

ask Mr. Stearns: "What's all the shootin' fer?"

Imaginative reality—if the paradox may stand—is grimly diffused through "Brazilian Tales" (Four Seas) translated by Isaac Goldberg. Any nation could be proud to have these stories in its contemporary literature. Death stalks rather prominently through the small book, taking his toll freely. For those who enjoy unpleasant things well done, here are thrills, a bitter laugh, a gasp and a tear.

Alexander Black does not exactly say "the latest thing" in the volume of essays published under that title (Harper). But he states very well, in a new form, some truths which have been emphasized many times before; he writes ironically and to telling effect on themes so diverse as "Foreigners" and "Looking Literary", "The Truth About Women" and "The Dictatorship of the Dull". Many of his subjects are of no great significance, yet he makes them interesting; most of his essays make no attempt at an overburdening intellectual content, yet they are suited not only to please the reader, but to stimulate thought. And one and all are valuable as presenting a fresh and open-minded point of view toward literature, art, or the problems of contemporary life.

Octavus Roy Cohen's "Midnight" (Dodd, Mead) is an intriguing detective story contingent on the murder of a man of wealth and position. The charming fiancée of the murdered man, her brother, the beautiful and unhappy wife of a middle-aged financier, her sister the young flapper who plays such an important part in un-

tangling the mystery, a valet, a taxi driver, and the chief of police are all well drawn characters who fit smoothly into the plot and in their turn excite our sympathy, amusement, and distrust, feeding the flame of curiosity to the end.

Most people like to talk about their famous friends, and Hesketh Pearson does so with great unction in a book called "Modern Men and Mummies" (Harcourt, Brace). There are a few interesting though one-sided portraits of such men as Bernard Shaw, Sir Herbert Tree, and Frank Harris, and a quantity of absurdly inadequate sketches of other literary and theatrical celebrities. Mr. Pearson himself says, ". . . the American public like reading stupid things about eminent people . . ." That is undoubtedly the reason for this American edition.

Quite a different type from "An American Idyll" is Cornelia Stratton Parker's new book, "Working with the Working Woman" (Harper). It is a very readable account of her experiences in factory, laundry, and hotel, where she took the humblest jobs and sought as close an association as possible with her companions. She has remembered that you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar, so she uses an easy narrative style, many humorous anecdotes, and an optimistic viewpoint, which gets her points across as well as the most learned treatise on social conditions. It is guaranteed unadulterated by propaganda and well worth reading.

Eden Phillpotts's latest book, "Pan and the Twins" (Macmillan), is a pleasant result of his exercising his imagination, his philosophy, and his

sense of humor. It is placed in a strangely up-to-date period, the Roman decadence, and traces the fortunes of two youths who are helped and advised by the friendly god, Pan. It is a grave injustice to imagine Pan merely as a picturesque woodland deity; he is here shown to possess the combined wisdom of Solomon, Socrates, and Freud. The twins, having been separated in their childhood, have very different careers, the one becoming a Christian while the other remains Pagan, proving conclusively what thoroughly good fellows the Pagans were. There is a strong philosophical slant to the book, but one never loses sight of the twinkle in the author's eye.

Were it not for Isaac Marcossou, who would know that negroes, living in the very shadow of the equator, die in large numbers from pneumonia before reaching the age of forty; or that aeroplane traffic has been extensively developed in the Congo; or that coal can be bought in Capetown for one-fourth the price at Teneriffe, England? Jumping kangaroo-like from personality to personality, the journalist's record of "An African Adventure" (Lane) manages to include facts wholly amazing and enlightening about the business situation in South Africa.

"The Dragon in Shallow Waters" (Putnam) by V. Sackville-West is a story for those who like unnatural atmosphere and unpleasant people. The original situation is bad enough, and it is drawn out by a succession of morbidly horrible developments. Despite a real literary quality and some brilliantly vivid description, this is not a book that one can be said to en-

joy. The central figure is a vicious blind man with a destructive mania, so you can judge for yourself.

"What Next in Europe?" by Frank A. Vanderlip (Harcourt, Brace) sums up the miseries, the desolation, the starvation, the chaos growing out of the war and out of treaties "conceived in hatred and malice". Then it suggests measures for the commercial and economic rehabilitation of the stricken nations, with America shirking none of her plain obligations.

Back to the grey days, or the gay days—according to whether or not one has eaten red meat for breakfast—when the vikings infested British swamps, toured Iceland in summer, killed bulls and serfwomen for the sacrifice, and buried the swords of their dead relations with them, lest their feuds live after. Gunnar Gunnarsson, authentic descendant of the saga heroes, digs down into the pockets of his ancestors and finds treasures of virtue. Lief and Ingolf, who swore brotherhood at the spring festival, letting their blood mingle on the brown scarred earth, fight the sons of Atle Jarl for supremacy in the homeland and are driven out. Taking their wives, cattle, and the carved pillars of the chief-seat aboard their high-prowed boats they set sail for Iceland, and here Lief who would not sacrifice to the gods is killed. A stern, robust panorama of living, with always the wing of an implacable fate hovering over. "The Sworn Brothers" is one of the Gyldendal books now being brought out in this country by Alfred A. Knopf.

"The Real Japanese Question" by K. K. Kawakami (Macmillan) is a