

poet that comes to mind at the moment is "The Ancient Mariner," and the only sea that Coleridge ever sailed was the sea of metaphysics. "The Tempest" is a theoretical rather than an empirical sea poem, and was written by a dry-footed genius. "M'Andrew's Hymn" is a noble poem of life on the sea, but not exactly of the sea; the poet was a passenger and not a sailor, and he extols the power of man and steel and steam, and not the power of wind and wave. It is true that Masefield was a sailor, and that he has written some stirring sea ballads and apostrophes to white-bellied ships; but even his greatest poem is a penetrating and tragic study of English village life. We have many Wordsworths of the lakes and fields, but as yet no Burns of the ocean. The fact seems to be that the sea is too vast, too mysterious, too overwhelming, to be confined by the limits of prosody. Its lovers and intimates need the freedom of prose to express themselves, and so New England men of letters are to be praised, not blamed, for the two great monuments to the sea erected by their guild.

In these mechanical days of oil-burning steamships, when it is impossible to maintain a merchant marine without a Government subsidy, when passengers live on the ocean exactly as they live in the most luxurious hotels, hardly knowing whether they are not on Fifth Avenue or Piccadilly or the Rue de la Paix, and when sailors work on ship-board about as they would work in a steel mill or cotton factory, there is a melancholy but absorbing interest in reading the story of the merchant-adventurers and seaman-explorers of old Massachusetts. Their wonderful clipper ships—"so strongly built, so finely finished, and of so beautiful a model" that they were the admiration of the world, ships that logged as high as 18.2 knots for twenty-four consecutive hours—have gone, never to return. It is no wonder that Mr. Morison, as he takes leave of them, pays them a tribute which, although in prose, is touched with the feeling of a poet:

The seaports of Massachusetts have turned their backs to the element that made them great, save for play and for fishing; Boston alone is still in the deep-sea game. But all her modern docks and terminals and dredged channels will avail nothing, if the spirit perish that led her founders to "trye all ports."

Sicut patribus. . . . We can ask no more here. But in that unknown harbor toward which we all are scudding may our eyes behold some vision like that vouchsafed our fathers, when a California clipper ship made port after a voyage around the world.

A summer day with a sea-turn in the wind. The Grand Banks fog, rolling in wave after wave, is dissolved by the perfumed breath of New England hayfields into a gentle haze, that turns the State House dome to old gold, films brick walls with a soft patina, and sifts blue shadows among the foliage of the Common elms. Out of the mist in

Massachusetts Bay comes riding a clipper ship, with the effortless speed of an albatross. Her proud commander keeps skysails and studding-sails set past Boston light. After the long voyage she is in the pink of condition. Paintwork is spotless, decks holystoned cream-white, shrouds freshly tarred, ratlines square. Viewed through a powerful glass, her seizings, flemish-eyes, splices, and pointings are the perfection of the old-time art of rigging. The chafing-gear has just been removed, leaving spars and shrouds immaculate. The boys touched up her skysail poles with white paint, as she crossed the Bay. Boom-ending her studdingsails and hauling a few points on the wind to shoot the Narrows, between Georges and Gallups and Lovells Islands, she pays off again through President Road, and comes booming up the stream, a sight so beautiful that even the lounging soldiers at the Castle, persistent baiters of passing crews, are dumb with wonder and admiration.

Colored pennants on Telegraph Hill have announced her coming to all who know the code. Topliff's News Room breaks into a buzz of conversation, comparing records and guessing at freight money; owners and agents walk briskly down State

Street; counting-room clerks hang out of windows to watch her strike skysails and royals; the crimps and hussies of Ann Street foregather, to offer Jack a few days' scabrous pleasure before selling him to a new master. By the time the ship has reached the inner harbor, thousands of critical eyes are watching her every movement, quick to note if in any respect the mate has failed to make sailormen out of her crew of broken Argonauts, beach-combers, Kanakas, and Lascars.

The "old man" stalks the quarter-deck in top hat and frock coat, with the proper air of detachment; but the first mate is as busy as the devil in a gale of wind. Off India Wharf the ship rounds into the wind with a graceful curve, crew leaping into the rigging to furl topgallant sails as if shot upward by the blast of profanity from the mate's bull-like throat. With backed topsails her way is checked, and the cable rattles out of the chain lockers for the first time since Shanghai. Sails are clewed up. Yards are braced to a perfect parallel, and running gear neatly coiled down. A warp is passed from capstan to stringer, and all hands on the capstan-bars walk her up to the wharf with the closing chantey of a deep-sea voyage:

SOLO

I. O, the times are hard and the wa - ges low,

CHORUS SOLO

Leave her, John - ny, leave her; I'll pack my bag and

CHORUS

go be - low; It's time for us to leave her.

THE NEW BOOKS

BIOGRAPHY
FROM SEVEN TO SEVENTY. By Edward Simmons. Harper & Brothers, New York City. \$4.

Most of us know about Mr. Simmons as a distinguished American painter whose mural work in the Congressional Library at Washington, in the Appellate Court building in New York, and elsewhere is a fine contribution to American art.

Here we first meet Mr. Simmons in his early days, in which he had many odd and queer adventures in the Far West. Then he went to Europe in the steerage, studied art in the famous Latin Quartier in Paris, and traveled extensively. He is evidently a born story-teller, and his book is as full as a book possibly can be of anecdotes about men and women of all sorts. Even more enjoyable to our taste than the "wild and woolly" tales of his youth are his delightful reminiscences, appreciations,

and discriminating descriptions of American painters and sculptors as found in the latter part of the book.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS: A CRITICAL STUDY. By Delmar Gross Cooke. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York. \$3.

This is a book about Howells the writer rather than about Howells the man. The sub-title, on the title-page (but not on the cover) states this. We must go elsewhere for appreciation of William Dean Howells's warm-hearted, humorous, humanity-loving personality. Even the biographical chapter (there is only one) is largely subjective, and when it isn't is cyclopædic. Mr. Cooke devotes a chapter each to Howells's ideas on criticism, his literary methods, and his literary ideals, and then, dividing his author's work into three heads—Poetry and Travels, Transcripts of Life (in Fiction), and Studies in Ethics (also in Fiction)—analyzes and de-

scribes each book. Thus this work consists of a series of essays or studies. These will interest those who recall Mr. Howells's books, or, better still, have just read them. The comments are often acute and point out defects as well as merits. Apparently there is to be no adequate and complete Life; much can be gleaned from his own "Boys' Town," "Impressions and Experiences," and "Venetian Life"—three books exceedingly well worth re-reading.

POETRY

ODES AND LYRICS. By Hartley Burr Alexander. The Marshall Jones Company, Boston. \$2.

The work included in Mr. Alexander's "Odes and Lyrics" has, in part, been collected from "Odes on the Generations of Man," first published in 1910, and "The Mid-Earth Life," which appeared as long ago as 1907. All of this poetry belongs to an outdated era, and this is especially perceptible from the fact that it reveals all the errors and mistakes of that outdated era and none of its very positive virtues. Mr. Alexander grows very cosmic at times; he employs stilted language and archaic thoughts; he repeats constantly the material that greater poets have handled surpassingly well. It is an example of his method to note that, instead of having an image say, "I am the child you were," he has it say, "I am the babe thou wast." He also sings

When thou are near I tremble, dear,
As leaves in sudden rain,—
When thou are nigh my heart beats
high
With bliss akin to pain.

One can but say "dear, dear." He also uses such extravagant phrasing as "pursed lips do nubble" in order to get a rhyme with bubble, and "ere the bubbles frothle" that he may rhyme with "true-heart trothal," which would seem to be adding insult to injury on poor readers of poetry.

ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

CONFESSIONS OF A BOOK LOVER. By Maurice Francis Egan. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York. \$2.50.

One of the chief vices of books about books is that the conclusions contained within them often prove so exasperating as to destroy all pleasure in reading. The idea that when a man writes about books he must enter the arena with either a broadsword or a net and trident and always seek to trip his adversaries up is one that steadily gains in volume as younger men are inoculated with the virus of criticism. However, older men display more equanimity. They do not necessarily fight about books. They talk about them. In his "Confessions of a Book Lover" Mr. Egan talks so delightfully that no one thinks of contradicting him. After all, but few of the younger men agree with him and many of the older men possess views that do not necessarily coincide with his. But disparities in taste do not enter into the question when one reads Mr. Egan's

book. It is not so much a book about books as it is about a man's wanderings among books. In a most felicitous colloquial manner Mr. Egan moves among the memories of his boyhood reading, comments on the poets and poetry that please him, and even enters upon discussions of certain novelists. But it is all done in the first person; it is an explanation of Mr. Egan's own mind and the reactions of that mind toward cer-

tain books. His critical estimates are much less attempts at definitive analysis than they are explanations of his personal tastes and prejudices. Now Mr. Egan is admittedly a cultured and interesting man, and naturally his likes and dislikes in books are of more than ordinary interest. Therefore "Confessions of a Book Lover" is an important and admirable portrait of a mind that is both restrained and brilliant.

THE LITTLE GRANDMOTHER'S SCHOOLS

BY ALICE STONE BLACKWELL



MME. BRESHKOVSKY

CATHERINE BRESHKOVSKY, "the Little Grandmother of the Russian Revolution," made a deep impression during her two visits to America—in 1904-5, when she was under the ban of the Czar; and in 1918-19, when she was a fugitive from the Bolsheviki. From all parts of the country inquiries have come to me, asking where she is now and what she is doing.

When she found herself unable to go back to Russia, she devoted herself to founding boarding-schools for poor children in Russian Carpathia. This beautiful, wild, and mountainous region is now a part of the Czechoslovak Republic, but its people are of Russian descent. They are very poor and ignorant, but excellently endowed by nature, she says, and eager for education. The schools that she started were warmly welcomed. They have been supported mainly by American help, and they need this help now more than ever.

Madame Breshkovsky has been obliged to live for some time in Prague, because of her ill health.

Madame Breshkovsky had been much

shocked by the murder of Nabokoff and the attempted assassination of Milyukoff by those who wish to restore the old régime. She wrote to her American friends that the monarchists had made a list of fourteen influential persons whom they meant to kill, including not only Socialists but liberals and progressives, and that she was one of the fourteen. She said, "They are hunting us like big game."

She is in deep grief over the state of public affairs. In a letter to an American friend she says:

"From all sides I am assailed and bombarded by prayers and requests, of which it is impossible to fulfill even the half. To say nothing of Russia itself, here in Europe we have to take care of thousands and thousands of our destitute countrymen. One asks a visa to go to a place where he hopes to get work. Another is searching for his relatives, lost God knows where. Some have children that must be placed in boarding-schools or furnished with clothes. The majority ask for money, being on the verge of starvation. Unable to meet these needs, one feels very sad.

"I am striving to preserve my faculties, with a view to the time when there will be need of our old forces in Russia. So, instead of dissolving myself into the general distress and wretchedness, I try to concentrate my attention on those young beings who can be reached, and who have already begun to prove themselves reasonable, conscious, and in sympathy with the welfare of their countrymen. I mean my Carpathian boarding-schools, which contain already many hundreds of poor girls and boys."

In a letter to another friend she writes:

"Small as it is, my work consists of two branches, both springing from the same stem. The first is the constitution of a group of *intelligentsia*, honest, enlightened, and devoted to the people—that will work among the people and with the people, to persuade them to a life more conscious, more ethical, more humanitarian. For I have observed that hitherto those who have had a chance to become highly educated do not care to transfer their knowledge to those deprived of that privilege. This neglect of the command given by Christ himself—who esteemed children as the best instrument through which the perfection