AN ABUNDANCE OF NEW BOOKS FOR THE GIRLS AND BOYS

THE BOOK OF THE WEEK.

THE GREEN MIRROR. By Hugh Walpole. (George H. Doran Company. $1.50.)

It may be, as Mr. Walpole implies in his foreword, that the types and situations depicted in this volume seem already a little old fashioned amid the swift scene shiftings of the world to-day. Yet there are few fellow craftsmen who might not envy him the rare perception and ability that have here recorded them.

This is the chronicle of a self-sufficient family, a family that is founded on tradition, impregnable in its own standards and wellnigh devoid of imagination. To the Trenchards the world contains two types: those who are Trenchards and those who are not. The Church of England, the Apostolic Creed, the Decalogue itself were all instituted primarily for the benefit of the Trenchards. Even Christmas takes second place among festivities to the august function of Grandfather Trenchard's birthday. It is on the latter occasion that we first witness a rallying of the Trenchard clan: the old grandfather, bereft of nearly all faculties save his unconquerable family pride; Great-aunt Sarah, even yet a formidable obstructionist; George Trenchard, the father, weak and good natured, a valuable spoil in the family entrenchments; Aunt Aggie, a rancorous old maid; Aunt Betty, who doesn't count because, contrary to family tradition, she loves everybody; Uncle Tim, Mrs. Trenchard's brother, who by deliberate choice is a rank outsider, having committed the unpardonable sin of fathoming the family's pretentious weakness and telling them so. Then there are the children: blundering clumsy Henry, neither boy nor man, with a kindly heart and a weak head for port; Millicent, whom the family feel that they have lost, because she has visited Paris and has a cosmopolitan taint; and thirdly Katherine, the family jewel, the mother's priceless possession, the one foreordained to keep unsullied the sacred family traditions. Lastly, there is Mrs. Trenchard, self-effaced, taciturn, an unguessed latent force destined to become a crucial element in the impending family upheaval.

This upheaval is precipitated by a natural and seemingly harmless event, the entrance of an outsider into the family circle. This outsider, Philip Mork, is an average young Englishman, with a slightly extra energy and assurance born of several years residence in Moscow. Mr. Trenchard finds him entertaining; Aunt Betty includes him among her universal likes; Henry envies him his easy manners; Katherine gives him her whole heart even before he asks it. But Grandfather Trenchard, Great-aunt Sarah, Aunt Aggie, see in him only the Stranger, the Invader, the destroyer of the peace of their house. As for Mrs. Trenchard, behind the silent inertia of her opposition one is slow to guess the inflexible, adamantine will, the fanatical and unconquerable hatred.

The monumental tensity of the ensuing drama is at first rather hard to grasp unless you too happen to be at heart a Trenchard, all tradition and no imagination. Here, on the one hand, is a likable, manly fellow with nothing against him save a transient affair with a Russian chorus girl, which he frankly confesses to Katherine. Here, on the other hand, is a girl who is of age and legally her own mistress, who luckily has a mind of her own and who socially will be making a good match. Yet she knows that if she breaks traditions, if she goes against the family judgment, it means a domestic civil war that will shake the family foundations to its last ramparts.

The real essence of the volume, the ultimate touch of genius, is embodied in the enigmatic personality of Mrs. Trenchard. Nothing about the book is more artistic than the way in which the author has successively narrowed down his battle ground. In the first place we have the Trenchard clan against the outside world; then it becomes the Family against the Invader, this stranger of unguessed prowess; then it becomes a duel, with Philip's strength pitted against the dead weight of the mother's resistance. Then suddenly Philip's defense crumbles; and Katherine, who thought she loved him because he was strong, finds that she loves him doubly because he is weak—and this knowledge spurs her into actively taking up arms against her own mother and dragging family traditions in the dust. Within its own special class this book is a masterpiece. It contains at least four figures which could ill be spared from English fiction, while the one likely to be longest remembered is the stoic figure of Mrs. Trenchard herself, standing to the last proudly obdurate and unconquered in her entrenched isolation.

Such is the main thread of the central theme stated as briefly as is consistent with a clear understanding. But to those readers whose interest in a novel extends beyond the mere narrative and includes the craftsmanship the obvious claim of this volume to a place of relative distinction among current novels centres in its fine restraint, the steadfast consistency with which attention is focussed within the family fortifications, one might almost say upon the family hearthstone. Everywhere and all the time the book is made to live up to its title: it is a chronicle of the intimate happenings enacted for generations in the antiquated, time honored old drawing room, with its green and faded wall paper, its worn green carpet and upholstery—all reflected in an equally antiquated and time honored mirror which from force of habit has almost forgotten to reflect any other color than the prevailing green. And no real lover of the finer touches of literary artistry can fail to experience a keen joy in the culminating symbolic touch by which that same stodgy, traditional, unimaginative mirror, family talisman of the Trenchards, is at last shattered into splinters by an impulsive act of one of the younger generation. You feel that this tragic catastrophe heralds the downfall of the citadel, and you instinctively echo the impulsive pronouncement of one awakening member of the family, "Thank God, at last a Trenchard has done something!" In short, the book's relative importance is not due to any particular bigness of theme or treatment or character painting, but because of its sustained symmetry—because in relatively big and little things alike it is so rarely and amazingly right.

Harmony in Rose and Blue. One of many pictures by G. F. Munn, in "The Art of George Frederick Munn." (Dutton & Co.)

"Bucky" O'Neill Monument. In the Plaza, Prescott, Arizona. Illustration from "Arizona the Wonderland," by George Wharton James. (Page Co.)

Chase's Portrait of his Youngest Son, Roland Dana Chase. From "The Life and Art of William Merritt Chase," by Katherine Metcalf Roof. (Scribner.)

LITTLE FOLKS AND LITERATURE

This is an age of inspired theory and indifferent practice. We set all the mill stones in the world going on a Monday morning and forget to bring any grist to them after Saturday week. We are always busy with new ideas and ideals concerning those ideas. In fact, we are a generation of promoters with a passion for establishing cataclysmic precedent and starting spectacular mechanism; and we find our greatest difficulty in literally minding our own business after we have made it that.

Courage is obviously a good thing to have, and it is obviously a good thing to have the courage of our experiments. Most of our experiments today have a scientific basis and are worth the making. We realize that the practice of vivisection serves a race; that the dietetic squad is in the main a good thing; that the various toxins must come to be tried tentatively on the human being. Model tenements must be built for the model and the model must be installed in them before we can assume their actual practicability. The human unit is the necessary factor in all procedure involving the tentative welfare of the human race.

Thus must all of our modern educational experiments be carried out on the child itself. Froebel, Montessori, Gary—we try one theory of education after another with the courage of our time. We don't know where our children are going, to paraphrase a popular saying, but they are certainly on their way, and because this way is beset with the perils of the modern pioneer path it behooves us to watch it carefully. Nay, more than carefully—anxiously. We must stand by that which we have started. We must correct the mistakes of our system.

The books that we are offering our children to-day reflect our attitude toward them with an illuminating clarity. In the excitement of starting them scientifically, of watching our particular theory of communal or individualistic development work out—or begin to work out, being so much better at beginnings than at any other part of the process—we have hastily provided them with a literature to assist our theories. And this literature for the most part smirks and preaches like any other assorted propaganda.

If we are congenital realists we approach the child mind as if it were the virgin soil of a potential kitchen garden, ours to spade and hoe indefatigably and plant full of the utilitarian seeds of all the homely vegetables. If, on the other hand, we are native romanticists our natural inclination is to treat it like a ouija board and stand around in awed and ecstatic silence awaiting its manifestations. In the one case we hand our offspring a book entitled something like *How the Wood Fairies Taught Little Johnnie the Difference Between an Apricot and an Acorn* and in the other something suggestive, like *Pollyanna and Little Paul Dombey in Looking Glass Land*.

But the child's mind is not yours—it's his. It is an impertinence to answer anybody's questions before they are asked, or to superimpose our spiritual taste on any living human being, whether it happens to be one of our own size or somebody very much littler than we are.

Beset by such gloomy meditations on the subject of Juvenilia, it is an honest pleasure to take up a book like *The Babyhood of Wild Beasts*, by Georgia McNally (Doran), and find a simple and graphic study of the infancy of wild animals made for children without condensation or patronage. There are twenty-five chapters, illustrated by truly interesting photographs, each one telling the significant fact about a different baby beast: what it looks like, what it eats, and what its habits are, illumined by personal anecdotes of the author's relations with it. Miss McNally has a sincere liking and understanding of the children of men and animals and knows how to represent the one to the other.

In *The Broom Fairies*, by Ethel M. Gate (Yale University Press) is another pleasant surprise for the discouraged reviewer. They are real fairy stories, clean of fancy and pure of origin, delightfully told, and any child who likes Grimm and George Macdonald will be glad to have Miss Gate's volume on his bookshelf beside the others. Except for a moment of incongruous remorse on the part of the Frozen Princess some thousand years too late, and the unconvincing reform in the character of the eldest Sister who should by good rights have remained dourly a maiden to the end of her days, the book is altogether enjoyable.

An Eskimo Robinson Crusoe, by Roy Snell (Little, Brown), would be fun for anybody to read. It is as instructive as *The Swiss Family Robinson*; and in the same way, and for the same reason. No child, however involuntarily well informed, need shrink from this pellucid tale of Kituk, the White Bear and the three little camoogans in the land of Pee-le-uk-tuk.

Surprise House, by Abbie Farwell Brown (Houghton, Mifflin), is a little less satisfactory, but it is as good as its title and ingeniously devised, and though its moral is obvious it is only that if you read your Shakespeare you may have your reward in due time.

Peaseblossom, The Adventures of the Pine Tree Fairy and Others, by Mabel Fuller Blodgett (Doran), is thoroughly unorthodox, but not without its points. For those of us who can accustom ourselves to the idea of fairies hatching from eggshells, and similar nature fakes, it is a pleasantly got up little book.

The Funnyfeathers, by Lansing Campbell (Dutton), is a simple, straightforward and satisfactory account of the doings and sayings of various animals. It is a book for very young children and will entertain them without forcibly educating them.

The Happifats and the Grouch, by Kate Jordan (Dutton), though it has more of the spirit of adventure than many children's books, and holds the interest well, teaches just the smug and obvious lesson that the title suggests, and never quite loses sight of it.

The Pollyanna Annual, edited by Florence Orville and published by the Page Company, is not so incurably and unpleasantly glad as the title indicates. Nevertheless the gladness is there.

OUR INSURGENT THEATRES

In his book on *The Insurgent Theatre* Thomas H. Dickinson has enriched our current vocabulary by a phrase which conveniently covers the little theatre, free theatre, intimate theatre movements, and which enables the reviewer to include under a single title such widely varying treatments of a general question as are found in Mr. Dickinson's own book, in Sheldon Cheney's *The Art Theatre* and Louise Burleigh's *The Community Theatre*.

The Insurgent Theatre (Huebsch) is the most dispassionate, thoroughgoing and exhaustive handbook of its kind. "I have purposely made no attempt," says Mr. Dickinson in his preface, "to deal with the literary aspects of plays written for and produced by the so-called 'insurgent' theatres." He adds the significant sentence: "I do not present the insurgent theatres as better theatres; I present them as different theatres." This point of view at once sets Mr. Dickinson apart from the usual pamphleteers who uphold the new ventures and assume that they are better than the so-called "commercial" theatres. *The Insurgent Theatre* contains facts and figures, a history of new theatre experiments in subsidy and a consideration of what may be done by leagues by means of "federated audiences." He passes structures on fads and insincere attempts to wheedle the public, but ends on a note of hope. "All in all the theatre seems to me to be to-day in the not unencouraging position of a young runner who for some time has been cautioning about warming up and now bends over the tape ready and eager for a race against strong odds." One instance of the thoroughness of the book is the space devoted to Donald Robertson's valiant venture in Chicago in 1907 and 1908, which has received but scant attention from other writers. Perhaps this is another instance of the Westerner who has kept his eyes open in his own part of the country, and when he comes to survey a nationwide movement is better able to write about it than a critic who finds it irksome to stray farther afield than Broadway—or at most Grand street. Mr. Dickinson once wrote a book on American drama. It was interesting, but one felt instinctively that it was written by a professor. *The Insurgent Theatre*, which is well written, is vastly more readable, and Mr. Dickinson is to be congratulated that he has at last freed himself from the necessity to write like a professor.

The Art Theatre (Knopf) is written by Sheldon Cheney, editor of the attractive new *Theatre Arts Magazine*. The author does not pretend to furnish a history of the art theatre or the little theatre, and he confesses that he is not altogether just to the commercial manager. His aim is to set forth "accurate data about the most successful little theatres and art theatres." Incidentally, he wished to "provide an account and analysis of the achievement of the Arts and Crafts Theatre in Detroit." Mr. Cheney is then, better equipped to discuss the inside of the movement than Mr. Dickinson, but lacks the latter's qualifications as historian. *The Art Theatre* is purposely one sided, but the enthusiasm with which it is inspired, the ease and fluency with which it is written will make it possibly more interesting reading than *The Insurgent Theatre*. As in Mr. Cheney's earlier work, *The New Movement in the Theatre*, there is a large amount of material on Craig and Appia and Reinhardt, but this is supplemented by a detailed account of Sam Hume's practical achievements in Detroit. One of the most valuable parts of the book is the description of Mr. Hume's convertible settings. Mr. Hume is an ardent enthusiast, an unselfish artist. He has invented a system of stage setting which is here set forth for the benefit of all managers, professional and amateur. There is one diagram illustrating the use of the sets, and numerous cuts supplementing the descriptive material. *The Art Theatre* is of course one sided, but as it makes no pretence to being anything else, it would scarcely be just to blame the author.

The Community Theatre (Little, Brown), by Louise Burleigh, is a brief and agreeable little book describing certain aspects of a nationwide movement. Whether Miss Burleigh knows it or not, she is following the trail blazed over ten years ago by Romain Rolland, who laid down the principles for a community drama in his book on *The People's Theatre*. It was one of the requisites of M. Rolland's theatre that the people should participate in the plays produced. Says Miss Burleigh: "The community theatre is a house of play in which events offer to every member of a body politic active participation in a common interest." She proceeds to analyze in quick succession the different methods by which the community spirit may be awakened, and offers suggestive chapters on "Playgrounds and Pageants," "The Sociological Theatre," "Little Theatres," and so on. The book concludes with a number of practical suggestions on organization and an appendix and bibliography. A preface by Percy MacKaye restates that idealist's theories on the civic theatre.

The question of insurgent theatres has received a good deal more space in the newspapers and magazines of late than its importance would seem to warrant. Perhaps this is but another instance of our national failing: our desire to pursue the new for the sake of the new. Certain it is that the little theatres are doing worth while work, but their directors and adherents must realize that promiscuous publicity does not mean true success, and that three or four years existence is no pledge of perpetuity. The books of Mr. Cheney and Miss Burleigh may inspire the insurgents, and they will at least interest outsiders as records of achievement, but there is a danger in such enthusiastic writings which cannot be overlooked: the little theatres require rather the tonic admonitions of Mr. Dickinson than the warm praise of the authors of *The Art Theatre* and *The Community Theatre*. Our new movement in the theatre is only in its swaddling clothes and too much attention and overpraise may bring it to naught.

Jingles and Verse.

An interesting anthology of modern nursery verse has been put together by Jenny Wallis in *The Sandman: His Songs and Rhymes* (The Page Company, Boston). The editor has ransacked the juvenile magazines for material and has contributed liberally herself. Her criterion seems to have been novelty rather than familiarity. The book is appropriately illustrated. It forms part of a "Sandman" series. ($1.50.)

Christmas Stories.

In an American variation on Dickens's "Christmas Carol" which she calls *The Angel of Christmas* (Frederick A. Stokes Company), Stella George Stern Perry makes a successful business man wander about on Christmas Eve to see the forms of oppressive labor from which he draws his wealth. The new Scrooge also sees again his childhood and his mother, which drives the lesson home. (75 cents.)

The Christmas spirit permeates the delightful account of the celebration of the day in a New England village, *My Little Town* (E. P. Dutton & Co.), by Winifred Kirkland, now printed by itself in a pretty little volume.

A poetic fantasy by Coningsby Dawson, *The Seventh Christmas* (Henry Holt & Co.), records what the author thinks the little Jesus might have done when he found that he had completed six years of his life. (50 cents.)

Imagining from pictorial art that there must have been baby angels as well as those who announced the coming to the shepherds, Laura Spencer Porter in *The Story of the Little Angels* (Harpers) leads a band of them to the manger where the infant lies. (50 cents.)

For discontented boys and girls the Rev. Dr. Charles E. Jefferson tells a story of *The Land o' Enough* (Thomas Y. Crowell Company), showing how dismal the world would be if everybody had everything he wanted and did not care to strive for anything or to depend on others. (50 cents.)

What's the Matter With Russia?

Many are asking "What's the matter with Russia?" Much material with which to answer this may be found in "The Soul of the Russian Revolution," written by Moissaye J. Olgin, a Russian revolutionist for seventeen years and now here as an exile. His account is issued this month by Henry Holt & Co.

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The brass bound wedding chest that held
Her linen's snowy store,
The very wheel whose humming died,
Seemed only chains she bore.

She watched the foot free gypsies pass;
She never knew or guessed
The wistful dream that drew them close,
The longing in each breast
Some day to know a home like hers,
Wherein their hearts might rest.

(From "The Dreamers and Other Poems," by Theodosia Garrison. George H. Doran Company.)

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