

petent and interesting. While admitting the superiority of Greek architecture in single buildings he says of Roman city planning: "No other culture has so successfully managed to create such urban dignity." The invention of the alphabet is explained in detail, as well as the difference between it and earlier systems of writing, confined to scribes. "Without an alphabet the diffusion of knowledge would be immensely slower and general education would be impossible."

HIS evaluation of ancient civilizations contains a number of sentences not soon to be forgotten: "Ancient Egypt was . . . a doomed monster, like a dinosaur. But, like a dinosaur, it was also magnificent." "The Greek . . . city-state was a marvelous politico-social invention which permitted an unexampled flowering of freedom, intellect, and art. But it was by its nature limited in size, and could no more develop into a nation or an empire, or into a unit of a federal state, than an insect could evolve into a mammal or a bird."

Such biological analogies reveal Huxley's background, which gives him a broad approach to social theory. He is concerned with a search for principles in history and predicts that order will be found, partly through archeology and social anthropology, among other disciplines. He rejects Marxism as a valid part which has been blown into a false whole and is unhappy with Toynbee's ideas. He says that challenge and response are too generally present to have served as motivation for historical change, and that Achaemenian Persia was not a Syriac "universal state" but the world's first true empire. He feels that genetic accidents which produce such men as Ataturk and Genghis Khan prevent too close a determinism in history, but that civilization does nevertheless broadly progress from simplicity to complexity and from particularism toward unity. He begins and ends with a plea for a universal faith for mankind because "international organizations will never become fully effective as agencies of joint enterprise until a common framework of collective thought has been developed in which they can operate."

Julian Huxley is a first-class photographer. In his selection of subject matter, lighting, and composition his twenty-seven full color and thirty-nine black-and-white photographs are of professional quality. They were reproduced in Holland. Let this be a Toynbeean challenge to our publishers, meriting a prompt response.



NEW EDITIONS

Shaw for Today

IT IS hardly news that Bernard Shaw's dramatic criticism has an enduring value that is seldom found in writing of its kind; but it is news that about forty of his best essays on the London theatre of the 1890s are now to be had in one small book—"Plays and Players" (Oxford University Press, \$1.35), with an introduction by A. C. Ward. The title given this selection is significant, for Shaw had almost as much to say about the art of acting as about the art of playwrighting, and on both subjects—not to mention the art of theatrical production—he spoke with characteristic confidence, pervasive wit, and matchless competence. One of the few critics who have ever been able to distinguish between part and performance, he is also one of the very few who have been able to make their readers see on the printed page—at least partially—performances that they have never seen on any stage; and, as a result of this ability, he has given to a whole generation of actors and actresses a life beyond the grave.

He had his hobbies and his crotchets, and he rode his hobbies hard. But when these are examined they turn out to be soundly grounded intellectual and artistic convictions. He insisted on separating what he considered the dross from what he knew to be the gold in Shakespeare. He berated the London theatre for its shabby treatment of Ibsen. He wasted words and energy in trying to persuade Henry Irving to listen to the voice of Shaw rather than to the proud voice of his own ego. He fought a loving, losing battle in his effort to convince Ellen Terry that she was wasting her magnificent talents on parts that were unworthy of her. He refused to be gulled by fashion, and could puncture the fashionable reputation of a playwright such as Pinero with a sentence. He was not, of course, an infallible prophet; for example, he failed to foresee that "The Importance of Being Earnest" would prove even longer-lived than himself. But time has confirmed an astonishing number of his critical judgments; and, most remarkable of all, these half-century-old essays of his still have so much freshness and vitality that it is hard to believe they could ever have had more, even when they were first printed in *The Saturday Review*

(London) from January 1895 to May 1898.

The inclusion in the Modern Library of "Selected Poetry of Robert Browning" (\$1.45), edited with an introduction by Kenneth L. Knickerbocker, brings to my mind questions that I have asked myself before—When are we going to have a Browning "revival"? And isn't it overdue, in view of the treatment already accorded other great Victorians? A new evaluation of Browning could be based on his achievement of pushing the frontiers of poetry into hitherto unexplored territory; on his extraordinary additions to what had previously been considered poetry's proper subject-matter. Mr. Knickerbocker, in his interesting introduction, firmly divides Browning's work into three parts, or periods; while in his selections he includes nothing earlier than "Pippa Passes" (1841), and judiciously winnows the poems of the third period (1869-89).

OTHER new Modern Library titles are "Selected Stories of Eudora Welty" (\$1.45), with the introduction that Katherine Anne Porter wrote for "A Curtain of Green" in 1941; and "An Outline of Abnormal Psychology" (\$1.45), edited by Gardner Murphy and Arthur J. Bachrach. Miss Welty is herself something of an amateur of abnormal psychology; but her art seldom fails to enforce conviction, at least momentarily, even when it makes unusual demands upon credulity. In the "Outline" more than twenty experts, writing on as many topics, have produced a collective volume that fairly fulfills the promise of its title.

What, I have sometimes wondered, is the proportion of buyers of "The Prince" to readers of the same famous book? Machiavelli's masterpiece has appeared in numberless editions, and still the total steadily mounts. Topping the pile, for the moment, is the fine, lucid Heritage Press edition (\$5), with an introduction by Irwin Edman that places Machiavelli's political philosophy in its historical setting. This is a book to own—even read. Also from Heritage: T. J. Arnold's lively translation of Goethe's "The Story of Reynard the Fox," France's "The Revolt of the Angels," and "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" in a single volume, all beautifully printed and illustrated (\$5 each). —BEN RAY REDMAN.



Seeing Things

WITH THE GREATEST OF EASE

NOT that it matters, but the wire seemingly no thicker than a thread, which makes it possible for Mary Martin to soar with birdlike ease as Peter Pan, does catch the light occasionally. The wire supporting all the Peter Pans I have seen, from Maude Adams down through Marilyn Miller, Eva LeGallienne, and Jean Arthur, has always shown. No doubt it would be better if it did not, though it seems a safe guess that most children never see it. To adults, however, its showing is a reminder of how slim is the strand which supports all innocence, especially the regained innocence of mind and heart that makes it possible for grownups not only to put up with Barrie's fantasy but to surrender to it.

Miss Martin does not really need such a wire to fly. Of this I am confident. Well, almost confident. She must use it merely out of courtesy to her predecessors in the part who have relied on it. I do not mean to deny the wonders of Joseph Kirby's flying machine as supervised by Peter Foy, because if reality had a place in Never-Never Land this contraption would deserve star billing. But such is the magic of Miss Martin's performance that in this new version of "Peter Pan"* reality is exiled to the wings.

I must admit I dreaded seeing "Peter Pan" again, fearing I had grown too old for it or it too old for me. After all, it was first produced in London a half-century ago, the year after the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk, N. C., had done some flying themselves aided by a very different type of machine, intended for very different purposes. Where the Wrights were making an experiment which would shove the world into an unpredictable future from which there was to be no retreat, Barrie was moving back, escaping rather than advancing. He was concerned with the present of children, which is the past of adults, and writing as firm, if gentle, a protest against

the horrors of growing up as can be found.

That he wrote as a sentimentalist his worshipers (staunch sentimentalists themselves) have neither disputed nor deplored. As late as 1921 Galsworthy complained to William Lyon Phelps (of all people) that in most of Barrie's work he "found so many little lapses from what one can only call 'taste'—austerity of sentiment—so many little scrapes at one's epidermis—that" he confessed to "listening to him often with great discomfort." Long before, others, though safely on dry land, had felt a kind of seasickness when confronted with the more elfin of his whimsies. Certainly since 1921, as tastes have changed and toughened, Barrie's reputation has suffered, and many among his older admirers now wince at the archness which they may once have accepted.

I know I never thought that at fifty-four I would be touched as decades ago I had been by Peter's teaching Wendy and the Darling children to fly, or that I would sit wet-eyed among hundreds of other wet-eyed adults (there were scarcely any children present on the night I saw the new "Peter Pan"), all of us applauding furiously to save Tinker Bell's life at Peter's request.

AS EVERYONE must know by now, this "Peter Pan" is not exactly the "Peter Pan" that Barrie wrote. It is a musical comedy closer at times to Broadway than to Kensington Gardens. In certain scenes it is overproduced. Its second act drags a bit. And its music at best is what is chillily described as serviceable. These are adult reservations which the honest performance of drab critical duties forces me to mention. I suppose I could think up more, and with ease, if I were Captain Hook's prisoner on the bad ship *Jolly Roger* and he gave me the choice of doing so or walking the readied plank. Since I am not and write instead as one captivated by the evening as a whole and especially by Miss Martin's Peter, let me quickly get on to the production's enchantments.

Among these count the jubilantly contributive gadgets which somehow produce the magical effects they are supposed to; the lively and jealous Tinker Bell created by some unsung

Homer of the switchboard; Norman Shelly, whose dominion over the animal world is such that he can play both Nana and the Crocodile with equal skill; Margalo Gillmore, whose Mrs. Darling is the only one I have ever seen to have warmth and true kindness and not to be a cardboard figure; the unsentimental goodness of Kathy Nolan's Wendy; the attractiveness of Miss Martin's daughter, Heller Halliday, in the written-in part of Liza, the little maid who follows the children to Never-Never Land; the beguiling meekness with which Joe E. Marks once again plays Smee, the tailor; the children who are blessedly free of those shiny tricks which can make stage brats intolerable; the Indians who are drolly "heap big"; and the Pirates who are as fiercely Jolly Roger as if Howard Pyle had drawn them.

Cyril Ritchard, properly stuffy as Mr. Darling, is the more overpowering as Captain Hook because, though a fierce and scowling pirate, he appears to have strayed out of Congreve and Wycherly into that unholy calling, carrying with him some of the airs and graces of high comedy to make the brutality of his bloody threats the more terrible.

As surely as no playgoer who saw Maude Adams in the surrendering days of his youth can discuss "Peter Pan" without mentioning her, no playgoer who had thought he was past the age of this particular kind of surrender will be able to talk about "Peter Pan" in the future without naming Mary Martin if he has seen her. Before the curtain rises Miss Martin's Peter has flown the Atlantic and taken out naturalization papers in America. Her "boy who would not grow up" is the brother of Nellie Forbush. Yes, and of Danny Kaye, too. Yet vital and humorous as her Peter is, he can suddenly clutch at the heart, speaking without affectation for all that shining goodness of spirit Miss Martin abundantly possesses. He can also fly, fly as no previous Peter has ever flown, sweep through the air with a frightening speed and a grace that is truly celestial.

Quite rightly, the new scene in which Peter and the Darling children are shown on their journey to Never-Never Land has been described as an aerial ballet. It is a dance, beautiful and breathtaking, during which the dancers never touch the earth. Miss Martin dominates it, a figure who, as she sweeps and glides, turns and soars, creates poetry without speaking a word. Does the wire show which sustains her? It does. But, remember, not because it is really needed but merely as an act of courtesy to the more earthbound Peter Pans who preceded her. —JOHN MASON BROWN.

*PETER PAN, Edwin Lester's new musical production of James M. Barrie's play. Lyrics by Carolyn Leigh. Music by Mark Charlap. Additional music and lyrics by Jule Styne, Betty Comden, and Adolph Green. Directed by Jerome Robbins. Settings by Peter Larkin. Costumes by Motley. Presented by Richard Halliday. With a cast including Mary Martin, Cyril Ritchard, Kathy Nolan, Margalo Gillmore, Norman Shelly, Joe E. Marks, Sondra Lee, etc. At the Winter Garden, New York City. Opened October 20, 1954.