

AN INTRODUCTION BY
DOROTHY CANFIELD
FOR
Seven Gothic Tales
BY ISAK DINESEN

NEW YORK MCMXXXIV
HARRISON SMITH AND ROBERT HAAS

THIS is the title page of a handsomely printed brochure which will be sent (for 10c) to all readers of THE SATURDAY REVIEW who are interested in sharing with Dorothy Canfield her exotic sensations in tasting a new literary flavor—the flavor of SEVEN GOTHIC TALES. You will hear a great deal more about this captivating book (the April selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club), meanwhile the brochure provides an informative background for your later enjoyment. It will be an addition to your collection of interesting literary items. Just clip the coupon or drop a note to the publishers.

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The New Books

Belles Lettres
REASON AND BEAUTY IN THE POETIC MIND. By Charles Williams. Oxford University Press. 1934. \$2.50.

These studies are not so portentous as the title seems to suggest. "They do not attempt to consider what poets ought to do, only what they have done." They are concerned with literary criticism rather than with esthetic philosophy. And literary criticism is better than esthetic philosophy, more solid, more interesting, and less pretentious. It is better to talk of esthetics apropos of poets than of poets apropos of esthetics. Croce is a good critic because he is a good critic, not because he is a philosopher, and no better critic than others who flourish no philosophy. Mr. Williams is most suggestive when he is least abstract; when he analyzes "The Prelude" or "The Ode to a Nightingale"; when he looks at the relation of English literature to the skeleton in its closet, that "dark realism" which haunts it, that tragedy of an unintelligible world; or when he comforts himself with the thought that perhaps it may be just to say that, in this mode of experience called the world, there are at least two great realities, Shakespeare and Death.

This bitter splendor, this "nightmare Life-in-Death," is no abstraction. The Elizabethans bragged about it, the Jacobians intellectualized it, the Augustans shut it up, the earlier Romantics let it partly out, the Victorians chained it, and since then we have not at all agreed what to do with it. It has, in the course of literature, been received as a new discovery, which is silly; and denied as morbid, which is sillier, and anatomized at great length, which is transitory; and transmuted into sex problems or political problems, which is still more transitory; or made over to the guardianship of a superior intellectual society, which is the silliest and most transitory of all. Marriage with the skeleton is perhaps the wisest intercourse with it, with all that marriage involves of intimacy and strange-

ness. And the child of that marriage "is a being that we shall never understand until we become skeletons ourselves, if then. But that it has always been the closest neighbor of mankind and a continual intimate of the genius of poets, there is no doubt at all." Mr. Williams's book is condensed and worth reading more than once. "Beauty is truth, truth beauty"; he does not attempt to prove this true, but rather to show in what way it has been understood by Spenser, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Wordsworth, and Keats; and that is a result more solid, more interesting and less pretentious.

A. N. C.

SOVIET LITERATURE. An Anthology. Edited and translated by George Reavy and Marc Slonim. Covici-Friede. 1934. \$2.50.

Much of the more readable Soviet writing has already been translated and published in the West in the usual commercial way. Such a novel as Kataev's hilariously amusing "The Embezzlers," for instance, is just as understandable to the everyday English or American reader as the work of any of his own popular writers of fiction. There is a certain ground for assuming that work which hasn't been risked in translation won't be readable in the sense that it will strike fire in the minds of any considerable audience of Western readers. The assumption can be carried too far, of course, but it has its basis.

The intellectually curious will wish, nevertheless, to sample Soviet writing whether they can understand it or not; others will have missed some of the more readable Soviet writings already published—there is, in short, a place for such an anthology as this. There are extracts, for example, from the fiction of Zamiatin, Pilnyak, and Kataev, all fairly well-known in this country, and from a score of writers less well-known. Some fifty pages are given to translated poetry—a sad task at best, generally, and productive of little nourishment in the literal transference of thought made here. Then there are some rather turgid introductory remarks by the compilers, and various extracts from Soviet criticism, and the more or less eccentric pronouncements of Futurists, Constructivists, and so on.

tellectual productive means to this end. Intellectual-material production is composed of three elements: of tectonics, construction, and fabrication. . .

The above rather horrible example is from the period of 1923 when the boundaries and nature of proletarian art were fixed with more severity and less humor than they are now. It is scarcely fair to the book as a whole, the literary samples in which are sometimes not only interesting in themselves but reflect the changing revolutionary psychologies of the past seventeen years. It will be found useful by students and those who wish a smattering, at least, of Soviet literature since the Revolution.

Fiction
THE STORY OF A COUNTRY BOY. By Dawn Powell. Farrar & Rinehart. 1934. \$2.50.

In this novel of the country boy come to town, only the chief character has individuality, and he behaves so unconventionally that the book and the man, after rather noisy progress, end in frustration. The other characters are stock types—the dumb wife, the faithful female friend, the jazzy telephone girl, the chasing executive. These durable but dull beings wander through a story which, in spite of some excellent rhetoric, never quite achieves either charm or force. Only those who enjoy seeing how silly their bosses can be will be enthralled by Miss Powell's latest book.

After boyhood on the farm, Christopher Bennett becomes general manager of a factory. He marries his childhood sweetheart, Joy, the girl who never grew up, rises to wealth and luxury, but after a time finds himself involved in labor disputes, and later resorts to wine and women to drown his business troubles. Along comes the depression to complete the liquidation of the Bennetts and back they go to the farm, which Chris accepts as the life for him.

Miss Powell has done better work than this in her "Tenth Moon" and will do so again. Her writing has vigor and occasionally beauty; her difficulty here is strategic, not tactical. She picked the wrong tale, and filled it with oafs.


M. D. P.

THE MAN WITH FOUR LIVES. By William Joyce Cowen. Farrar & Rinehart. 1934. \$2.

This is a short book, but it would have been better as a short story, save for certain descriptions the author introduces that spring from his own experience in the Great War, and are memorable. The explanation of the apparent mystery was guessed by this reviewer when little more than half-way through the book. And it takes a good deal of believing. Nevertheless, Mr. Cowen has a graphic pen—or typewriter—and even though he evidently sympathizes with good old Chilton's brief and biting dismissal of pacifists and with

(Continued on page 598)

GRAHAM
Greene
His new book is a brilliantly prismatic novel of modern London which, says the Christian Science Monitor, "may initiate a movement to wean English fiction from its present competent dullness."
IT'S A BATTLEFIELD
A story of swirling drama, continual surprise and beauty. \$2.00


J. KEITH
Winter
His new play is one of the best-liked successes on Broadway — a moving tragi-comedy of love's shining hour, a story of passion and sacrifice.
THE SHINING HOUR
At all bookstores, \$1.50
DOUBLEDAY,
DORAN

* "Best-sellers" and distinguished young authors, they have produced such books as Greene's memorable THE MAN WITHIN and ORIENT EXPRESS, and Winter's THE MAN'S SAUCER and THE RATS OF NORWAY.

Keep a sharp eye open to these two young men..."

Over the Counter			
The Saturday Review's Guide to Romance and Adventure			
Trade Mark	Label	Contents	Flavor
BUT NOT THE END Frederick Nebel (Little, Brown: \$2.)	Novel	The author of "Sleepers East" has written a tightly dramatic story of a post-1929 group of New Yorkers which seems destined for the movies. The man is good.	Keen
LARAMIE RIDES ALONE Will Ermine (Morrow: \$2.)	Western	Crack cattleman's detective returns to Wyoming to find his younger brother rubbed out. Our hero has the determination of them Northwest cops.	Standard
THE FIGHTING DANITES Dane Coolidge (Dutton: \$2.)	Historical Novel	The author, who knows his stuff, tells a lively tale of a U. S. spy in the Mormon army which was prepared to defend their territory against invasion by government troops.	Unusual
BESSIE COTTER Wallace Smith (Covici-Friede: \$2.)	Novel	Why the author of "The Captain Hates the Sea" should have written this probably accurate but pointless study of the residents of an old-fashioned St. Louis bordello, we can't figure out.	Dull
THE MAN WITH FOUR LIVES William J. Cowen (Farrar & Rinehart: \$2.)	Horror Story	The mental disintegration of an officer and gentleman of the British Army who apparently killed the same German three times during the war. The noble British traditions are overworked a bit, but it's an unusual tale.	OK

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.

*We have sailed many months, we have sailed many weeks,
(Four weeks to the month, you may mark),
But never as yet ('t is your Captain who speaks)
Have we caught the least glimpse of a Snark!*

THE Snark, let us at once remark, is symbolical for that story the scene of which was laid in Constantinople and which had "some particularly piquant references to prominent European personages" of two or three years ago, for which we ourselves searched in vain for A. F. of New York City, and for information on which we recently appealed to our readers. We're making reference to it again partly because we have been much inspired by the rush of knowledge which rose up to confute our ignorance in regard to JAN OF THE MILL and partly as a Pullman porter might go through his car calling, "Last call for dinner." Three times and out, we're afraid; if we can't get light on it after this last despairing, pitiful appeal, we'll have to let it become The Great Unsolved Mystery. As to Jan or John or Jack, or what you will, of the Mill, in addition to the correspondent who wrote us of it the other day, we've had word from Steven T. Byington, of Ballard Vale, Mass., who writes us

I take from the shelf a book I bought for a dime some months ago, and copy the title-page:

The
Life and Adventures
of
Jack of the Mill:
A Fireside Story.
By William Howitt.
In two Volumes. Vol. I.
Second Edition.
London: Longmans, Brown, Green, and
Longmans.
1845.

The two volumes are bound in one, Mr. Byington writes, and by turning the leaves it quickly becomes evident that the hero was successively known as Jack-of-the-Mill, John-of-the-Mill, John Othmill, Othmill the Lollard, Sir John Othmill, Baron Waldeck, and the Knight of Kitcottie. Further, our friend, Mr. Christopher Ward, whose parodies at one time added so much gusto to the pages of the *Saturday Review*, sends us a leaf torn from a second-hand book catalogue which shows that the tale is still to be had, and our alter ego, Ruth Flint, has found it safely listed in the New York Public Library under the title THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF JACK OF THE MILL, in an edition published in 1844 by Harpers. So now a long farewell to all Jack's greatness.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

We hope A. H. R. of Marblehead, Mass., hasn't given up all hope of ever hearing from us in response to an inquiry he addressed to us long ago. He wrote:

Could you give me any information of any book taking the story of the Garden of Eden, in the Bible, only from a metaphorical point of view? Also any book on the subject of Good and Evil?

With no more than a mention of Cabell's SOMETHING ABOUT EVE (McBride), since we don't believe it is in the vein A. H. R. desires, we pass on to Philip Littell's THIS WAY OUT (Coward-McCann), a book published a few years ago which is both thoughtful and clever. Then there is Murray Sheehan's EDEN (Dutton), a queer, pathetic tale, original in conception, with an awkward, gripping sort of pathos; Marc Connelly's highly successful play, THE GREEN PASTURES (Farrar & Rinehart), and Roark Bradford's OL' MAN ADAM AN' HIS CHILLUN (Harpers), from which it was adapted. These, perhaps will serve as a sample of the books which A. H. R. wishes. As to the more philosophical studies he wants, these discussions of good and evil are likely to fall fairly sharply into two groups, those written from an ethical point of view and those from a religious. Among the latter are N. S. Talbot's RIDDLE OF LIFE (Longmans, Green), William D. Ross's RIGHT AND THE GOOD (Oxford University Press), and THE PROBLEM OF RIGHT CONDUCT (Longmans, Green), a textbook of Christian ethics, by Peter Green. In the first category are such works, of course, as Nietzsche's BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL, which

is to be had in an edition edited by Oscar Levy (Macmillan), AN INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS (Scribners), by Frank Thilly, and THE MEANING OF RIGHT AND WRONG (Macmillan), by Richard C. Cabot. This very week there is to appear a volume by H. L. Mencken (Knopf), under a title similar to that of the last-named book: TREATISE ON RIGHT AND WRONG. The aforementioned works, of course, are but a drop in the sea of philosophical and ethical literature which exists on the subject of good and evil. A. H. R. should turn also to Frazer's GOLDEN BOUGH (Macmillan), which he will find fascinating and illuminating reading.

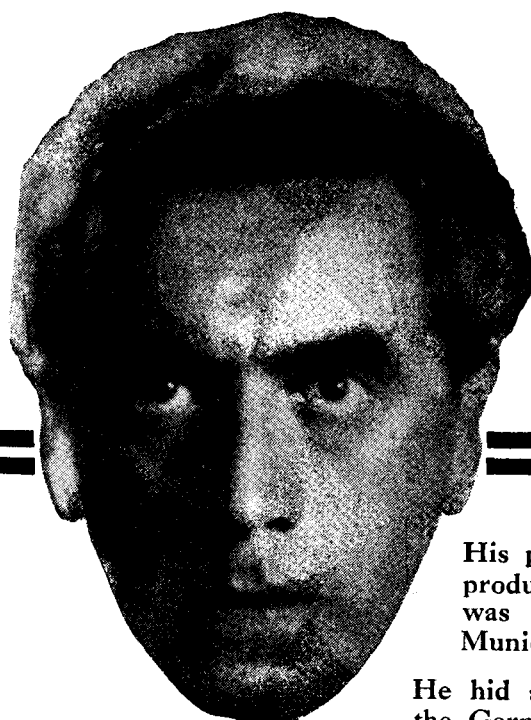
GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHOLOGY

As to THE GOLDEN BOUGH, we wish also to recommend that to Mrs. F. M. D. of Washington, D. C., whose request for information on books dealing with Greek and Roman mythology has been relayed to us. In addition we suggest Bulfinch's AGE OF FABLE (Dutton: Everyman's Library), the best working compendium for the general student. And we ought to say, before we leave the subject, since we didn't say it a moment ago while we were directly concerned with that monumental work, THE GOLDEN BOUGH, that an abbreviated edition, entitled LEAVES FROM THE GOLDEN BOUGH (Macmillan), was issued a few years ago by the author's wife. Also, for anyone who wants some of the old stories told in charming fashion, and simply enough for children as well as their elders to enjoy them, there is always Hawthorne's TANGLEWOOD TALES.

PERIOD FURNITURE

We have a letter from D. R. of Morgantown, W. Va., putting rather a poser to us. He asks first for a book which clearly describes the characteristics of period furniture, secondly, for one which describes the jointing, mitering, and hidden details of construction, and last—and here especially lies the difficulty—for a work "that dwells at some length upon the proper proportion of one part to another, much as the human body is judged by the ideals set forth by the ancient Greeks."

To take up his question in the order of its parts there are several works to which D. R. can refer for guidance on the various periods: PERIOD FURNISHINGS (Clifford & Lawton), by C. R. Clifford, a lavishly illustrated "encyclopædia of ornament" (which takes up fittings as well as furniture), or THE PRACTICAL BOOK OF PERIOD FURNITURE, by H. D. Eberlein and Abbott McClure (Lippincott), containing numerous illustrations and a good index, FURNITURE STYLES (Pitman), by H. E. Binstead, or THE PERIOD FURNITURE HANDBOOK (Dodd, Mead), by G. G. and F. Gould. As to the details of construction, D. R. ought to be able to find assistance in APPLIED SCIENCE FOR WOODWORKERS (Ronald), by W. H. Dooley; THE ART OF WOODWORKING AND FURNITURE MAKING (Dryad), by A. Gregory, or PROBLEMS IN FURNITURE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION (Bruce), by A. S. Madsen and J. J. Lukowitz. Now, "the proper proportion of one part to another." Aye, there's the rub. Our investigations have disclosed nothing so far that helps, though we've had our doughty Ruth Flint on the trail, and what evades her conscientious efforts must be a vanishing quantity indeed. We ourselves had an interesting few minutes when in the course of our wanderings we read through the article on furniture in the NEW INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPÆDIA. We culled all sorts of picturesque bits from it, as that in Asia generally raised seats are not used and when they exist are in very truth "the seats of the mighty," that in Levantine houses, where deewans (divans) take the place of chairs, tables are small so that they can be drawn up to the couches which are immovable, and except for them, furniture is practically non-existent, shelving along the wall supplying place for articles of all sorts; that in the days of Louis XIV Versailles was supplied with silver furniture, in the royal apartments at least, and that the result of the efforts of two or three designers to please Napoleon. All this and much more we found, but nary a word about what we sought. If any of our readers knows aught that might help, let him speak, or Ruth Flint and ourself will never know peace.



The career of ERNST TOLLER ... poet

His play, *Masse Mensch*, was produced in Berlin while he was in a military prison in Munich.

He hid a physical defect, joined the German Army, was cited for bravery—and turned Pacifist!

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autobiography of

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