

leader in the Sons of the South, fighting to keep Missouri a slave state.

Miss Waters, who has used the history of her own family as material for her novel and has peopled it with historical personages, has a pleasant way with scenes of not too great dramatic intensity. Her characterizations are also pleasantly serviceable if on a rather superficial level. She tends to explain away any contradictions in their actions by vague references to the black mind, the mulatto mind, the Scot's mind, and even the South Carolina and Maryland mind. Toward the Negro characters she is, to use her own phrase, friendly but patronizing. Her principal white characters are all noble in intention if their actions sometimes belie this. But her story keeps you reading.

While not quite the significant contribution to Americana that the publishers feel it, "Fairacres" is an above average historical romance.

—EDWARD J. FITZGERALD.

GREEK LITERATURE FOR THE MODERN READER. By H. C. Baldry. Cambridge University Press. \$3.75. In recent years there has been a decline in the study of classical language and, almost as a compensation, a spate of new, lively translations of their classics. For the reader who is modern in being alive today and in being dead to the "dead" languages, further aid is offered by the kind of book that Professor Baldry has written. One of the initial difficulties to a reader of Greek translation is his lack of familiarity with the "mental fur-

niture" of Hellenic culture; and so here there are two opening chapters to sketch its political history—from the beginnings in Crete to the decline in the Alexandrian period—and its social, literary, and religious backgrounds.

After that the book settles down to the inevitable progression: Homer and the epic tradition, lyric poetry, the writers of tragedy (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides) and of comedy (Aristophanes), the prose writers and historians (Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon), the dialogue writers (Plato), and finally a brief epilogue on the Alexandrian writers. The discussion is fresh and always stimulating—in the sense of inducing a desire to read the literature itself; and it is informal and informed, never patronizing or pedantic. Especially good is the section on tragedy, which describes a production of the "Oresteia" in fifth-century Athens so vividly that the printed play takes on added splendor. Altogether a fine introduction, it is more elementary and less erudite than Professor Moses Hadas's "History of Greek Literature" published two years ago.

STEELE AT DRURY LANE. By John Loftis. University of California Press. \$4. Sir Richard Steele, most widely known through his essays in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* and his letters to his Dear Prue, has additional importance. In recent years Professor Rae Blanchard has diligently and admirably edited some of his works and all of his correspondence; and now Professor Loftis examines his career as theatre manager and his last comedy, "The Conscious Lovers," produced in 1722. For painstaking method, thorough background, and impartiality the book is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Steele and the stage of his day.

In the theatre his career had two phases—as theatrical manager and as advocate of the new sentimental comedy (with an exemplary or didactic purpose). Professor Loftis is aware of all the ironic differences between Steele's practice and his theory, and— even more commendably—he is impartial in finding him less than lovable. For the facts, based on extensive materials in archives and in print, show that although Steele advocated a reformed comedy with a high didactic purpose and showed it with his own last play, in his management of the theatre he was a failure—neglectful of his duties, tolerant of vaudeville bills and "immoral" Restoration comedies, and reluctant to produce new plays. Although Professor Loftis accuses him of intellectual dishon-

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OMAKK, PA OMAEP.

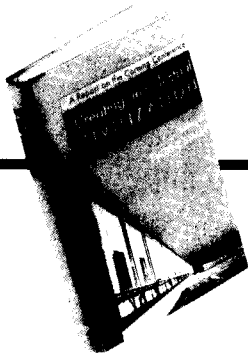
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esty in not putting his ideas into practice, perhaps he was merely exhibiting a normal human frailty; while in his theory and play he could express his personal untrammelled ideas, in his managership he had to adjust them to the exigencies of practical business, of collaboration with partners, and of his own deficiencies.

STURGE MOORE AND THE LIFE OF ART. By Frederick L. Gwynn. University of Kansas Press. \$3. This workmanlike, affectionate book gives us a concise account of an English poet who was forgotten by the public long before he died. Sturge Moore was born in 1870, lived and circulated through artistic and literary epochs, and wrote incessantly and without success almost until his death in 1944. He has been praised by a few critics, but ignored by most readers and students.

The reason is easy to understand when we see that he wrote far too much (about 50,000 lines of verse) on moral and classical subject-matter presented in the old-fashioned garb of traditional poetic diction. In his two-part monograph Mr. Gwynn records in detail Moore's full life as artist and poet, and then an analysis of his poetry and ideas. That his reputation or popularity will ever blossom seems unlikely, but he deserves at least this sort of book to put him, so to speak, on record.

A curious detail with modern overtones: about 1905 Moore and his friends planned to produce Shaw's "Don Juan in Hell," but canceled the project because it was too ambitious. Today the Drama Quartette has succeeded in solving that problem. And a curious stylistic howler: Mr. Gwynn writes, "He actually burst into print." Poor Moore!

JOHN STUART MILL AND HARRIET TAYLOR. By F. A. Hayek. University of Chicago Press. \$4.50. In his autobiography John Stuart Mill paid tribute to Harriet Taylor so extravagant that many readers suspected it to be more than she deserved, particularly when matched against the dyspeptic comments of Carlyle. Now through the newly discovered correspondence between Mill and Mrs. Taylor we can see how powerful her intellect was and how strongly it influenced the genius of Mill. Professor Hayek has neatly strung out the letters and joined them into a narrative with his comments—an excellent device, tactfully accomplished—so that Mill and Mrs. Taylor are their own eloquent and intimate advocates.

The letters start at the beginning of their friendship, when she was the

legal wife of another man, but it was not long before she was the soul-mate of Mill. Although their friendship shocked many of their circle, causing them to retire from active social life, there was nothing sordid or undignified about it. Her husband accepted it, later arranging for a separation; and two years after his fatal illness—when she nursed him with great devotion—she married Mill. But she remained alive only six years longer, and Mill faithfully spent his last years near her grave in Avignon.

There is abundant variety in these letters—a Victorian love story, replete with family bickerings; the grubby account of earnest Utilitarian activities; the intellectual partnership of two vital minds; and a group of travel letters from Mill on walking tours through Italy and Greece. Finally Professor Hayek has printed two brief appendices: an early essay by Mrs. Taylor, which shows she was a skillful pamphleteer, and some of her verse which proves she was a very bad poet

—ROBERT HALSBAND.

FRANCIS CARCO: The Career of a Literary Bohemian. By Seymour S. Weiner. Columbia University Press. \$4. In spite of the purple patches of sadism displayed on the jacket, this book is more scholarly than sensational, more concerned with setting down the life and works of a prominent French living writer than providing vicarious thrills for the average reader. Is it, as the publisher suggests, for the general reader, anyway? He will feel frustrated at the cool treatment of what he suspects is a hot subject. Being told Carco's predilection for vice and debauchery is not like seeing Carco indulging. What we have here is more the academic thesis than a popular work. Certainly the scrupulous documentation (six footnotes in the first paragraph), the index, and the vast bibliography are for the specialist.

This study is the most thorough treatment to date of the poet and novelist who adopted as his own *patrie* the various levels leading up to Sacre Coeur. Bars, bordellos, queer joints—Carco shows his bourgeois readers the sights and lets them hear the characters speak their strange lingo. The fact that Carco's underworld is somewhat out-of-date makes it all the more exotic. Today poets of the *pègre* like Jean Genêt make the author of "Jésus la-Caille" seem as quaint as that extinct bird, the Apache. Incidental to the narration of Carco's career and the genesis of his works we are offered helpful background descriptions of places and discussion of literary currents affecting the author. In the