

An Important Literary Event!
A NEW NOVEL BY
THOMAS BOYD

Author of "THROUGH THE WHEAT"
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PEACE**

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Readers of THE SATURDAY REVIEW**

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The Iron Mother

By **CHARLES BRAIBANT**. "The Iron Mother' is a French 'Main Street' in which one's interest is held not by the portrayal of barriers to life—though these there are, neither minimized nor prettified—but by the sense of life's victories."—*N. Y. Herald Tribune.* \$2.50

A Young Man in a Hurry

By **T. O. BEACHCROFT**. "I agree that he is a discovery. He makes much of the best story writing of the day seem insignificant in the true sense of the word. He is a realist, a successful poetic observer of Nature."—*macabre and an intensely poetic observer of Nature.*—*William Rose Benét in the Saturday Review.* \$2.50

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By **ELEANOR MERCEIN KELLY**, author of *Basquerie*. "A thoroughly charming book. The scenes are as picturesque, as unusual, as those of the Basque stories. She writes of Yugoslavia and Corfu, and the characters are salty and vigorous. It is certainly highly enjoyable."—*N. Y. Herald Tribune.* \$2.50

HARPER & BROTHERS

NEW YORK

The  *PHOENIX NEST*

By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

ROUND ABOUT PARNASSUS

BEFORE examining what recent books of verse are upon my desk, I should like to tender the whole-hearted concern and sympathy of this department to *Edwin Arlington Robinson*, our greatest living American poet, who is now ill in hospital. I hope his recovery may be speedy. I have a particular admiration for his latest book, "Amaranth," and such reviews as I have seen of it did not seem to me at all to do it justice. People tire so quickly nowadays, apparently, of hearing Aristides called the Just—in other words, when a writer has built up a considerable reputation the time inevitably comes when smaller men wish to tear it down. This is the most general of statements, but I have thought it peculiar that the bright minds on our best journals couldn't seem to perceive the remarkable vigor and originality in "Amaranth." At a time when most poets would be practically through writing, or else repeating themselves, Mr. Robinson accomplished something peculiarly his own yet peculiarly different from much of his work. There had been several of his later books that did not hold or move me as much as the work of his strongest period, but "Amaranth" seems to me an extraordinary poem. In spite of its presentation of the miscast, it is anything but a "tired" poem. It has energy, remarkable imagination, and a subtle humor—deeply ironic though its implications are—that in a man of less achievement would have confounded the critics. As it was it seemed to confound them in a different way. When a man has finally come into his own and received the highest praise, it would appear to be an accepted fact that there is nothing further to say about him. He may continue writing extremely well, but his style is known, all his best qualities have been intensively analyzed, his contribution to literature has become so familiar that the reviewers are inclined to tire of further evidences of it. They are looking around for what is happening in new pastures and they miss what is right under their eyes.

This, at least, is the opinion of one reader of poetry who has been following the current output for some time. "Amaranth" is one of the few volumes I can read with pleasure and profit. I do not find this study of the miscast in life a pessimistic book, I find it a most wise one. It is the mithridate that inoculates against the poisons of life and should strengthen the spirit. And the creatures of this significant fantasy, even to the pythian cat, Amersand, are types we can all recognize, drawn with sure skill and yet not at all without sympathy. My admiration is second to no one's for Robinson's great narrative, "Tristram," just as I think that in certain of his shorter poems he created some of the most subtle and beautiful verse of our time; but he has written with wide range, and "Amaranth" is unique in narrative poetry. It is like nothing he has done before. It shows his fullest powers of insight, his ripest intelligence.

One should be grateful to the Overbrook Press for bringing out a new edition of *George Meredith's* famous sonnet sequence, "Modern Love," in a most attractive format and binding, with slip-cover. One hundred and fifty copies of this little book were printed last October, with composition by *Margaret Evans* and presswork by *John F. MacNamara*. The address of the Overbrook Press is Riverbank Road, Stamford, Connecticut.

Joseph Auslander has made a distinguished translation from the Norwegian of the poems of *Herman Wildenvey*, the leading poet of Norway today. His first book of lyrics was published in 1907, and at the age of twenty he was praised by *Georg Brandes*. He has won the famous Gyldendal Prize, which corresponds in Scandinavian countries to our Pulitzer Prize. *Knut Hamsun* furnishes an introductory note to this book, highly laudatory, and Mr. Auslander, in a preface, tells us of Wildenvey's life of adventure. His volumes of verse, it seems, number eleven, and he has also written a novel, several collections of short stories, a book of essays, a book of biographical sketches, and done various translations. The present volume is entitled "Owls to Athens" (Dodd, Mead), and this is Mr. Wildenvey's explanation of his title:

By "Owls to Athens," as the old Greeks phrased it,
They meant the adding to what brimmed abundant—
Like gilding the lily or like bread that's wasted
On baker's brats—redundance twice redundant!

To you, America, these songs I bring—
Though all your resonant young forests ring;
Though you, America, my new-found land,
Grasp fistfuls of new beauty with each hand.

Incidentally, Mr. Auslander's lyrical (though prose) descriptions of Norway in his preface are beautiful. It was Wildenvey who introduced him to the country. The translator also speaks eloquently of the difficulties of translation, of how the translator is "continually torn between the scrupulous tyrannies of the text and the nimble latitudes of the spirit." In closing he pays a most graceful tribute to the poet, in laying before him his translation.

The book opens with tributes to Norway and Knut Hamsun. Then come lyrics, two satires, and a long ballad on Mary Magdalene. This poetry is immediately seen to be robust, offhand, even jaunty. Also it is often colloquial with a foreign tang. Sometimes the translator has encountered considerable difficulties with the movement of the rhythm and the falling of the rhyme. Nevertheless, on the whole, Mr. Auslander has managed to convey the fresh, exuberant qualities of the original poetry. The book is different from any you are likely to have seen for some time.

Over the Counter

The Saturday Review's Guide to Current Attractions

Trade Mark	Label	Contents	Flavor
MODERN LADY <i>Grace Perkins</i> (Farrar & Rinehart: \$2.)	Novel	Success story in which Jane, having won a dominant position among New York's realtors, finds triumph hollow without a man.	Adequate Time-killer
DEVIL KINSMERE <i>Roger Fairbairn</i> (Harpers: \$2.)	Costume Romance	Scion of good provincial family heads for London, steps smack into intrigue at Charles II's court. Beaucoup action against authentic-seeming backdrop.	Good
SO BRIEF THE YEARS <i>Natalie Sokoloff</i> (Dodd, Mead: \$2.50.)	Novel	The horrors of Russian post-revolution days as they hit our heroine. Urged by shrewish grandma, she sells herself to OGPU's head man in return for invalid mama's comfort. Comes the White Prince.	Not So Good
THE GUESTS ARRIVE <i>Cecil Roberts</i> (Appleton-Century: \$2.50.)	Romance	Inheriting the Venetian island palace of her father, Cleo is forced to open it as a hotel. Proprietor and guests provide the tale.	Enter- taining
FORGET IF YOU CAN <i>John Erskine</i> (Bobbs, Merrill: \$2.50.)	Novel	Using a wealthy attorney, widower, and a svelte mysterious Fifth Avenue modiste, Mr. Erskine demonstrates that a man can't forget his wife's past.	New York

The New Books

(Continued from page 507)

in a small village of Champagne during the last century, with a tart satirical flavor and solid characterizations which add much to its effectiveness. The story itself is not always particularly moving. The drama of a dominant, hard-headed mother and a weaker son, forced by her to lead a double life until the day of his death, is static and not well adapted to such a prolonged narrative form. In addition, the presentation of the whole as a sort of memoir written by an obviously artificial friend of the family, does not tend to enhance the significance of the situation. But the abundance of picturesque detail, the thoroughly convincing nineteenth century atmosphere, and the racy, highly colored language in which M. Braibant reports the doings and sayings of his countryfolk, all combine to make his book a notable one,—in French.

In English, even viewed with charity, it becomes a rather plodding history of a dullish small-town family, perfectly logical but far from overcharged with interest. It is difficult to say just why this curious change has operated, but perhaps it is in part due to the inherent slowness and stiffness of the English language as compared with the flexibility of the original. What is already a little ponderous in French becomes definitely heavy and pedestrian, while the animating vigor of the style, with its use of peasant expressions, as well as the satire inherent in the descriptions of old customs, simply evaporate. There are doubtless other important factors worthy of consideration in this disappointing case of international misunderstanding, but, as in the non-literary realm, in spite of all attempts at conciliation the two parties,—Gallic child and Anglicized stepchild of M. Braibant's pen,—will inevitably remain worlds apart.

T. P., JR.

History

FRENCH REVOLUTIONS. By E. L. Woodward. Oxford University Press. 1934. \$3.

"Why," inquires the jacket of this volume, "have Frenchmen changed their form of government at least nine times since 1789? Why have these changes taken a revolutionary form?" These questions, it goes on to say, are discussed in this book. So far that is true. They are discussed, and, within such limits as its compass permits, are, in general, well discussed, or, at least, described. A series of lectures given at Alexandra College, Dublin, they have the form and substance of such utterances. Beginning with an introduction on the general causes of French revolutionary movements, that of 1789 in particular, they include chapters on the Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Dictatorship, on Napoleon I, on Restoration and Counter-Revolution, an account of the reign of Louis Philippe, the Fall of the Second Republic, Napoleon III, and the Commune of 1871. They form, in effect, a brief history of France since 1789, expressed, as it were, in terms of revolutionary movements. They are clearly and entertainingly written; they do not fall into the common errors of the Commune being essentially communist as the Marxians would have had the world believe; nor the illusions cherished as to the national workshops. They are well proportioned, sane, and moderate, as well as informed statements of the case; and, while they discuss, they do not attempt to solve the problem as to why there were so many revolutions—save, as he says, "for the establishment of a politically civilized order"; though he admits in his conclusion that the problem of reconciling it with liberty is still unsolved, that we may still face new and "calamitous changes."

W. C. A.

Latest Books Received

BELLES LETTRES

Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy. M. C. Bradbrook. Cambridge Univ. Pr. Macmillan. \$3.50.

BIOGRAPHY

Edward Atkinson. H. F. Williamson. Boston: Old Corner Bookstore.

EDUCATION

Faith and Fear in Child Training. M. W. Eggleston. Round Table Press. \$2.

INTERNATIONAL

France's Crisis. P. Einzig. Macmillan.

MISCELLANEOUS

Sailors' Knots. C. L. Day. Dodd. \$3.50. *If Lincoln Had Lived.* Univ. of Chicago Pr. \$1. *What Shall We Name the Baby?* Ed. W. Ames. Simon. \$1.50. *Why We Feel That Way.* A. W. Trettien. Stratford. \$3. *Mental Training.* S. N. F. Chant. Macmillan. \$2.50. *My Adventure into Spiritualism.* E. L. Howard. Macmillan. \$2. *The Costume Book.* Mrs. N. Cookson. McBride. \$2.

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The result of a first hand study of the Recovery Program by one of England's most noted political economists. First published in England, the book attracted such wide interest here that this American edition was found necessary. \$3.00

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