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Recent American Drama
CARGILL SPIETSMA

The English and French Languages:
An Entente
J. MARK BALDWIN

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Recent American Drama

CARCILL SRIETSMA

Among the early efforts to create an American play was Royall Tyler’s, whose “The Contrast” was produced with success at the John Street Theater, in New York, in 1787. We are told it is the first American comedy to be produced by a professional company. In the opening lines the author is exultant over the fact that he has introduced into playwriting the principle Monroe later introduced into politics, thus paving the way for the founders of the American Mercury:

Exult each patriot heart!—This night is shown A piece which we may fairly call our own.

This all-American comedy presents the contrast between the homely virtues of an untraveled American and Chesterfield’s polished gentleman. If from time to time the American dramatist’s enthusiasm for an American stage still leads him to make contrasts, the great contribution of contemporary playwrights is based upon a more significant understanding of America.

For the new plays the authors have seized the vital forces of human nature and clothed them with the garments and speech of primitive American life. Poetry, technical skill, a knowledge not only of human nature but of the people who have inhabited the mountains of Kentucky and the Carolinas have made possible the creation of “Sun Up,” by Lulu Vollmer, “This Fine-Pretty World,” by Percy MacKay, and “Hell Bent for Heaven,” by Hatcher Hughes, the last of which received the Pulitzer prize for 1924 and which has been brought to Paris by Fortunat Strowski to be produced in French by Marcel Harrand.

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Early in our century those interested in American drama were aware that we had no American Théâtre Libre nor American Literary Theater, such as that of Antoine and Becque in Paris, such as that of Yeats and Lady Gregory in Dublin. The New World was behind the times. The movement for better drama had two sources. In the academic world two or three young men, prominent among whom were Brander Matthews and George P. Baker, shocked the professors of literature by insisting upon making the drama a separate study. Having gained this much, the former began his Dramatic Museum at Columbia University, and the latter offered his course on Modern Dramatists and the Technic of the Drama. By nineteen twelve over fifteen colleges were giving courses in drama and at Harvard an experimental theater was established where plays written by students of Professor Baker’s were, and are still, tried before the public: encouragement was given the efforts of this 47 Workshop, as it is called, by Mr. Craig of Boston, who offered an annual prize for the best Workshop play of the year. This in the city where Samuel Sewall, protesting against the acting of a play in the council chamber, recorded in his diary March 2, 1714, “Let not Christian Boston goe beyond Heathen Rome in the practice of shameful vanities”.

The second vitalizing force manifested itself in the organization of groups of amateurs. The most prominent of them was formed in 1915 and took the name of the Washington Square Players. It was composed of young people who often met in the back room of a Washington Square book-shop and who, dissatisfied with the plays offered by the professional managers, decided to have a theater of their own. They had little money, their talents were undeveloped, but they had much enthusiasm. We are told that the same night they decided to give plays they began with Dunsany’s “The Glittering Way”. A witness has given us the description: “There was a good fire on the hearth, and it was snowing outside. The folding doors between the two rooms of the bookstore were improvised into a proscenium. An open window at the back, through which penetrated the dim illumination of Macdougal street, served to give an impressionistic impression of heaven.” For properties
Mr. Robert Edmond Jones, with the inspiration of the impressionist, rolled long strips of wrapping paper into wands. Mr. Moeller and Mr. Eliot impersonated the murmling rocks. The other actors went through their parts, reading the lines from the printed page. For an audience there were Miss Palmer and Miss Westley, each of whom paid ten cents for the privilege of an impromptu excursion into the rarified atmosphere of pure art. The total receipts were used to defray the expenses of two candles. They later secured a theater, the Bandbox, and during their first season produced fourteen one-act plays and pantomimes, all but five of which were written by Americans. The rest of the story is well known; before the war interrupted their work they had produced plays such as "The Clod" from the 47 Workshop, plays by Moeller, Langner, Murdock Pemberton, Americans, and by Maeterlinck, Andreyev, de Musset and other Europeans.

Back from the war, the remains of this first group, fortified by new members, organized the Guild. It is this Guild which, after all the difficulties of recommencing, has built up a large following in the form of annual subscribers who assure it success, and it is this Guild which will soon open up its own new theater on Fifty-second street between Seventh and Eighth avenues, in New York City.

That these two movements, the academic and non-academic, are closely related is easily seen from the fact that a former member of the Guild, Augustin Duncan, who began his career with a similar movement in Ireland, off-spring of the Irish Literary Theater, the Abbey Theater, staged and played in one of the pieces we have mentioned, "Hell Bent fer Heaven", written by a young professor of the drama at Columbia University, Mr. Hatcher Hughes.

Mr. Hughes has dramatized religious fanaticism. This great force moves the voice and body of a puny wretch, the "Runt", as the author first designated him: Rufe, the runt, is as "hell bent fer heaven" as the latest recruit to the local anti-vice society. He sings and prays the name of God into every phrase, and every phrase is used to further his diabolical designs, until murder itself is sanctified.

This zealot, to destroy his rival, tries to renew an ancient feud which a marriage is about to terminate. A brother is incited to kill the fiancé of his own sister. But the plan fails: the fanatic is left to discover his own hypocrisy... left a prisoner in the cabin by those he betrayed, he blasphemes the God who fails to rescue him from the rising waters of the flooded valley.

This play is American even to the hypocrisy of Rufe, for if he is a Tartufe, he is an American Tartufe, relying more upon hymns than upon casuistry to seduce his rival's fiancée. The primitive conception of foreigners, the speech,
Yank returns to marry, in "Sun-Up", he marries and goes away. The author of this latter play has chosen the mountains of Carolina for her scenes. Besides feuds, these men are known for their 'moonshine', whiskey made by moonlight! One of the laws made by the first Congress was a tax on whiskey manufactured in the United States. It produced a rebellion, and Washington had to use armed force against the mountaineers. From this time on these people have looked upon the law as their enemy.

Their vindictive animosity to the law is voiced in the play by the widow Cagle, whose father was taken by the law, whose husband was slain by a revenue officer, and whose son is now removed from her by the draft. Word comes that the son has died in action. Once more the mother cries out against the law. She has a chance for revenge. In the evening an army deserter seeks refuge in her cabin: her law is: a life for a life. But in the night she hears her dead son's voice. Overcome with mysticism and joy, she lets the deserter go: it is sun-up in her heart.

Otherwise excellent, with the rare good fortune of a Lucile La Verne as the corn-cob smoking mother, this play flickers out into insipid sentimentalism; it is "Hell Bent fer Heaven", as produced in New York, with the hypocrite saved.

The difficulty of presenting some of these recent American plays results from the use of dialect. The two authors we have mentioned have used it, more or less. Eugene O'Neill has used the word suited to the character and his characters have not always been brought up on the "Letters to His Son". The use of dialect is so marked in such a play as "This Fine-Pretty World", a mountain play by Percy MacKaye, that more than one critic was led to exclaim that it seemed as though a student had tried to write a play in old English with the aid of a dictionary.

Mr. MacKaye, deeply inspired by a desire to produce a national theater, has lived among the natives and tried to reproduce their very speech... his play is full of poetry and passages of beauty, but he has out-Synged Synge. His enthusiasm for his art, however, cannot but move us to a better understanding of his efforts to create an American "Theater of Poetry": in the Survey of 1924, Mr. MacKaye said:

"This language is a precious heritage of the mountaineer from a thousand years of folk-culture; yet so cramped is the standardized culture of the average normal school teacher (blissfully ignorant of the Elizabethans and Chaucer and 'Beowulf', not to mention Burns and Synge) that the first admonishment of the mountain child—who has braved lonely miles of storm—swept trails, humbly to 'crave larnin', —is for him to correct and shamefacedly disavow his own ancient mountain speech in favor of the 'grammatical rules' of a rubber stamp education.

"Yea, sir, hit war the first cold spell that come, right when the grapes is about all gone and the rest of the berry tribe, between the turnin' of the weeds under and the dyin' of food, and thar comes in a gang of jay-birds and they fills the mind of the bird poetry."

There is a sentence I wrote down from the lips of an old mountaineer."

Thus is it that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings our latest dramatic school has taken much of the dialogue of recent American drama. But fortunately for us, Mr. MacKaye first learned the language of the ordinary playgoer, at home from Steele MacKaye, the playwright, his father; at Harvard, from George P. Baker, his professor.

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Since "The Contrast" of 1787 we have bewailed the importation of foreign plays. This has never interfered with our support or appreciation of them. Even when such plays as we have been considering are presented, a half-dozen other audiences are listening to importations.

This danger of foreign influence is not great. Shakespeare and Molière might be more highly esteemed by some had they never borrowed: but they would not be Shakespeare and Molière. Such men as Brander Matthews and George P. Baker have known how to profit from the models given by the Greeks, the French and those between. As a result we have a school of American dramatists which is appreciated not only at home but in Europe. Ibsen and Andreyev are no longer the only invaders: Eugene O'Neill and Hatcher Hughes are abroad in a field that is open to others who may care to follow.
The English and French Languages: An Entente

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The question of extending the entente between the two great allied nations, England and France, to include the reciprocal cultivation and propagation of their two languages, opens interesting vistas. The topic has all sorts of bearings, linguistic, historical, educational, of which I select the most general or brief treatment.

It is of special interest to the speaker to note that the topic brings the United States directly into the circle, since the American Republic is the most populous single country speaking the English language, and the extension of her influence in all the avenues of literature, trade, etc., through the medium of the language, brings her into line with her democratic peers, England and France. No discussion of the future of the English language can disregard the United States, and no discussion of the French language can disregard so important and sympathetic a clientèle.

I.

Two principal motives seem to be involved in the propagation and permanent establishment of a language: there are two criteria, so to speak, of its fitness to survive: its relative utility and its relative elegance. Nothing can stop the spread of a language which meets a need, and nothing can destroy a language whose elegance makes it the fit vehicle of human sentiment and aspiration. Language is both a practical instrument and a spiritual vehicle; these are its two essential functions respectively utilitarian and aesthetic.

Considering the subject first from the point of view of utility, we find certain fields in which the practical availability of a language is the sole or main motive in its diffusion.

In Colonization, in the first instance, the language of the mother or colonizing country, is an important instrument. It adds itself to the institutions of government and other elements of the social regime put in force. Even when the language is not officially propagated or enforced by decree, it still tends, by the prestige of the dominant class, to become the exclusive speech of the colony. The processes of colonization have been among the most important means of propagation of the French, English, Spanish, Portuguese and German languages.

By this means English has come to be spoken by one-fifth of the entire population of the globe. It was also due to this that the Spanish and Portuguese languages secured their wide dissemination in the Western Hemisphere.

This means of spreading a language, however, is very limited in its working, since it requires the favourable theatre which the colony presents. The colony, being a domain of exclusive political influence, is not open to the free competition of tongues.

Another important instrument of the propagation of a language in virtue of its utility is Commerce. The great movements of commerce facilitate the peaceful penetration of this or that language, which goes along with the trader, the industrial agent, and the exploiter. Here the competitive conditions are present and utility is the criterion of survival. Its forms of speech go on tours of conquest of the world along with the goods, ships, inventions and patents of a country. In recent decades, with the decline of the commercial importance of Spain and Portugal, the Spanish and Portuguese languages have fallen into the background, while English, German and French, especially the first two, have made enormous advances in consequence of the expansion of British, American and German trade.

These two processes, both based upon utility, find illustration in great sections of the earth today. In Africa, colonization is the business of the day: the languages of Europe are being imposed upon the natives, each in the sphere of influence of its respective country. In South and Central America, the influence of trade is all important. Coming after the epoch of colonization, which fixed the vernacular of this or that country by substituting a new speech for that of the natives, this vernacular finds itself in turn obliged to compete with the languages of the great commercial nations.
In Mexico, a country in which these processes of change take on very interesting forms, we find English and German advancing by great strides, through the rapid accommodation of the country to the trade-currents, which flow strongly through it. French commerce has fallen back, comparatively speaking, in Mexico, and with it the use of the French language in practical life. (1)

There is a vast region of human life and interest, however, which these motives and factors of utility do not much affect: that of sentiment and aspiration, the entire sphere of permanent human expression in literature and art. Here we come upon the criterion of elegance. In this field a language succeeds because it is elegant.

The conquests of a language in this domain are permanent, since its products are fixed in artistic and literary form, its models become classic, its cult dominates in education and serves the ends of recreation in the theatre, the romance, and the collections of the bibliophile. In this way, language ceases to be simply a tool; it becomes the embodiment of the national spirit and its organ, reflecting the character and temper of the race, of which it remains the spiritual possession.

The means of propagation and extension of a language in this sphere are very different from those already mentioned, being no longer utilitarian but sentimental. Literature is not an article of commerce, though books are bought and sold. A play is not judged by its utility measured in profits to the theatre or to the author, but by its essential human meaning and value. The means of dissemination are here, therefore, not commercial or practical; they are of a quite different order. A people may be compelled to use in daily life a language which it hates, while at the same time expressing its spiritual aspirations, finding its recreations, and fulfilling its most intimate inspirations, in a different language altogether.

Here again I may draw illustrations from a country, Mexico, in which I have studied these phenomena and in which they are typical. While as I have said, English and German have superseded French, and are superseding Spanish, in the mercantile and industrial life of Mexico, they have hardly touched the aesthetic or sentimental life—English, little, German not at all! This domain is held securely by the two Latin languages, Spanish and French. French is not only first of the foreign tongues in prestige and honor with literary men, it is the literary and artistic language of the country as a whole, ranking with the vernacular. While the process of penetration by English and German has gone on in business circles, the reading public, has devoted itself with ever greater interest and enthusiasm to French literature and French art. So true is this, that German treatises in science and practical invention, as well as those in the social and moral sciences, are introduced into Mexico largely in French or English translation. (2)

While German has imposed itself by reason of its commercial utility, it has remained for the Latin languages and English to express and interpret the spiritual side of life. In this Mexico is not an isolated but a typical case.

The reason for this is undoubtedly to be found in what we may call, in a large sense, the "elegance" of the French language. Historically, French has shown its supreme fitness as the vehicle of clear and elevated thought, no less than of subtle and varied emotion. Its forms lend themselves to the use of refined and delicate imagery, and refuse to tolerate the clumsy, the gross, or the obscure. It is due to this character of elegance that French maintains in literature, in art, in diplomacy, and in polite intercourse, wherever people are civilized; it does not require any of the artificial supports of official decrees, ecclesiastical patronage, or commercial exploitation.

I think it may be said, in short, that English, in the future as in the past, is bound, by reason of its utility, to remain dominant in the world of practical affairs, apart from all questions of its relative elegance; and that French is bound, similarly, to remain dominant in the domain of art and letters, apart from all question of its utility, by reason of its elegance. Of these two languages, French need not enter into sharp competition with English, in the field of commerce, and English has no need to compete...
with French in the domain of literature. In the latter sphere, in fact, that of the things of the mind, there can be no real competition, since all the world's masterpieces are open to all peoples alike, and have full value for each, whatever its mother tongue.

We have here, then, sufficient indication as to what the true relation between French and English should be in the future: it should be one of co-operation, of entente, a cordial entente maintained and developed in the common interest of the Anglo-Saxon and Latin civilizations.

It is true that the best policy in respect to both languages is one of co-operation and reciprocal encouragement, we may then ask what are the practical means by which such a programme can be carried out? Our answer may be stated under the same two captions—utility and elegance.

Let each of the two peoples and the two governments adopt both languages to serve the greatest possible range of utilities.

Evidently, the first step is to make the two languages available to the mass of the educated people in both countries. English and Americans should encourage the study and practical use of French in schools, homes and colonies. The French should do the same for English.

Such encouragement may go far beyond the official school programmes and courses of study: it may comprise informal exercises and themes, a preference for certain texts, the citation of authorities—all the means, in short, by which an instructor or tutor can raise the prestige and heighten the appreciation of a given national life, culture, and language in the mind of his pupil. The extraordinary educational campaign of this sort conducted in the United States in the last thirty years in favour of German may be cited in illustration. The German language, German Science, philosophy, and culture have had an extraordinary exploitation in all the American centres of education. Even in private life, this may be made effective, for in choosing governesses and tutors for children most parents are guided as much by the relative values placed, in their social milieu, upon one national culture rather than another, by considerations of utility.

In all these ways, both official and informal, let the English prefer the French, and the French the English to other foreign languages; the gains in the long run, will be enormous.

Another sphere of utility in which such co-operation may be made effective is that of government usage in general, diplomatic and official. The two languages may be made equally and together the official medium of international correspondence, and even of domestic communication in matters involving foreign affairs, political or commercial. Governments alive and sympathetic to this utility may in many ways serve the entente, as, for example, in the colonies of both countries, where a polyglot population has to be constantly communicated with, and in all the regulations concerning foreign trade, where effective advertisement or information might benefit by statements made in both languages.

The same recommendation has its place also in private trade and commerce. If the commercial and industrial classes are trained in the two languages, they will have an arm of great advantage in international trade. For example, in the South American countries the skilful use of different languages has been of great advantage to German trade. In Mexico, where as I have said, the English and German have become current as commercial languages, French houses would profit greatly by being able to use in their advertisements, announcements, correspondence, etc., the English along with the French and Spanish. In other countries, where French commerce has made headway, the English or American merchant finds it to his advantage to know French. Here is an important field for useful and friendly co-operation.

In the sphere of elegance the same sort of entente is possible. There is already under way a distinct movement toward a more intimate literary and artistic relation between the English speaking countries and France. In this movement the United States is prominent. The countries which use English already recognize, through their leading writers and artists, the intrinsic value of the French language.

This recognition will become reciprocal and general. But there is much to be done in turning this preference to account in popular ways. The stigma of lightness and license attaching to the French romance and play must be removed; and on the other hand, the impression in the French mind that English literature is in great part dry and sterile, on account of the tradition of puritanism, must be overcome. "Bovarysm," on the one hand, and "spinsterism" on the
other, must not continue to hinder just appreciations of the literary workmanship of the masters on both sides of the channel and on both sides of the Atlantic. Here real work of sound instruction remains to be done. English books are not all occupied with histories of prudes, and French books do not all glorify the Libertine.

As to the United States, the problem is similar except for the special conditions obtaining in American education. The educational means of encouraging the study of a language are not there the same as in England or France.

In the first place, there is no national system of education in the United States, through which a direct influence could be exercised upon the whole country. The systems of the different states are dissimilar; and in each of them considerations of utility of a local sort—geographical, commercial, etc., are influential in the shaping of the school programmes. Further there is great rivalry among the partisans of the different modern languages, in this locality or that, and this often takes the form of active propaganda, resulting in the election of partisan school boards. In Germano-American localities, the Germans control the choice of texts, the arrangement of programmes, and the distribution of the student's hours of study. In many of the states, the most that could be effected in the public schools, would be to secure a fair and equitable distribution of the student's time as between French and German. It is possible, however, even in the state schools to create an atmosphere for French—has recently been done for Spanish, seeing its commercial utility in South American trade—so that pupils who have a choice between French and German, should choose the former. In secondary education the feeling of the parents is often decisive, since the scholar is still in his teens.

In the universities, both the State institutions and the great private foundations, the "modern languages" group,—comprising French, German and perhaps Spanish or Italian, are generally made alternative to one another, the student making his choice with the advice of an instructor. While it would be generally impossible to secure any direct preferential recognition of a given language, it is possible to secure a larger attendance of students in one class-room than in another, by various means, of which the personal influence of the instructor is the most important.

The real importance of this last-named factor has been shown in the history of American education in the twenty-five years preceding the War, a period during which there was a remarkable rise in prestige of German. It was part of a movement toward the over-estimation of German models and German scholarship, showing itself in a remarkable way in the universities. It was due not only or mainly to direct German propaganda, but to the residence in German universities of large numbers of chosen American advanced students, who afterwards became professors all over the country. This double migration to and from Germany became so general that toward 1890 most colleges and universities in the United States had one, two or more devoted germanophiles on their teaching staffs: these men counselled the student to study German, to consult German authorities, to follow German models, and in case he desired to fit himself to teach in the United States, to go to Germany and obtain a Ph. D. degree. One may easily imagine the influence constantly exercised in the same direction, of all these teachers, in successive academic generations. I cite this to show the extent to which this movement of mere imitation, encouraged by arrangements to facilitate exchange between the institutions of the two countries, went to establish a real pedagogical monopoly for Germany and things Germanic in the United States.

It is by analogous measures of this sort, I think, that the influence of French language and French culture in general may be extended in America. Apart from certain lines of commerce where the use of French would be advantageous, the avenues of direct utility are not largely open. French can not replace English or Spanish in the practical life of the Americans. But in the direction of an enhanced moral and scholarly prestige French may look for its conquests. It must count upon its elegance, as an instrument of literature and art, and upon the excellence of French thought, science, and philosophy to forward its fame and enlarge its place in the western world.

To this end, the French people should become more familiar with English; by using English they can interpret and explain things French to the Americans. Intercourse between the two countries should be developed, especially in literary and scientific circles. The universities and schools of France should be made
accessible, and these facilities made known to English speaking students. The technical instruments of scholarship, such as catalogues, announcements, bibliographies, should be produced in French and circulated in America, and the classics of France, with French commentaries, should be made available to the young American. If a fair chance is thus given it—the chance that the wide field opened after the war affords—and if the proper means of legitimate propagation are created, French will soon overcome the lead heretofore held by German in the United States, and assert there, as elsewhere, the superiority to which its intrinsic qualities entitle it.


The English Femina-Vie Heureuse Prize has been awarded to Mr. E. M. Forster for "A Passage to India".


Walter Damrosch's "My Musical Life" (Scribner's) and Arthur Ransome's "Racundra's First Cruise" (Huebsch) have been republished in London by George Allen & Unwin.

G. W. Cable, who died on January 31, was the author of "Old Creole Days", "Madame Delphine", and other stories of Creole life.
Recent Articles in French Revues on American Subjects

The following list supplements one published in Ex Libris in May 1924.


Chateaubriand et l'Amérique, Pierre Moreau. La Revue de France, 1er Septembre 1924.

Un Américain à Sainte-Hélène, Marguerite Coleman. Revue Mondiale, 1er Septembre 1924.


Notes sur l'Amérique, André Jouve. Europe, 15 Octobre 1924.

L'idealisme de la Jeunesse universitaire aux Etats-Unis, Schinz Albert. Revue Bleue, 20 Octobre 1924.


L'Avenir de la Culture classique aux Etats-Unis, Jean Malvy. Revue Bleue, 1er Novembre 1924.

Le Séjour de Talleyrand aux Etats-Unis, F. Baldensperger. La Revue de Paris, 15 Novembre 1924.


Le programme du Président Coolidge, André Fribourg. Les Annales, 16 Novembre 1924.


L'Emprunt Français aux Etats-Unis, Ernest Dutrey. La Quinzaine Economique. 1er Décembre 1924.


L'Amitié Franco-Américaine en 1925. L'Art de se connaître et de s'estimer entre nations. Bernard Fay. Le Correspondant, 10 Février 1925.


Of René Lalou’s “Contemporary Literature” translated by W. A. Bradley (Knopf) Ernest Boyd says, “It is intrinsically a first rate and indispensable piece of scholarship, in the very best French tradition—balanced, clear, authoritative and never dull—like Lanson’s general history of French literature.”

In an article on D. H. Lawrence in The Nation, February 11, Edwin Muir says, “He has not fulfilled the promise shown in ‘Sons and Lovers’ and ‘The Rainbow’. But if he has not written any completely satisfying work, he has written in all his books more greatly than any other English writer of his time.”
The report of the American Library in Paris for March shows gifts of books amounting to 173, including, in addition to the usual number of books presented by authors or publishers, a collection of books from Sir Thomas Barclay. The total number of subscribers registered was 376. This included the following new members: Miss May Crowley, Mme. Elsa Crozier, Mr. Edward Gellibrand, Mr. H. E. Greenway, Mr. J. M. Gierson, Mr. Robert B. Hostater, Mr. D. MacDermot, Mr. Junius S. Morgan, and Mrs. Marion Randall Parsons.

The book circulation for the month was 11,015, or seven per cent more than during the corresponding month last year.

The Best French Books

One of the primary objects of the American Library in Paris is to assist American libraries in the selection of French books, and particularly in the selection of current publications.

The question "What are the best current publications?" has always interested critics, whether they would admit it or not, and in France, as elsewhere, it has taken either of two forms: "What are the bad books?" or "What are the good books?" The former question is ordinarily left to the Chambre Correctionelle to settle, at least as far as works of a pornographic character are concerned; the average reader is not interested in finding out what the bad books are. But the latter question is of interest to everyone, because good books are of elemental importance to everyone, and everyone is continually hoping to find better ones. It is also a more difficult question, because the answer depends less upon the character of the books than upon the nature of the use to which they are to be put.

It is, indeed, these qualities that make the question one of such national importance as to challenge the attention of the best minds. In order that a people may secure as much as possible from its reading and in order that it may contribute as much as possible to the welfare of other nations, the best in its literature must be discovered and pointed out. This has been recognized in France by such organizations as the Comité France-Amérique, which has for some time published its monthly review a list of the ten most important French books.
of the month, or rather the best book in each of
the following classes: (1) intellectual life, (2) history and general politics, (3) economic, industrial, commercial, and financial life, (4) novels, (5) poetry and fine arts, (6) ancient and modern literature, and literary criticism, (7) philosophical and social life, (8) law, (9) medicine, and (10) foreign countries. The question has also received the attention of reviews like Clarité which limits itself to the selection of the best book of the month.

In its study of this problem, and in its effort to assist American libraries in securing the best in French contemporary literature the American Library in Paris has aimed primarily at the selection of the best books relating to French life and art. In making this selection it has had the assistance of: M. André Chevillon of the Académie Française; M. de Moncet of the Comité du Livre; Madame Duclaux of the Committee appointed to award the Prix Femina-Vie Heureuse; and others. The results of its study of the problem have been embodied in selected lists published in the Book List of the American Library Association, and in the somewhat more extended lists published bi-monthly in Ex Libris.

It is the desire of the editors of Ex Libris as well as of the officers of the Library to make these lists as useful as possible, and to supplement them by others of an equally useful character. With this in view the readers of Ex Libris are asked not only to criticise the lists which have already been published but to suggest other books which should be included in them, or other lists which would be of value.

American Books Translated into French in 1924

The following list of American books translated into French during the year 1924 is based on "Les Livres de l'Année" published as a part of the "Bibliographie de la France."

Cather, Willa, "My Antonia." (Payot).
Cooper, Fenimore. Le Corsaire (Gautier).
Curwood, James Oliver. Le Piège d'or. (Crès).
Finn, Francis. Lucky Bob. (Lethielleux).
LaFCADIO, Hearn. Esquisses Martiniquaises.
Trad. Marc Logé. (Mercure de France).
— — Tom Sawyer à travers le monde. Trad. A. Savine. (Michel).

FRENCH BOOK SELECTION

For the month of March, the Literary Committee of the "Société Sékwaná" of Paris chose the following books as the best in its opinion:

Combats et batailles sur mer, Claude Farrère et Paul de Cheuff; Le flambeau des Riffaut; Gaston Chéru; Un cadet de Béarn, Charles de Bordeu; L'entivernment sans clair de lune, Tristan Derème; Les Opinions d'Anatole France, Jacques Roujon; Jeunesse d'Ernest Renan, Pierre Lasserre; Ronard et son temps, Pierre Champion; Éloge de la Frivolité, Beaunier; Frédéric Ozanam, Georges Goyau.

Men and Issues: a selection of speeches and articles", by George Wharton Pepper (Duffield), consists for the most part of speeches delivered since January 1922 when Mr. Pepper took his seat in the United States Senate. His speech delivered at the Belleau Wood Memorial meeting held in Philadelphia, April 9, 1922 is included in the volume.
LES SURVIVANTS
LE CHEF NOIR
"YTOODCUTS
by Deslignères, reproduced from
Edgar Poe's "Aventures d'A. Gordon Pym",
(Traduction Baudelaire, published by Helleu et
Sergent, 125, Boulevard Saint-Germain, Paris.)
Book Reviews


Mr. Wertenbaker treats his subject in a new and interesting fashion. His opening paragraph might serve as a good plea for forest conservation. At the close of the Sixteenth Century, the great English forests had virtually disappeared, and timber and its by-products had to be sought abroad. Importation was especially important from those countries bordering the Baltic, where vast forests still were almost untouched. This was an unsatisfactory solution of the problem, however: wars, jealous courts, ice-locked ports impeded traffic. English industry and shipping were on the wane, many splendid mariners were entering foreign service.

As a remedy, colonial possessions had to be sought. Daring navigators had already brought home stories of limitless forests in the New World. Elizabethan statesmen and merchants, men of far-sighted vision, realized that England's safety and prosperity depended largely upon economic independence. The little island must expand into new lands, where its own exhausted forests could be replaced.

Therefore, efforts made by the London Company to establish a colony in Virginia were regarded as a crusade, vitally interesting to every Englishman. The settlement at Jamestown in 1607 was not the product of a selfish private venture, but the fruition of long years of thought and endeavor, financed by great lords and merchants who knew full well that there would be no immediate returns upon money invested.

The members of the London Company had expected Virginia to be a duplicate of England. But due to tobacco, Virginia became an agricultural community, and for more than a century could not boast a single town worthy of the name. The colony was a series of tobacco plantations, with owners, wage earners, indentured servants, and a few slaves. Thus Virginia developed during the seventeenth century a distinct and unique life of its own. Labor remained for a full century the problem of the planters. A laborer in the colony earned four or five times as much as he would have been paid in England. The Indians could not be utilized for plantation work, being of too proud and noble a spirit, and having the trackless forests near at hand as a refuge.

A Dutch privateer put into the James River in 1619, and sold the Virginians 20 African slaves, but it was many decades before this sort of labor could be had in useful numbers, the slave trade being entirely in the hands of the Dutch. Abject poverty was rife in England, and planters brought out indentured servants, a system satisfactory to all concerned for over a century. Few of these "servants" were degenerates or criminals, but mostly honest laborers, desirous of bettering their condition in the world, and selling their services in a dear market. Some political prisoners, so-called criminal laborers, were sent over, and were a source of real strength to the colony. The vast bulk of the settlers were English, and this fixed for all time the character of the population of Virginia.

The author shows that the average Virginia plantation, especially in the seventeenth century, was but a few hundred acres in extent, partly due to the difficulty of finding labor for cultivating larger holdings. He traces the development of the colony, and shows how Bacon's Rebellion, in 1676, was caused by the crash of the tobacco market, due to the Navigation Acts of the Restoration, and the ensuing misery. There are excellent chapters on the "Yoeman in Virginia History" and "Beneath the Black Tide", and an appendix, giving the entire Rent Roll of Virginia for 1704-1705.

Paul Rockwell


This book belongs to the same class as Mr. Madison Grant's "Passing of the Great Race", and from the reviewer's point of view gives a very satisfactory solution of present and future problems, not only of Europe but of all the white world. "We Other Nordics", profiting by the change from unknown to known quantities in the human equation, have the matter in our hands.

There is perhaps a too complete simplification in the classifying of Europe and most of America along racial lines, but it does explain. Race and not nationality, race and not language, race and not religion, race and not remembered traditions, is the touchstone and the guide. In this last qualifying adjective, remembered, lies the important factor.

We are Mediterranean, slender, dark, unstable, artistic; or Alpine, stocky, dark, stolid, strong and uninspired; or Nordic, blue-eyed and blond, "the most masterful breed that the world has ever seen". We may be for the moment an impermanent mixture of any two or of all three, but the Alpine is limited to small communities if in control, the Mediterranean becomes great only under the leadership of a great (and generally isolated) man, while the Nordic has a political sense and a balanced
judgment which generally carry him through political crises, but he must be on top, and he loves to fight.

The malaria of the present time is the result of the lowered Nordic blood in Europe, drained off in the wars of the past 400 years and thinned out by the industrial life of the past century. The blue-eyed blond Nordic must live well or not at all. The dark round-headed Alpine can adapt himself to factory life as well as to peasant life, increase and, obedient to Nordic government and intellectual progress, form a strong and useful population, but his persistence, his lack of enthusiasm has enabled him to take over little by little the farms and tenements deserted by the less easily satisfied Nordics. The dark, slender, long-headed Mediterranean can adapt himself equally well and will act as a leaven in the mass of Nordics, inclined to stodginess without this quickening influence. But neither of the dark peoples have a constructive political mentality. Lack of vision in the Alpines, too much vision in the Mediterraneans, limits the one to small groups which cannot combine to form an empire (example the Balkans), while the latter, like the Athenians of Saint Paul, are tempted by novel and untried solutions. There is an interesting and enlightening comment on the racial make-up of France and of Germany during the past two hundred years, which explains in a measure the present strained situation.

One guesses that Mr. Stoddard has blue eyes, but he has written a book interesting for all complexions to read and, if they can, to profit by the lines of political conduct which he has clearly indicated.

E. R. Stoever


Although New York has still the first place among American ports, it has lost most of its grain trade to Montreal, the author points out, and if the Great Lakes are connected by canal with the Mississippi, will soon be out-distanced by New Orleans, which might even become the greatest port in the world. He speaks also of Port Arthur, Texas, which holds the third place among American ports; Charleston, which probably has the best natural harbor on the Atlantic seaboard after New York; the Pacific ports, and those on the Great Lakes; and concludes with a description of proposed American waterways, including the Boston to the Gulf canal.

In his discussion of harbor problems he observes that several European ports, notably Marseilles, average 1,500 tons of cargo transhipped over every foot of equipped quay, as compared with only 150 tons per foot in New York harbor.


Professor Sloane visited Morocco and Algeria last year as member of the American Delegation invited by Marshal Lyautey. He writes in the first pages that the procedure of France in North Africa "serves to confirm two doctrines of public law which, if not inaugurated, have at least been sanctioned by the United States: the right of a nation to abate a public nuisance at its door and the denial to any nation or people of tenure in perpetual fee simple of valuable land which is not used by them for the general benefit." And he compares the American attitude in Cuba and regarding the Indian lands with that of France repressing the disorders in Morocco and seizing the "habour" lands in Algeria.

He also refers to the recourse that both France and the United States had to colored troops during the War. In that policy of arraying Turanians against Aryans in war time, says he, both countries have been, as many regret, only too successful.

On several occasions he takes up the race question which France faces in her immense colonial empire nowadays as acutely as the United States does within its continental border. This formula of Marshal Lyautey, "We do not regard or treat the natives as an inferior race, merely as another race," is quoted twice, as if to indicate that the author has adopted it as a key to the problem.

Some parts of the book seem to be mere compilations on historical or administrative questions, others, mere accounts of travel, but a few pages on the work of the Protectorate in Casablanca, which "almost stuns the mind,"—on Marshall Lyautey, and his "tremendous dynamic force," are of greater interest.

The personal and coloured style of the author is noteworthy.

Pierre Denoyer


The more interesting among these essays relate to the Walloon settlers in America, beginning with Jesse de Forest, whose company in its ship "New Netherland" were the first permanent colonists in any number who made homes in New Netherland, and including Peter Minuit, the first of New York governors, Isaac de Rasieres, his secretary, and Jacob Leisler, defender of New York against James II and Louis XIV.

These chapters are preceded by several upon the history of the French Reformation, conspicuous in which were Lefevre, identified with the revival of Biblical studies at the Sorbonne, and Marot, who was equally interested in the introduction of psalm singing.

There are no prerequisites to reading Spender’s book. To have visited the historic spots about which he writes, or to have been in England are not necessary factors to enjoyment. England is in the book; in the word pictures of men and mansions which are so charmingly drawn. But as surely as you read, you will be called toward those places, and toward those dead and silent men whose names speak for them. Wolsey and Hamp-ton Court, Charles Stuart and Whitehall, the Warrior Marlborough and Blenheim... in each chapter you will find yourself living in a different age, living with keen interest.

For it is an interesting book, with a quaint reminiscent atmosphere as though the author were telling his tales from first hand experience. I doubt if Mr. Spender could write a disinterested history, he has too much sympathy and insight into his men and mansions. With an eye for color, he sees the misery and the laughter, the glamour and its pitiful waning, and the ultimate dignity of old monuments and men.

Harriet S. Bailey


This little book is intended for the traveller equipped with a circular ticket from Paris, or the automobilist with a week to spare in exploring this gray but charming part of France. It includes visits to Carnac, where God saved Saint Cornely from a pagan army which pursued him, by turning it to stone; to Plougas-tud with its great calvary and gay gala dresses, seen in all their splendor at the Pardon of St. John on June 24; to Vitré, which is to the North of France what Carcassonne is to the South; to Pont Aven, more frequented by artists than any other place in Brittany; and to that typical sardine fishing village, Douranen. The author explains also the peculiar use made of the statue of Saint Catherine at Guingamp as well as the raison d’être of the lit close.


This is a somewhat indolent person domiciled in Paris is a demoralising book. It makes one want to droop all bread-winning toil and hire to the Midi to follow Mr. Wilsbach’s path through the country of Hannibal, of Charlemagne, and of Roland, through the Pyrenees, and in the ‘wrong’ direction, as the author explains at the outset of his narrative. All tourism and all hotelsisme and chemin-de-ferisme, for that matter, seems to be in collusion to draw the Pyrenéen passenger traffic from west to east, from Biarritz to Perpignan. But Mr. Wilsbach went in from Toulouse and Carcassonne and ended at Biarritz, and as a result had railway compartments and charabancs pretty much to himself.

Except for a predilection for churches, Mr. Wilsbach is a traveller after the heart of the present reviewer. We are not much interested in churches, or in church glass. The finest glass we ever saw was in the First Methodist Church of Warren, Ohio. During drowsy sermons we used to lie on our seven-year-old back on the old rose pew cushion with the sanctified smell that only church cushions seem to get, and study that glass by hour, by the day it seemed then, and it spoiled for us, it proved, all the glass of Europe, which is too cluttered up with lead to let its pretty picture show to best advantage.

But when he is not poking around in some dusty old cathedral Mr. Wilsbach is a charming fellow to go along with. We hurry with him through the tourist-trodden town of Carcassonne and up the valley of the Tet into the mountains themselves and the French Catalan country, and thence by motor diligence over a rough road into that strange little independent mountain commonwealth, Andorra, where office-holding is unpopular because unpaid, and where, when the author wanted to have a look inside the ‘capital’, it was necessary to hunt up the huge key from the jolly woman who charred for the government but who at the moment happened to be doing a washing for one of the few Andorran grandees who could afford to hire washing done.

Along the Pyrenees is a kind of a travel book, full of incident of that sort. We leave Andorra and come to Foix, where Count Gaston Phoebus held forth in feudal days; we ride along the new motor road on the roof of these mountains, with the wheels of the railroad’s motor coach spinning six inches from sheer space; we descend to the country of the troubadors in the central foothills; visit Pau and bathe in the tradition of Henry IV; climb up again to stand in awe of the sublime Cirque de Gavernie, with the river plunging 1385 feet over its icy rim; down to Lourdes to spend a day watching the sick and the crippled seeking the cure of the shrine; and finally to Bayonne to watch a championship match of pelote and to wish that the Pyrenees extended another 250 miles to that Mr. Wilsbach might go on and write about them.

He has a detailed power of observation and a plain narrative style that succeeds in imprisoning much of the “feel” of this romantic region in his pages. And a pleasure is added for the reader in the Larousse relief map of the Pyrenees which the publishers have printed on the inside covers of the volume.

R. F. Wilson

Much that is of intrinsic value has been written on Stevenson, and likewise, much that is neither illuminating nor of great interest. In the collection of essays and brief criticisms contained in this latest volume, "Robert Louis Stevenson, His Work And His Personality," we feel there is a loss and a blankness which have been filled in other pages to our greater satisfaction and advantage. We are not made aware of Stevenson himself, that rich and rare personality, and we feel somehow, that the book has been a dutiful effort on the part of its compilers. Taken separately, many of the articles prove not disappointing, but many also prove dull, and as a whole their color is nondescript and they miss a definite mark.

Harriet S. Bailey


Shelley has been presented to us poetically, biographically, affirmatively and negatively, in essay form and in volume, as a blithe Ariel or as a more somber mystic. Now we are given Shelley psycho-analyzed.

"New truth is only useful to supplement the old; rough truth is only wanted to expand, not destroy." We take these words from Robert Louis Stevenson. They are good words to remember in reading "The Psychology of the Poet Shelley." In the two papers which make up this slim book, Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Barnefield have not spared us new truths. The homogenic tendencies of Shelley, viewed under the microscope of psycho-analysis, take on a pathological aspect. The questions of his inversion and bisexual characteristics are laid open and treated with frankness and careful argument. I do not say that this is a necessary book for the general public, that the majority or readers will gain greatly from its perusal or will realize a deeper insight into Shelley as a poet. But it is an undeniably interesting book, and I believe, would prove of distinct value to those who are earnestly and thoughtfully concerned with the progress and experiments of present-day psychology.

Harriet S. Bailey


Lady Frazer, in this collection of extracts from the work of Sir J. G. Frazer, has put all young people between the ages of twelve and sixteen greatly in her debt. She has culled legends and folk-lore which will delight the young adventurer, and perhaps will lure him on to further discoveries in future years. Lady Frazer in her preface says, "I do not wish to teach, my aim is to amuse, to please." I think we can safely claim that she has charmingly accomplished her purpose; but with the added virtue of imparting knowledge in a delightful and not too erudite manner.

Harriet S. Bailey


While writing with the direct purpose of portraying the souls of other people, Mr. Bradford has perhaps unconsciously given us a glimpse of himself. Through subtle suggestions and brief, magnetic passages, we sometimes look beyond the subject which is held before our eyes, and see the author. He does not encroach upon his Keats or Voltaire or Flaubert, but by sympathy and a kind of whimsical understanding, he shows that he has done all that human mind can do to entrap the shy, rare stuff of souls, and in so doing, has tangled a bit of himself between the lines. It may be this personal touch gives the book its altogether delightful flavor, for we feel that whatever subject Mr. Bradford might choose, were it souls or cabbages and kings, he could never be commonplace. In this case, he has taken the most unveiling of all confessions... personal letters... and with skilful hands reconstructed the men behind the outpourings of their souls. A book to be read for a larger appreciation of Voltaire, Keats, Flaubert, and the few other men of letters of whom it treats, but also to be read for the pleasure and richness of Mr. Bedford's own personality.

Harriet S. Bailey


Mr. Steed, who served as foreign correspondent of the Times at Berlin, Rome and Vienna, and was later director for European politics of the London Times till 1922, has just published the account of his career, "Through Thirty Years," which includes the time spent in study at Berlin and Paris. This work is at once a very racy account of the adventures of an exceedingly intelligent and observing journalist, and a document of first importance for the history of 20th century European politics. Thanks to the influence and wealth of the Times, the author found himself in exceptionally favorable conditions for making practical
use of the talents with which he was endowed, and he was fortunate enough to be able to look behind the scenes of foreign politics in Central Europe.

From the beginning of his career in Rome he was the confidant of Visconti Venosta, the veteran of Italian foreign politics, and was the means of bringing Chamberlain and Sonnino together. In Vienna he was the friend of the leaders of the Slav national party, of Mazzaryk, leader of one of the Czech parties in Prague, of Count Dzieduszeki, leader of the Galician Poles, and of the Croatians Supilo and Trumbitsch. He was employed as a friendly intermediary between the Austrian and Italian governments, and was the advisor of King Edward VII during his annual cure at Marienbad, being consulted by the King as to what course to hold in Austria. Afterwards he was the confidant of Colonel House, President Wilson's counsellor, during the Peace Conference.

He received the confidences of the actors in the tragedy which paved the way for the catastrophe, he himself at times playing an important role. As a result of his conversations with Edward VII, Clemenceau and Charles of Roumania concerning the danger of a European war, he was sufficiently warned to rouse British public opinion at the decisive moment. The scope of his activities increased during the war, and he collaborated with the national leaders Mazzaryk, Benes and Trumbitsch in the creation of the new States of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. He was also director of propaganda among the Slav and Roumanian soldiers employed in defensive preparations for the Austrian army on the Italian front.

Of all that he has seen and all that he has done his narrative gives an impression both vivid and accurate. There is not a page which does not contain a shrewd thought or instructive fact. His work presents a case rare in history. Generally the most interesting narratives are the least instructive documents, because the details which render them pleasant to read are drawn from the author's imagination. Two notable examples are furnished by the Memoirs of Marbot and those of Cardinal de Retz. But here the solidity of the document is guaranteed by the character of the author, an intelligent observer and sincere narrator, by his training in historical matters, which taught him to note down his observations at once and follow his notes when writing his narrative. It is guaranteed also by his profession of journalist, by which he learned to date his facts exactly. The charm of the narrative is not achieved by dramatic or picturesque devices; on the contrary, he keeps to a direct and familiar style, unhampered by rhetorical or diplomatic precautions, and lightened by flashes of humor. He is consistently accurate, and displays a keen insight into sentiments and hidden motives.

It is impossible to convey the charm of Mr. Steed's book by quoting extracts; it must be read in its entirety. The British public has given this work a great welcome, and the success of the French translation should be the same, for its subject matter concerns France as much as England.

Charles Seignobos


This volume by the former Prime Minister of Italy continues his attacks made upon the Treaty of Versailles in his previous works entitled "Peaceless Europe" and "The Decadence of Europe". No other representative of the Allied Powers, past or present, has so openly attacked the general territorial awards incorporated in the Versailles Treaty and the reparations imposed upon Germany. In keeping with basic historical revelations he recognizes that Germany's guilt in bringing on the war is not established, and that a severe peace has no justification. At times, like most Italian writers, M. Nitti uses vague and sweeping generalizations that are not based upon fact. The underlying thesis that the "French iron lords", "Poincare's policy", and the general policy in the Saar and the Ruhr "make a desert", however, is certainly provocative of thought.


Every good Bostonian is brought up from the cradle on the traditions of Boston, and so, although this book may belong peculiarly to the atmosphere of that city, I believe it is the stranger who will reap the greatest benefit from reading "Old Boston Days and Ways". It is a valuable guide, written without the irritating "I-know-it-all" mannerisms of the ordinary guide book. One of the most interesting chapters contains extracts from "New Travels in the United States of America", by the Frenchman, Jean Pierre Brisset de Warville, which give very vivid pictures of old Boston in the days immediately following the American Revolution. Indeed, every chapter abounds in interest and in those little intimate details which are the charming and most faithful recorders of the past. I would recommend this book to anyone who is going to Boston, because it would give him an intelligent point of view, and to anyone who is not planning to go to Boston, because it might persuade him to change his mind.

H. S. Bailey

"The Dark Cloud" is the story of a young English lad of tender age and sensibility—by an author of tender age. Mr. Boyd is said to have written a book when he wrote "Through the Wheat". "The Dark Cloud" is strikingly in one or two paragraphs and the cover design, neither perhaps notable except in comparison with the rest.

The story is one of adventure, especially as reflected upon the mind of the seventeen-year old Hugh Turner, romantic by nature, calvinistic by training, and inferior by complex—of adventure in the wide plains and waterways of our young and vigorous nation, of the underground railway, of bar-room brawls and hairbreadth escapes, of shipwrecks and crinolines, of the Quebec fire and a sky "like fresh rose-petals". The story begins in Quebec where the hero runs away from the English ship where he served as cabin boy. Down the St. Lawrence to Detroit, across country to Cincinnati, and then up and down the Mississippi in a river steamer makes the physical itinerary of Hugh's adventure. The dark cloud is symbolical of self-distrust, of indecision and discouragement; the passing of the cloud is Hugh's winning of self-confidence. The conception of the scope of the plot, is a good one; but the execution has not made it convincing. It is, however, solely an American novel, and there is little imitation in it. That is perhaps its best point, tho the adjective is of uncertain connotation.

Elizabeth S. Mann

A list of the one hundred books of fiction ranking highest in the lists of best sellers between 1900 and 1925 is published in the Publisher's Weekly, February 14. In this list Sinclair Lewis's "Main Street" is first.

A list of novels with characters based on real persons, compiled by Earle F. Walbridge, is printed in the Publisher's Weekly, February 7, under the title "Romans à Clef".

In the Times Review of the Year 1924 the following are noted as the best works of fiction: Galsworthy's "The White Monkey"; Masefield's "Sard Harker"; E. M. Forster's "A Passage to India"; and Miss Margaret Kennedy's "The Constant Nymph".

"The Letters of Archie Butt, personal aide to President Roosevelt", edited by Laurence F. Abbott (Doubleday), is described in the New York Evening Post Literary Review as the most human book ever written about Roosevelt.

A list of recent books is as follows: "The Dark Cloud", by Thomas Boyd; "Romans à Clef", compiled by Earle F. Walbridge; "The Conception of the Scope of the Plot", Elizabeth S. Mann; "The Best Biography of Shelley", according to a writer in the International Book Review, is that by Dowden.

Of James M. Beck's "The Constitution of the United States" (Doran), J. St. Loe Strachey says, "His exposition leaves little to be desired. The things that matter most in a book are lucidity and the awakening of interest and the stimulation of the mind, and in this volume we get all three."

"Our City—New York: a textbook in city government", written by High School students of New York City under the supervision of Frank A. Rexford (Allen & Bacon) is a collection of the best essays on the different branches of municipal service which were written by the students during the year 1923. Among the numerous interesting illustrations is a cross section of the Washington Irving High School, showing the various educational and recreational activities that are carried on in a typical American High School.

The "imaginary" portraits one could dispense with quite easily. Unfortunately, the personalities here recorded are more real than imaginary, and are the kind of people who do not make very much difference in the world, one way or another, so it might seem unnecessary to read about them. The author has treated them with a biting unkindness which seems far more than their due, for after all, why waste unkindness on mediocre sinners? Also, Mr. Boyd might sometimes be suspected of chasing the ludicrous, with the embarrassing result that he catches an elephant in a not meant specifically for butterflies.

The "real" portraits, however, savour of keen observation and a catholicism which is more worthy of the author and his characters. Brief, natural little sketches of contemporary writers, they leave the reader with a definite impression of each subject, and a feeling that Mr. Boyd is more at ease with living models than with the mechanical puppets he labels "imaginary", always with his tongue in his cheek. H. L. Mencken, James Branch Cabell, William Butler Yeats and George W. Russell (A.E.) are among the personalities the author has chosen to present, and we find very human portraits, drawn from life, and giving the color and insight that is possible under the pen of an intimate commentator.

H. S. Bailey

The best biography of Shelley, according to a writer in the International Book Review, is that by Dowden.

Of James M. Beck's "The Constitution of the United States" (Doran), J. St. Loe Strachey says, "His exposition leaves little to be desired. The things that matter most in a book are lucidity and the awakening of interest and the stimulation of the mind, and in this volume we get all three."

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New Books Added to the American Library

Any of the following books, excepting those which are starred, may be borrowed by members of the American Library in any part of Europe, and requests for them will be filled in the order in which they are received. They may be purchased from the booksellers who advertise in Ex Libris.

POLITICS AND ECONOMICS


RUKEYSER, MERRYLE STANLEY. Common Sense of Money and Investments. Simon & Schuster. 1924.


LITERATURE


FICTION


LAURIE, MAXWELL. Shameless Innocent. London. Werner Laurie. 1924.


WELLS, CAROLYN. More Lives Than One. Hutchinson. 1924.

MISCELLANEOUS

BROWN, ELMER ELLSWORTH. The Making of our Middle Schools; an Account of the Development of Secondary Education in the U.S. New York. Longmans Green & Co. 1924.
MELVILLE, LEWIS. 'Lady Suffolk and Her Circle. London. Hutchinson. 1924.
PICHON, LÉON. The New Book-Illustration in France. London. The Studio Ltd. 1924.
SANTAYANA, GEORGE. The Life of Reason or the Phases of Human Progress. 2d ed. with a new Preface. New York. Chas. Scribner’s Sons. 1924. 5 vols.
SKINNER, OTIS. Footlights and Spotlights, Recollections of my Life on the Stage. Indianapolis. Bobbs Merrill Co. 1924.

FRENCH

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A Selected List of New French Books

FICTION


The latest book by this popular novelist, author of "Le Lac Sale", is probably his best. It is not only a vivid tale of life in the Near East, but at the same time an excellent description of the activities of the Zionist Movement.


A first novel by a very young author, dealing with student life in Paris. Excellent from every point of view. (Prix des Amis des Lettres Françaises, 1924).


Short psychological stories, a number of which rank among this Academician’s best writings.


A brilliant yet bitter study of a man of science, absorbed in his work, who in spite of the fact that he is happily married, forms an attachment for another woman.


Tender and fresh recollections of childhood in fictional form, by the author of “Emile et les Autres”. (Prix Femina-Vie Heureuse, 1924).


M. Larrouy, author of “Odysée d’un Transport Torpillé” (Prix Femina-Vie Heureuse, 1917) here gives us another admirable romance of the sea.

NON FICTION


A remarkable treatise dealing with the influence of French thought in America and Europe.


Recollections by this great painter of the years just before, during, and after the World War, when he was director of the School of Rome.


Poems of extraordinary beauty, dealing with life and nature (Grand Prix Lasserre, 1924).


A magnificent prose-poem, by the author of “Paradis à l’ombre des Épées”.


A profound analysis of present day moral, psychological, social and political conditions, by one of the editorial writers of the Figaro.


M. Rostand, son of the author of “Cyrano de Bergerac”, in these essays shows himself to be a shrewd ironic observer of modern society.


This is the authorized biography of the great actress.

Of Booth Tarkington’s thirteen favorite authors, according to Asa Don Dickinson, no less than four are Frenchmen: Cherbuliez, Daudet, Balzac, and Dumas. Mr. Dickinson also notes that Tarkington reads more autobiography, preferably French, than anything else.

Léon Bazalgette’s, “Henry Thoreau”, translated by Van Wyck Brooks (Harcourt), is described by Theodore Stanton as one of the best of recent American publications. “It would”, he says, “make a fine campaign document for the future Progressive Party, if we are to have one.”
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"Notes on the Writings of James Howell", by Professor William Harvey Vann of Baylor College, is intended not only for students of seventeenth century prose, but also for readers who have enjoyed Howell's "Letters" and, perhaps, also his "Instructions for Foreign Travel", and want to know more about his other writings. Thackeray described Montaigne and Howell's "Letters" as his bedside books.

In speaking of Christopher Morley's "Chimney-smoke", E.V. Lucas says, "Here he is established without a rival on his own ground, as the poet of the home". On the other hand, the author of the little brochure descriptive of Morley's writings, published by Doubleday Page and Co., believes that he is more widely known for his essays, "Shandy-gaff", "Mince Pie", and other works.

The Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres", 95, Boulevard Raspail, which has already published a collection of Greek and Latin authors in French translations under the patronage of the Association Guillaume Budé, is about to undertake the publication of translations of the best modern authors. Among the first of these will be the writings of Shakespeare, hitherto published by Dent et fils.

Brigadier-General John H. Morgan, author of "John Viscount Morley" (Murray) has an article entitled "More Light on Lord Morley" in the North American Review for March. Morley, he says, looked upon his "Life of Gladstone" as the only book of his which would live. He, however, believes that his little book on Burke will remain a classic, and also his essay on "Compromise".

Robert Herrick's "Waste" is the most effective inquest into the aims and ideals of contemporary civilization which we have, Johan J. Smertenko says in an article on "The Novel of Inquest" in the Nation for February 25.

"The Life of Lord Wolsey", by Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice (Heinemann), contains very little about Lord Wolsey's early career or private life, both being already covered by his autobiography and "The Letters of Lord and Lady Wolsey". It is devoted rather to his public career.

"An Anthology of the Modernista Movement in Spanish America", compiled by Professor Alfred Coester of Stanford University (Ginn & Co.), is useful as an introduction not only to contemporary Latin-American literature, but also to contemporary Latin-American Life. "Lyric poetry is the Spanish-American's natural mode of self-expression", the compiler says, as the novel or short story is the Anglo-American's. This is the first book to make the work of the modernista poets readily accessible to students in the United States.

George Moore's "Hail and Farewell" is described by The Spectator as his most agreeable and most important piece of work.

The Benson medals of the Royal Society of Literature have been awarded to Gordon Bottomley and George Santayana in recognition of their eminent services to literature. Professor Santayana is the author of "The Life of Reason", "Character and Opinion in the United States", and other works.

The gold medal of the National Institute of Arts and Letters has been awarded to Edith Wharton, author of "Old New York", "The Age of Innocence" and other novels. Mrs. Wharton is the first woman to whom the award has been made.

"Dumping: a Problem in International Trade", by Jacob Viner of the University of Chicago, (University of Chicago Press), is a careful study of the prevalence of dumping, particularly since 1890, its economic effects, its relation to the question of unfair competition, and available methods of controlling its abuses.

In a foreword to Mrs. May Lamberton Becker's "Reader's Guide Book" (Holt) Henry Seidel Canby says of the author, "She differs from the retailers of information that have always served the press in columns of question and answer, first, in breadth of knowledge, next, in accuracy, third, and most important, in a personal touch in criticism and comment which makes her guides as suggestive as they are instructive". It contains in addition to a hundred other things, notes on books in French for little children, on French literature, and on French life.
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AMERICAN

American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, March: Giant Power; Large Scale Electrical Development as a Social Factor.
The Dial, April: Dr. Freud on Art, Clive Bell. On Self-Government, G. Santayana.
— April: American Fascism, Duncan Aikman. Portrait of Louis XVI, Philip Guedella.
The Living Age, March 14: Europe drifting Backward, Georg Brandes.
— March 28: An hour with Arnold Bennett, Frédéric Lefèvre.
Survey Graphic Number, March: Negro Art and C. Barnes.

BRITISH

Foreign Affairs, London, April: The Present Position of Minorities in Europe, Dr. Wilhelm Medinger.
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Nineteenth Century, April: President Ebert and Hjalmar Branting, Ramsay MacDonald. Poland and Dantzig: The Case If Poland, Ludwig Ehrlich.

FRENCH

Aesculape, Mars: La Peau, dans l'Art, les Sciences, Médicales, l'Histoire, et la Littérature (Numéro Spécial).

Le Correspondant, 10 Mars: La Tragique Histoire de Charles Ier, Testis. La Politique Romaine, la France et le Saint Siège, Pierre de Quirière. Lettres inédites d'Alfred de Vigny à la Duchesse de Maillé, Comte de Luppé.


Mercure de France, 1er Mars: Considérations sur l'Art Classique, Emile Bernard. La grande pitié des Chaires de Langue d'Oc en France, Frédéric Mistral neveu.

— 15 Mars: La Réaction Parnassienne et le Renouveau de la Fantaisie, John Charpentier.

Revue Mondiale, 1er Mars: L'utile contact entre Paris et Moscou, Jules Moch. Lucien Bonaparte et le Cardinal Fesch (documents inédits), Serge Fleury.

— 15 Mars: La vraie Situation en Syrie, par un Témoin.


La Revue de Paris, 1er Mars: Le Comte de Saint-Simon, Henry de Jouvenel. La Mer Rouge à travers les âges, A. Kammerer.


Revue Universelle, 1er Mars: Un homme, Jean de Plessis de Greendedan, René Bazin.


In a review of Sinclair Lewis's "Arrowsmith" (Harcourt) Carl van Doren says, "So far as substance goes, the book marks the same advance upon 'Babbitt' as 'Babbitt' marked upon 'Main Street'."

In an article on "Amy Lowell and the Art of Poetry" in the North American Review for March, Archibald MacLeish describes "Legends" as her best book and as one of the great books of American poetry.

James Lane Allen, who died February 18, was the author of "The Choir Invisible", "The Kentucky Cardinal", "The Flute and Violin" and other Kentucky tales. The first of these is his best known work.

The Bookman quotes Jesse Weik as saying that more books have been written and published concerning Abraham Lincoln than any other historical personage except Napoleon.