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PHILADELPHIA

## The New Books Belles Lettres

(Continued from preceding page)

let" and "Othello" in the present volume, or in a few passages where his reverence for Madame Blavatsky—as annoying as is always the admiration of a strong head for a weak one—leads him to emulate that celebrated lady's unctuous verbiage. For the most part, Mr. Bragdon's work is that of a highly organized artistic intelligence, sincerely and deeply religious, speaking not by rote but from an experience genuinely sensitive to cosmic beauty.

"Old Lamps for New" is a collection of new and old essays which present the familiar doctrines of theosophy in a most attractive form. All modern philosophies—neo-realism, neo-idealism, Bergsonianism, and the rest—are laboring hard to incorporate Einstein and Relativity; perhaps theosophy, though less modern than the others, has less difficulty than any of them in this task; at least, the essay "Time is a dream" is one of the most satisfactory in Mr. Bragdon's volume. There are also many notable sayings upon art, such as "the creator of beauty is subjectively a mathematician whether he knows aught of mathematics or not." Should modern civilization go to pieces, theosophy is the only popular religion which would without difficulty survive the change. In that event, Mr. Bragdon would undoubtedly come to be considered one of the great writers of the present period. Meanwhile, without so considering him, and without agreeing with more than a fraction of what he says, we may still welcome and thoroughly enjoy his work.

PORTRAITS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. Historic and Literary. By C. SAINTE-BEUVE. Translated by Katharine P. Wormeley and George Burnham Ives. Putnams, 2 vols.

The most famous work of Sainte-Beuve is already available in so many editions that this new collection and translation may, at first sight, appear unnecessary. But the translator has done her work so well that the two beautiful volumes, with their wealth of illustrations, mostly reproductions of old steel engravings, will tempt many readers to substitute them for the familiar editions. The editors have taken some justifiable liberties with their author. The portraits are compiled from the "Causeries du Lundi," the "Portraits de Femmes" and the "Portraits Littéraires." In some instances they have combined separate essays on the same person, avoiding the inevitable repetitions by excision. There was not such a good case for excluding Sainte-Beuve's "discussions on style" in which some of his best literary criticism is contained. But these volumes, when all is said, contain the cream of the author's work. It is as easy to over-rate Sainte-Beuve as it is to under-rate him and criticism has been fairly divided in both respects as to his critical ability. He owes more than the famous critics usually owe to the work of journeymen *littérateurs*. Like Augustine Birrell he writes best when he has some book on which to base his essay, although the book, very often, is not mentioned in the essay it provokes. There was no intention of concealment in this habit. It must never be forgotten that Sainte-Beuve, though he was a critic, was first of all a *causeur*. A fine test of any man's critical power is to examine what he has to say about an alien literature. Sainte-Beuve passes this test with his colors flying, for his opinions and dissertations on English literature and English characters are sounder than his countrymen have generally written. The essay on Lord Chesterfield, for instance, is a great achievement for a Frenchman. For though Chesterfield had many Gallic traits in his character, he was essentially a product of Eighteenth Century England. Moreover, on account of his "quarrel" with Dr. Johnson, history has tended to overlook many of his finest qualities, his breadth of mind, his tolerance and intellectual equipment. Sainte-Beuve is not distracted by any such popular misunderstandings. He sees to the heart and mind of his man and draws an extremely sensitive portrait against the background of the Eighteenth Century. As a commentary on the greatest figures in the France of that cycle these two volumes would be hard to surpass. The translators have employed a clean, nervous English throughout and the volumes are beautifully printed and bound.

ESSAYISTS PAST AND PRESENT. Collected by J. B. PRIESTLEY. Dial, 1925. \$1.50.

This is a collection of essays from the days of Steele and Addison to our own time of Robert Lynd and Hillaire Belloc. Mr. Priestley has made his selection with an effort to stimulate taste by giving samples of the delectable dishes to be found at the English literary board. Eschewing more weighty material he has confined his choice to the "personal essay," keeping in mind De Quincey's distinction between Literature of Knowledge and Literature of Power. Among the contents are Swift's "A Country Visit," Lamb's "Imperfect Sympathies," Hazlitt's "Merry England," Thackeray's "De Finibus," Stevenson's "The Lantern-Bearers," and Chesterton's "A Piece of Chalk." It is a delightful and scholarly volume and serves to remind the reader of an easy and gentlemanly method of composition that is fast passing out of fashion.

MEN, WOMEN AND COLLEGES. By Le Baron R. Briggs. Houghton Mifflin. \$1.50.  
SILHOUETTES. By Sir Edmund Gosse. Scribners. \$2.75.  
FALSTAFF AND OTHER SHAKESPEAREAN TOPICS. By Albert H. Tolman. Macmillan. \$2.50.

## Biography

HENRY MONTAGU BUTLER: Master of Trinity College, Cambridge (1886-1918). A Memoir by His Son. (J. R. M. BUTLER). Longmans, Green. 1925. \$4.50.

Quite apart from its high merits as a biography this book may be read for its very entertaining pictures of university life and politics in Cambridge, England, from 1886 to 1918. That Dons are not necessarily dull, as the old undergraduate burthen goes, is once more disproved by the life story of one of them, also one of the most famous of his own times. Butler came to Trinity after his short occupancy of the Deanery of Gloucester. Thus the son's book takes up the biographical tale almost where Mr. Edward Graham, the Harrow biographer, left off. As Headmaster of Harrow for twenty-six years (he was appointed at the exceptionally early age of twenty-six) Butler's experience was not altogether unsuited to the duties of the new appointment. But where at Harrow he had been an autocrat, as his position demanded, at Trinity he was "all that a wise man ever wishes to be," head of a constitutional government. The accounts, with which this biography is crowded, of his dealings with the Fellows and Council of his College are of so many little masterpieces of tact and skill in managing difficult affairs. Butler's literary tastes, his speeches, conversations, and even his sermons are mellowed and gracious, like one of his own wines; to spend an hour among them in the pages of his biography is a delightful experience.

HAIL AND FAREWELL. By GEORGE MOORE. Revised Edition. Doran. 1925. \$7.50.

This, the juiciest, the wittiest, and the most characteristic of all George Moore's books is reissued in two volumes, with a new preface introducing and reviewing the work. Mr. Moore discovers that, as with the pre-Raphaelites, it is nature not art that produced his masterpiece, the unsurpassable human nature of Ireland; indeed, no writer could add to the humors of Yeats, Lady Gregory, and AE, when in their Celtic poses. It is a witty preface to a witty book, and if Mr. Moore insists upon dropping Whistler's last name as unworthy of a man with McNeill for his middle name, he takes no more liberty there than everywhere in the impudent and delightful book which he reintroduces.

THE TRAGIC LIFE OF VINCENT VAN GOGH. By LOUIS PIERARD. Translated by Herbert Garland. Houghton Mifflin. 1925.

To what is generally known about Van Gogh M. Piérard has contributed a thorough investigation of the painter's efforts as an evangelist among the Belgian coal miners, with some additional information concerning his artistic beginnings at Antwerp. The rest is a rather heavy-handed compilation from familiar authorities. The value of the revelations is obviously relative to the reader's attitude toward poor Vincent. The cult will naturally rejoice in new evidence increasing the mass of energetic frenzy formerly on record. Others may feel that heaping up already abundant evidence that Vincent was always nearly mad merely tends to confuse what is unimportant—his madness, with what

is important—his unique lyrical gift. The book is of good English make with many illustrations and as covers, a gorgeously colored end-paper, which seems more appropriate symbolically than practically durable.

**SIX PRISONS AND TWO REVOLUTIONS.** By OLIVER BALDWIN. Doubleday, Page. 1925. \$3.

Although the author of this book, as the title suggests, had the pleasure of studying the interior of six prisons and the exterior of two revolutions, he does not seem to have learned any great wisdom from his experiences or to have progressed through the purgatory of trial to a paradise free from calling bad names. It appears that Oliver Baldwin, who is the son of Premier Baldwin of England, was invited to go to Armenia as an army instructor in 1920. What followed caused him some trouble and the present volume. As the publishers of the book say: "The fact that his life was constantly in peril seems to have left him unmoved." We wish it hadn't left him so unmoved, for then his story might have been a bit more interesting.

**MEMORIES OF NINETY YEARS.** By MRS. E. M. WARD. Holt. 1925. \$5.

This polite volume is preëminently the chronicle of a lady. Mrs. E. M. Ward is an R. A. in her own right, as well as granddaughter, niece, and wife of Royal Academicians. An adored only child, she was from an early age gaily at home in that distinguished circle. She had a picture accepted by the Academy at fourteen; at fourteen and a half, she was engaged to Edward Ward, the promising young artist, whom she afterwards married. Both of them acquired early recognition, and such a company of friends among the significant painters, writers, and musicians of the day, that the book is heavily embroidered with great names. Too often the names remain names and no more, for Mrs. Ward does not habitually admit us to her reflections. Nevertheless, here are Tom Moore, and Frith, friends of her childhood; and Wilkie Collins acting "Fairy Godmother" to her secret wedding. Here are the young Millais, and Lewis Carroll; a visit to Paris with Charles Dickens and his wife; Jenny Lind singing alone in Burnham Beeches; Victoria whipping manners into the young Kaiser-to-be.

Although the book is a long record of artistic and social events, without much comment, one lays it down with an increased sense that these people lived and were, because a nice little lady who knew them, tells us so.

**MEMOIR OF THOMAS BEWICK** written by Himself 1822-1828. With an introduction by SELWYN IMAGE. Dial. 1925.

It is strange that Thomas Bewick's autobiography has had to wait eighty-three years for a second edition, and one is correspondingly grateful to the publishers who challenge our undue forgetfulness of one of the best autobiographies in the language. Everything that the aged master wood-engraver set down for his children is as sound and fragrant as the box-tree from which his blocks were made. His English is as racy and telling as those sparse firm shoves of the graver which we read in expressive white line on thousands of woodcuts each a little masterpiece of understanding, simple fine-feeling, and often of quiet good humor.

So the reader should be left the full joy of following the truant lad of Cherry-burn farm through high adventures with birds and beasts and fish, through acquaintance with wastrels, ballad singers, and dour heroic yeomen of the North Country, to that industrious apprenticeship which was to revolutionize an art, and to that sturdy old age which was to speculate wisely on liberty and social inequality, on essential religion versus theological vanities, on war and destructive national ambitions. So foursquare massive and genial a book simply has to be read entire. Samples will no more tell the tale than would sample draughts adequately "low-sen the skin" of that admirable Johnny Chapman, whose portrait in these pages is merely one of many masterpieces. However eugenists will thank your reviewer for quoting—"If the same pains were taken in breeding mankind that gentlemen have bestowed upon the breeding of horses and dogs, human nature might, as it were, be new modelled."

Were a nation-wide organization of

Back to Bewick clubs possible, our social and political maladies would be on the way to recovery. Failing that, there is in this wise and friendly book rich solace for the discriminating few. Mental hygiene could find no more beneficial regimen than a Bewick daily dozen reckoned alternately in pages and woodcuts.

**THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN BURROUGHS.** By Clara Barris. Houghton Mifflin. 2 vols. \$12.50.  
**THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON.** By James Boswell. Edited by Arnold Glover. Dutton. 3 vols.  
**THE LAST YEARS OF ROBIN.** By Marcelle Tirel. McBride. \$2.50 net.  
**WILLIAM CADOGAN.** By John Ruhlat. Hoeber. \$1.50.  
**THE SHORT JOURNAL AND ITINERARY JOURNALS OF GEORGE FOX.** Edited by Norman Penney. Cambridge University Press (Macmillan).  
**JOHN S. SARGENT: HIS LIFE AND WORK.** By William Howe Downes. Little, Brown. \$8 net.  
**PORTRAITS OF A HALF CENTURY.** By Samuel L. Powers. Little, Brown. \$3 net.  
**CARLYLE ON CROMWELL AND OTHERS.** By David Alec Wilson. Dutton. \$5.  
**DISRAELI: ALIEN PATRIOT.** By E. T. Raymond. Doran. \$4 net.  
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## Drama

**ROBERT BURNS.** By John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin. \$1.50.  
**MODERN THEATRES.** By Irving Pichel. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.25.  
**THE WORKS OF EUGENE O'NEILL.** Boni & Live-right. 4 vols. \$2.50 each.  
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**THE MAN WITH A LOAD OF MISCHIEF.** By Ashley Dukes. Doran. \$1.25 net.  
**THE BEST PLAYS OF 1924-1925.** By Barns Mantle. Small, Maynard. \$3 net.

## Economics

**PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OR SOCIALISM.** By SCOVILLE HAMLIN. Dorance. 1925. \$2.

One of the several general impressions the reader carries away from this book is that, in the mind of the author, civilization, private property, and the Constitution of the United States are synonymously sacred terms. Another is that taxation is somehow the open door to public ownership and that, said door being at present wide open, "the flood tide of Socialism" is about to roll in. Still another is that Mr. Hamlin, having written many paragraphs based on many notes, used no more supra-logical method of joining his paragraphs than paste pot and shears.

## Education

**THE ONE-TEACHER SCHOOL IN DELAWARE.** By Richard Watson Cooper and Hermann Cooper. University of Delaware Press.  
**ENGLISH REVIEW GRAMMAR.** By Walter Kay Smart. New York: Crofts. \$1.25.  
**OVID'S METAMORPHOSES.** By Arthur W. Roberts and John C. Rolfe. Scribners. 80 cents.  
**EDUCATION AS WORLD-BUILDING.** By Thomas Davidson. Harvard University Press. \$1.50.  
**LA BUCHE.** By Anatole France. Oxford University Press. 50 cents.  
**TEACHING HIGH SCHOOL LATIN.** By Josiah B. Game. University of Chicago Press. \$2.  
**THE EDUCATION OF THE MODERN BOY.** Small, Maynard. \$3 net.

## Fiction

**GAMBRINUS AND OTHER STORIES.** By ALEXANDER KUPRIN. New York: The Adelphi Co. 1925. \$2.

Kuprin is an artist who is remarkably congenial to the Western mind; he never disturbs it. Revolutions may come and go, war may murder, wrong may crush. "Beauty is Truth, Truth beauty," smiles Kuprin as he polishes a sentence in "Sulamith" or "Gambrius". Add to this the undisputed fact of his being an extraordinarily accomplished if not a profoundly significant writer and you have everything a bored intelligentsia needs.

The crux of the matter is that Kuprin's attitude towards his subject is generally that of an Oxford gentleman towards a cockney,—one of detached interest. Thus, like Gorki, Kuprin chooses picaresque material with much relish; but the two men are at opposite sides of the fence. One is sure that Kuprin is taking notes and remarking to invisible friends, "Charming, isn't it?"

This, is, however, as much his strength as it is his limitation; it affords him a perspective such as Gorki often lacks, and the result is formal beauty unsurpassed except in the very finest passages of Russian literature. "Gambrius," with its single, undisturbed focus, is a last word in such a distillation; but it is more than that. Somehow Russian authors are a help best when they write

(Continued on next page)



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