

The Clearing House

CONDUCTED BY AMY LOVEMAN

Inquiries, accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, should be directed to Miss Loveman, in care of The Saturday Review.

A BALANCED RATION FOR A WEEK'S READING

KRISTIN LAVRANDATTER. By
Sigrid Undset. Knopf.

A PREFACE TO MORALS. By
Walter Lippmann. Macmillan.

FIREHEAD. By Lola Ridge. Har-
court, Brace.

Leading Foreign Writers

"Is there any way," asks R. S. G. of Birmingham, Ala., "of knowing from one year to the next the date of the Nobel Prize awards? And will you be kind enough to tell me who in your estimation are the leading contemporary novelists in France, Italy, Russia, and Ireland?"

SENTIMENT has dictated the date on which the Nobel Prize awards are made, for the official announcement is fixed for Founder's Day, December tenth, the anniversary of the death of the donor. As a matter of fact the selections are usually common property as early as November, but are not actually proclaimed until the following month.

"Contemporary" is a more or less elastic word and I don't quite know whether

R. S. G. is using it to mean of the minute or applying it to those writers who have been making literature during the past few years. I am construing it in the case of France to include a writer who died as long ago as 1922 and in that of Ireland one who lived as recently as last year. But with the exception of a few I have selected the names of only living authors in answer to R. S. G.'s inquiry as to the most eminent novelists and dramatists of France, Italy, Russia, and Ireland.

Bernard Shaw, I suppose, would be classed with English dramatists rather than Irish despite the fact that he is a son of Erin by birth, and yet surely his name should go down on this list. With it would appear the names of Lady Gregory, and Synge, both dead, who had so much to do with the development of interest in the Irish stage, and W. B. Yeats, still happily living, and just now publishing another volume of recollections entitled *DRAMATIS PERSONÆ* (Macmillan); St. John Ervine, whose plays have had enormous success in America as well as in England and who is no less well known as dramatic critic than as dramatist; Lennox Robinson, Sean O'Casey, whose *WITHIN THE GATES* held the stage so successfully in New York a year

ago, and Liam O'Flaherty. The last named is also one of the Irish novelists to be reckoned with, as is, too, Sean O'Faolin, whose *NEST OF SIMPLE FOLK* (Viking) won enthusiastic plaudits from the critics. Then, too, among Irish writers is that brace of novelists who have delighted lovers of sport, Somerville and Ross; George O. Birmingham, and Peadar O'Donnell. Joyce, of course, takes first rank among the novelists not only because of his own work but because of his influence upon writers of other lands.

Italy has long had one outstanding name in both fiction and drama, Gabriele d'Annunzio, stormy petrel of both literature and politics for years. Signor d'Annunzio is at present reported very ill, but not long since he was making fiery pronouncements for his country. Pirandello sprang to fame in this country with his *SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR*, and his plays have been read with attention since, even if few have been produced on the American stage. He passed through New York some months ago on his way to Hollywood, a courteous, scholarly gentleman, vivacious in discussion of his theories and full of interesting ideas as to the possibilities and future of the screen. As to general fiction in Italy little of the contemporary work has found translation into English. Perhaps the outstanding representative of the novel to have been given an English version is Grazia Deledda, whose popularity in her own country has been comparable with that of the best-seller women novelists of our own. Her *MOTHER* was issued some years ago by Macmillan. An Italian novel, needless to say written in exile, since it is violently anti-fascist, is Silone's *FONTAMARA*, which won much acclaim here in English translation, and is now being presented in dramatic version on the stage.

It is impossible to write of contemporary French literature without mentioning Proust, though he has been dead now for some years, since his *A LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU* is ranked by some competent critics as the major work of our time. At the moment Jules Romains, whose monumental *MEN OF GOOD WILL* (Knopf) is appearing volume by volume in the English translation, is the most vigorous figure in French fiction, Romain Rolland having somewhat slipped into the background. André Gide and Duhamel also play an important part. Among dramatists the outstanding names are those of Paul Claudel, Brieux, and, of course, Maeterlinck, who, though Belgian, since his work is written in French really deserves place with the French dramatists.

Since the Soviet Revolution Russian drama has been so largely propagandist in nature as to have produced no dramatist of note, at least none whose works have reached the foreign public. Merezhkowski, Gorky, Alexei Tolstoy, whose *DARKNESS AND DAWN* (Longmans, Green) has just appeared over here, Bunin, Ilya Ehrenbourg, and Mikhail Sholokhov, author of *AND QUIET FLOWS THE DON* (Knopf) are the leading contemporary novelists. On the whole the most important works have dealt with the cataclysm that overthrew autocratic government or have presented in part at least a picture of events just before the Revolution.

The Outstanding American Novel

**WINNER
PULITZER PRIZE
1936**

**Honey in
the Horn**

BY H. L. DAVIS

HARPERS

The Compleat Collector

FINE PRINTING: CONDUCTED BY CARL PURINGTON ROLLINS

*In alternate weeks this Department is devoted to Rare Books
and is conducted by John T. Winterich*

Twenty-Four Conversations

LANDOR: IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS. New York. 1936.

TO reprint Landor's "Imaginary Conversations" is, one must presume, a matter of curiosity as to modern taste. As the introduction by Mr. R. H. Boothroyd points out, Landor "never attempted nor desired to be a popular writer." With that fact in mind a selection of only twenty-four, out of the total of nearly one hundred and fifty Conversations which Landor wrote, is here offered the modern reader, with a brief but excellent biographical and bibliographical and critical introduction.

The format of the book is a large octavo, printed by Hans Mardersteig at the Officina Bodoni in Parma. The type is a new font, designed by Mr. Mardersteig, which possesses a good deal of character without being at all obvious. It is a face somewhat resembling Baskerville's, but with some gaiety in the italic. The pages lack running heads, which I think a mistake, but each chapter heading is enclosed in a different border. These borders possess variety, but are hardly good enough. Of the presswork and paper there can be no criticism. The binding is very fine. A printed cloth, delightful in pattern and color, gives a rugged appearance which is desirable in a book cover.

Winter and Spring Styles

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON. A collection of his works from the library of Bacon Callamore. Hartford. 1936.

This is an unusually interesting bibliographical work. It sets out to stimulate the reader's interest in Robinson by listing his works wherever they have appeared, giving sufficient details of the books to serve as bibliography, and adding a considerable amount of explanatory matter (much of it from letters of Robinson to the collector whose books furnished the basis for the present volume). Such a method makes good reading of what must otherwise be a book of reference. I have no way of checking the accuracy of the work, but I do know it is a book of the kind seldom met with—an intimate record of a great poet, related in guise of a catalogue!

The printing, by Edward B. Thompson at Hawthorn House, Windham, Connecticut, is, it happens, as reserved and meticulous as Robinson's poetry. The combination is perfect. The fortunate possessors of the book (which is not for sale) will cherish it.

A Miscellany of Recent Books

A DESCENT INTO THE MAELSTROM, Poe's tale, is issued by William R. Scott, New York, as number one of the new "American Renaissance Series," at one dollar. It is delightfully printed at the Powgen Press, on gray paper, illustrated in color

by Charles McCurdy, and properly bound in cloth with paper label. Not so big as other books at the price, but more attractive.

1601, Mark Twain's idea of Queen Elizabeth's conversation in her more relaxed moments, appears again, this time from the Black Cat Press. Mr. Irvin Haas's notes and check-list of editions gives real value to the book—he lists twenty-two such printings.

A HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY is a new edition of Muzzey's well known school history, issued by Ginn & Co. in their usual competent text book style. The maps are especially satisfactory, being clarified of all unnecessary material and drawn clearly. Color register is especially good for American map-printing, and the half-tone pictures are well handled.

SALOMÉ, Oscar Wilde's play, appears in new form from the Walpole Printing Office,—a small quarto, set in a sans-serif roman. Competently handled, as would be expected. From the same press comes

SATIRES AND HOAXES OF DR. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, a diminutive folio on gray paper, in Janson type, and with decorations by Herb Roth. A pleasing and definitive printing of these pleasantries.

Shakespeariana

LOST PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE'S AGE

By C. J. Sisson \$3.75

"A notable collection of new, and true, tales of Elizabethan life, admirably told, lively and uproarious... a true picture of Shakespeare's England."

Times Lit. Supp.



A STUDY OF LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

By FRANCES A. YATES

Shakespeare Problems Series

\$2.50

It has long been known that *Love's Labour's Lost* was a highly topical play. Miss Yates here sets out to identify the many topical references, with the help of newly discovered data.

SHAKESPEARE'S IMAGERY AND WHAT IT TELLS US

By CAROLINE F. E. SPURGEON

\$4.50

"Palmary." *Manchester Guardian*

"Exciting." *Sat. Rev. Lit.*

J. DOVER WILSON'S TRILOGY ON HAMLET

(i) *The Problems of the Text:*

THE MS. OF SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET

2 vols. \$4.50

"A fascinating piece of literary detective work." *Ch. Science Monitor*

(ii) *The Text: HAMLET (The New Shakespeare Series)*

\$2.50

"No lover of Hamlet can afford to do without this edition." *Times Lit. Supp.*

(iii) *The Plot: WHAT HAPPENS IN HAMLET*

\$3.50

"A joyous adventure." *P. M. Jack in N. Y. Times*

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