

it. It is straining the very ment to say that the merely Shakespeare "do the hard sup beauty." Nor, allowing for preference for his latest colle representative volume." Go tion can be claimed neither t by the earlier, more expar "Man," but by "Two Live using a chain of sonnets one else would employ form, is both personal and poem that is a simple, mov almost overpowering sense of insistent of Richard Dehm Leonard's work is in no set the title hints at surface sima Leonard's work is in no set the title hints at surface sima

It is, at least for this reviewer, a definite descent to the more scattered pieces of "Tutankhamen." The title poem is an ambitious attempt to picture the continuity of man's life in three pages but in spite of a few felicitous phrases, it is prosy. The concluding section, "Wars," is noticeably "dated." But the shorter verses—particularly "The Wife," "Flight of Crows," and "Indian Summer" (the high point of this collection)—give the lie to the glib charge of professional pedantry. Whatever faults may be found in Leonard's verse, it is never pallid.

The collected poems of Charlton Lewis reveal a less fiery but equally definite personality. Grace was Professor Lewis's note; a delicate flavor spiced with humor characterizes this posthumous volume. A few of the earlier verses could have been spared, although Henry A. Beer's Foreword gives sufficient reason for their inclusion. Had Lewis lived. . . . But such speculations are as unsafe as they are futile. Here is his title of creation, too slender for criticism yet not too trivial for praise.

## Cocteau's First Novel

THE GRAND ECART. By JEAN COCTEAU. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1925. \$2.

Reviewed by MALCOLM COWLEY

THIS novel is the first which Cocteau wrote, and the second of his books which Lewis Galantière has translated. Concerning the quality of these translations, there has been much discussion. People have pointed out, quite justly, that to speak of Saint-Eugene as "the Back Bay of Algiers" is hardly an exact rendering of Cocteau's phrase. Nor is "Pa Râteau" the English of *Père Râteau*. Still, there is life in Mr. Galantière's expressions, and his work in general is so far above the average that, until the day when other translators are forced to acknowledge their more grievous blunders, he should receive nothing but praise.

As for the novel itself, "The Grand Ecart" is far superior to "Thomas the Impostor." The style of the two is similar; there is the same wit, the same exaggerated metaphor; but in the former volume the characters have the trick of coming alive. Germaine especially; she is a common type in Paris; a kept woman who works in the theater with a sense of sacrifice, as if she were paying a tax to her reputation. One might call her utterly depraved. Still, depravity implies a fall from a brighter state of morals, and in the case of Germaine the past was even blacker than the present. It would be more exact to speak of unmorality, and to add that unmorality of her sort is more dangerous than the immorality with which it is always contrasted, for she could steal, murder, or break a heart without marring her perfect complexion, without the least consciousness of doing wrong.

When Jacques Forestier fell in love with her, it was like a fall into the sort of abyss which can only be found in an opium dream. He had been candid and ingenuous. Now he learned how to lie to her "old man"—the Egyptian financier who paid the bills—to meet hop-heads, snow-birds, and perverted creatures of both sexes, and to speak with them as equals. Germaine got rid of him. The cure was violent as the disease; he attempted suicide, and was saved only by the dishonesty of the barman, who sold him a drug of inferior quality.

It is a fascinating novel. If Cocteau and his

friends would cease to make their exaggerated claims of genius, one could praise the book wholeheartedly. As it is, one cannot fail to remark that the sensitivity and fancy which are his distinguishing features are not the qualities of genius. They belong to a minor poet, a poet of the *Paris-la-Nuit* which has only two dimensions; or, if it possesses any depth at all, might be compared to the parchment stretched across a drum—resounding, fierce, and hollow.

## Manners and Mores

QUEST. By KATHARINE NEWLIN BURT. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1925. \$2.

WITH her new novel "Quest," Katharine Newlin Burt definitely steps out of the adventure story class in which her earlier books, "The Branding Iron" and "Snow-Blind" had placed her. In this new volume she gives us a sincere study of manners and mores in the Catskill country during the last fifty years. There is a sense of the land in it, a feeling for the earth and its growing things which is for the most part lacking in American literature and which so enriches that of England. One gets the "feel" of the places she describes:

The sober workmanlike team shook their heads and



*a sort of boy with a  
bow & arrow - he  
wasn't good a genius*

Illustration by the author from "Letters to Katie," by Sir Edward Burne-Jones (Macmillan).

started with a certain eagerness for home; the dust flew up from the narrow metal-rimmed wheels; the smell of the church grounds, turfy and warm, merged into the smell of the leafy, dusty village street, of dinners preparing to right and left in the pleasant small houses. . . . Before they got down into the main part of the town, they could see over its roofs the little broad ferryboat plying across to the opposite larger town, leaving two bright folds of water behind it like trailing wings and having altogether the air of an active water insect.

If it is not a large stage Mrs. Burt sets, at least no one can deny the abundance of characters. The pages are almost as thickly peopled as those of Dickens or Balzac, and in the earlier portions the characters are completely realized three-dimensional beings, although, it is to be regretted, as the book progresses they tend to become types. Not the least charming of these people is Hooker, the parrot, who through listening to his clerical master's intonings "had become expert in Mosaic law." At the approach of Miss Abbey, whom he was later to disgrace, he "would invert himself and begin to climb all over the cage, upside down, downside up, cocking his ash-gray head and his glowing yellow eyes and cleverly grasping the bars with his deliberate amber toes. His tail, the color of a flame amongst the ashen feathers of his wings, balanced him in whatever attitude." But, alas, when, carefully covered with a bit of embroidered silk, he was handed into the cab with Miss Abbey—"Thou shalt not commit adultery" Hooker remarked excitedly."

The publishers announce the volume as the story of youth's search for God. It is much more

than that. It is a keen and sympathetic analysis of the child psyche confronted by the inexplicable "thou shalt nots" of an adult world, and a relentless portrayal of the warping of individuality brought about by ugly fears implanted in childhood. One will search far before finding a grimmer bit of realism than that of Little John's punishment. It was while locked in the dark room, trembling and broken by his whipping, that Little John heard "a voice without human modulation, cold, high . . . say 'I am the Lord thy God'"—and in a paroxysm of terror he passed beyond being afraid. "He had become Fear . . . the Fear of God." The failure of his life comes logically and relentlessly from this hour. Nicholas, in his little hour of trial, meets a too lenient God, and treads a tortuous if partially primrose path to a finally tragic readjustment. This theme is too real to need the sound and fury of plot which Mrs. Burt introduces into the latter part of the book, and the work loses much toward the end through the piling up of theatrical incident.

## Schnitzler's Latest

FRAULEIN ELSE. By ARTHUR SCHNITZLER. Translated by Robert Simon. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1925. \$1.50.

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN

HOWEVER unpleasant the theme of Schnitzler's latest novel may be the book is an artistic triumph. Within the brief compass of its less than one hundred and fifty pages it presents a kaleidoscopic portrayal of the doubt, despair, and agony of a soul which volumes of description could make no more poignant. Its very brevity, indeed, lends it an intensity of mood which neither author nor reader could sustain for a long period, but which for the duration of its swift-moving course lays an unescapable hold upon the emotions. When the tale is told, and the heroine has paid with her life for the violence which she has done to her own nature, the unreality of the situation into which she has been forced becomes secondary to the inevitability of its outcome. The story has that higher reality which is the essence of good fiction.

The high pitch of its emotion is derived through the device of reflecting through the consciousness of Fräulein Else herself the misery to which the young girl falls prey when she has committed herself for the sake of saving her father from financial ruin and imprisonment to appearing unclad before the æsthetic gourmand whose assistance is only to be purchased through feeding his lust for beauty. The device, of course, is perfectly familiar, but it is here handled with an economy of means, a sureness of intention, and a straightforwardness of method that are masterly. The writhings of the girl's soul, the decision and indecision that alike tear her, the final shift of emotion from Else to those around her while she is still maintained as the medium through which the feelings of all are reflected, are conveyed with a directness that is as highly charged as it is effective. From start to finish the story moves with absolute certainty. Its technique is flawless.

## A Prize Novel

WILD GEESE. By MARTHA OSTENSO. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1923. \$2.

Reviewed by REBECCA LOWRIE

ANY novel which will satisfy the requirements of a reputable publisher, a popular periodical, and a motion picture producer is an interesting phenomenon. And such is "Wild Geese," the \$13,500 prize novel by Martha Ostenso. One is amazed at its selection for this particular prize, because though it may indeed be called "promising" the promise is not fulfilled within the limits of the book. It is unremarkable as a story; its serial possibilities are slight; it is not readily adaptable to the naive art of the motion picture.

The author is, we are told, a young Norwegian girl. The scene is prairie country somewhere in the northwest. The characters are farmers of mixed racial extractions—Swedes, Icelanders,

