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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Art

HOW TO SEE MODERN PICTURES.

By RALPH M. PEARSON. Dial Press. 1925. \$2.50.

Modern pictures should be seen simply as design. "The new approach is visual in character. It demands that pictures be seen as ends in themselves. It demands that a distinction be made between qualities in a picture whose only purpose is to be seen, and qualities whose purpose is to convey ideas or human emotions." So Mr. Pearson.

With all this demanding it should be clear that there is no longer any legitimate place in the sun for the picture which while being seen may also convey "an idea or a human emotion." It is apparent also that a way of seeing has been recently discovered which has nothing whatever to do with the ideas or emotions of the human being who owns the eye. All this your reviewer willingly leaves to the woeful race of psychologists.

Give Mr. Pearson his case, that nothing but formal design is worth anybody's attention in a picture, he preaches his cause with clearness and pungency. He shows up and down what rhythm and balance are, reduces the Hambidgean dynamic symmetry to a manageable capsule, analyzes many pictures, produces abstractions of natural appearances, including an etching of his own in which a mountain is most instructively reduced to the scale and semblance of a bun. Finally there is guidance to such books and periodicals as are keeping the world safe for Modernism. It is all very simple and strong.

Since the layman is obtuse to design, such teaching as this book affords is useful—up to a certain point, up to the point, to wit, where art draws on ideas and emotions, which until very recently art has always done. Too much of this drilling in design is rather likely to produce a mathematical sort of prig rather than a civilized art-love. While dutifully reading his Pearson, the neophyte may still find his account in his Cox, Huneker, and La Farge.

WOODCUTS AND SOME WORDS. By GORDON CRAIG. Small, Maynard. 1925. \$3.

A beautifully made little in-quarto with fifty-seven cuts after Mr. Craig's wood-blocks and his own racy account of his adventures in the arts, the whole not addressed to the long eared public but to the adept and to the unspoiled beginner. Many of the blacks are memoranda of stage managements. It was a handy way to reproduce and pass the material about to the caste. Others are portraits of places, yet others pure fantasies, still others geometrical abstractions—all beautiful distributions of velvety blacks on the white paper. Many served in that very distinguished magazine, *The Masque*, as head- and tail-pieces. Mr. Craig tells how he makes them, why he likes them, where he finds the blacks, how he prints them. Those would be dull fingers that would not quiver for the graver as they turn these pages. The little book has all Mr. Craig's extraordinary gift for picturesqueness and vitality, with such a joint and harmonious appeal to ear and eye as we have hardly had since Elihu Vedder's "Omar."

THE ETCHINGS AND DRY POINTS OF CHILDE HASSAM. With an introduction by Royal Cortissoz. Scribners.

Belles Lettres

MIRRORS OF NEW YORK. By BENJAMIN DE CASSERES. New York: Joseph Lawren. 1925. \$3.

Mr. de Casseres is not divulging the accumulated secrets of indiscretions which have impalpably deposited in the mirrors of offices, boudoirs, and supper clubs of New York. He is not reflecting a composite impression of the city, the customs of its inhabitants, and the attitude of its strangers within its subways. Rather, Mr. de Casseres has apparently presented a quixotic, fantastic, mercurial mirror of his own to various quirks, quiddities, and oddities of the metropolis. At times, he exercises that privilege which was discovered by Lewis Carroll, of penetrating the mirror itself, and staring back with elfin mischief.

The viewpoint which Mr. de Casseres adopts is, in effect, a plea of demurrer to a quantity of indictments: that New York is materialistic; that the city is given over

to pleasure; that it is obstreperous and self-confident and egotistic. What of it? he demands. "Our religion," he affirms, "is a practical pantheism, with energy as the Eternal Substance."

Mr. de Casseres is buoyant and astringent and loud. He hammers home his points of pessimism with the same punch and bevo of the "There Is Hope" school of encouragers. He has an enormously happy time of it and indulges a tremendous amount of animal spirits in dispensing a venomously intoxicating brand of gloom. He is paradoxical and conclusive and destructive. At times, however, his style has the somewhat obvious absurdity which lends glitter and glamour to an occasion, especially if tongues are thickened, but makes reading a bit difficult.

HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE. By A. & C. Boni. 4 vols. \$5.

THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET. By George MacDonald. Dutton. \$3.50.

UPLANDS OF DREAM. By Edgar Saltus. Covici. OUR FELLOW SHAKESPEARE. By Horace J. Bridges. Covici. \$2.50.

SWALLOWING THE ANCHOR. By William McFee. Doubleday, Page. \$2 net.

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Biography

WILLIAM AUSTIN. By Walter Austin. Marshall Jones.

EDITH WHARTON. By Robert Morss Lovett. McBride. \$1 net.

DORA WORDSWORTH: HER BOOK. By F. V. Morley. Houghton Mifflin. \$2.

OUT OF THE PAST. By Margaret Symonds. Scribners. \$4.

FARMINGTON. By Clarence Darrow. Boni & Liveright. \$2.

THE DEATH OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE. Harvard University Press.

STORIES OF OLD IRELAND AND MYSELF. By Sir William Orpen. Holt.

A PLAYER UNDER THREE REIGNS. By Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson. Little, Brown. \$5 net.

EDWARD EVERETT. By Paul Revere Frothingham. Houghton Mifflin. \$6.

HENRY CABOT LODGE. By William Lawrence. Houghton Mifflin. \$1.75.

THE LIFE OF JAMES ELROY FLECKER. By Geraldine Hodgson. Houghton Mifflin. \$4.

Drama

THE NEW WAY. By Annie Nathan Meyer. New York: Samuel French.

TUNNEL FRENCH. By Hubert Griffith. London: Allen & Unwin.

EDUCATION. By Frank J. Adkins. London: Allen & Unwin.

THE GHOUL. By Olga Petrova. Four Seas.

COSMEN-EXILES. By John C. Judy. Published by the author, Berkeley, Calif.

Education

SCHOOL FOR JOHN AND MARY. By ELIZABETH BANKS. Putnams. 1924. \$2.

The publishers have given away the secret by scrawling on the jacket in red, "The Story of a Fight Against the Caste System," but we would have guessed it without that. "Jack" and "I," with the protagonists of the title, a typical professional class English family, return after several prosperous years in Canada about the time when people of their sort put the children into preparatory and "public" schools. Smitten with unctuous democracy (pardon, Democracy) and expecting to find the "state" or "council" schools similar to the modern and enlightened system of Canada and the United States, they scorn the snobbish and inefficient schools of their caste in favor of those of the workingman's children. Misunderstandings and social ostracism follow, and more careful study of the situation by the parents. The conclusion seems to be that there is no democracy and plaguey little education in England, so they all trek back to Canada.

In narrative form, and written in the copy-book manner of an ingenuous and sentimental child, the book loses the force of a dispassionate study of the failings found in the English school system, while the unreality of the chief characters frustrates the evident intention of vividness and direct appeal. We can see little interest her for American readers in general and even less value to educators in particular.

(Continued on next page)

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By C. ANSTRUTHER-THOMSON

Reviewed at length in the Saturday Review of Literature of May 16. \$4.00

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The New Books Education

(Continued from preceding page)

COLLEGE. By John Palmer Gavit. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.

FORUM PAPERS. Second Series. Edited by Charles Robert Gaston. Duffield.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF WALTER H. PAGE. By Burton J. Hendrick. Adapted for school use by Rollo L. Lyman. Doubleday, Page. \$1.

AMERICA'S NEED FOR EDUCATION. By Calvin Coolidge. Houghton Mifflin. 80 cents.

Fiction

THE SLEEPER OF THE MOUNTAIN RANGES. By Edison Marshall. Cosmopolitan Book Co. 1925. \$2.

Mr. Marshall is an adept in the manufacture of that staple product, the north-western brand of outdoor, he-man fiction. This one nears the jumping off place, being located in northern Alaska, its chief feature a lively volcano and its supporting troupe a band of satisfying wild natives and half breeds. The rest of it is according to a well tested pattern: two men, one girl, one being a bad man, the other noble; girl sufficiently red headed and the problem being to shuffle the bad one into the discard and bring the others to the scheduled "clinch." The half breed hero, of course, turns out to be really white, which will not surprise the experienced reader. The appetite of the "best-seller" public for this particular story seems to be insatiable: and it is really a good story. The high spot in this one, naturally, is the volcanic eruption, which is preceded by a well done tribal dance. The volume has three illustrations, one in color, from paintings by Jes W. Schlaikjer.

THE FOREST OF FEAR. By Alfred Gordon Bennett. Macaulay. 1925. \$2.

If the author of this tale has inadvertently left out any of the "stunts" proper to a twelve reel thriller the oversight is negligible. It holds enough. Mere murders are not worth noting, as minor details to the scenario which runs to shipwrecks, cyclonic upheavals of a whole South Pacific Island, the abduction of the lovely heroine by the mysterious Chinese "Mandarin"; a wonderful cave chuck full of "radium" (apparently *au naturel*, so to speak, in an elemental state) presided over by a hideous but very wise living god, who tells at great length much that the reader and the actors themselves already know, by way of "prophecy." Good old amnesia also takes a hand, and the final rescue is effected by the help of the serviceable U. S. Navy which loans a battleship for the job. It is all a wild absurdity but addicts of the film will find it entertaining.

THE BOARDER UP AT EM'S. By Anice Terhune. Macaulay. 1925. \$2.

The background of New England village life, of some twenty years ago, the deft sketches of several of the minor folk, and the really excellent study of "Em," the sixty year old woman who runs the town, are enough to offset the rather theatrical plot of the titular heroine's problem in this "Down East" story, although it remains a bit hard to get up enthusiasm over a beau-

tiful heroine who begins her career by forgery and then marries a man she does not love in order to gain an easy life. When she finds that, after all, she is not married she goes back to the old home village, to have her baby, and is taken in and befriended by "Em," who is a sort of presiding genius, looking after the welfare of the community. One does not care much for the girl, but "Em" is worth meeting—an incarnation of the caustic, yet humorous, efficiency, of the severity and kindness, that is—or used to be—produced only in rural New England. There are also nice touches in the handling of the lesser actors. "The idea of keepin' me waiting all this time just for a newspaper!" says Em to the postmaster, to which he replies—"Some folks don't get even that much. The mails ain't what they was."

THE PRINCE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE. By Harry F. Liscomb. Stokes. 1925. \$1.

The author of this book is blurred as "the boy novelist" who is, we are informed, still in his teens. A prefatory note to his story waggishly remarks: "The publishers present this unusual story in the form in which the manuscript was submitted to them, its original atmosphere undisturbed by editorial blue-pencil." This amounts to patting the lad on the back and winking a publisher's eye at the reading public. We doubt very much if it works.

As an isolated piece of writing the book is not worth a syllable of discussion. But the principle involved in the fact that it is a book and not a manuscript in the wastebasket where it belongs elicits vigorous censure. Mr. Harold Lloyd lately impressed the publisher's joke for service in one of his films. "Merton of the Movies," we recall, developed a story from an adaptation of the theme. That is fiction. This is fact. The public is here cordially invited to spend a dollar for a "Brother, Sister, do not pass up this book" treat, which is, in sum, a puerile compendium of idiotic, childish adventures related in the language of an unnecessary Malaprop. Surely the soul of wit does not also lie in such mad confusion as "The deathly combatants," "the esoteric aperture in the partition," "of which he had developed a yearning passion for," "their fingers aglitter with sapphire adamants," or the devastating alliteration of "the kidnappers. . . carried the fighting Fifth Avenue flapper up a flight of stairs and shoved her forcibly into one of the ballrooms." It is all infinitely worse than a badly written society page.

We are not criticizing the author. In the ordinary channels he would eventually come to discover his mistakes without having them openly proclaimed. He would learn that solecisms do not necessarily create enticing slang. He would learn a hundred other things besides. It is the publisher we condemn for giving a false value to his work. There is no analogy between this and "The Young Visitors." Under no other conceivable conditions than the present would "The Prince of Washington Square" have found itself in print. Jokes such as this never repeat, and Mr. Liscomb, proceeding on a false basis, may waste a dozen years of his life at a trade for which his earliest work gathers not the slightest promise. It is all a pathetic case of very poor judgment, of which he is the unfortunate victim.

THE HOUSE OF SECLUSION. By Marion Harvey. Small, Maynard. 1925. \$2.

Miss Harvey's mystery yarn is a compound of good qualities and qualities not so good, the former holding a safe lead through most of the book and finishing with a strong, unexpected spurt which drops the handicaps of the story far to the rear. One starts with the aged and reliable Who killed Cock Robin? problem, here slightly varied by allowing the elderly victim to meet his end in the treasure vault beneath the house where he has lived recluselike for years in mortal dread of his enemies. A guileless nephew is with him at the fateful moment when the cellar light goes out to be followed instantly by a sinister struggle in the dark.

Uncle Jones lay dead upon the floor. How come and why? We did not learn until nearly 300 pages later. In fact we did not remotely suspect, so skilfully has the author succeeded in prolonging our mystification while constantly adding fresh fuel to our curiosity. On only one point do we raise objection, and that is to the method employed at the close by the author to bring about a satisfactory solution. She unearths piece by piece the obscure and dishonorable past lives of various characters, some of whom have died years before the

story opens, out the majority of whom play active parts in it. All right, we know that this is customary in the province of the mystery story, but here it had the effect of making one think that Miss Harvey's plot had gone beyond her control and that in desperation she had belatedly called in the aid of properties which she had not marked for her use from the very beginning.

PROFESSOR. By Stanley Johnson. Harcourt, Brace. 1925. \$2.

This is a sorry tale of pedantry, polish, prestige, and petty politics in a small college. Its thesis is that the driver of a garbage wagon (say) may be kindlier, more just, of a greater usefulness and a wider range of activity and interest, than the intelligentsia of this college; and that their struggle for power and privilege and preferment is a struggle of little spiteful nasty beetles. It is written well, but not so calmly as to suggest that Mr. Johnson views the tiny struggle with detached pity, a wondering passer-by.

THE PRINCESS OF PARADISE ISLAND. By Kenyon Gambier. Doran. 1925. \$2.

Although Mr. Gambier employs numerous perennial standbys, in the way of plot, setting, incident, and characters, for the materials of his present romance, he has so skilfully revived, rearranged, and transformed the hardy relics that they here seem to us as good as new. The secret of his accomplishment is due in part to a spirited and graceful prose, combined with the ability to make one think the yarn is moving swiftly when in reality the actors are merely trying vigorous, but minor, practice steps. In a word, the author is never guilty of dullness, nor of the equally serious offense of slackening his grip upon the reader's interest.

The leading rôle is allotted to Jeanne Smith, the Princess, who inherits from her father sovereignty of a tiny Bahaman island over whose simple black natives she rules with justice, kindness, and tolerance for all. Charlie Bonsal in the distant States is bequeathed possession of the island by the will of his late uncle, and departs at once to take up his tropical residence, only to find on arrival that the property has never legally passed from the ownership of the girl and her dead father. This disappoints the young man, of course, but being of chivalrous mold, he bears his loss stoically, loves the girl, and quickly enlists on her side to repel other invaders of her domain who are already gathering for the doing of evil deeds.

Here enters the shadow of a huge mortgage to menace the heroine with foreclosure. There are also revealed a Yankee business man with money to take over the title, a nefarious wolf in a friendly sheep's clothing, a rumor of buried treasure whose finding will save the girl's home from grasping creditors. These and other approved ingredients are adroitly blended to produce a tale which, though the *blasé* may spurn it for "old stuff," has yet the virtue of being far better handled than a great deal of "new stuff" which we see constantly bungled by ill-trained pens.

IN HIS OWN IMAGE. By Frederick Baron Corvo. Knopf. \$2.75 net.

THE ANNEXATION SOCIETY. By J. S. Fletcher. Knopf. \$2.

DAY OF ATONEMENT. By Louis Golding. Knopf. \$2.50 net.

THE MISTRESS OF HUSABY. By Sigrid Undset. Knopf. \$3.

THAT NICE YOUNG COUPLE. By Francis Hackett. Boni & Liveright. \$2.

THE SPORTING SPIRIT. Compiled by Charles Wright Gray. Holt. \$2.

GORA. By Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan.

THE DECAMERON. Boccaccio. A. & C. Boni. \$1.25.

GARGANTUA AND PANTAGRUEL. By Francis Rabelais. A. & C. Boni. 3 vols. \$1.25 each.

BIGGER AND BLACKER. By Octavus Roy Cohen. Little, Brown. \$2 net.

UNVEILED. By Beatrice Kean Seymour. Seltzer. \$2.50.

THE GUERMANTES WAY. By Marcel Proust. Seltzer. 2 vols. \$6.

PICKANINNY. By Estelle Margaret Swearingen. Duffield. \$1.25 net.

MIDIAN MEDITATIONS. By Jean Berry. Putnam. \$1.50.

MISS MACKENZIE. By Anthony Trollope. (World's Classics). Oxford University Press. 80 cents.

THE LAXDELA SAGA. Translated from the Icelandic (Huebsch).

PRAIRIE FIRES. By Lorna Doone Beers. Dutton. \$2.

MRS. FULLER. By Marguerite Bryant. Duffield. \$2 net.

THE MISSING INITIAL. By Natalie Sumner Lincoln. Appleton. \$1.75.

THE LAIRD. By Winifred Duke. London: Long.

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