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Books of Special Interest

Making a Criminal

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A CROOK.
By R. L. DEARDON. New York: The
Dial Press. 1926. \$2.

Reviewed by WINTHROP D. LANE

OF books on criminals there is a tremendous number at present. Some are weighty volumes on criminology, some are light sketches of the ways of offenders, some are detectives' chat, some are autobiographies. This belongs to the last named class. Mr. Dearden tells the story from material supplied to him by the real thief, Netley Lucas, who is English. This swash-buckling young scallawag, who quotes Browning, Tom Moore, Landor, and Leigh Hunt well, began his destructive ways young; most criminals do. He was an only child, and that was bad for him, for often only children do not have well-rounded lives. He was also "a harbinger of grief and misery" in being born, for his mother died when she gave birth to him, and the father never forgave him. The father cared little for children and placed Netley out with a crabbed old man and woman who cared as little. Another change of household occurred when the lad was six, for he then went to live with his grandparents, who had lost any understanding of children they ever had. The father, forgetting the mother, skipped to Paris with an actress of evil reputation and was murdered in circumstances never learned by Netley.

Sent to a public school, he soon showed his cleverness. Other boys came to him to get them out of their scrapes. This ruddy-cheeked sprite of nine asounded his old friends by solemnly volunteering to poison an unpopular master with "deadly nightshade." "I had to be in the lime-light," recounts Lucas. Notoriety was food and drink to him. Hightoby men and crooks were his heroes. "I revelled in accounts of crimes and swindles, putting myself into the places of the principal actors in these sordid dramas." Elders helped along his sense of being at odds with his environment. A "dear interesting orphan boy," guests at country places called him. Some of them had known his father and to them he was: "Poor George's son, you know. Such a pity! His mother's good looks, and his father's brilliance. Much too clever for the Navy!" All of this he heard. Looking like a saintly choir-boy, he says that he only had to turn his eyes on girls and they fell for him "hook, line, and sinker." Something was wrong with young Lucas, that was clear; but what it was he did not know, he never knew, and no one ever discovered.

A precocious boy, he became a precocious criminal. At the age of sixteen his name was known to Scotland Yard. He impersonated a Navy officer and spent most of one season at an exclusive London club, enjoying everything. He went to country house parties and won ladies' hearts; that was all right, but he also stole their necklaces. He rifled drawers in dressing rooms in hotel suites. He cashed bogus checks. He played confidence games expertly and swindled many business men. It was his habit to go into a shop, outfit himself with more clothes than he could use, and never pay a cent. He practiced nearly every kind of crime that had theft in it. Though he made one fleeting trip to New York, he couldn't quite see how to pull his tricks here, and so he went back.

Through the story we get pathetic glimpses of Lucas's better nature, of his disgust with himself. How far this is genuine, and how far it is the creation of Mr. Dearden, it is impossible to say. One has a feeling that it is Mr. Dearden's moralizing, Mr. Dearden's acquaintance with literature, and Mr. Dearden's adeptness at story-telling that are being revealed, rather than those of the young crook who knew all the "fences" of London.

Lucas had turned over a new leaf at the end of the book and was off for the colonies to make good. His story illustrates at what an early age many criminal careers begin; how easy it is for children to be so treated that they later go wrong; and how little is done in the course of a criminal's career to discover why he is a criminal. For Lucas has been in the hands of prison authorities several times, but no one ever diagnosed his difficulty. What happened to him in his childhood to make him anti-social was not learned. Similarly, no one knew why he had reformed, if he had reformed. No one could now apply the same treatment to some one else, for no one knows what that treatment was. Lucas

State Annals

HISTORY OF MISSISSIPPI. By DUNBAR
ROWLAND. Chicago-Jackson: The S. J.
Clarke Publishing Company. 1925. 2
vols.

Reviewed by LUCY M. SALMON

THAT convenient personage, "the average citizen," "the average reader," or "the man on the street," knows much of Mississippi, especially if he lives north of Mason and Dixon's line. He may be unable to give its geographic boundaries, but he knows that it is a sparsely settled state, that its negro population outnumbered the white, that it is fundamentalist in religion and regular in politics, that it invented the "grandfather's clause," or if not that, at least something like it, that it understands gerrymandering as well as did Elbridge Gerry himself (and in confirmation of this statement he points with pride to the shoe-string district) and finally he knows that Mississippi, like every other one of the other forty-eight states in the Union, can give pointers in practical politics to one and all, each and several.

To such wise men the impressive volumes by the distinguished Director of the Mississippi State Department of Archives and History will come as a rude shock, jolting them out of their complacency and suggesting to them the wealth of information in regard to Mississippi they have yet to acquire. If the volumes seem to be written somewhat in the superlative degree, this will be a wholesome corrective for the depreciatory tone often affected by the ignorant towards superior knowledge.

To the student of history the volumes will have a qualified service. He will appreciate the tireless, devoted activity that has produced them, he will profit by the care with which the archives of the State are being preserved and made available for the use of all; and he will be encouraged to renew his efforts to secure similar results elsewhere. His own use of them must, however, be somewhat restricted by the lack of an adequate bibliography, the absence of footnotes, the meager and repetitious references at the end of each chapter, and by the somewhat uncritical use the author has made of his material. Sweeping statements are given without supporting evidence, general conclusions are drawn from facts not disclosed, and the insatiable desire of students who wish to know what lies beneath the surface is seldom appeased.

The first impression made by the work is that it is a combination of discursive narrative history, encyclopædia of facts, military roster, and panegyric of "the heart of the South." The numerous illustrations are sometimes genuine contributions to history, but for the most part their interest seems purely sentimental. Careful reading tends to confirm first impressions and to lead to the conclusion that the work falls between two stools.

The general reader will not be attracted by pages of names of Mississippians prominent in early settlements, in politics, or in war, or by the dictionary-encyclopaedic account of the eighty-two counties of the State. On the other hand the research worker will miss much that is vital if he seeks to reconstruct from it a living picture of this most interesting State. The attempt to square the circle seems as futile in history as it does in mathematics. The special value of the work lies in the indication it gives of what still remains to be done. But it seems probable that the direction this must take is not that indicated by the author when he says that "one of the important objects and tasks of American historians is the writing of adequate State histories." This has repeatedly been undertaken and as repeatedly failed. A few years ago, a great publishing house engaged distinguished historians to write the history of the various commonwealths of the Union, but the series was abandoned because of the little interest it had been able to secure. With the increasing facilities for communication among all parts of the country, it is becoming correspondingly difficult to grow enthusiastic over boundary lines that have for the most part been determined by parallels of latitude and longitude. It becomes more and more inherently impossible to set up barriers and to concentrate interest on the territory they delimit. The special contribution made to the cause of history in the State of Mississippi has not been its achievements as they are narrated in the "History of Mississippi," but the creation of its Department of Archives and History of which the organizer and the efficient director has been Dunbar

The Business Life of
Ancient Athens

By GEORGE CALHOUN

Many aspects of the life of the ancient Athenian have been made familiar, but we know very little of the busy docks and markets in the Piræus, or the financial district where capital was mobilized and put to work, or the industrial region around Laurium, almost modern in its dirtiness and desolation.

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A Letter From France

By LOUISE MORGAN SILL

A NEW book of historical and critical value is "Thomas Deloney: Le Roman des Métiers au Temps de Shakespeare" (Nouvelle Revue Française), by Abel Chevalley, author of "Angleterre au 19^e Siècle" (Regne de Victoria), "Le Roman Anglais de Notre Temps" (Oxford University Press), etc. M. Chevalley gives a fascinating account of the artisan-novelist, Deloney, and is the first writer to affirm the true literary significance of this sixteenth century weaver who was workman, vagabond, troubadour, pamphleteer, and finally novelist of the workshop and the street in the days of Elizabeth. Writing a century and a half before Fielding, he was the first to describe artisan life in fiction, the first to paint working people realistically. In this he was the precursor of the modern realistic novel, and his importance lies there as well as in the genuine, sincere, and vivid quality—and the quiet humor—of his work. No one but him has described for posterity the golden age of the Guilds, the "magnificent syndicalism" of Shakespeare's time.

M. Chevalley does not exaggerate the talent of Thomas Deloney, who was not, he explains, an "unknown genius," but endeavors to give him his rightful place in history. And though Deloney has been not infrequently mentioned by literary historians or commentators—and notably by MM. Legouis and Cazamian in their admirable "History of English Literature"—this is the first time justice has been accorded to this remarkable man in full measure. The volume will be quickly followed by M. Chevalley's French translations of Deloney's novels, "Thomas of Reading," "Jack of Newbury," and "The Gentle Craft." M. Chevalley was formerly editor of foreign politics on the Paris *Temps*, then for five years in charge of American Affairs at the Foreign Office, 1910-1914, and Minister Plenipotentiary to Norway and High Commissioner in the Caucasian Republics. His "Roman Anglais de Notre Temps" has already appeared in English in America.

Edouard Schneider, who wrote that inspiring book "Eléonora Duse, Souvenirs, Notes, et Documents," has just published "Promenades d'Italie" (Grasset). There is no politics in this agreeable book, but the

soul of Italy, its people, its art, and landscapes, seen through the eyes of a man of culture who loves the country ardently and knows it well. He notes the changes made in the museums since the war; he takes his reader to Rome, Ravello, Florence, Naples, Capri, Paestum, and many other enchanted places which he interprets sympathetically. M. Schneider has also written several plays, one of which was given at the Odéon; but his most important drama, "Exaltation," which was to have been played by Duse, and was written with the benefit of her consent and spiritual collaboration, has never been produced owing to her death.

Every now and then a new book on Baudelaire appears. As bit by bit his art criticism has been found and printed, his fame has grown as one of the most significant art critics of France. The most recent study of the poet is "Notre Baudelaire" (Plon) by the poet and critic, Stanislas Fumet, issued in the series of "Le Roseau d'Or," with an expressive photograph. M. Fumet seeks the truth in the Baudelaire enigma and finds much gold among the ore. He quotes the poem "L'Examen de Minuit," where Baudelaire reveals his remorse and aspiration, and which did not appear in the earlier editions of the "Fleurs du Mal." It has been proved now that the dissoluteness of this poet was largely imaginary. The reader will not fail to be interested in the interpretation of Baudelaire's thought with relation to "love" and the Creator. Art is indeed long, and so is literature. A new edition of "Fleurs du Mal" will have a Preface by Paul Valéry.

Students of the Romance languages will be interested in "Le Bête du Vaccares" (Grasset), by Joseph d'Arbaud, perhaps now the best Provençal poet, one of the literary heirs of Mistral. The author wrote this curious story first in Langue d'Oc, then in French, and his two versions are given side by side. There is also a Preface by Charles Maurras, which is at once an explanation and a eulogy of the author. The tale is drawn from an ancient Provençal "bestiaire," an *dis* in character a poetical fable in prose, told, it is supposed, by a bull-herdsman in

the Camargue in the fifteenth century, and begins: "In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in the name of Our-Lady-of-the-Sea and of our holy Marys." The herdsman finds the track of a strange beast, hunts it for a long time in vain, and when he at last finds it, it speaks to him and claims to be a half-god. But in the end it vanishes forever. There is a glossary of Provençal words used in the French version. Vaccarès is the name of the largest pond in the Camargue, where Joseph d'Arbaud, after having studied law at Aix, settled as a bull fancier, and where he lives the life of a herdsman in love with solitude and great spaces.

Guglielmo Ferrero's new book "Le Passé et l'Avenir" (Kra) is a superior journalistic report of the present situation of the world, a comparison of the present with the past, which is readable and not very long. Its observations will not be new to many readers who follow the general development of civilization, but for those who do not the book will be a useful guide to understanding and thought. A short chapter on "Ce Que les Américains Cherchent en Europe" supplies an answer to this question which has every semblance of being the true one, namely, variety. Compared to our apparently immense monotony of life and character, Europe furnishes, in small spaces, infinite variety in customs, architecture, people, life. Ferrero shows that even European variety is doomed to disappear, and is already on the way to doing so—the inevitable result of modern industrial tendencies.

Madame Aurore Sand (Madame Lauth-Sand) has published through Calmann-Lévy the "Journal Intime" of her famous great-grandmother, George Sand. While the volume adds nothing absolutely necessary to the literature of this writer, it completes the whole, and gives us unpublished sketches, letters, reminiscences, literary portraits and criticism, descriptions of nature, a bit of everything in the great number of subjects handled by George Sand outside of her novels. There are also indications of her stormy experiences with various literary men—the long list of whom is extraordinary. As new books appear, and unpublished correspondence between her and her friends is given out, the feeling grows that George Sand has not yet been adequately estimated nor understood.

A beautiful reproduction of an extremely rare sixteenth century work, "Le Songe de Poliphile," has just been issued by Payot by subscription. The book is made from the Kerver edition of 1546, in the old translation by Jean Martin, and includes the two hundred engravings by Jean Goujon after pictures by Mantegna. This book is an expression of the Renaissance in its sculpture, architecture, decorative art, and symbolism. Thirteen hundred and fifty-five copies were published.

The centenary of the birth of Beethoven, in 1927, has elicited new publications, among them a Life by André de Hévésy (Editions Emile-Paul), which contains new testimony from documents recently discovered in Austrian châteaux, and which definitely fix those uncertainties in Beethoven's life that have continued to puzzle commentators. There is also "La Jeunesse de Beethoven" (Payot), by J.-G. Prod'homme, covering the musician's years from his birth in 1770 to 1800; and there is the second volume of Unpublished Works by Beethoven, containing hitherto unpublished musical compositions which have been transcribed by G. de Saint-Foix and issued by the Société Française de Musicologie, including a Trio for violin, 'cello, and piano, a Rondo for the piano, and a Gavotte for four hands.

Abel Bonnard's "Eloge de l'Ignorance" (Hachette) is written in the exquisite style for which the author is famous. His short essays which appear from time to time in the *Journal des Débats* are the very flowers of Paris journalism, replete not only with eloquence but solid wisdom. His book on Ignorance should be widely read. It contains a severe analysis of the very common type of people in our time—probably of other times—who talk without thinking, read without thinking, accept ready-made opinions and add nothing to the substance of life. He calls them "the artificial barbarians who are the supreme creation of the modern world." He might have called them also the most mischievous by-product of the printing press.

M. Charles Seignobos has completely revised and greatly enlarged his admirable "Histoire Politique de l'Europe Contemporaine" (Paris: Colin), which since its appearance almost thirty years ago has been regarded as one of the best and most readable surveys of European annals. He has made his revision in the light of the events of the war years, and has added to his already exhaustive bibliographies a vast number of new titles.

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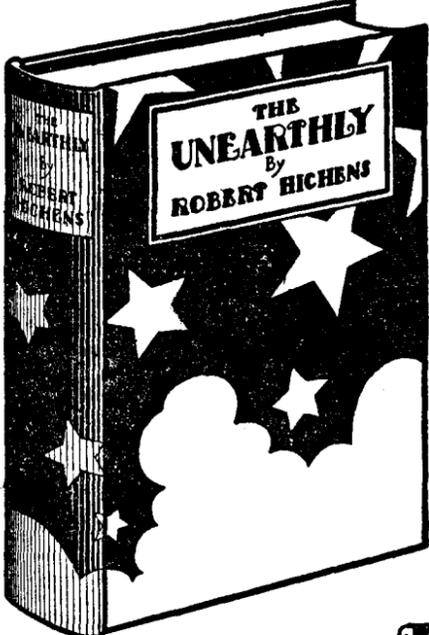
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