carleton S. Coon. Little, Brown. 1933. \$2.

This is the Odyssey of Ali the Jackal, a big, blond Riffian with the craft of Ulysses and a sense of humor terrifying in the extreme. Brought up in tribal exile near Fez to a contemptuous hatred for the French and a seething determination to reestablish his tribe in the Rif, he joins the French army in order to steal three rifles and, before he can desert, is shipped to France to fight the Germans. Having killed eight Frenchmen from his post as sniper, and been decorated with the Croix de Guerre for the "capture" of the Germans among whom he is found wounded, he returns to Morocco and a series of tumultuous adventures.

Mr. Coon is an anthropologist, obviously familiar with his background. His evident knowledge, together with richness of detail and a certain undertone of bloody irony, lifts a loosely knit adventure story into something a good deal more than that.

THE WHEEL OF LIFE. By Hermynia Zur Mühlen. Translated by Margaret Goldsmith. Stokes. 1933. \$2.

This novel, covering slightly less than a year in the life of an adolescent German girl, is more than slightly reminiscent of the anonymous "A Young Girl's Diary," to which Dr. Sigmund Freud saw fit to write a preface some years ago. Whereas that volume bore the stamp of indubitable authenticity, this work reeks with self-conscious naïveté—the self-consciousness of a presumably mature woman looking back at the naïveté of adolescence and aping it with little enough success.

Granted that the material is, as the jacket-blurb says, "of universal appeal," it is also of such peculiar fragility and is so remote from the conscious processes of the mature that it demands, for completely satisfactory representation, the full powers of unmistakable talent. Thomas Mann has achieved it in his long story, "Disorder and Early Sorrow." In her present novel, Fräulein Zur Mühlen has touched only its surface. Working from the outside, she has been unable to avoid self-consciousness, and in an attempt to reproduce the unconscious humor of the adolescent's reflections on the unknown world, has succeeded only in being slightly ludicrous. It is a sincere and painstaking attempt.

(Continued on page 100)