

The Third Jungle Book

JUNGLE DAYS. By WILLIAM BEEBE. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1925. \$3.

Reviewed by SAMUEL SCOVILLE, JR.

WILLIAM BEEBE has just published "Jungle Days", climaxing "Jungle Peace" and "On the Edge of the Jungle." "Voices almost high enough to become visible; comedy so delicate that appreciation never reaches laughter, and tragedy so cruel and ruthless that it stirs doubts of the very roots of things," all these he finds in his jungle. To him there is no interest so intense as that aroused by the lives of the dwellers in that little cosmos of time and space, from the vast etabelli tree, which was three hundred years old when Columbus discovered a new world, down to the invisible parasitic worms found inside of the tiny thrips who live under the bark of the fallen tree.

In fact, perhaps the only criticism the general reader may have to make of Beebe's writings comes from the fact that he is by nature and choice a microscopist, a painter of miniatures, and as such lacks the perspective on which ordinary observations depend. To him an opalina, that microscopic being which he discovered in the intestines of a jungle-frog, is more important than the grim anaconda which dragged its mighty length past him one night when he was watching on the beach. When once he can be persuaded to leave Liliput, no writer of today can better depict the lives of the jungle-folk than William Beebe in words whose cadence and color make the reading of them a delight.

To me in this book, as in all of his, there are certain bits over which I like to linger. Of such is the passage where he tells of creeping out of Cheops by the ancient, choked robbers' entrance where sharp bits of alabaster held him motionless and he pictured the whole vast weight of that mighty pyramid as pressing down upon him.

Another is in the chapter called "Falling Leaves" where he writes of creeping through the jungle to solve a new bird-call when some sudden, unexplained instinct made him examine the ground closely just beneath his upraised foot. There in a trap of death lay coiled a great fer-de-lance mimicking the brown leaves of the forest floor and not twelve inches from his upraised foot. Being a scientist, Beebe set himself to solve the cause of this instinct which again and again had warned him of the presence of a snake in the jungle and found that it was the faint unpleasant odor of musk, which his nostrils had caught subconsciously, that had saved his life.

The chapter on those old-time people, the monkey-folk, who like us humans fought their way up against the eternal pull of earth, is recommended to all fundamentalists who believe that the use of the reasoning faculties of the human race should be prohibited by law. Other high lights are the languid loves of that jungle-moron, the sloth, and the fight to the death between the spectacled owl and the young anaconda—but of selecting passages there is no end.

Tories and Patriots

(Continued from page 253)

dramatic figure in the Revolution is not the honest American Tory. Before 1776 all but malcontents were of his belief that armed rebellion was not the proper course. He held fast, when the others, carried by the logic of events, went on to what must have been, outside of New York and Philadelphia, the easier decision. If he loved his country he stuck it out in his own community, until he was broken for life or forced into exile in Nova Scotia or the Bahamas. And he had other attributes which should make him popular with the safe and sane Americans who have descended from his persecutors. He did not approve of what they would call Bolshevism, he believed in the sanctity of property and constituted government. He thought that political unrest hurt business. For such ideas he was deported with violence. As Crèvecoeur depicts him, he seems, one must admit, a more desirable citizen than some who have taken his place.

*Edited by Henri L. Bourdin, Ralph H. Gabriel, and Stanley T. Williams, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925. \$4.
**Edited by Jonathan Boucher, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co. 1925. \$6.

The BOWLING GREEN

The Glasgow Passage

R. M. S. TRANSYLVANIA, AT SEA

TAKING a bath at the Central Hotel, Glasgow, I had a feeling of being already at sea. For in a Glasgow bathroom you find yourself among the specially large and sturdy plumbing, deep enormous tubs and brass taps, so familiar to all travellers in the Clyde-built ships. To read the name of *Shanks and Co., Barrhead*, written in a bathtub, has always been part of the flavor of sea-adventure; how often, simmering deep in hot slanting brine, I have hummed small private madrigals in honor of Messrs. Shanks.

It would take a number of pages justly to describe the various excitements of making one's first passage from Glasgow. The journey from Euston, eight happy hours in what must be one of the world's most comfortable trains, would be a theme by itself. It was odd that of all the named engines on the London, Midland, and Scottish line, I saw (in the yards at Crewe) the one that would give me the most surprise—an engine called *Charles Lamb*. The express that leaves Euston at 10 A. M. is timed (in October, anyhow) so that you get your glimpse of the Westmorland hills in the full shine of afternoon. Be sure to look out for the two pretty girls sitting on a stone bridge near Grayrigg; you pass them about 3:15. Then, after the very Long-Islandish country north of Carlisle, where just casually your eye catches little stations called Gretna and Lockerbie, you meet the first sunset shadows in the folds of Annandale. You'll not be wasting time drinking tea in the restaurant car; it's my guess you'll be standing in the corridor watching those lovely bare ridges, bronze as Roman helmets in honeyed light; sifted with opal in the rough ravines. And if you're a lover of differentials in language, the first thing you'll mark at the Central Station in Glasgow is the sign "*Passengers Are Requested to Shew Their Tickets.*"

Certainly philologists should always make the Glasgow passage; words that are strange and yet anciently familiar are like toys for you to play with all the way over. "Bute Hall," said one, showing me the Glasgow University by starlight. "Lord Bute?" I asked. "Aye, he gifted it." Going down to Greenock, where we boarded *Transylvania*, how pleasant to see the sign *Ground to Feu*. Speaking of calling us in the morning, "I'll just give you a chap on the door at 8 o'clock" said the steward. And the Chief Engineer, in one of those midday cracks after the Captain has sent word from the bridge that "the sun's over the foreyard," was telling of fishing for octopus. It's not bad meat if you don't know what it is, was the gist of his comment; "but if ye know, ye kind o' grue at it." There is some lively etymology to be taken in at every turn. Walking on the boat deck, under the three black funnels, where that fine soupy whiff comes up the galley ventilator and sharpens the appetite, I found a small faucet marked *Boats' Breakers*. Why, one might well ponder, is a lifeboat's water keg always called a *breaker*? The Captain, who could outskate many a college Ph.D. in his knowledge of words, told me why. It's really *barreca*, Spanish for a small cask. This pleased me, as I already knew the French *barricade*. There is no lingo so savory as that of ships and charts. Even Cape Race, that ill-favored coast which masters give a generous offering in foul weather, the Captain secretly relishes for being the tip of the Avalon Peninsula. Of the names on the Newfoundland chart I liked specially Random Sound: it seems to carry the indignant voice of perplexed old mariners. Pinchgut Tickle is another name I remember on that chart. It was Joseph Conrad, in a little essay not yet (I think) collected in his volumes, who praised the kind of writing found in Notices to Mariners and other sea-memoranda of that sort, where a lack of precision in the text may mean life or death.

We were not less lucky than John Burroughs in our hap of weather. The Clyde, as he noted long ago in "Fresh Fields," is the finest of all

approaches to Britain; when we went down the firth on a transparent October afternoon it was at its best, reminding me of a grander Lake George. Glasgow has not been very skilful in letting the larger world know the magnificence of her noble waterway. We are all aware that she is a great shipbuilding city, but somehow we do not realize that she is approached by a winding strait among purple mountains that is surely among earth's finest picturesques. To an eye wonted to Long Island levels the fells and laws seem unexpectedly high and bluff. Goat Fell runs close upon 3000 feet; Ailsa Craig sheers up 1100 feet in one steep lump. As you glide so smoothly by the openings of a dozen lochs and sounds, each bending in among the unspoiled hills, or look over into the green apron of Ayrshire, it seems preposterous to leave this magic region barely glimpsed. I wonder if any other great manufacturing town has such fairylands at its door. By the time you have dropped the Mull of Kintyre, and Scotland fades, Rathlin Island (where the Bruce studied spiders) is in sight. It is too dark to see the Giants' Causeway, but even so to note near-by on the map such minstrel names as Coleraine and Limavady—yes, and Bushmills—gives a pensive pleasure. Off Moville the tender comes down from Derry with Irish emigrants to board the ship, a fiddler playing reels to keep their hearts up. It's a longish trip from Derry in the tender, and I imagine there may well be sore hearts among them; though some who come to see them off have much drink taken and are in very lyric mood. But the eldritch voice of the ship's whistle, as she gives the tender a final salute, seems almost a refinement of cruelty. It is so very definite. But it is part of the "drill," as our Scottish friends term any manner of rite; and at sea that is all-important. At Moville I received an Irish telegram, in a bright green envelope. The official notations on the form were all in Irish, beginning *Telegrafa an Phuist*, which somehow brightly conveys a suggestion of swift urgency.

Then, for a week, you are drowned in vacancy. What British weather-reports always call an "anti-cyclone" (not, as anxious females sometimes imagine, a specially violent kind of cyclone, but a period of prevailing high barometer) was with us; day after day of fresh breezy blue. A caller air, as one Scot called it. And you move in the slow and yet regularly measured circle of ship-board hours, aware of Time only in the same vague accepting way that one is aware of the surrounding sea. Almost with incredulity you read, a week later, that "Heavy baggage must be ready to be removed by 8 p. m." and they tell you that Nantucket Light Vessel will be "made" that afternoon. There were few passengers in the first cabin, and it seemed curiously like a house-party at some large country mansion. It would be true to say that the most exciting single event of the week (barring, of course, the little meetings when the Captain and the Chief talked unpublishably of the queer ways of the sea) was the night I had a vile cold. A kindly passenger gave me tablets of aspirin and phenacetin to take in the evening hot toddy. Later, as I lay gently tilting and steaming in my berth, I woke from marvellous dreams—dreams of half-apprehended glamour and magic; visions that drift away like smoke in moonlight but still leave behind them an uneasy suspicion of merriments and pangs beyond the humdrum of this daily plod. It was the kind of hypnotics most teasing of all: a dim continuation of something dreamed once before. I suppose that if it were not for the greatest peril of the sea (which is overeating) one might have more of these lovely clairvoyances on board ship. If only the steamship companies didn't feed one so well and so often, if one had the austerity to live for a week on toast and bovril and hot toddy, what golden fables might result.

And tomorrow morning we shall sight Liberty again. There's nothing so wholesome as to hear the little jokes people in other lands make about one's own country. A story now current on the other side is of a Frenchman making his first visit to America; and as he came up New York Bay an American pointed out the Statue of Liberty.

"Yes," said the Frenchman, "we do that too."

The American was puzzled. "Do what?"

"Put up statues to our dead."

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.



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Books of Special Interest

British Drama

THE CHIEF BRITISH DRAMATISTS.
Edited by BRANDER MATTHEWS and
PAUL ROBERT LIEDER. Boston: Hough-
ton Mifflin Co. \$1925. \$5.

Reviewed by J. RANKEN TOWSE

THE compilers of this volume, whose names are a sufficient guarantee of their competency, may be said to have fairly accomplished their main purpose, which was to illustrate in brief compass the various stages of development in English dramatic literature from the Middle Ages to the close of the nineteenth century. Considering the limits of the space within which they were arbitrarily confined it was almost unnecessary for them, in their preface, to give a list of their unavoidable omissions. That their collection of plays, twenty-five in number, has been, as they say, very severely sifted, is obvious enough, but the operation has been conducted, on the whole, with notable shrewdness and judgment. And formidable, at first sight, as is the array of rejected authors, some of them of no little eminence, it may be remarked that the works of many of them are—for the ordinary reader at any rate—more curious than valuable as specimens either of drama or literature. Moreover the editors very wisely simplified their task, and forestalled possible objections by giving the preference to those plays which, in actual representation, had enjoyed the greatest and most enduring popularity. And this, after all, is no bad criterion to go by. In the theatre the sustained verdict of the mass is the surest foundation of fame. And it is well also to remember that the dramas, declared by critical intelligence to be the greatest of all time, have ever been the chief favorites of the general public.

This particular dramatic anthology is superior to many others because of the care that has been taken, in each instance, to secure the most authoritative text. On this account, notwithstanding its piece-meal character, it may be commended to the enthusiastic and conscientious student as well as to the less precise and fastidious reader. And most, if not all of the pieces selected—individual opinions may differ on this point—are generally conceded to be among the finest achievements of their respective creators. To discuss their merits seriatim at this time is neither possible nor needful. Whether even a careful perusal of them, as the editors fondly hope, will enable the average student to note the processes of dramatic evolution during the last four centuries, and the causes of them, may be doubtful, but he should at least be able to perceive the striking changes that have occurred in the literary quality, the methods of construction, the power of characterization and the use of imagination. The present writer is not inclined to think that the size or shape of the theatres or the personality of the actors had very much to do with any of them. That, however, is another matter.

In addition to an introductory chapter on ancient and modern theatres in England, which is interesting although it contains nothing new, this volume, which with its admirable print and thin but not transparent paper, is a fair example of modern bookmaking, offers, in its thousand pages, a rich choice of varied drama, from the Bome Abraham and Isaac down to "The Liars" of Henry Arthur James. Here are famous works of Marlowe, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, Massinger, Wycherley, Dryden, Olway, Vanbrugh, Congreve, Sheridan, and other classics, and several of the more illustrious moderns. The whole makes a rich and varied feast. It seems a pity that room could not have been found for Tennyson's "Becket," although, to be sure, that could not be

counted among the long lived plays of its era. This solid and useful book is completed by an index containing notes on the plays and their authors, an index to characters and a reading list in the chief British dramatists.

Three Little Tree Books

A GUIDE TO THE TREES. By CARLTON C. CURTIS. New York: Greenberg. 1925. \$1.50.

THE GIANT SEQUOIA. By R. S. ELLSWORTH. Oakland, Calif.: J. D. Berger. 1924.

THE FOREST GIANT. By ADRIEN LECORBEAU. New York: Harper & Bros. 1924. \$2.

Reviewed by NORMAN TAYLOR
Brooklyn Botanic Garden

A MATEUR tree lovers and the immensely increased number of walkers will find Professor Curtis's book an invaluable little guide to our native trees. There are pictures of most of the kinds, and the author has found it necessary to use only a few of the terms which have driven many from more technical and exhaustive works. Not since Thompson-Seton's "Foresters' Manual" for boy scouts, has there been such a judicious sifting of the unimportant and a thoroughly successful selection of the significant in tree identification. The book is wholly without literary style, unless it be the essence of style to crowd as much information into a small space as possible. Nearly all of this is correct, but experts will bemoan the inclusion of a few persistent old errors that have been carried through generations of tree books. But as the book is not for experts, it is a genuine pleasure to record the fact that no recent guide to our native trees should prove so satisfactory to amateurs as this one. It is thin and will slip into the pocket.

While Professor Curtis's book deals with the trees of northeastern America, both the other volumes have to do with a single species of conifer—the giant Sequoia—now confined to California. The ancient range of this now relict species was so extensive the fossil remains of it are common in many parts of the world.

The immense antiquity of Sequoia, stretching from the days of the dinosaurs to the present, has fired the enthusiasm of professional botanists from Asa Gray to dozens of lesser students of today. Paleobotanists, geologists, and various climatologists have wrung from its past history, and from these relict survivors in the Sierra Nevada, a story of almost incredible interest, a veritable drama of tree history.

Neither of the present volumes makes any pretense of adding to that story, both are frankly appreciations of its significance. Mr. Ellsworth's is more inclusive as to information than the Frenchman's book, but as a literary work it is as the writing of an enthusiastic sophomore against a master. Who Adrien LeCorbeau may be is wholly unknown to the average American reader, and the reviewer confesses never to have heard of him until recently. He has produced a little masterpiece of descriptive nature writing. Nothing since Maeterlinck's "Intelligence of the Flowers" has so caught the beauty and drama of plant life. Holes could easily be picked in some of his statements, but no scientist who lacks the magic of this author should pick them. It is doubtful if the general reader will retain one really significant error, such, for instance, as referring to the Sequoia as giant pines. But no one can finish this little book without capturing through the magic of the author's prose, some of the beauty and majesty of Sequoia.

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