SOME NEW BOOKS.

Dramas of Russian Life.

The main difficulty in understanding the Russian character is summed up concisely by ANTON TCHEKOFF in the second series of Plays (Scribners). "Why," says *Vershinin* in the play of the "Three Sisters," "why is a Russian sick of his children; sick of his wife? We Russians are extremely gifted in the direction of thinking on an exalted plane; but, tell me, why do we aim so low in real life? Why?" It is precisely this terrible divorce between the intellect and the will which makes Russian literature really more foreign to the Anglo-Saxon mind than even Japanese literature of the twelfth century. We can better understand the hero of a Japanese novel who solves the everlasting triangular complication by marrying both the ladies at once, to the complete satisfaction of both, than we can understand the never ceasing eloquence of the Russian, ending in nothing.

The second volume of Tchekoff plays contains eight plays; the remaining four were translated by Marian Fell and previously published. The two volumes contain all the dramatic work of Tchekoff. It is reported that Bernard Shaw has said: "Every time I see a play by Tchekoff I want to throw all my stuff into the fire." The world should be profoundly grateful that destiny controls Mr. Shaw's hand. For surely, if the world and not only Russia is to be considered, Shaw gives more universal types. Neither the comedy nor yet the tragedy of Tchekoff reaches the general heart. First place the continual vodka drinking has no equivalent in English or French life and literature. Not that there is no such thing as drunkenness, but in much Russian literature it is the unbroken rule and the most continuous occupation of all life. Moreover, in other countries the utterances of the man drunk either with spirits or emotions are not apt to be chronicled as his most valuable contributions to thought and life. Julius West, who has made the English translations in this volume, says: "The Russian novelist or dramatist takes to psychology as some of his fellow countrymen take to drink." But it is, after all, the psychology of futile questioning of the infinite that the Russian takes to, not the psychology which solves the laws of mind. Tchekoff, says his translator, just escaped the tragedy of suicide by introspection by the possession of a sense of humor.

In the present volume, "The Proposal," "The Wedding," "The Bear," "A Tragedian in Spite of Himself," "The Anniversary," are comedies; "On the High Road" is an early one-act tragedy, vaguely recalling Gorky's "Night Shelter," although it is not comparable in force and reality; "The Three Sisters" and "The Cherry Orchard" are dramas and considered the author's masterpieces. Both deal with the typical Russian problem of inaction. The three sisters have but one desire, to give up their provincial home and to go to Moscow to live. The changes are rung again and again upon this theme, to go to Moscow. There is apparently no earthly reason, sentimental or economic, why if they choose, they should not do so, but with the true Russian paralysis of the will they continue to talk and do nothing. In "The Cherry Orchard" the solution of all the financial difficulties may be solved by selling the orchard; but again the tragedy lies in hesitation and sentimentality.

"On the High Road" is the only profound tragedy, and as it once more hinges upon drunkenness it is hard to enlist the Anglo-Saxon sympathies. *Bortsov*, who has been forsaken by his nearly married wife and financially ruined by his brother-in-law, for whom he went surety, is drinking himself to death. He is in an inn on the high road, offering his cap and his coat and everything else he has, even his young wife's miniature, for a drink of vodka. The sympathies of the crowd are against him until a former coachman enters, recognizes *Bortsov* and tells his story to the assembled multitude. Then all the sympathies are with him. The wife likewise is driven in by the storm and takes shelter in the same inn; and such is the resentment against her that she narrowly escapes murder. Doubtless the characterizations are vivid and well differentiated, but the motif is alien to us. Only one who has steeped himself in Russian literature, in Dostoievsky and Gorky, can feel that to take to drink and to talk is a satisfactory solution of life's sorrows.

Nor can one feel that the comedy of Tchekoff is worth Shaw's. It is infinitely less subtle and refined. In "The Proposal" *Lomov*, whose health is ailing, calls upon *Tatalya Stepanovna* to propose. The lady, unaware of his intentions, falls into a violent quarrel with him as to whom certain meadows belong to. When the suitor rushes out in anger the lady's father divulges his intentions and the lady screams for his return. Upon his return a new quarrel is started as to the respective merits of the couple's dogs and the scene ends with the betrothal and the prospective father-in-law plying the newly betrothed with champagne. In "The Wedding" the plot turns on the payment of 25 rubles to a guest to produce a real General at the wedding. The guest attempts to palm off a retired naval captain as the General and confusion results. "The Bear" is an account of a boorish courtship, with not a little of the touch which makes "The Taming of the Shrew" an anachronism to-day. "The Tragedian" tells the sorrows of the commuter, much as our comic papers tell them each spring; while "The Anniversary" is the tragico-comic undoing of a pretentious bank director by his wife and a beggar who both arrive at the wrong moment and refuse to be dismissed. On the whole the humor seems to date back to the Elizabethan period or else to be on the plane of our less reputable comic papers.

In the main Tchekoff makes a finer appeal to a foreign audience in his short stories than in his plays.

The People's Government.

In *The People's Government* (Appletons) Dr. DAVID JAYNE HILL considers the State "as an embodiment of force" and "as a human ideal"; law "as a sovereign decree" and "as a mutual obligation," and the citizen as first the source and then the beneficiary of political power. These chapters are philosophical, and the clear and concise analysis they make of the elements of political organization ought to be just at this time a peculiarly cogent appeal to the American citizen to do his part toward instituting a revival of the old American habit of giving alert attention to public affairs, cultivating a serious sense of civic responsibility, and exercising calm reflection and decisive action in the rights and duties of citizenship.

That the manifestation of these qualities by our people would be a revival the Hon. Elihu Root has made distinctly plain in notable recent addresses. We have come to regard our national liberties as a natural and inalienable possession instead of the fruit of creative and sustaining effort. We are in danger of cherishing the wise old formulas without possessing their spirit as an active, operative motive power.

Such studies as these by Dr. Hill cannot but be highly useful in this disturbed day. They are elementary but not shallow; they are in no sense partisan, they deal with the stuff of life in a practical, helpful way. Such lectures must stimulate the reader to a resolve to be active, not passive, in the political life of which he is unavoidably a part; to be, so far as lies within his power—and the extent of his power and opportunity is clearly delineated—an agent, not an instrument, and especially not inert material in the hands of political artisans.

The important matter for the citizen to comprehend and constantly recall, Dr. Hill says, is that "a battle of ideas is going on in which, consciously or unconsciously, he must take a part." If he is passive and inert he contributes to the success of "the party attached to absolutism." The moment men cease to appreciate their rights and liberties unconscious political decay begins. "There exists no natural and inherent law of human progress." Arbitrary power wears many masks, and is most dangerous when disguised as beneficence. Unchecked, it leads to one form or another of despotism; honestly perhaps, if wrongly, considering itself the source of law.

Of individuals as of governments it is true that "the whole of civilization depends not merely upon obedience to law but upon the renunciation by each of the temptation to make his own will the source of law." Without power to punish violators the State would be "impotent to secure the rights and liberties of which it is the guarantor"; but only when the State itself submits to law can it rightly claim the allegiance of its subjects.

To maintain a system of government which has renounced its opportunities of arbitrary power the citizen must in ordinary times exert vigilant activity; in its crises he must shrink from no peril or sacrifice in its defence. Dr. Hill's wise words are meant to contribute to that public spirit which by its loyalty and good sense and insistence on right conduct will hold the State to safe ways.

Artists and Thinkers.

In *Artists and Thinkers*, by LOUIS WILLIAM FLACCUS, assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania (Longmans, Green and Company), the author sets himself the question: Is the artist at heart a thinker and is the thinker an artist? In dealing with the question he works along the border line of both art and philosophy, taking as the subjects in which to study the question Rodin, Maeterlinck, Wagner, Hegel, Tolstoy and Nietzsche. Tolstoy, Hegel and Nietzsche have all had a great deal to say about art. They have all formulated theories and discussed special points. The author says it is not so much his wish to solve the problem as to get the lifeheat of it in all its unruliness. His idea is to suggest the life, the color, the wealth (or, as he says, "the liveness, the colorfulness and richness") of the problem by tracing the thought strain in certain artists, the artistic groundwork of certain philosophies. He attempts to show us the parallelism between Rodin's technique and his reflections upon art, and he gives the world view of Maeterlinck, Tolstoy or Wagner as it defines their outlook on the world of art. Hegel's philosophy he speaks of as a world romance of the boldest. Going a step further than the artist's pose and the philosopher's clannishness you find both alike in this, that they are creatively self-expressive. Wherever the artist reacts to life intellectually as well as emotionally; whenever in the philosopher the sense of the dramatic and the grasp of the divine adventure are strong, the common bond is noticeable. It may be stated here that the author merely states his problem and mentions the common bond, but he goes no further, and at the end all we know is that there is a common bond between the artist and the philosopher and it is difficult to say just where the artist ends and the philosopher begins. Nietzsche, for example, was more an artist than a philosopher; Hegel more a philosopher than an artist; Tolstoy was an artist who preferred to be a philosopher; Maeterlinck was an artist slightly touched by philosophy, and Wagner was forced to evolve theories to justify his surprising art.

In an age when music and poetry are alive with the complexity of modern life, sculpture alone of the arts failed to give anything of the passion and richness of modernity. Rodin has proved that the fault lies not in sculpture as an art but in the sculptor. He shows not only an art which is forceful and resourceful, but is intense, imaginative and intellectually stimulating. But his art is not his only answer to his critics; he has brilliantly defended his ideals and his technique. The author thinks that Rodin owes his dramatic quality to the inwardness, compactness and naturalness of his treatment. Rodin himself tells a tale of how he learned the true secret of modelling. One day he was shaping the foliage of a capital when a decorator in the studio said: "Rodin, you handle yourself badly; all these leaves of yours appear flat. That is why they don't seem real. Make some of their points shaped toward you so as to give any one who looks at them the impression of depth." Rodin took his advice. "I remembered never to see forms spread out flat but always deep—never to consider a surface other than the end of a solid, as a point more or less large aimed at you." Rodin continues that the ancients used this same science of modelling, and it is to this principle of technique that their works owe at once their strength and their suppleness. He also thinks that light and shade effects are possible in sculpture. "The great sculptors," he says, "have all been colorists. They play so skilfully all the resources of relief, they fuse so well the boldness of light and the modesty of shadow, that their sculptures have all the relish of the richest etching."

The ugliness of some of his subjects he thus exonerates: "Whenever a great artist or writer takes hold of one of these uglinesses he at once transforms it—with a stroke of his magic wand he makes of it a thing of beauty; it is magic, it is witchery." Rodin, then, has a symbolism that instead of being crystallized is fluid. His art expresses his philosophic idea that life is movement and struggle; as unrestful, as intensely dramatic in its quiet changes as in its explosive moments. As a thinker Rodin has the insight and courage to see what it was that made him great as an artist. He demands an unflinching observation, accuracy, individuality, skill, forceful workmanship, all at the service of an artistic purpose that catches the very breath and heartbeat of life.

Maeterlinck, Mr. Flaccus thinks, is a decorative artist in that he is constantly using nature as a background against which the inner life is flung, either in subtle harmony or strong conflict and with which it fulfils its destiny. A valuable part of the essay on Maeterlinck is the careful distinction which Mr. Flaccus makes between the world outlook of the young poet and the later philosopher which M. Maeterlinck has become.

In the Wagner essay the author deals with Wagner's theory that language must be stripped bare of its intellectual content in order to restore its early fluidity and emotional content. Several passages from "Tristan and Isolde" are chosen to exemplify Wagner's theory. Also Wagner's determination to use the orchestra as a sort of Greek chorus as an interpreter of the action and its underlying motives.

Both Rodin and Wagner are elemental, passionate; and both portray titanic struggles. But Rodin is simpler. He means art to express cosmic struggle and unrest. Wagner desires art to express not only conflict but a real passion dialectic.

One by one the author takes his six subjects and puts their life outlook under the microscope. The book would be enormously improved and given a kind of continuity which it now lacks if the author had written a final, summing up chapter contrasting his subjects. The failure to do this makes one lay the book down with a distinct sense of disappointment. The author has a vigorous style with rather a marked feeling for the striking phrase, but he is also guilty of the bad Americanism of coining nouns when there are amply adequate ones to hand. Why will our writers insist upon "richness" for "wealth," "colorfulness" for "color," and "liveness" for "life"?

Journeys to Bagdad.

The season is approaching for *Journeys to Bagdad*, which may be undertaken in the genial company of CHARLES S. BROOKS, whose essays (Yale University Press) show him competent to conduct a mighty pleasant pilgrimage. Not the least of his merits is the sentiment which governed his choice of illustration, a charming series of old fashioned wood cuts by Allen Lewis. In the rush of careless, mediocre bookmaking this little volume's appearance is a joy indeed to the lover of polite letters.

When with the approach of springtime the wanderlust begins to tease, any old Bagdad that you may choose will do. Truancy gives full flavor to the delight of travelling. As Stevenson pointed out, idleness is not inherently attractive; it is enjoyable only when there is reason for not being idle, and the more loudly duty calls the happier is the true idler.

The time to set out for Bagdad is when domestic ties are most tyrannous, when the demands of business are most imperative, when there is every reason why you should stick to your anchorage. Then the great world calls you, and if you are the right stuff away you go—leaving home and family, office and friends—out through strange byways, learning life.

Any Bagdad will do; largely because, if you are a right pilgrim, once you get there you will yearn for new Bagdads beyond. Good travellers travel right ahead, up one side of the world and down the other, circumnavigating this insignificant globe, and getting home to the back door as naturally as they started from the front door.

It is easy, dreadfully easy, to get started on the Bagdad pilgrimage. You walk the street, intent on going the shortest way in the quickest time to your destination; and a waif of paper on the sidewalk flashes at you a lying advertisement of the charms of some resort—to which you wouldn't go to earn a salary but which is a key of suggestion unlocking the machinery of your thoughts and sending you straight, say, to the nearest sporting goods store for an outfit and paraphernalia for streamside, woods or mountain slope.

A friend's casual word, a glance at a long distance time table; a flash of feathers in the shrubbery, the new blue in the sky, the smell of spring coming up the hill of the year—just anything at all may give you the signal. The tarry smell of a ship chandlery may send you down to the sea and a ship, a gun in a shop window may set your trigger finger twitching, a newspaper paragraph may order you south, or east or west or north. If, pending the arrival of the first warm days, you travel in imagination and with Brother Brooks, you will travel without ticket or time table, and more or less bookishly.

There is a lake where you used to paddle or row, swim or skate. You came out of or off the water with a healthy boy's thirst for ginger pop. There was a little gray house by the road. You opened the door; your arrival was "proclaimed to all within by the jangling of a bell." You drank your ginger pop out of the gurgling bottle with a zest you will never know again; you raided the cake counter and ate of its spicy delicacies prodigiously. Will you ever get so much pleasure out of the spending of your dollars as you did when you spent pennies for tops and marbles? How you felt the wood for hardness, scanned the varnished surface for knots; asked if the peg were honestly screwed in, and, with one eye blissfully shut tight, sent the other tracing and testing the truth of the curve. That little old shop—does it still stand?—is one of the Bagdads of your mature imagination.

We shall accompany Mr. Brooks on only one of his rambles; he calls its record "The Worst Edition of Shakespeare." But, whatever of dread the title hints, this is no drill of the critical canons! See: Here is "a certain set of Shakespeare in nine calfskin volumes, edited by a man named John Bell, now long since dead, which set happens to have stood for several years upon my shelves." And the gentle essayist, reading a life of John Murray, came upon a sentence that "shook" him: "Bell, it said, Bell of my own bookshelf, of all the editors of Shakespeare was the worst." That shot went home; it was like a bit of whispered scandal, tantalizingly void of detailed specification.

Bell was so old and respectable that he seemed unassailable; and now he was assailed. It was a shock; but with the shock came a secret joy, "for somewhat too broadly had Bell smirked his sanctity on me." "There is much human nature goes to the stoning of a saint." Bell's Shakespeare was published in 1774:

> He was not a man of the schools. Caring not a cracked tinkle for learning, it was not to the fellos nor to any authority that he turned for the texts of his plays. Instead, he went to Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and took their acting copies. These volumes hold the very plays that the crowds of 1774 looked upon. Herein is the "Romeo," word for word, that Lydia Languish sniffed over.

Bell in his notes, Mr. Brooks reflects, echoes a world that is talking about delicacy, about sentiment, about equality. "(For a breeze blows up from France.)" The eighteenth century babbled these words in its dotage. And Bell put his time into his notes, and so did a better work than his Shakespeare criticism:

> This was the time when such words as "blanket" were not spoken by young ladies if men were about; for it is a bedroom word and therefore immoral. Bell objected from the bottom of his silly soul that *Lady Macbeth* should soil her mouth with it. "Blanket of the dark," he says, "is an expression greatly below our author. 'Curtain' is evidently better." "Was the hope drunk wherein you dressed yourself?" Whereat Bell again complains that *Lady Macbeth* is "unnecessarily indelicate." "Though this tragedy," says Bell, "must be allowed a very noble composition, it is highly reprehensible for exhibiting the chimeras of witchcraft, and still more so for advancing in several places the principles of fatalism. We would not wish to see young, unsettled minds to peruse this piece without proper companions to prevent absurd prejudices."

Mr. Brooks philosophizes very pleasantly on "The Decline of Nightcaps," "Maps and Rabbit Holes," "Tunes for Spring," "The Chilly Presence of Hard Headed Persons," "Hoop Skirts" and other matters of interest if not of pressing importance.

A Missionary's Sketches.

A volume that can be heartily recommended as few missionary books can is *A City of the Dawn*, by R. KEABLE (Dutton). As to the personality of the author one can only guess by what he sees, what he hears and what he believes. First, then, he was a student at Cambridge, a pupil of A. C. Benson, a well born Englishman, with traditions of a powerful civilization; a trained thinker and writer with an artist's keen perceptions and vivid susceptibilities; finally he is a high churchman who can look with leniency at a Mohammedan service and kneel in a Roman cathedral. The book is prefaced by A. C. Benson. If the fluidity and elegance of the English are similar in master and pupil, one finds in the pupil rather more iron—a something keener, stronger and more intense. Mr. Benson says:

> It is something more than a pleasure to me to be asked to say a few words of introduction to this brilliant little book, the work of a friend and former pupil. "Brilliant" is the word that keeps recurring to me, because the author appears to me to have actually seen things wonderful and strange, to have caught and retained out of a thousand rich impressions, whatever it is which constitutes their interest and charm, their strangeness and greatness, their appeal and pathos, their strength and tiredness; and all this, it seems to me, ripples into words both apt and beautiful, till I too see and feel, swiftly and distinctly—the heat, the color, the scent, the atmosphere of it all. The book is vivid, picturesque, impressive from end to end. * * *
>
> But here in this book the writer's eyes are everywhere, and not only that, but the words flow out to recapture it all, till as I drift to the end of chapter after chapter, it is with the dreamlike sense that some vision has passed between me and the quiet bookshelves of the room where I sit and the close grown shrubberies of the College Garden. * * *
>
> Missions are not merely the fad of enthusiasts; in spite of natural failure and delay, they are of the very essence of the Gospel spirit. The message of the Cross is to show how the worst that man can do is vitally linked with the best that God can do.

Mr. Keable landed a little over a year ago on the east coast of Africa at Mombasa, which still pays a nominal suzerainty to Zanzibar. "Here," he writes, "we have railways and hospitals and Maxim guns to-day, and the few often poverty stricken Arabs who are still ignorant enough to hate us are here on sufferance now."

Then follow chapters of such vivid and poetic description that one feels one has been to the coast of East Africa and seen the little crowded city of winding lanes, with the palms green with leaves and brown with nuts hanging over the whitewashed walls, all thrown up against the vivid blue of the African sky.

Let us turn sharp to the left past the high iron gates of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, whose twin towers with their short spires have been showing ahead of us between the houses for some time. Here is the row of silversmiths. In fascinating cases are piled really beautiful silver goods, and on the floor squat men in their white cotton garments sandpapering, filing, hammering and polishing. To the right is a shop you can trust, its walls hung with a strange miscellany of ancient swords and guns, embroidered Arab belts and powder flasks, necklaces, carved wooden spoons, whips of hippo leather and twisted iron rubbish that is not thrown away simply because a Banyan, like a Jew, cannot do it. The glass case is full of ebony and silver walking sticks and they are not expensive either:

> But this is the glory of the High Street. On the left is the post office; and, right opposite, are two big shops full of Indian, Burmese and Japanese goods, with men selling them in skirts and black hair done up in a "bun" behind like the good Singalese that they are. These are the really great shops who live on the passenger and empty his pockets with great regularity. Up this street lie the court house, the English club, the Bank of India, the shady Victoria Gardens and the consulate, a big, white, spreading house with a wide drive and a real lawn and an outlook over really nice gardens to the sea. But we turn the other way; the street narrows; we pass the entrance to the customs and the way up from the landing beach; men are squatting on the ground here, with rolls of pice and rupees to change all foreign money that comes their way, and at length we are out on the open square before the Sultan's old palace which is now used for Government offices, with the sea glittering before us, dotted with a steamer or two, a fleet of dhows under bare poles to the right. H. M. S. Pandora round the corner of the old consulate pier, and two or three green islands of the reef behind all. Across the square, the seven mile Ruabu railway ends its open trucks packed as a rule with clamoring crowds of black and brown skins, and its engine clanging a big bell as it moves down the centre of the street. Just by its terminus is the yellow wall and palm planted garden of the old Sultan's palace, now being fitted for the residence of Sayyid Halifa and his wife. With luck, we shall see him in his car, wife and child beside him, a courtly smiling gentleman, very picturesque in his rich Arab dress, who shows the reality of his European culture by not wearing European clothes.

The author looks on all he sees with a gentle and hopeful eyes and an unwavering faith that the message he is bringing is the salvation of the world. His chapter on "The House of Islam" is vivid and interesting without a touch of unnecessary bigotry.

Nor are these sketches lacking in humor. The chapter on Kinyozi, or the Barber, is quite delightful in its perception of incongruity, and it is the touch of the real artist that places side by side the chapters on the wretched old goatherd woman in the arcade, "A Vessel Unto Dishonor," and the clean, efficient "coffee seller" of the streets, with his artistic paraphernalia and his clean turban and kanzu for the evening service at the mosque.

One of the most pathetic stories told in the book is that of the "Mother of the Poor." The author had been months on the island before he heard of the holy spot where this lady was buried. By chance he came upon the grave and then heard the story of her life.

> She was a rich girl in the Paris of the '30s, and she married at seventeen—a love match. In the full flush of that early happiness he died, and she was left alone. In her sorrow she turned to God and not against him, and asked what was the answer to the riddle of life He had set in her way. And this island was the answer. They were founding the Catholic Mission here in those days, among the slaves and fevers and crowded streets of a town which not even Burton had visited at that early date. And she came to help, not as a religious, but as a private lady, with her wealth and her youth, and she lived here for nigh on fifty years. She brought the French sisters out, and built the first hospital, and visited over the creek, all the while the whipping post stood in the slave market, and the turn of the tide washed bodies on the shore. There were no clean roads then, and the secret of the mosquito was not known. Big swamps lay about the town, and the filth of an Arab and African city without sanitation or supervision appalled even the naval lieutenant who merely walked once or twice through its streets. Picture her up and down under the blaze of the sky, enduring every infection that the sun sucks up, in and out of close huts and unsavory people, her, the rich Parisian girl—and for fifty years. And then came a change of regime, one of those regrettable but unavoidable ecclesiastical changes which seem always to be human blunders obtruding into the divine mission; but with it went her life. Her sisters were changed; the work of fifty years had made a groove, and maybe it was well to strike out a little differently. But some plants are too tender for much uprooting, and this had roots very deep down. So they were torn, and she died.

In the end the author refers to the Dean of St. Paul's four lectures on "The Church and the Age." The Dean admits that the Church is still far down the ages, with her journey yet little more than begun. Not so this young missionary. There is hope, he thinks, flickering and new in every soul that has been brightened before the temple of God.

A Long Needed Guide for Civil Servants.

A policeman in New York is liable to dismissal from the force on any of fifty-three charges, thirteen of which are specified in the Charter. Each of these charges has resulted in the removal of at least one member of the force, the action of the Commissioner being upheld by the courts. Instead of being difficult to rid the city of an unworthy policeman, the task is comparatively simple. All that is necessary is intelligent adherence to the system established. Reinstatements have been due in most cases to the carelessness and neglect of the authorities, springing from haste, abuse, or misunderstanding of their powers.

The Bureau of Municipal Research in *Legal Rights of Civil Servants in the City of New York* brings these facts out clearly. It has collected the statutes, and the decisions of the courts interpreting them, under which persons are appointed to and removed from the civil service, and these constitute a volume indispensable to all whose interests are related to employment by the city. This applies with equal force to department heads and subordinates. For those who discuss city government the book will be invaluable, for it presents in easily accessible form material which without it must be sought in the discouraging recesses of a complete law library.

Some New Books of Verse.

"I have looked for a poet among the Irish peasants," says Lord Dunsany in his introduction to *Songs of the Fields*, by FRANCIS LEDWIDGE (Duffield). "because it seemed to me that almost only among them there was in daily use a diction worthy of poetry as well as an imagination capable of dealing with the great and simple things that are a poet's wares." To the seeker came one day, unsolicited, an old notebook and a letter from Mr. Ledwidge asking if there was any good in the poems that filled the pages of the book; and the quest was at an end. Francis Ledwidge, farm laborer, learned stenography, hoping to get into newspaper work; and he became a scavenger at twelve shillings a week. He worked in the copper mines next, undertook to organize a strike and lost his job. Taking up hypnotism as a hobby, he acquired in his native County Meath the reputation of one who had sold himself to the devil. Lord Dunsany took him up, published his poems and took the poet away to the war, lance corporal in the Fifth Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. The peasant poet is a lyric reporter of Meath. We do not care for his dikes "spitting" violets to the breeze; "the bloom unfolded on the whins like fire" is an admirable line.

The "Symphony of a Mexican Garden" in GRACE HAZARD CONKLING'S *Afternoons of April* (Houghton Mifflin: The New Poetry Series) is more Olympian than Mexican; the four parts, "The Garden," "The Pool," "The Birds," "To the Moon," are presented with musical clues as to key and tempo, from "poco sostenuto in A major" to "allegro con brio in A major," whose purpose is easier to comprehend than their usefulness is to perceive. If the rhythms are suited to the changing themes the musical apparatus is either negligible or an actual encumbrance; if the rhythms need propping they are not worth it. The presentation of one art in terms of another is an innocent affectation. "A Breath of Mint":

> What small leaf fingers veined with emerald light
> Lay on my heart that touch of elfin might?
> What spirals of sharp perfume do they sting,
> To blur my page with swift remembering? * * *
> Their coolness brings that ecstasy I knew
> Down by the mint fringed brook that wandered through
> My mellow meadows set with linden trees
> Loud with the summer jargon of the bees.
> * * *
> Yours is the subtlest word the summer saith
> And vanished summers sigh upon your breath.

Sufficiently modern is the poetess one of whose sequential love lyrics bears title, "From the Woolworth Tower," as does one of SARA TEASDALE'S in *Rivers to the Sea* (Macmillans). There are many little lyrics in this collection that sparkle memorably from a single facet:

> Strephon kissed me in the spring,
> Robin in the fall,
> But Colin only looked at me
> And never kissed at all.
>
> Strephon's kiss was lost in jest,
> Robin's lost in play,
> But the kiss in Colin's eyes
> Haunts me night and day.

In *The Song of Hugh Glass* (Macmillans) JOHN G. NEIHARDT has written something like an epic of pioneer days in the West. The story that forms the core of the poem is suggested in Chittenden's "History of the American Fur Trade," and affords an excellent vehicle for the true theme of the poem, the courage and trials and successes of the conquerors of the wilderness:

> The year was eighteen hundred twenty-three.
> 'Twas when the guns that blustered at the Ree
> Had ceased to brag, and ten score martial clowns
> Turned from the unwhipped Aricara towns,
> Earning the scornful laughter of the Sioux.
> A withering blast the arid south still blew,
> And creeks ran thin beneath the glaring sky;
> For 'twas a month ere honking geese would fly
> Southward before the Great White Hunter's face:
> And many generations of their race,
> As bow flung arrows, now have fallen spent.
> It happened then that Major Henry went
> With eighty trappers up the dwindling Grand,
> Bound through the weird, unfriending barren land
> For where the Big Horn meets the Yellowstone;
> And old Hugh Glass went with them.

Mr. Neihardt revives in grown up Americans the boyhood delight in tales of life and adventure on the plains when Indians and buffalo roamed over them, free and wild.

In *Ashes and Sparks* (The Century Company) RICHARD WIGHTMAN weaves the stuff of daily life, hopes and fears and moods of man and nature, into verse that has lilt. In "The Exposition" he indulges a playful fancy whose cleanness saves it from irreverence:

> She and I went to it—the Big Fair. We were the whole Attendance.
> It was all under one roof, which was called the Sky.
> Every day this was refused by invisible brushes, gloriously,
> And at night all lit by countless lights, star shaped.
> And arranged curiously in the form of Dippers and things.
> It must have cost a fortune in some kind of rare coin
> To do it that way. * * *
> We didn't see the Manager at all.
> But there must have been one around there somewhere.
> To arrange all this and look after it.
> And we didn't pay anything to get in;
> Our hearts invited us.

America has to-day no poet who so truly answers in so many phases the multiplex tests of the poet; who, in one word, combines the natural gift of song with the painfully acquired mastery of art in so satisfactory degree as does CALE YOUNG RICE, whose *Earth and New Earth* (Doubleday, Page) continues evenly his tradition. Mr. Rice is the American Noyes; both poets, perhaps excelled by a contemporary here and there in one requirement of their art, excel in the comprehensive view, and both are geniuses of the robust order, voluminous producers. Given quality, sustained and wide ranging composition is a fair and reasonable test of poetic power.

Some good ringing ballads are the best things in HELEN GRAY CONE'S *A Chant of Love for England, and Other Poems* (Dutton). "There is a beauty, after all is said, unreached forever," says BENJAMIN R. C. LOW in *The House That Was, and other Poems* (Lane); the beauty that lingers after music, and the beauty that lies too often just beyond the poet's grasp. That beauty Mr. Low seeks, and the fruit of his quest is a volume of verse delicate but substantial. In WILLIAM ALEXANDER PERCY'S *Sappho in Leukas* (Yale University Press) there is all the youthful fervor, the poetic vision that made Rupert Brooke beloved of those who love poetry, and none of the grossness that blurred some of the young Englishman's well wrought verse. Mr. Percy shows that he knows that rhymed and metered socialism is not poetry. He can be serious without cynicism, has a fine lyric quality and the sustained power that comes only with a natural medium of utterance, all of which bode well for his poetic future.

KEEPING UP WITH THE LITERARY GAME.

"Dostoievsky: His Life and Literary Activity" is the title of a new book anounced for early publication by George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. It is by a Russian writer, Eugene Soloviev, and has been translated from the Russian by C. J. Hogarth. The author of the study seeks to supply, in a balanced review of Dostoievsky's life and influence, a corrective to the fantastic views put forward by certain Russian and other critics of the great writer.

In his new book, "Why Men Pray," published by Macmillans, Dr. Charles Lewis Slattery retells one of Henry Drummond's old stories to illustrate his point that prayer produces a sense of human fellowship.

"One Sunday night on an ocean steamer a man spoke of a hymn which had just been sung as having for him peculiarly sacred associations. He was in the Confederate army in the American civil war and was ordered at one time to lonely sentry duty. As the night wore on he felt his danger, and to keep up his courage he began to sing.

> Jesus, lover of my soul * * *;

and after uttering the great prayer of this hymn he was comforted and felt quite safe.

"A strange expression came over the face of a fellow passenger on the ship: 'I,' he said, 'was in the Union army that night and had been sent out with a party of scouts. We saw a solitary sentry, and my men had their rifles levelled to fire; but just then we heard the clear notes ringing out in the stillness,

> Cover my defenceless head
> With the shadow of Thy wing:

and I said, "Boys, lower your rifles; we'll go home!"'"

Dr. James A. Macdonald, author of "Democracy and the Nations" (George H. Doran Company), asserts that Bernhardi outlined the whole plans of Germany to a select few at Leland Stanford University a few months before the war. He told how Germany would make a feint of getting by the French fortifications while in reality she was marching through Belgium. She would drive on to Paris, exact a sufficient indemnity to pay the costs of the expedition and then wheel round on Russia and crush her before she could mobilize.

"The only Americans who were parties to that conference were David Starr Jordan and Benjamin Ide Wheeler," says Dr. Macdonald. "All the others were Germans. Prof. Wheeler was fascinated, but Jordan wasn't particularly impressed. The only mistake Bernhardi made was in his assurance to the coterie that England would be neutral. The plans of Bernhardi were adopted by the General Staff and Count Bernstorff knew of these plans even before Bernhardi outlined them to his friends in California."

Granville Barker, the English playwright whose plays are now published in book form by Little, Brown and Company, has written a satire on Fifth avenue social life, entitled "Souls on Fifth," which will be published in April.

"—— and Other Poets" is the title of Louis Untermeyer's new book of verse announced by Henry Holt and Company for spring publication. The volume is in three parts. The first, called "The Banquet of the Bards," parodies most of the modern poets; the second section, called "Attempted Affinities," tries to show what would result from such collaborations as Clinton Scollard and Heinrich Heine, Ben Jonson and Harry B. Smith. The closing section comprises light verse and pasquinades.

Arthur Ruhl, whose "Antwerp to Gallipoli" is to be published by Scribner's early next month, was in Belgium in front of the first advance, in Paris when the Germans threatened it most nearly, in Antwerp throughout its bombardment, in Bordeaux while it was the temporary seat of the French Government, in Berlin when the war was about six months advanced, with the English prisoners in the German prison camps, in the trenches at La Bassee, with the Turks in Constantinople and Gallipoli, in the hospitals at Budapest and with the Austrians in Austria and Bulgaria.

Of "An Army of the People," by John McAuley Palmer, Major, Twenty-fourth Infantry, U. S. A., which G. P. Putnam's Sons published yesterday, Henry L. Stimson, ex-Secretary of War, says:

"The author brings out the details of a constructive proposition for the enrolment of a citizens' army in a form to make it easily read and understood. Major Palmer speaks with the authority of one of the most able and intelligent men in our army. I believe his book will be a valuable contribution toward an intelligent comprehension of the requirements of our land defence."

"Frey and His Wife," Maurice Hewlett's new book, which Robert M. McBride and Company will issue March 17, is a tale of old Norway.

That John P. Holland's original incentive in devoting himself to the perfection of the submarine was the hope of destroying the British fleet and liberating Ireland, is an interesting fact recalled by Farnham Bishop's "Story of the Submarine," just published by the Century Company. As a twenty year old Irish school teacher, Holland had come to hate England's rule of Ireland in those bitter days, and the opportunity for gaining his country's independence seemed to be brought nearer by the American civil war, in which so many Irish Americans were becoming trained veterans. It was only necessary for the troublesome British navy to be put out of the way, and that could not be done by outbuilding or outfighting it on its own terms.

Coming to America and settling as a school teacher at Paterson, N. J., Holland built his first submarine in 1875, and soon entered into actual negotiations with the Fenians, showing them, as Mr. Bishop says, how to get round, or rather under, the British navy.

Among the reprints for late February are noted Jane Addams's "The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets," Charles E. White's "Successful Houses and How to Build Them," Owen Wister's "The Pentecost of Calamity," and Clifton Johnson's "Highways and Byways of New England"—all issued by Macmillan.

A new work by Samuel P. Orth, professor of political science at Cornell, announced for publication within the next few weeks by the Century Company, is "The Imperial Impulse," a series of character studies of five of the European nations now at war, England, France, Russia, Germany and Belgium. The author believes that in the procession of events we are apt to forget the political, economic and ethnic backgrounds of the cultures now at each other's throats, neglecting the significance of the drama in our interest in the action. His aim is to recall some of the conflicting national traits, prejudices, habits and beliefs that lie behind the world commotion.

G. P. Putnam's Sons are publishing Compton Mackenzie's new book, "The Passionate Elopement."

Basil Santoine, a blind lawyer with remarkable powers of perception, is the central character of a new mystery novel by William MacHarg and Edwin Balmer, two Chicago authors, which Little, Brown & Company will publish March 18.

Sara Ware Bassett, author of "The Taming of Zenas Henry," a lively Cape Cod comedy published by George H. Doran Company, comes of old New England stock. She is descended on her father's side from William Bassett, who came to Plymouth in the Fortune in 1621, being one of the thirty-five persons left behind by the Mayflower. Sarah, a daughter of this William Bassett, later married Peregrine White, the first child to be born in the Plymouth Colony. Miss Bassett's mother's family were Boston people.

STEPHEN GIRARD'S LETTERS.

There Are 48,000 of Them—New Light Upon Epochal Periods.

Dr. John Bach McMaster is engaged in writing the life of Stephen Girard. Girard left 48,000 letters, which, as Dr. McMaster said, shed a new and intimate light upon those epochal periods our American Revolution, the French Revolution, the reign of Napoleon and our second war with England.

These letters, or a large part of them, were either sent by Girard to his agents in foreign countries or were received by him from them. At that time, says the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, he was America's greatest merchant prince and capitalist. He knew things first hand that no one else in our country could know. That is the gold mine which our celebrated Philadelphia historian has uncovered—those 48,000 Girard letters. They form a chain without a missing link from about 1777 to 1831.

"Many of the very questions we face to-day with our shipping," remarked Dr. McMaster, "were faced by Girard. His vessels were seized, his sailors impressed, his cargoes confiscated."

"Did Girard admire Napoleon?" the historian was asked.

"Being a Frenchman, he was strong for the French Revolution," was the reply, "and he was for Bonaparte, until he made himself Consul for life. After that Girard hated the Corsican. And, of course, Napoleon seized many of Girard's ships, which helped to arouse his hatred."

Here is something you didn't know: Girard was always willing to finance a South American or a Central American revolution for a quid pro quo. For that day the revolutionist was usually a patriot who was struggling to get free from under the heel of a tyrant.

He had letters from the great negro warrior and statesman of the West Indies Toussaint L'Ouverture, whose name Wendell Phillips said history would write above those of Lafayette, Washington and John Brown.

"When did Girard stop writing in native tongue, the French, and in English?" was inquired.

"Along about 1800," replied Dr. McMaster, "although he didn't break off suddenly. He never was able to write good English and nearly all his let