

The New Books Fiction

(Continued from preceding page)

strongly-accented *Ti amo*, or an equally violent *Torniamo subito al hotel*—both of which he hears, within short interval, from the treacherous lips of the genteel "Miss Perkins."

THE VENGEANCE OF HURRICANE WILLIAMS. By GORDON YOUNG. Doran. 1926. \$2.

Williams is that imperishable, old-fashioned figure beloved by penny-dreadful romancers—the stalwart sea captain of black-birding and piracy days in the Solomon and other savage islands of the south Pacific. He is the indomitable master of his soul and ship, but lives under the cloud of having been lawfully hanged and declared legally dead for a crime of which, though proven guilty, he is innocent. Life, law, and enemies have cruelly wronged him, and he fights back lustily, supported by a crew of doughty henchmen. In the struggle with his vindictive foes, he is ever upright, infallible, all-conquering to an almost fabulous degree. Gore floods the decks of the combatting ships (his own and those of his persecutors) in a ceaseless deluge, myriad heads and limbs are broken, severed, or shattered, every species of primitive violence being turned on in the author's endeavor to make the tale go. Somehow, for ourselves, the story fails to approach remotely Mr. Young's immensely better "Seibert of the Island," and "Days of '49."

THE BEST LOVE STORIES OF 1925. Edited by MURIEL MILLER HUMPHREY. Small, Maynard. 1926. \$2.

The twenty short stories here gathered into a volume seem to represent most of the faults and merits which are evident in native periodical fiction today. They are strong in sentiment and technique, mendacious in their reflections of life, barren of originality and ideas, superficially clever and interesting, reliant upon incident and surface impressions rather than upon the profundities of character and emotions—in a word, with rare exceptions, they are perfect examples of pretentious mediocrity. Of course they are uniform in being passably written and neatly constructed (not very unusual qualities), and though the authors are masculine and feminine in about even numbers, all but three of the stories are very ladylike indeed.

The majority have the suggestion of made-to-order fiction designed to fit the requirements of the publications in which they appeared. None of them, since they keep strictly within the limits of the obvious, arouse any imaginative activity in the reader, few of them slop over with mush, and all are what is broadly termed "wholesome." Several of the writers are new ones to us, but in the main such widely-known names as Zona Gale, Ben Hecht, Barry Benefield, May Edington, Mary Heaton Vorse, Stephen French Whitman, Mildred Cram, and Chester T. Crowell preponderate.

THE SPLENDID SHILLING. By IDWAL JONES. Doubleday, Page. 1926. \$2.

Respect for Mr. Jones's craftsmanship and impatience with his dulness in telling a story which demands swift pace and vivid incident, are the mingled reactions derived from "The Splendid Shilling." Its minor qualities are uniformly good, but its major element—the story itself—is poor; and every one knows that in novels of adventure, if weaknesses must exist, they should exist the other way round. "The Splendid Shilling" is, roughly, a picaresque novel of the fifties, the story of Guy Puncheon, half-gypsy, of his boyhood in Wales and afterwards his wanderings at sea and in California to find his boyhood sweetheart. Thus its series of episodes is unified by means of his romantic quest, which ends in a success that becomes ironic failure. Mr. Jones knows his period, his gypsies, his California; he writes well, perhaps a little too well, for his style is not only a trifle too measured and ornate, but also a great deal of a hindrance to the flow of the story. Many of his characters have a touch of strength and vividness, and less improbability than most characters in novels of this kind; and he has a predilection for mad people. But Mr. Jones is not essentially a romancer, and his talents seem miscast; he is rather, on a low but unmistakable plane, an artist. His delight in words and close attention to period would be better served in historical studies where color and detail are more important than action.

GIRL OR BOY. By JOHN NORTH. Small, Maynard. 1926. \$2.

Mr. North, who here presents his first

novel, a fantastic, broadly humorous satire on modern gullibility, seems to have made a nearly perfect score. The motive of his story derives from the revolt of the turning worm, in this instance the worm being David Crump, a downtrodden London clerk approaching middle-age who, on losing his job, is visited by an inspiration of tremendous import. Following its lead, he goes to Paris, hires an assistant conspirator, invests his savings in the trappings of the rôle he assumes and returns to London a transformed, unrecognizable man. The press "falls" at once for his world-shaking announcement that he has mastered the means of bringing motherhood to unfruitful wives and of predetermining the sex of their unborn children. For nine months he is an unparalleled sensation—his dupes flocking to him with fees that net him a fortune—then, of course, the bubble bursts and his spell is over. But it is a great time for Crump and the reader while the hoax lasts. The book seems to us a capital production from beginning to end.

IN THE PALACE OF AMUHIA. By FLORENCE WILLINGHAM PICKARD. Doran. 1926. \$2.

A Biblical story of Babylon during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and the captivity of the Hebrews, this novel seems to possess slight interest for the average fiction reader. The prophet Daniel, guardian of his exiled people's destiny, as councillor to the King and Queen Amuhia, is the central figure of the tale. The miracles are not too numerous or heavily stressed, being confined to that of the "Fiery Furnace," dream interpretations, and the handwriting on the wall, but this virtue is completely overbalanced by the fearful "gift of gab" manifested by many of the characters.

PROUD REVELRY. By AMBER LEE. Seltzer. 1926. \$2.

Between the crude autobiographical novels by young men not long out of college, with their vivid moments and their basic honesty breaking through a coating of innocent affectation, and such a smooth pandering to risqué tastes as "Proud Revelry," one does not hesitate to choose the former. "Proud Revelry" cannot be curtly dismissed as a bad novel, or quite dismissed as an insidious one; but a worthless handling of hollow material, devoid of artistic merit or integrity, it certainly is. Miss Lee's Anthony Sherrad is introduced at seventeen and pursues an amorous career with one girl after another, girls named Evadne or Candace, and none of them the least bit real or interesting. The end of the book, with cheap cynicism, shows him deserted by his wife and flying into the arms of a courtesan. Miss Lee has not created a personality, and still less has she expressed life, even in terms of the jazz age. She has simply hustled her hero through half-a-dozen episodes with women, to please people who like so rapid a pace, who like spiciness and *le highlife*, and who think pretty and facile descriptions give an artistic slant to the novels of their choice.

TOPPER: AN IMPROBABLE ADVENTURE. By THORNE SMITH. McBride. 1926. \$2.

The combination of the strictly suburban Cosmo Topper with a group of persons from another world who succeed in leading him very far astray was a happy inspiration on the part of Mr. Thorne Smith, the author of this amusing book. It contains, besides a devastating picture of Topper's respectable home life, two engaging figures in the flapper-ghost and the dog, Oscar, who is also a spirit, though in a somewhat unusual way. Mr. Smith's methods are not always subtle, but they are frequently very funny. He has something of the insane instinct for making the impossible seem diverting rather than absurd, which has made P. G. Wodehouse famous, and he preserves something of that author's delightful atmosphere in this story, thoroughly American as it is in substance. If you are looking for the sort of humor that will neither weigh on one's satiric sense during reading, nor stay fixed in the mind afterwards, you will appreciate the thoroughly workmanlike antics of the people in this book. Unsubstantial as many of them are by nature, they are thoroughly alive as entertainers.

THE VALLEY OF THE STARS. By CHARLES ALDEN SELTZER. Century. 1926. \$2.

If more tales of the wild and woolly attained the all-round excellence of Mr. Seltzer's, the lowly position which the "Western" occupies in the realm of adventure fiction should be conspicuously improved. He writes persuasively and well, employing the "muffler" skilfully when

the palpably nonsensical is introduced, and handling his materials with unerring consciousness of the effects he desires to produce upon his reader. The story concerns a snobbish miss who journeys from civilization to a ranch in the open spaces, there to take up her residence as the hereditary half-owner of the property. The eternal he-man, her reluctantly accepted partner, enters soon upon the scene, while sundry desperadoes and their murderous conniving unite to menace the security of the courageous pair.

International

THE BLIGHT OF ASIA. By GEORGE HORTON. Bobbs-Merrill. 1926. \$3.50.

For Mr. Horton the blight of Asia is the Turk, unchangeable and irredeemable. Murder and lust are the wellsprings of Turkish action. Kemal and his hordes are carrying on the ancient warfare of the days of the Crusades while they lull Christendom with lying promises of reform and tempting oil concessions.

Such is the main thesis of a man who for thirty years lived among them and had official and private dealings with them. With invective, diatribe, and poetic malediction he curses them. In horrible detail he describes the fiendish cruelty with which they burned Smyrna and looted, raped, and slaughtered their way through the Christian quarter. Christendom, represented by a powerful fleet, looked on—and stayed its hand.

A sincere Christian, the author has nothing but contempt for the missionaries who have accepted the conditions laid down by the Turks for the continuation of their work. This he says is nothing less than a renunciation of the whole teaching of Christ. The only honest way for them to solicit funds in this country is to say frankly: "We want money to help educate young Turks so that they may become better Moslems." The conversion of a Moslem youth means death for the convert and the prompt suppression of the school where he was converted.

The book is not pleasant reading, though it will bring new courage to those who oppose the ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne. It will fortify them in their conviction that the Turk should be outlawed by the nations. But it will not help them to resolve their major dilemma: how is outlawing them going to better matters?

THE ETHICS OF BUDDHISM. By S. TACHIBANA. Oxford University Press. 1926. \$5.

This work is the enlarged and completed form of a doctor-thesis accepted by the University of Oxford in 1922. Since that date two books on the ethics of India have been published, but the author does not appear to have seen them. His book in thesis-form was entitled "Ethics of Pali Buddhism" and it is a pity that he did not retain this title. It would have prevented him from making the statement that bloodshed was incompatible with Buddhism. This is true of primitive Buddhism, but Japanese Buddhism was full of military zeal and did not hesitate to indulge in bloodshed. From the broader outlook of Buddhism in general there is also much to be modified or changed altogether in what the author says of celibacy and chastity. The Buddhists of Tibet and China have changed the practice and even the rules of primitive Buddhism. But as a presentation of primitive Buddhist ethics the present study is to be commended. It shows the practical moral rules of the early Congregation and does not attempt "to abstract its moral idea and philosophize it." The original teachings (attributed to the Buddha) in regard to abstinence, patience, benevolence, veracity, etc., are given under each head with ample illustrations, the arrangement of matter being the author's and not in accordance with the Buddhist classification. This is just as well, although it leads to a good deal of repetition, which, together with the somewhat naïve remarks of the author regarding the beauty and advantage of each of the virtues enumerated, lends an air of

SURVEY OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, 1924. By Arnold J. Toynbee. Oxford University Press. \$8.50.

WHITHER RUSSIA. By Leon Trotsky. International Publishers. \$1.50.

GOVERNMENTAL METHODS OF ADJUSTING LABOR DISPUTES. By Ting Tso Ko. Longmans, Green.

THE ADVANCING SOUTH. By Edwin Mims. Doubleday, Page. \$3 net.

HOW BRITAIN IS GOVERNED. By Kate Rosenberg. People's Institute. \$1.

EUROPE'S NEW MAP. By F. J. Adkins. People's Institute. \$1.

INTERNATIONAL ANARCHY. By G. Lowes Dickinson. Century.

ESSAYS ON NATIONALISM. By Carlton J. H. Hayes. Macmillan. \$3.

Miscellaneous

TWENTIETH CENTURY ADVERTISING. By GEORGE FRENCH. Van Nostrand. 1926. \$6.

ADVERTISING: ITS PROBLEMS AND METHODS. By JOHN H. COVER. Appleton. 1926. \$3.

These two recent books on advertising are quite different. One is an appraisal of the progress of advertising in the last twenty-five years, the constructive years, and the other an addition to the already long list of textbooks, telling how it is done. Of the two, George French's book is the more interesting, and is undoubtedly intended for the reader with an intelligent curiosity about advertising, rather than a desire to practice it. It is a history of the more striking aspects of advertising. Here he will find the names of such pioneers as George P. Rowell, and Thomas Balmer, the origin of such organizations as the Advertising Clubs of the World, the Better Business Bureau, the Audit Bureau of Circulations, and the Association of Advertising Agents (which is now being prosecuted by the Federal Trade Commission for conspiracy in restraint of trade), a brief history of each kind of advertising, such as retail, mail order, technical, outdoor, and descriptions of the various groups of mediums. It is all very interesting reading, for its author has long been an interested spectator of the development of this new adjunct of business, at once its closest friend and severest critic. The book will stand long as a reference book, and a much needed one, as the status of advertising as a subject has not received much consideration, compared with books on its technical practice, of which Professor Cover's is an excellent example.

Professor Cover, who teaches business subjects at Denver University, has written a clear, readable, and sound book on the practice of advertising, wisely devoting most of his space to the subject of copy, which is, after all, the important part of the work. Like all whose relation to advertising is by teaching rather than practice, he is a little inclined toward theory, as, for instance, in the weight he gives to psychological tests tried out on small bodies of students. He also unduly emphasizes the excess profits tax as a motive to advertise. What will there be to support advertising if that tax is ever repealed? The book is especially to be commended for its style. It is one of the easiest to read that has appeared in a long time. The introductory chapter on Market Analysis as a Basis for Advertising, by Percival White, who is the author of several books on the same subject, is a brief but comprehensive description of the essential outline of the means and necessity of such work.

GARDEN-MAKING. By ELSA REHMANN. Houghton Mifflin. 1926. \$3.50.

Miss Rehmann has written a notable book on gardening. Even the Introduction, "Garden-Making as a Fine Art," is a remarkable bit of writing in its broad understanding and presenting of the place of gardening among its sister arts. The book itself consists of nineteen short chapters on the various aspects of garden creation, beginning with a charming disquisition on "The Simplest Kind of Garden." "What can this be?" thinks the reader. "The simplest kind of garden is a flower-bordered path. Its simplicity lies in the singleness of its purpose and in the directness of its composition."

In the same manner as this—and could there be a better?—does Miss Rehmann take up and thoughtfully and agreeably discuss such subjects as The Round Garden, The Seat as an Element in Garden Design, The Statue as an Interpretation of the Garden Spirit, Fragrance as a Factor in Garden Design, Color as a Factor in Garden Design. In each chapter the writer presses her point with force, yet with a dignity and grace of style that suitably clothe this fascinating subject of the garden. The author's warmth of feeling for her art, her enjoyment of all that she does in planning and planting gardens, are felt on every page. And everywhere there is high help for the gardener, help in the principles of design, in the reasons for a given plan, but especially help in flower-arrangement in the garden with regard to placing, color, and succession of bloom.

Mrs. Perrett's short supplementary chapters also show a strong appreciation of color in the garden. Among her photographs are some of unusual beauty and one, opposite page 53, superbly illustrates the sculptural value of foliage.

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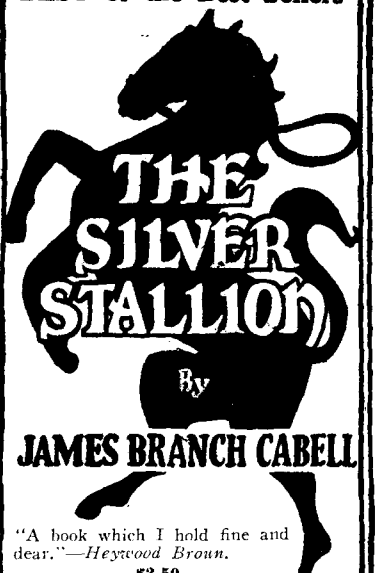
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The Reader's Guide

Conducted by **MAY LAMBERTON BECKER**

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to **MRS. BECKER, c/o The Saturday Review**

A BALANCED RATION

MANTRAP. By *Sinclair Lewis* (Harcourt, Brace).

THE DECLINE OF THE WEST. By *Oswald Spengler* (Knopf).

ULYSSES. By *Frank Jewett Mather* (Holt).

W. H., New York City, preparing a thesis, asks for at least ten recent novels dealing with New York City.

CANDOR rather than local pride forces me to admit that I believe the most appropriate method of presenting New York in fiction is at the moment—the city changes momentarily—that taken by John Dos Passos in "Manhattan Transfer" (Harpers). This book is as nearly as may be a Pathé news film. The very title calls to the mind of anyone using local means of transportation a place where everyone is going somewhere and nobody stays, a perpetual tangent, a centre of hurried exchanges. It is not the native's New York, rather the city as it would strike a somewhat frightened foreigner, acclimated but not at home. "Cover Charge," by Cornell Woolrich (Boni & Liveright), uses the same flash and dash manner for the night life of the town, with the title again giving the program—the price paid for the privilege of paying a great deal more. In "The Shoals of Honor," by Elizabeth Sanxay Holding (Dutton), life is on much the same level, with the center of interest in a handsome hanger-on, a little brother of the rich who manages before the last page to grasp the slippery tail of his own soul before it slides out of reach. The leading man of John Wiley's "Triumph" (Minton, Balch), is another beautiful auxiliary to the life of ladies; thoroughly at home in New York, he marries a New England conscience and tries to make it over to fit Broadway. Now guess what the title means. (No, it does not.) This city is to most of the United States the place where you can go to a different theatre every night for as long as you stay: Thyra Sampter Winslow brings her show-girl lore in a brilliant new novel of the stage, "Show Business" (Knopf), and so does Louise Closser Hale in "Home Talent" (Holt). The artists' colony of Greenwich Village and environs figures in "Alison Vail," by Elizabeth Newport Hepburn (Holt), a novel about sober, genuine artists, not the local side-shows: here at last, probably because we have here working-people, we begin to get a sense of love for the place, of affection for the trees of Washington Square, the vistas of lower Fifth Avenue. The city takes part in the life of these people. In "The Chicken-Wagon Family," by Barry Benefield (Century), it opens its arms to a group of wanderers from afar off and shelters them in an abandoned firehouse; the tale is sufficiently fantastic but the newspaper life in it is serious enough. So in another joyous fantasia, the most uproarious New York novel of the season, "Friends of Mr. Sweeney," by Elmer Davis (McBride), the parts that deal with editing a journal of opinion are taken with strict realism. This book for all its gaiety has a solid psychological base, and in some ways it is a key to the city.

As soon as the hero of Charles Norris's "Pig Iron" (Dutton) reaches a certain eminence in his business career, he comes of course to New York, and the background of a good part of this important novel is the city as seen by him and his kind. The city of hardworking women, Mr. Norris gave us in "Bread" (Dutton), first in Harlem walk-ups before the War, then in present-day circles frequented by the highly-paid: this is the best view of the American city-woman's life at work that I know, better even than Sinclair Lewis's "The Job" (Harcourt, Brace), because wider in scope. The most tragic novel about life as it may be lived in and near this city seems to me F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" (Scribner), and the first story in his new collection, "All the Sad Young Men" (Scribner), seems a preliminary study for it. I do not know if Mr. Fitzgerald wrote with a moral intention, but he certainly produces a moral effect. "Monstrous dinosaurs carried these people in their mouths," you meditate, "and now look at the darn things," and being launched upon

meditation, come to the depressing truth that they are what they are not in spite of money and power, but because of these. The city in Arthur Train's "The Blind Goddess" (Scribners), is that of criminal courts, of lawyers, justice and its miscarriages, especially the latter, and of the alliances of all these with local politics.

In scarce any of these novels the city appears through rose-spectacles of affection, even for a brief period. No, for such tenderness as James Bone shows for his city in "The London Perambulator" (Knopf), or E. V. Lucas in "A Wanderer in London" (Macmillan), one must look to Mabel Osgood Wright's "My New York" (Macmillan), which is not a novel but a personal record, for the most part of life in the seventies and eighties. There are thousands in this city to whom this book would be a treasure; it brings to life one of those buried cities that lie, layer upon layer, upon Manhattan Island. They need not be so old, these cities, to be historic; there is little enough left of Mrs. Osgood's town though many of its inhabitants still do business on the site. The tourist's crowded emotions give piquancy to a small and stimulating guide, "New York in Seven Days," by Dayton and Barratt (McBride), describing the sights, shops, shows, and restaurants loved by the outlander. And I must crowd in, because it is the only book to develop one of the most distinctive features of life here, Konrad Berkovici's "Around the World in New York" (Century), a series of intimate studies of life in our foreign districts; if not a novel, it is material far more than one.

Should there be a similar thesis brewing for Chicago, be sure to get Louise De Koven Bowen's "Growing Up with a City" (Macmillan), an autobiography with uproarious reports from Chicago's Age of Innocence, and from the years when it was being uplifted by determined and high-handed philanthropy.

E. C. N., who keeps a book-shop in Stamford, Conn., finds that some of the best collections of poetry for children are scorned by young people of high school age, boys especially. "Long-legged boys who have begun to shave" refuse to take home "Rainbow Gold," "This Singing World," "The Listening Child," "The Cambridge Book of Poetry for Young People," "Thousand Poems for Children," "Come Hither," "Recitations Old and New for Boys and Girls," and call for something more like Dana's "Household Book of Poetry," and "The Home Book of Verse," but smaller and less expensive." The point is that the book desired must be without the fatal suggestion of juvenility.

THERE is no point in reminding these customers that every one of the books named above is a collection that I have found fit to float my middle-aged mind. With the situation E. C. N. faces there is no argument: I am so glad that they will read poetry at all, even to the point of buying it, that I am happy to cooperate in seeing that they get what they want. "Poems for Youth," edited by William Rose Benét (Dutton), may have been prepared with just this audience in mind; at any rate it does suit the exacting adolescent. There are introductory notes to supply a personal element welcomed at this time of life, and the poets chosen are of the new dispensation. There has lately appeared a large but not too expensive collection called "Magic Casements" (Macmillan), compiled by two high school teachers and intended for reading by young people of this age; the range is wide and the book would be welcomed in a family library. "The Boys' Book of Verse," compiled by Helen Dean Fish (Stokes), was made as it were to order from the demands of growing boys, who in these matters freely make known their likes and dislikes: it is a spirited collection, and so is "The Book of Story Poems," edited by Walter Jerrold (Stokes).

S. W., New York, wishes a book on home care of the sick to go with a family to the country in case of emergencies.

"**SIMPLIFIED NURSING**," by Florence Dakin (Lippincott), is as good for the home student as it is for a textbook, and the mother of a large and ambitious family will find it a treasure. (Continued on next page)



Another Book City

May some author (Mr. Morley, please note) soon write a "Browsing Guide" and direct the steps of members of both the literati and illiterati to the many bookshops and book departments that await exploration. No matter how well-known a bookseller may be, each individual visiting the establishment for the first time is breaking his own trail, but a guide would not be out of order as it would at least enable the tyro to get started in the right direction. And there are many persons among the uninitiated. A personal canvas has convinced me that even the regular book buyers are unacquainted with the bookpeople in their own localities.

Cleveland, Ohio, might well be called a good book city. There is there that extremely likeable person Harry Korner of Korner and Woods. Mr. Korner is the "guardian, guide and friend" of many Clevelanders. Once convinced of the worth of any book he telephones his friends (they do not feel that they are patrons, clients or customers) that he is sending them a copy. An instinct for knowing what people like makes this possible, but even though this makes it unnecessary for them to go to the shop for many of their books they often drop in, because the Korner and Woods store is one of the best-looking places in the country—and Harry Korner can't talk to them on the telephone as long as they'd like.

And then there is Burrows Brothers, operating several stores and circulating library branches in the same city. Through a very interesting series of advertisements the people of Cleveland are told of the books which Mr. C. K. Jackson sees are always ready for them. A large organization this, but its size does not detract from its "bookishness." Here one finds that a good business organization may be a good bookstore.

I have never had the pleasure of meeting Richard Laukhoff although I have heard several stories about him. He, it is, who will not sell a book unless it can be recommended as literature, and from all accounts he knows what literature is.

Yes. Cleveland is a well-served book city. A combination of an up-to-date good-looking bookshop containing a charming personality, an organization that maintains the highest of business standards and a man who is an idealist as well as a bookseller, all go to make it that.

And they're all members of the **American Booksellers' Association**. And they all read the **Saturday Review of Literature**. But then, what would one expect?

ELLIS W. MEYERS,
Executive Secretary,
American Booksellers' Association.