

NEW BOOKS SEEN THROUGH REVIEWS AND COMMENT

WEEK'S FICTION AND NON-FICTION RANGE OVER MANY THEMES

Mr. Comfort's Extraordinary Book of Confession—Review of a Conrad Sea Story.

Sad Russian Stories—Other Fiction With Unpleasant Themes—Galileo in English—Who's Who.

Seasonable European Guides—Volumes on Politics, Feminism, Business and Other Subjects.

It is an extraordinary book that will Livingston Comfort has written in "Midstream" (George H. Doran Company), a confession as outspoken as that of Joan Jacques Rousseau, and one, we are inclined to think, that should never have been made in print. Having reached that middle point in the Biblical three-score years and ten, when Dante started to investigate his Hell, Mr. Comfort turns to look back on the Hell he has passed through. That he is sincere in his self-analysis there can be no doubt; neither can it be doubted that he hopes to do good by it, even if it be only in explaining himself. Most men have made confessions of this sort to themselves in time of dejection, and most men have seen the unfairness of these self-accusations when their normal condition returned. It may be regretted that the woman who made a lasting impression on Mr. Comfort by telling him to stop trying to himself did not go further and tell him to stop thinking about himself.

We prefer not to touch on his boyhood, for we feel on unsafe ground there. Mr. Comfort looks on it from the judgment seat of mature years and considers his iniquities only, with no heed of the brighter side. He seems harsh too in his judgments on his relatives, telling only of the points of friction. He tells us that the craving for drink was hereditary in him, that he brought up in a druggist's home and that he himself was a habitual drunkard till he was 30. Then he was subjected to a cure which has preserved him so far. He was engaged in newspaper work and was unable to hold positions long, partly on account of his falling and partly too, it seems, from incompetence. That is a pitifully common story, not only among newspaper men but in every profession and in every business. We cannot see that Mr. Comfort's experience throws much light on the matter. Neither does his success as a story writer prove anything as to his being a good or a bad reporter.

He values individuality highly and justly, but there are places where it is in the way, as in the United States army in the war with Spain and apparently whips in his insubordination. He fairly whimpers about the treatment of the men before they were sent to the front, and is evidently proud of his discreditable conduct in Porto Rico, where his American spirit would not allow him to obey his superior officers. Later in the Philippines he did a brilliant piece of work in getting to Manila first with the news of Gen. Lawton's death, but he certainly failed as a newspaper man in sending his story in such a shape that it could not be understood at the office.

Mr. Comfort finally found a place and a mode of expression for the experiences he had had in the stories he wrote. In these what he saw and understood stand out clearly and vividly; that is what makes people read them. The philosophy of life he has drawn from them is his own; we have been unable to understand it in this book. It accounts for the weak places in his novels. The process of introspection is good for Mr. Comfort artistically. It detracts from the value of this confession. It makes the last chapters read like the talk of a patient who cannot stop harping on his symptoms. There is the lesson of pluck fighting against odds to be drawn from the confession, but that hardly warrants its publication. It is an amazing indiscretion.

SOME NEW FICTION

The collection of "Stories from Russian Life," by Anton Tchekoff, which Marjorie Pell has translated (Charles Scribner's Sons), are fragments of reality rather than fiction. The author has the gift of holding the reader's attention to the phase of life that interests him and of impressing him with its importance, insignificant though the incident may seem on the surface. Some of the tales are poetic, some have the form of humor, but all are saddening and full of hopelessness. That is the required stamp for modern Russian literature, though we imagine that even in Russia and even among the Russian poor there are plenty of people who lead a normally cheerful life and who go about their business as most people do in other parts of the world. The Russian writers will not look at these, however. It may be that those who can read them only in translations would suspect them of not being genuine Russians if they did.

An early book of Joseph Conrad's, published in this country under the more appropriate title "The Children of the Sea," is reissued under the original title, "The Nigger of the Narcissus" (Doubleday, Page and Company). It is the story of the voyage from Bombay to London of a sailing vessel, the sort of work in which the author is at his best, and more particularly of the trouble caused in a decent ship's company by a disreputable sea lawyer and a malingering negro.

The first portion of Howard Vincent O'Brien's "New Men for Old" (Mitchell Kennerley, New York) is interesting so long as the author depicts the predicament of his hero, an idler who has enjoyed life in Europe, when forced to earn a livelihood in Chicago. His rapid advancement and his growing understanding of the young woman he admires do not go beyond the possibilities of fiction, and the comparisons of some American peculiarities with those of Europe are sensible. His experiences with labor problems, while they detract from the interest of the tale, are described with less vehemence than appears in ordinary magazine articles that deal with them. Only an oversensitive publisher could have refused the book on that account.

The successive adventures of a valuable jewel while it is being conveyed out of New Guinea are related by Beatrice Grimshaw in "The Sorcerer's Stone" (The John A. Winston Company, Philadelphia). The dangers are of the peculiarly horrible kind found in the au-

thor's New Guinea, but are relieved by the comical behavior of a stout Frenchman who reads dance poems. The stories are readable and exciting enough, but Miss Grimshaw has done far better work.

Whether the anthropologist in R. Austin Freeman's "The Uttermost Farthing" (The John A. Winston Company) is insane or not matters little. After his wife has been killed by a burglar he indulges in the pleasant pastime of hunting and murdering criminals and mounting their skeletons in his collection. There is a certain amount of monotony in this pursuit until he stumbles on the man he has been after and avenges his wife. It is an ingenious variation on the detective story which will entertain readers who are sufficiently bloodthirsty.

To the many methods of breaking the bank at Monte Carlo Guy Thorne in "Chance in Chains" (Sturgis and Walton Company) adds control of the roulette ball by electricity. The scientific part of the story is pretty dull and the tale is not much more than a skeleton, but the adventure in the fog is very well done.

A further step in the atrocity of "novelizing" plays is taken by "A Popular Novelist," who turns "The Merchant of Venice" into a novel and apparently intends to do the same with the other plays of Shakespeare. Charles and Mary Lamb, to be sure, thought it desirable to entice children to read Shakespeare later by telling them the stories, and less capable pedagogues have imitated them. The assumption, however, that modern readers can only read novels and must have Shakespeare written down to the level of this production is decidedly novel.

A TRANSLATION OF GALILEO

One of those books which publishing houses print simply for honor, as they can have little hopes of profit from them, is issued by the Macmillan Company, "Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences," by Galileo Galilei, translated by Henry Crew and Alfonso de Savio, a handsome quarto. In this one volume, the translator states Galileo seems to have gathered during his last years practically all that is of value, either to the engineer or the physicist. And in it the specialist may discover whether and in what degree he anticipated the discoveries of the nineteenth century. The "Dialogues" were translated into English in 1665 by Thomas Salusbury, but most of the copies were destroyed, probably in the great fire of London. Even the British Museum copy is imperfect. Another translation made by Thomas Weston in 1730 is scarce and not good. The present translation is made by two instructors in the Northwestern University at Evanston, Ill., with great conscientiousness and with a knowledge of modern scientific terms. It does credit to American scholarship.

THE NEW WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA

From the beginning "Who's Who in America" has proved an indispensable book of reference, and with its successive improvements has far outstripped its English model in the breadth of the field it covers and in the importance of the facts it supplies. The appearance of the eighth issue, for 1914-15, has been awaited with some impatience; in spite of the difficulties attending the undertaking it is to be hoped that the publishers may see their way to making the publication annual.

The number of pages in "Who's Who in America," edited by Albert Nelson Marquis (A. N. Marquis and Company, Chicago) has increased to 2,920, as compared with the 827 of the first edition, and the number of biographies to 21,459, as compared to 8,602. There are 4,426 new notices, making an increase over the last previous edition, after deduction is made of those who have died or have been eliminated for other rea-

sons, of 2,665 sketches. A certain proportion of the increase is due to the change of administration and the consequent changes in important political offices.

It has been found necessary to limit the references in the case of names that are dropped to the last volume only, a change that is to be regretted, though the necessity for saving space is obvious. As it is, by the use of this paper the volume is fully as handy and not perceptibly larger than its predecessor. The place index is retained and the interesting summary of educational statistics, "Who's Who" has held faithfully to its high standard of accuracy and comprehensiveness, and this eighth volume takes its place worthily with its predecessors in the reference library.

GUIDES TO EUROPE

Impressionistic sketches of night life in European cities combined with recommendations of particular resorts will be found in "Europe After 8:15" (John Lane Company), the product of three authors, H. L. Mencken, George Jean Nathan and Willard Huntington Wright. The cities they inspect are Vienna, Munich, Berlin, Paris and London. Their scorn for the show places to which guides lead American trippers is amusing, considering that the places they recommend as more really bohemian and more truly reflecting national life are those usually frequented by Americans who make a more prolonged stay in those cities. There seems to be little to choose between the philistinism of the American who rushes through Europe with a party and that of the youth who dawdles in the Latin quarter and its equivalents to acquire the local color of art or literature.

The selection of statues made by Lordine Munsen Bryant in "What Sculpture to See in Europe" (John Lane Company) is respectable enough to be useful to a more highly educated public than she seems to have in mind. With the statues she thinks it necessary to tell the story of the subject; for instance, with Hercules she recites the tale of his twelve labors. The museums she visits are in Naples, Rome, Florence, Venice, Munich, Berlin, Paris and London, a sort of standard itinerary. The book is illustrated with pictures of nearly all the statues described.

In his two latest "New Guides to Old Masters" (Charles Scribner's Sons) Prof. John A. Van Dyke seems to be getting a trifle hypercritical. The "Berlin, Dresden" surveys the Kaiser Friedrich museum carefully enough, but why should the Dresden collection be treated so cavalierly? If it is visited by more travelers that does not affect the quality of the pictures. And so long as he does go to Dresden he might help out those who know less than he does through the dozens of Tenter pictures, the "Hell," "Devil" and other Breughels, and might mention the Wouvermanns who painted the miles of pictures they will see there. What if the "Holbein Madonna" is a replica? Should not the visitor be told a little about it? The "Munich, Frankfurt, Casen" is needed for the sake of completeness, and it is fair enough for the author to restrict himself in the first city to the old Pinacothek; when the traveler takes the trouble to visit the smaller galleries, however, it seems as though the author might stretch a point and tell of all the good pictures to be found in them.

QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

An interesting and fair minded account of the working of the United States Supreme Court and, to a lesser degree, of other courts in cases involving matters about which political parties have differed has been written by Dr. William Bennett Bizzell in "Judicial Interpretation of Political Theory" (G. P. Putnam's Sons). For the period after the civil war he traces separately the history in the courts of each disputed question, a method that facilitates reference for the matters which are still unsettled and are the subject of party differences.

The lectures on the Monroe Doctrine and the observation of treaties delivered before the New York Peace Society by the Hon. William H. Taft and later printed in the Independent have been gathered into a volume entitled "The United States and Peace" (Charles Scribner's Sons). They are timely as expressions of the late President's views on the present difficulties.

His present station at a critical point is the occasion for the reissue of Brig.-Gen. Frederick Funston's "Memories of Two Wars" (Charles Scribner's Sons), no history, but a capital story of per-

LONG AND DARKSOME THIS STORY OF DOOM

look for retribution on their maimed and scarred lives. Through the night the creaking of the sign without was as the rattling of Death's skeleton keys." It was after Richard Strang, the young fisherman, had married the Macmillan girl and the pair had gone to live in the old inn that we read of the doom.

Four years ago, Strang was "blissome white as milk" red as the dawn, with an eye for mirth, but she was subject to the terrors of the Scotch imagination. In the Ghost Inn she wound her arms fearfully about her husband's neck. "Oh, Dick! Dick!" she cried, "you love me, don't you? Tell me again that you do. Our love must keep the doom at bay." We should his hardy answer, "Doom be blawed," he said, "it's as dead as a red herring." Nevertheless when little Gillespie was born he had a distinct and poignant sense of the doom. A wall "borne down upon the wind of time out of an inimical midnight past and passing beneath the heavens like an arrow of God struck unerringly into his heart as he stood listening to the scurry of the wind rapping the rusty dagger overhead. With every swing of the drunkard's sign the dagger was plunged downward with a snarl." Little Gillespie grew up to be a hateful miser and oppressor. The story draws shocking pictures of the things he did.

The domestic life of Gillespie and his wife Morag is related with a detail that is startling. Morag was sensual. She became a drunkard, and worse. Eoghan, the very sensitive son of the pair, was overwhelmed by his feelings of shame. Page after page describes the drunken state of the mother and the wild despair of the son. Morag was insane when she cut Eoghan's throat with a razor. There are 600 pages in the story. The doom fills them. They are very dark and dreadful.

FLAGG'S GALLERY OF CELEBRITIES



No. 4—Julian Street. Mr. Street's series of articles on the varying temperaments of American cities, now appearing in Collier's Weekly, will be issued in book form by The Century Company.

sonal adventure. Gen. Funston simply relates the feats that won him distinction, the filibustering expedition at the beginning of the Cuban insurrection, and the fighting in the Philippines in which he engaged, with the capture of Aguinaldo.

The Scandinavian success, having decided that it is woman's business to rear the child, undertakes to improve upon nature and custom in "The Renaissance of Motherhood," by Ellen Key (G. P. Putnam's Sons). The expectant mother is to take a course of study of one or more years to provide her with ideas about her own physiology and psychology, about the proper scientific care of the babe before and after birth, and about other things that may be useful. This is after the analogy of cooking and home management schools. All preparatory to a beautiful, efficient, aseptic, unemotional world, devoted to teaching its grandmothers in the proper conduct of life.

The various addresses and magazine articles on corporations and labor questions delivered by Louis D. Brandeis in recent years are collected in a volume entitled "Business—a Profession" (Small, Maynard and Company, Boston). An appreciative sketch of Mr. Brandeis's career is prefixed.

To the superabundant literature on the subject Logan Marshall adds his "The Story of the Panama Canal" (The John A. Winston Company). He gives the usual accounts of the early history of the isthmus, of the earlier canal projects, of the railroad and of the De Lesseps undertaking, before entering on the story and the description of the present canal. He adds a forecast of its probable usefulness, and in appendices gives accounts of the working of other canal systems.

OTHER BOOKS

An appreciation rather than a sketch of a luckless American landscape painter, whose pictures are now being sought by collectors, has been written by Elliott Daingerfield in "Ralph Albert Blakecock" (Privately printed by Frederic Fairchild Shearman). Blakecock was a contemporary of Inness and Homer Martin, but was wholly self-taught. He painted away with no encouragement in great poverty till he went insane and was confined in a sanitarium, where, we understand, he is still alive. It was only then that his pictures began to be sought for. Mr. Daingerfield has discovered singularly few incidents of his life and is obliged to guess at the influences which may have guided him. He reproduces a number of his pictures and describes and criticises them in the text.

Though art may be young in Canada, patriotism sees to it that no manifestation of it is unrecorded. In "The Year Book of Canadian Art, 1914," compiled by the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto (J. M. Dent and Sons, London) we have the record of what was done in that year not only in Toronto, Montreal and Quebec but in Winnipeg and Saskatchewan in the lines of literature, music, painting, sculpture and architecture; a record that may seem provincial and rather feeble for the time being, but that here and there, particularly in literature and architecture, gives promise of the greater things that Canadians hope for.

The satire on society and especially on woman in rather mystic prose and decidedly bad verse of Richard Clough Anderson's "Antisocial in Social Captivity" (Stewart and Kidd Company, Cincinnati) is helped out with clever colored pictures of the fashion plate order. It may be that the author's acquaintances have the key to his humor; to the ordinary reader it must seem pretty weak.

amusements will be found in Lillian Pascal Day's "Social Entertainments" (Moffat, Yard and Company) with directions for putting them into execution. The arrangement follows the order of the calendar from January to December.

A collection of jests and anecdotes, relating to vaudeville performers or perhaps tried unsuccessfully on the stage, will be found in Will M. Cressy's "Continuous Vaudeville" (Richard G. Badger, Boston). In a whole volume of jokes some will be found that are funny; the majority, however, will sadden the reader.

The "Trolley Trips Through New England" for 1914 (The Trolley Press, Hartford, Conn.) has enlarged its pages, which permits clearer maps. It is a convenient guide, but might be improved by more copious time tables and indications of connections.

A review of the whole field of "Medical Research and Education" will be found in a collection of articles published by the Science Press, New York. The series opens with a history of research in medicine by Dr. R. M. Pearce of the University of Pennsylvania. This is followed by a multitude of articles on many aspects of medical education by the most distinguished professors at Johns Hopkins, Harvard, the Rockefeller Institute and the chief medical schools in the West and the East.

A collection of jokes, more or less funny and of varying degrees of antiquity, each fathered on some person who is prominent in the newspapers for the moment, will be found in "Anecdotes of the Hour" (Hearst's International Library Company). The humor is fully up to the joke book average.

Dr. Brandeis's Short Visit. Dr. George Brandeis, the distinguished critic of literature, was among the passengers on the Vaterland, the new Hamburg-American liner, which arrived here last week on its maiden voyage. He will be in this country probably less than two weeks, during which time he will deliver several lectures. Dr. Brandeis recently received a tremendous ovation when he visited London, the committee arranging the banquet given him being composed of Sidney Lee, William Archer, J. M. Barrie, John Galsworthy, Edmund Gosse, John Masserfield, C. Bradley and Walter Raleigh.

Books Received. "Turkish Memories," Sidney Whitman (Charles Scribner's Sons). "A Wanderer's Trail," A. Loton Ridger (Henry Holt and Company). "The Changing Order," George W. Wickstram (G. P. Putnam's Sons). "Irish Literary and Musical Studies," Alfred Percival Graves (Charles Scribner's Sons). "The Problems of Psychological Research," Harvard Cartwright (W. Ruckey and Company, New York). "New Science," Michael Monaghan (Mitchell Kennerley, New York). "At the Sign of the Van," Michael Monaghan (Mitchell Kennerley). "Nurses for Our Neighbors," Alfred W. Weller, M. D. (Houghton Mifflin Company). "The Monroe Doctrine and Moments Law," Charles Francis Adams (Houghton Mifflin Company). "Within Reach Walks," Thomas Mott Osborne. (Appleton's).

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Books are a relief in the summer. Books are companions that you can take up or put away according to the mood. Vacation days should be days of relief and change, and the right books to read are as important in the selection as your companions. In making selections for summer reading it is fitting that we should have the assistance or guidance of those who know, and consequently it will be of great use now to read the literary columns and the advertisements of the publishers of books in the 1914 Summer Reading Number of the New York Sun, to be issued Saturday, June 13th.

A somewhat ingenious argument for