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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are priced as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Business

BUSINESS CASES AND PROBLEMS. By Leon Carroll Marshall and Others. University of Chicago Press. \$3.

PRACTICAL BUSINESS ENGLISH. By W. L. Mason. Putnam. \$2.

Drama

A STUDY OF THE MODERN DRAMA. By BARRETT H. CLARK. Appleton. 1925. \$3.50.

"A Study of the Modern Drama" is a combination and revision, with various omissions and additions, of two earlier volumes—"The Continental Drama of Today" (1914) and "The British and American Drama of Today" (1915). About three-fourths of the material (excluding bibliographies) is taken with minor changes from the earlier books. The method is the same; in regard to each author there is a brief statement, partly biographical, partly critical; this is followed by a commentary on one or more representative plays. The comments are analytical and suggestive; they generally furnish an excellent guide to the uninitiated reader, and should teach him a good deal about dramatic structure. To the student of drama the chief value of the book lies in the admirable bibliographies, which have been greatly enlarged and brought up to date. They are restricted to works now available in English; with this limitation they are much the fullest and most satisfactory lists now available.

ONE-ACT PLAYS. Doubleday, Page. \$1.50 net.

Fiction

JACQUELINE, and Four Other Stories from the French. MINTON, BALCH. 1925. \$2.

Without representing any one school of writing, these stories share in common their original appearance in Les Oeuvres Libres, which, as the name implies, form an outlet for no special clique. Two stories of the five, "Jacqueline," and "The Old Maids," are by far the most significant, for the other three, though competently done, have no importance beyond their passing interest.

M. Henri Duvernois's "Jacqueline" is an impressive variation of the triangle plot in which a story packed with action and fertile in complications serves to remold a man's character by slowly revealing to him how he revolts the women whose lives he affects. "Jacqueline" is structurally the most ambitious, and by comparison perhaps the most successful story in the book. Wholly different from its sophistication is Maurice Level's "The Old Maids," which, if its central figure—a crude, oxlike maid-servant bullied by two old maids—were a little higher than a clod, would add to its grimness, pity and terror, and arouse in the reader a rush of emotion. As it stands, the story, rising to a rather unbearably revolting climax, has only a fleeting realistic power.

The stories are all competent, some of them admirably finished; they have well-managed plots and well-understood characters. But they are for the most part disappointingly denotative; they suggest nothing further than they say, they are lacking in creative largeness. Their very competence seems to arise from a literature harassed by too much technical perfection.

BRAVE EARTH. By A. T. SHEPPARD. Doran. 1925. \$2.50.

This is an unusual novel in several ways, although not a great one. Many such stories take unto themselves superficially a setting of days long past, but this novelist has sincerely studied and imagined his theme and in an unpretentious way achieves a real recreation of the spirit of another period. It is the old England—Cornish England—of Henry VIII. that he has chosen, and it is the two ancient customs of childhood trothplight and of Temple marriage (refuge-marriage, of dubious status, in the chapels of the Knights Templars), upon which he hangs his story of Humphry Arundell's youthful difficulties. Humphry involves himself inextricably between his troth-plight with Elizabeth Fulford, smug but suitable, and his impetuous Temple marriage with Jackett, will-o'-the-wisp of the moor. For a finale another historical theme is credibly used,—the effect of the waves of resentment which in remote country districts met the first inroads of the Reformation. Humphry upheld the Catholic faith of his family's tradition and

so, after civil war, went to the scaffold. Customs, dialects, habits of thought, and religious or rural superstitions all interest us in the rather surprising detail with which the pages of this fairly long book are studied, and at the same time we achieve some sense of the drama going on back of it all, in a great period of a great nation's history. The style has obviously been carefully studied to fit the tone of the book. It is at once quaint and sophisticated, and although occasionally an over-working of the method leads only to unnecessary obscurity, it is on the whole successful and effective.

GREAT SEA STORIES. Second Series. Edited by JOSEPH LEWIS FRENCH. Brentano's. 1925. \$2.

Mr. French has made competent selections for his second collection of sea stories. Like the first volume it covers a wide range of adventure and romance at sea. The present volume contains seventeen stories, "The Invincible Armada" by Purchase, "The Revenge" by Sir Walter Raleigh, "Early Arctic Adventure" by Barents, "The Sword of Alan" from "Kidnapped," by R. L. S. and so on. Smollett, Pierre Loti, Fenimore Cooper, Clark Russell, Masefield, Dana, Melville, and Hugo, give an inkling of the sort of cargo carried by this very seaworthy book.

WHERE THE TWAIN MET. By HERBERT G. WOODWORTH. Small, Maynard. 1925.

This is a tale of the conflict between Eastern and Western minds, and an interesting elucidation of the inadequacy of the weapons of the latter against the ancient subtlety and intrigues of the former.

THE BLACK TURRET. By PATRICK WYNNTON. Bobbs-Merrill. 1925. \$2.

Romances in the Graustark fashion seem as obsolete today as the philosophy of Madame Glyn or the novels of Ruby Ayres. Yet all three emit occasional lusty refusals to stay dead, and in the present outbreak of reconstructed, McCutcheon-esque fossils there is achieved at least a likeness of closely packed action. The museum of fiction antiques has been raided for a generous number of its most precious specimens—the princess of a tiny Balkan principality, cruelly imprisoned in the Grey Forest; her captors, the wicked, scheming old woman, and the dastardly disloyal diplomat, who plot the downfall of the dynasty; the two fearless, rescuing young Englishmen who save the girl from durance vile and help foil the plans of the fiendish Bolshevik. Besides these, the indispensable mob and military supers flap their ancient costumes, shake their moribund legs, and totter through the ensemble they once enacted in their bygone youth. After several hours passed in the company of such ghostly shadows, one is left perplexedly trying to find any reasonable excuse for parading them before a reading world which years ago had gladly forgotten their existence.

QUACK. By ROBERT ELSON. Small, Maynard. 1925. \$2.

Mr. Elson's previous story, "Maxa," suggested that he might become a novelist of some importance, but this new book is, in some respects, disappointing. He had an excellent central idea, but it is handled clumsily. This is awkward in construction, as its plan involves considerable repetition, amounting to variations on the theme which become a bit tiresome. Yet much of his characterization is very good, and some of the more or less detachable episodes would have made fine short stories. The basic trouble is that the thing is really a study in sociological ideals, and too much sociological earnestness is apt to spoil a story. Mr. Elson's hero is a doctor, a "research" man, who hits upon a wonderful remedy that will, in a large class of otherwise hopeless cases, not only cure but greatly prolong the life of the patient. He is not sure enough of its action to feel justified in giving it unreservedly to the profession, so, with the aid and advice of his wife, who is also medically trained, he decides upon a ten year period of trial, during which he practically constitutes himself the arbiter as to life or death of certain patients. Some of these cases are well handled, but others degenerate into long talking matches, something in the manner of "Swiss Family Robinson," between the doctor husband and wife. Yet much, even of this, is good talk: meaty, and suggestive as sociology.

(Continued on next page)

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OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
American Branch
35 West 32nd Street, New York

The New Books
Fiction

(Continued from preceding page)

LITTLE NOVELS OF SICILY. By GIOVANNI VERGA. Translated by D. H. LAWRENCE. Seltzer. 1925. \$2.

Verga will be remembered by many as the author of "Cavalleria Rusticana," and by a few as the author of "Mastro-Don Gesualdo," likewise translated by Mr. Lawrence, which received interested notice on its publication in America.

Verga's youth was spent in Sicily during the fifties and sixties, when Sicily was said to be the most destitute place in Europe; these "little novels" are tales of this forlorn age of poverty and sickness and strife, and of oppression by the church and the law and the lesser nobility; when men and women and children lived and died like dull beasts of burden; when Santo and Nena, old at thirty, were "like two oxen yoked to the same plow, which was what their marriage amounted to now."

These tales do not follow the American convention of story form, with development, climax, and dénouement. Rather, they appear to picture life as it passes, and they end when the watcher wearies of watching. It is needless to say that this formlessness is only apparent; for Verga's preoccupation is not so much with the Sicilians of his stories as with the life that has crushed them, and he will insert incidents which are needless to his plot, but which illustrate Sicily. These are novels of incident rather than of plot; and they are literally novels of Sicily—to which land Sicilians are not very important. Verga is never so absorbed in a character that he will not leave his deathbed for a casual glance out of the window, where all of life is parading in many colors.

This casualness is heightened by an informal, almost colloquial style, which does not change its cool monotone whether the incident be commonplace, sardonic, or sheerly savage.

THE PLEASURE BUYERS. By ARTHUR SOMERS ROCHE. Macmillan. 1925. \$2.

The reviewer whose literary taste is superior to the standard maintained by the current popular periodicals must be of an unusually generous nature not to pronounce "The Pleasure Buyers" a stupid book. Mr. Roche's latest concoction is a murder mystery story intended to entertain the host of readers of "summer fiction." The scene is in Palm Beach, the winter home of "the pleasure buyers."

Crude in construction, careless in style, platitudinous in its moralizing, this book is without literary life.

CARAVAN. By John Galsworthy. Scribners. \$2.50.

KINDRED. By Alice Prescott Smith. Houghton Mifflin. \$2.

THE CHEERFUL FRAUD. By K. R. G. Browne. Putnam. \$2.

THE BRIDE'S BOUDOIR. By Miriam Ryon. Siebel. \$2.

WHERE LOVE IS THERE GOD IS ALSO. By Lyof N. Tolstoy. Crowell. \$1.50 net.

A SON OF HIS FATHER. By Harold Bell Wright. Appleton. \$2.

Foreign

GEIST UND KULTUR IN DER SPRACHE. By K. Vossler. Heidelberg: Winter.

EL VIGIA. By Jose A. Balseiro. Madrid: Mundo Latino.

Poetry

THE DRUMS OF YLE. By J. U. NICOLSON. Illustrated by EARL H. REED. Chicago: Covici. 1925. \$2.

A hundred-pages-odd of sustained lyric ecstasy is a fearsome thing, God wot! An ecstatic romance here revives from long slumber the swineherds as well as the barons of Norman-Saxon England; with something of the naïve, youthful, prosaic pageantry of "Ivanhoe" itself. But now "set to music." Again the greenwood glows. The fairy-tale-like *motif*, young love, conquest, war, and death,—and, incidentally, the novelist's "triangle"—are handled with simplicity and sincerity, passion and sensuousness.

A story first, as it should be, few pages of "The Drums of Yle" fail to glint with gold of romance. For here the land once more "burns in wild glory." From Castle Mystery itself into the very "wretched burrows" of the poor, the reader is privileged to ride. It is the old grand manner assumed again with a certain freshness. And yet it is "the old grand manner."

NOR YOUTH NOR AGE. By HAROLD VINAL. 1925.

Of the ten poems here headed "Poems: 1924," and of the eighteen more headed "1925," it is not possible to grant more than momentary appeal to a couple of each group. Several additional lyrics and sonnets assert the singing voice, stray lines bespeak cerebral alacrity, numerous titles tell the clever fellow "in the making." But glibness at rhyming (no matter how beautiful the print and paper allotted to "carry" it), without depth, before long becomes tiresome. But poems such as "Mural Sketched from Memory," "Ghost Among the Roses," "Retreat," and "Abandoned Acres," are worth noticing.

A LOVER OF THE LAND. By FREDERICK NIVEN. Boni & Liveright. 1925. \$1.75.

Though this is mostly "mere verse," real imagination occasionally shines amid these sixty-odd pages of much too "even" poetry. Occasionally there is real strength, quiet and unsensational. The first half-dozen poems in this book, however, promise things not to be fulfilled.

An obsession for words themselves, especially outworn "poetic" ones, a fondness for the technique of Li Po (rather than the content), these are handicaps in the way of growth; and Mr. Niven, following Li Po, will continue merely a lesser John Freeman or John Drinkwater. "To Pauline," "Now Goes Our Lady to the Woods," "Her Servants," etc., "North Devon" and "A Song of Silence," however, have a vitality of their own (though deriving too much from Wordsworth).

MIRRORS. By MARGARET TOD RITTER. Macmillan. 1925. \$1.25.

Like so many current collections of verse, this book is strikingly uneven in quality. At her best the author displays a thin but authentic lyric strain; at her worst, she descends to the commonplaces of mere prose. Such lines as the following, for example, can hardly be regarded as evidences of poetic distinction:

*The proudest city on the continent
So utterly oblivious of me
What memories beguile thy solitude?*

Miss Ritter's work, unfortunately, is clogged with such prosy and unexpressive lines. Truly, she has not taken to heart Keats's advice to "Load every rift with ore." And yet in places her work manifests an appealing sincerity of emotion and flashes of real poetry; and in places she exhibits a singing quality which, while linked to no great distinctiveness of expression, may be taken as the sign and fulfilment of a genuine poetic impulse.

SENLIN. By Conrad Aiken. London: Hogarth Press.

THE ESPALIER. By Sylvia Townsend Warner. Dial Press.

POEMS. By Oliver Wels Antrim. Publication Society, 455 East 51st Street, New York.

ODES FROM THE DIVAN OF HAFIZ. By Richard Le Gallienne. St. Botolph Society (Page).

THE NORTHEAST CORNER. By Frederick R. McCreary. Houghton Mifflin. \$1.25.

SHADOWS OF MEN. By Arthur Crew Tuman. London: Erskine Macdonald.

POEMS. By Three Friends. Portland, Me.: Smith & Sale.

(Continued on next page)

Trade Winds

SEE by an ad in *The Publishers' Weekly* that the word *realtor* has gone into the latest edition of Webster's Dictionary.

Alfred Knopf is shortly to publish a \$2 book by a Kansas professor on "The Function and Mechanism of a Sentence." This sounds gorgeously typical of the profession of English-teaching nowadays; I look forward eagerly to reading it.

Russell Lewis, the excellent salesman of Messrs. Dodd, Mead & Co., has persuaded me to order the new edition of Tolstoy's "War and Peace" about to be published by his house; and the carefully edited "Miserables" illustrated by Mead Schaeffer; and the reissue of Harland's "Cardinal's Snuffbox."

One of the quaintest capers devised by a publisher is Mr. Pascal Covici's notion of giving away with the first 80 copies of a limited run of an Edgar Saltus book, a cancelled autograph bank-check of the said Saltus.

I wonder if any of them are stamped *Insufficient Funds*?

A book I could sell a lot of, if some publisher would make a good job of it, would be a book about Currier and Ives prints, with fine colored reproductions. Mr. Fontaine Fox told me once that when he bought a house at Port Washington, L. I., a few years ago, the previous owner left a specially fine Currier and Ives "Winter in the Country" hanging in the hall; the seller cared so little for it he didn't even bother to remove it.

When the library of the late George J. Gould (of Georgian Court, Lakewood, N. J.) was sold not long ago I looked over the books with some care; very fine assembly of De Luxe sets; Mr. Gould had evidently gone down without a struggle before the vendors of Japan vellum and crushed levant and Court Memoirs. Alas, the only works that showed any signs of having been read by the bibliophiles of Georgian Court (now a school for young ladies) were Casanova and Sir Dick Burton. Of Casanova 5 volumes were missing; of Burton 7 volumes were missing.

It is good news that Dutton is to republish (in the Kings' Treasuries series) "The Adventures of a Younger Son" by E. J. Trelawney.

A first edition of another Dutton triumph, "When We Were Very Young," is listed by Edgar Wells at \$10.

Mr. A. Edward Newton, stopping in at my shop just before sailing for London, says that if his new book sells 15,000 copies it will just pay for the fine new library he has built himself. The famous "Amenities" sold a good deal more than that, so perhaps the new one will too.

A visitor passing through the office of the Century Company was startled to see a memorandum on a desk saying RUSH 5000 WRAPPERS FOR THE NAKED MAN.

It transpired, as Fred Melcher would say, that this was merely an order for jackets of the first printing of Vere Hutchinson's new novel "The Naked Man."

BEST SELLERS in my shop the past fortnight—"Barber Shop Ballads," by Sigmund Spaeth; "Jungle Days," by William Beebe; "The Spanish Farm," by R. H. Mottram; "The American Credo," by Mencken and Nathan; "Drums," by James Boyd; "Mrs. Dalloway," by Virginia Woolf.

(The reason for "The American Credo" appearing in this list is that I found 3 old copies lurking in my stockroom; I read it again, reapplauded it as one of the best bits of malicious comedy I know, recommended it to Young Amherst, to whom anything published before 1923 is an Old Classic, and he sold them promptly. I must keep it in stock.)

There are always ways of starting a little Business. Young Amherst has an agreeable bass; I can manage a sweet Scandinavian tenor; and we got a couple of Young Amherst's friends to join us in singing "I've Been Working On the Rail-

road," standing in the door of the shop at lunch time. Of course a crowd collected; whereupon we drew their attention to our Window Display (On Consignment, let me add) of Barber Shop Ballads. This worked excellently." Perhaps Barber-Shop ballading is going to be the big Indoor Sport this winter. Mary Smith of the Harcourt-Brace bookshop, tells me she sold more copies of the Barber Shop book on its publication day than any other book this season except "Arrowsmith."

Another inquiry: a young man came in with a copy of the New York *Herald-Tribune* and showed me a large advertisement of Silver King ginger ale. The picture showed a bottle of ginger ale on a table, with three books behind it. The caller said he was short-sighted, could I make out the titles of the books in the pictures? I got out my lens: they were "Lord Jim," "Almayer's Folly," and "The Arrow of Gold." I tried to sell him the books, but he was doubtful. "Just curiosity," he said. Then I read him the text of the ad. "Made with sparkling mineral water, the essence carefully brewed (not soaked) from tender ginger roots from the Indies—and a dash of pure tropical fruit juices." No critic, I said, ever wrote a better description of Conrad's own flavor. He bought "Almayer's Folly"—"to remind me of my own," he said. Is there a bookseller in Waukesha, Wisconsin? If so, why doesn't he sell a set of Conrad to the Silver King Products Corporation, who make that ginger ale? Don't say I never give you any merchandising ideas.

P. E. G. QUERCUS.



Items

In and Out of the Office

1. HERE'S a news tip for

first-edition sleuths: Isaac Goldberg's forthcoming biography, *The Man Mencken*, will really be a distinguished contribution to American letters—the quintessence of Menckeniism! It will contain a mass of important and entertaining memorabilia—fugitive writings in prose and verse, musical compositions (printed in facsimile!), early free-lance clippings, and a number of intimate and characteristic letters. Believe it or not, the volume will also contain H. L. M.'s elementary-school report-cards, his first newspaper story, a description of an early chemical invention of his own, and an adolescent short-story that will thrill all collectors of *Menckeniiana*.

2. Looking over the galleys (even

proof-reading is fascinating on this book!), the photographs, and the delightfully unconventional documentary material, we can readily understand why book-explorers on the alert for exciting first-edition "items" are taking no chances; they are placing advance reservations now for *The Man Mencken*. (Price, \$4.00—ready October 15th).

3. IT'S a deliciously exhilarating

moment when a new book arrives on a publisher's desk—Copy Number 1, fresh from the bindery! Today we've had two such moments—all the more thrilling, because they were de luxe books, limited editions, by authors whose names are looming larger and larger on the literary horizon.

4. "You Who Have Dreams," a

volume of verse by Maxwell Anderson, co-author of "What Price Glory," and "The Poems of Irwin Edman" are hand-wrought productions of the Pynson Printers, limited to 1,000 copies each, and printed from type. The type has been distributed, and the books, at \$2 each, will be published September 15th—there's an honest-to-goodness "item" for first-edition hunters, and, regardless of editions, for all lovers of genuinely fine literature!

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