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# Books of Special Interest

## The Mentality of Apes

ALMOST HUMAN. By ROBERT M. YERKES. New York: The Century Co. 1925. $3.

Reviewed by LEE S. CRANDALL

IT IS a curious fact that, in spite of the interest which the great apes have always aroused in the minds of men, very little authentic information concerning them has become available to the general public. Just at this time, when discussion of the origin of man has reached the boiling point, Professor Robert M. Yerkes's "Almost Human" is certain to be well received. A careful perusal will convince any unbiased reader that the rather enigmatical title is appropriate.

Professor Yerkes is one of the few psychologists who have given serious attention to the study of the mental processes of the anthropoid apes. His technical publications are well known to the scientific world and probably no one is better equipped than he to present, in popular form, an account of what is really known concerning our "little cousins."

"Almost Human" is based on an account of the famous collection of apes maintained at Havana, Cuba, by Señora Rosalia Abreu. "Famous" is used advisedly, for while this important experiment and its general results are widely known among naturalists, little has been published concerning it. For the first time, a full history of Señora Abreu's work has been made available by Professor Yerkes. If the account seems somewhat disjointed, it is made doubly valuable by the interpolation of extracts from the publications of other workers in the field of ape psychology, as well as the observations of Professor Yerkes himself.

A woman of strong personality and unusual character, Señora Abreu, in spite of "the manifest surprise and amazement, the open or implied criticism, and even the ridicule of her fellow countrymen, acquaintances, and friends," has persisted in her interest in the lower primates, until it finally resulted in the gathering of a series of apes which has few rivals. As might be expected, the members of this unique collection react favorably to the tropical climate, even to the point of reproduction.

The birth of the chimpanzee Anumá, now ten years old and the first anthropoid to be reared to maturity in captivity, took place on April 27th, 1915. It was this unusual event that brought to the Cuban experiment the attention of biologists the world over. In 1923, a second baby, known as Lita, was born. Lita and her parents form the subject of a most interesting study of the family life of the great apes, a matter concerning which practically nothing was previously known.

The success of Señora Abreu's colony is used by Professor Yerkes in an effective plea for more extensive work with anthropoids. He outlines the possibilities of such investigation, in relation to many fields of human endeavor, summing up as follows:

"The purpose of this comparison of the status of physical and biological sciences is to point the strategic value of the primates for psychological inquiry. Of all living creatures they are the most promising material for the psychologist, aside from his fellow beings. And where the fellow beings refuse to lead or follow, where experimentation is unjust or impracticable, the infra-human primate is supreme. It is far worse than careless to ignore or neglect our opportunities; it is wholly inexcusable."

The book is written in a spirit obviously fair and with the careful reserve of the scientist who strives to draw the layman into his laboratory. It should be read by everyone given to arguing, or even to thinking, about the evolution of man.

## Some Spanish Mystics

SPANISH MYSTICISM. By E. ALLISON PEERS. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. $5.

Reviewed by MUNA LEE

ONE of the surest and most direct approaches to an understanding of pain is through Spanish mysticism. Angel Ganivet, hard-headed thinker that he was, declared the most striking tendencies of the religious spirit of his race to be "poetic exaltation, or mysticism, and fanaticism, the exaltation of action": and Unamuno, not too prone to agreement with Ganivet generally, says, "I become more and more convinced that our philosophy, the Spanish philosophy, is liquescent and diffused in our literature, in our life, in our action, above all in our mysticism; and not in philosophical systems." Shelley's "Flame-like Spain" and Santayana's "Christ, the only conqueror of Spain indeed!" are poetic syntheses of the same truth. The Spanish mystics have always been characterized not only by intense and flaming ardor, but by commonsense as well; not only by wisdom, but by sagacity; by that peculiar blending of vision and downright practicality which is temperamentally Spanish. In their discovery of the universe they never lose sight of earth. Saint Teresa's homely phrase, "The Lord walks among the pots and pans" is typical; equally typical is the "Slaying, Thy will recalleth life from death" of St. John on the Cross. The Spaniard detests generalization, vagueness, speculation for its own sake; he abhors unreality: and Spanish mysticism is, literally, the achievement of a passionately religious race in realizing its desire.

Mr. Peers's method in this volume of interpretation and selection is excellent. He contributes a brilliantly written introduction indicating the historical background and the spiritual sources, then presents extracts from the writings of the mystics themselves in beautiful prose translation and in verse which is not always so satisfactory. The original versions in Spanish form the third section of the book. From the several hundred mystics with their several thousand works, the editor chooses some fourteen from that Great Age of Mysticism which was also the Great Age of Spain—in literature, in painting, and in conquest. He begins with Fray Hernando de Talavera, Queen Isabella's confessor, whose chief importance is historical. Then come in order other precursors of Saint Teresa: Alejo de Venegas, Alonso de Orozco, Francisco de Osuna, Bernardino de Laredo, St. Pedro de Alcántara, Juan de Avila, Fray Luis de Granada. Saint Teresa herself and St. John of the Cross follow, and the later mystics, Pedro Malón de Chaide, Juan de los Angeles, Diego de Estella; with a magnificent climax in Luis de León, with excerpts from that very great and most characteristically Spanish book, "The Names of Christ"—excerpts embodying explanations of the symbolic meaning of "Bridegroom," "Son of God," and "Prince of Peace."

Lack of complete agreement with Mr. Peers—the feeling, for example that in the introduction he does less than justice to the Quietists, in failing to see that Molinos in his insistence on "spiritual martyrdom" and "perfect annihilation" is not after all so remote from the implications of Carmelite and Franciscan "strife" and "warfare" as Mr. Peers implies—does not preclude admiration and appreciation of his achievement. With a fine intuition for beauty, balanced judgment, and a discriminating critical sense, and with the sympathy born of comprehension, he has employed his scholarship and his enthusiasm to bring together a profoundly interesting mass of material not otherwise readily available for most readers.

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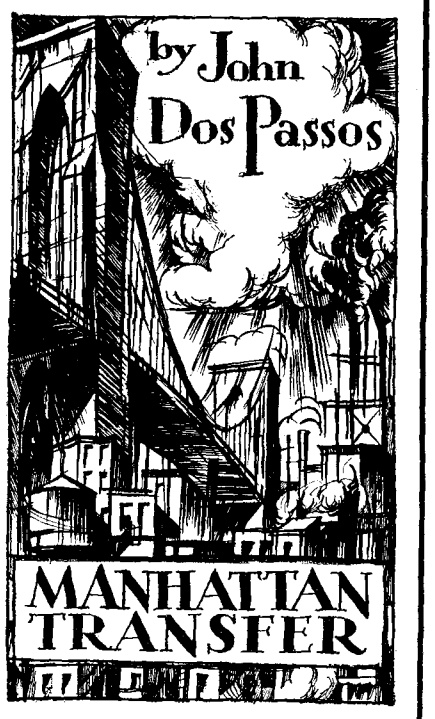


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# A Letter from France

By Louise Morgan Sill

THREE new volumes on Anatole France enrich the fast growing library on this subject. "La Jeunesse d'Anatole France," by Georges Girard (Nouvelle Revue Française), contains an account of the author's boyhood from authentic sources, with some of his earliest MSS. and a little collection of his thoughts about the Creator, called "Pensées Chrétiennes" which he wrote at the age of seven and intended to have printed when he should be twenty. Its price was to be fifty centimes. He was then, of course, a believer. Many of the youthful letters included here have to do with his parents, his serious father and his indulgent, charming mother. But though the letters and essays show a mind of intense sensibility, there is as yet nothing very superior to the output of thousands of French boys who are always specially trained in literary skill. This literary record is of great value only because of the writer's destiny, but it shows his early predilection for writing and his industry.

In "Dernières Pages Inédites d'Anatole France," presented by Michel Corday (Calmann-Lévy), we have unpublished pages written up to the time of his death, which add nothing to his fame but complete a record. There are fragments of dialogues which France entitled "Sous la Rose," in which again he treats of the Creator, this time from the standpoint of a sceptical old man whose arguments, however, are almost as ingenuous against faith as they were ingenuous for it in his childhood—a fact which M. Franc-Nohain points out in the *Echo de Paris*. The dialogues also deal with old age—upon which France is not at all edifying—with the War, with modesty, etc., written in that brilliant French of which he was always master even to the day of his death at the age of seventy-eight.

Another book on A. France, entitled "Anatole France et Racine," by Gabriel des Hons (Le Divan), has a Preface by Charles Maurras.

Jean Giraudoux's new novel "Bella" began serial publication in the October number of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. It is one of his strongest books, and is said to include M. Poincaré among its characters. It deals with political life in France, a theme which M. Giraudoux's career at the Foreign Office has amply prepared him to handle.

M. Poincaré's first cousin, Henri Poincaré, is the protagonist of another new book in the collection "Nobles Vies, Grands Œuvres" (Plon), by Paul Appell, rector of the University of Paris. It will be remembered that Henri Poincaré was a phenomenal mathematician. His father was professor in the Medical Faculty of Nancy, and among his forbears were soldiers, legislators, and lawyers. As a child he was not strong, and it was not until he reached the fourth class in school that his mathematical talent was discovered and became a subject of comment among the professors. He first distinguished himself in history and geography, though he never seemed to work hard, and was so absent-minded that he could not always say whether he had breakfasted or not. Later he was first in the entrance examinations for the difficult Ecole Polytechnique in Paris.

For the study of the poet Charles Baudelaire, the edition of his works edited and commented by M. Jacques Crépet (Conard)—whose father before him was a Baudelairian—leaves nothing to be desired. This publication, begun several years ago, is not yet complete, and the new volume has just appeared under the title "L'Art Romantique." Baudelaire's text is given without the interruption of notes, all of which appear, with studied commentaries and explications, in the second part of the book. There is also an alphabetical index of the best kind. This volume is a posthumous collection of Baudelaire's criticisms on art—on painters, writers, actors, musicians—the most important of which are his fine pages on the painters Delacroix and Constantin Guys. He was a passionate and clairvoyant admirer of Delacroix, and his study of this painter is a model of prose criticism. There are a few letters of the poet's, and his lecture at Brussels where he told of going to Delacroix's house, shocked by news of his death, and of sitting, talking and weeping, for an hour with the painter's old servant.

The prolific art critic, M. Florent Fels, writes on contemporary artists—Matisse, Rouault, Segonzac, Utrillo, Othon Friesz, Derain, etc.—with his usual insight and charm in a book which he entitles "Propos d'Artistes" (La Renaissance du Livre). The volume is illustrated by thirty-two portraits and reproductions. M. Fels is editor-in-chief of an excellent art review, *L'Art Vivant*, still in its first successful year of existence.

Abbé Henri Brémond, of the French Academy, delivered an address on Pure Poetry at the October 24th annual "public" meeting—to which, however, it is difficult to gain access—of the five Academies comprising the French Institute. This accomplished "historian of mysticism throughout the ages" published in July a book entitled "Pour le Romantisme" (Bloud). He has two brothers, André and Jean, who strangely enough are also ecclesiastics and writers. An extraordinary book by these three brothers appeared last spring called "Le Charme d'Athènes," to which each contributed interesting and erudite chapters on the poet Pindar, St. Catherine of Alexandria, the Eleusinian Mysteries, and other subjects. In talking recently to a cultivated American woman visiting France the present writer was rather surprised to learn that among other useful books she had bought the entire works of Abbé Brémond. This famous writer lives in an ancient building almost under the eaves of Notre Dame, in a narrow old street winding picturesquely past the Cathedral towards the Seine, where he has an apartment adjoining that of another brilliant French ecclesiastic, Canon Ernest Dimnet, who wrote "France Herself Again," "From a Paris Balcony," and numerous other books. Canon Dimnet, however, possesses the rare gift of writing equally well in French and English.

A group of new Russian books includes an unpublished work of Dostoïevsky's, "Le Bourgeois de Paris" (Kra), translated into French by N. Guterman; an account of Petrograd during the revolution by the daughter of the Russian minister, Witte, Madame Vera Narischkine-Witte, entitled "La Vérité sur la Révolution Russe" (Editions Baudiniere); the Princess Vera Galitizine's "Réminiscences d'une Émigrée" (Plon); and Henri Béraud's "Ce que J'ai Vu a Moscou" (Editions de France). All these books elucidate the Russian catastrophe.

The first French edition ever published of a *chanson de geste* entitled "Le Pélérinage de Charlemagne" was issued not long ago in Paris by Lahure. The most curious detail of this publication is the fact that the edition was made by Mrs. Anna J. Cooper, an American colored woman who teaches in a school for colored people in Washington. This chanson was popular in the Middle Ages, and relates in an amusing manner, and with a somewhat modern touch, the adventures of Charlemagne and his peers. It was the first poem in which twelve-syllable verse was employed. An edition was formerly published in London and one in Berlin, neither of which is to be found nowadays.

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