

E D I T O R I A L

Our Special Spring Number.

THE special spring number of *Books and the Book World* will appear next Sunday, April 14. It will, to be sure, have more pages than we usually offer our readers. It will also, we hope, be at least proportionally as much more interesting than usual as it is larger than usual. It might even be more so! Be sure we shall strive for that.

Of the features to be presented we shall speak here and now of one only. About two weeks ago the editor asked some dozens of the best known English and American authors, writers of fiction, to tell readers of *Books and the Book World* what book or books or what writer or writers they have individually and personally found most interesting in the twelvemonth past. At this writing replies are still coming in and it is impossible to say just how many we shall be able to publish next Sunday. It may easily be the case that some of the responses will have to be deferred for publication in our number of April 21. But they will all be printed, and those already received make it certain that the collective response will be among the most entertaining symposia THE SUN, or any other journal, has ever printed.

Double Discoveries.

In the first place we can't help but believe that the question put to all the authors was in itself the most interesting question that could have been asked. For the answers to it are bound to partake of the nature of discovery, of exploration. The discovery is dual. In telling us what he liked most or what made the strongest impression on him the writer may or may not call our attention to something good we have overlooked, but he does inevitably and unfailingly reveal himself. By their tastes shall ye know them.

Such men as BOOTH TARKINGTON, ERNEST POOLE, JOHN GALSWORTHY, ARNOLD BENNETT; such women as MARY S. WATTS, REBECCA WEST and MARY AUSTIN exhibit very definite likings, and the disclosure of these personal preferences has value to readers of their work.



A Book to Stir You Up.

THE appearance of a new edition of MADISON GRANT'S *The Passing of the Great Race*, so completely revised, the publishers tell us, as to have been entirely reset, is something to challenge the attention of those who are remodelling Europe nearer to their hearts' desires. The book is full of statements which slash across the preconceptions of most of us as sharply and as "ruthlessly" as they obliterate national boundaries.

GRANT is an anthropologist, which means that he doesn't give a rap for nationalities, of which we talk so much to-day, but does care immensely about races. The word "race" is all the time being misused. For example, GRANT tells us that there is no Celtic race. Racially the Bretons are Alpines. The Welsh—the small, dark fellows—are Mediterranean. Most of the Irish are of the same race stock as the Scotch and English. There is no ground in racial differences, he assures us, for a separate Irish state, however much religious and other differences may make the formation of such a state expedient or just.

Some Upsetting Statements.

The author tells us that "the world would be no richer in civilization with an independent Bohemia or an enlarged Rumania, but, on the contrary, an independent Hungarian nation strong enough to stand alone, a Finland self-governing or reunited to Sweden or an enlarged Greece would add greatly to the forces that make for good government and progress. A free Poland, apart from its value as a buffer state, might be actually a step backward. Poland was once great, but the elements that made it so are scattered and gone, and the Poland of to-day is a geographical expression and nothing more."

GRANT expresses the opinion that the catastrophic civil war has indefinitely retarded the development and fixation of an American type. It is his belief that the splendid Nordic stock which was almost exclusively the stock of the American pioneers and which was destroyed so largely in the battles of

the civil war might very shortly, had it not been for that calamity, have matured us into a nation like the Elizabethans of England, who produced SHAKESPEARE and DRAKE and HAWKINS and RALEIGH, who conquered and settled the American colonies, who laid the magnificent foundation for the greatest empire (in the sense of federated nations) that the world has ever seen.

The White Man's Future.

There is no melting pot, says GRANT, or if there is its operation is so slow, stretching over thousands of years to effect the smallest fusion, that man cannot take it into his calculations at all. Therefore those who look cheerfully to see America effect a blending of racial strains are simply deluding themselves. One race either displaces another, contrives to live side by side with it or is swallowed up by it. The people of India speak an ancient white man's tongue, but not a distinguishable drop of his blood is left to show their Nordic conqueror. Always in a fusion of races the inferior race triumphs.

In America, GRANT tells us, we must prepare to see (we shall not see it, of course, but our remote descendants will) the West Indies, the coast region of our Gulf States, perhaps also the black belt of the lower Mississippi Valley, abandoned to negroes. He grants the negro no potentiality of progress or initiative from within. He says that where the incentive to imitate the dominant race is removed the negro and the Indian revert to ancestral culture. "In other words, it is the individual and not the race that is affected by religion, education and example." For evidence he calls our attention to Hayti. "The white men in India, the East Indies, the Philippines and China will leave not the slightest trace behind them in the blood of the native population."

The Rule of the Worst.

In the introduction to his book GRANT remarks that our forefathers who wrote the words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," were themselves slave owners and despised Indians as something less than human. GRANT'S attitude is that men are not equal and it's no use pretending they are. He says: "Throughout history it is only the race of leaders that has counted, and the most vigorous have been in control and will remain in mastery in one form or another until such time as democracy and its illegitimate offspring, socialism, definitely establish caecocracy and the rule of the worst and put an end to progress. The salvation of humanity will then lie in the chance survival of some sane barbarians who may retain the basic truth that inequality and not equality is the law of nature."

We think we have said and quoted quite enough to impress upon our readers several facts about this book by the chairman of the New York Zoological Society, who is also a trustee of the American Museum of Natural History and a councillor of the American Geographical Society. It is a book with which most readers, perhaps, will violently disagree here and there at least, but it is an important book, one that should be read, talked about and thought about.

What the practical application of GRANT'S doctrines would lead to we shall not venture to guess. The modern mind is all wrapped up in nationalities—languages, customs, national ideals, national cultures. To reconstitute Europe on a racial basis would be, of course, clean out of the question. But it does seem as if racial facts will have to be taken into consideration less in establishing national boundaries than in dealing with continents and in dealing with races within the various nations, meaning by a nation here a political unit.

Get the book and read it. It's worth while.



Henry James in Bogey.

A FASCINATING book came in not many days ago—*The Method of Henry James*, by JOSEPH WARREN BEACH. Comfortably settled in the train we turned reverently to the first page and began to read. Professor BEACH, we soon discovered, drives a straight, long ball and follows it with a regulation brassie; he generally clears the second bunker and puts his third on the green close to the pin.

To go over the course with him was a pleasure. There was something exhilarating in the way he got about, without haste, without fooling, without slicing into the rough. Now when we went around alone the last time what a different, what a disenchanting experience was ours!

On the first hole of the Henry James circuit, the

Roderick Hudson, we cleared every hazard and were down in one two three! The longer and more difficult second hole, *The Portrait of a Lady*, on which we rather expected to get into trouble, was done by us almost brilliantly. Then, either because we were off our game or because the artificial hazards began to thicken, our score suddenly went up with a leap and a bound.

Professor BEACH assures us that HENRY JAMES had a method. Well, we once knew a man who had a system. The system failed and the man went broke. Perhaps if JAMES had applied his method to roulette he would have died a poor man. Perhaps if our acquaintance had applied his system to fictioneering he would have died a celebrity.

Rare Sport—Rare, Yes.

JAMES was some southpaw. He has struck out more readers with the bases full than any other literary feller that ever wound himself into a double kink and then put something across when the bleachers were watching the runner on second. Any one can read HENRY JAMES—just as any one can play kelly pool. Going through a paragraph of JAMES is as exciting as shooting rapids in a canoe; and there are also those long portages. When, after playing the trout of Mr. JAMES'S delicate subtlety, you hook his thought firmly and start to reel in, the speckled beauty is sure to get away from you. Fisherman's luck.

The best way to go through JAMES is not with the breast stroke, but with the crawl. A sliding seat will help you on a four mile stretch, but it isn't well to hit up the pace too much at first. If you can't gain any ground through the centre try a forward pass. Above all, don't be rough. This isn't hockey, but a gentleman's game—cricket, most likely. Be sure and stop punctually at 4:30. It's not necessary to dress for tea.



Books for Soldiers!

TALKING of the work of the Junior Book Committee, HELEN S. WOODRUFF, chairman of the advisory board, said:

"There has probably never been a time in the world's history when books were so universally read as now. Always a lover of books and for the past few years myself a writer of fiction, I have had brought home to me the fact that books mean a lot to our boys at the front.

"Soon after we entered the war a friend of mine began collecting books to send to local military and naval camps and sought my assistance. I was then on the executive committee of the Authors League of America and in charge of their book booth at Hero Land. With the help of Ellis Parker Butler, Rex Beach, Gertrude Atherton and other League members we sold many hundreds of books which were shipped to the camps.

"It was the grateful letters we received—letters showing plainly that the men want books as much as 'smokes' or chocolates or anything else—that led to the forming of the Junior Book Committee under the auspices of the American Library Association War Service. The committee collects books to be used in the training camps here and abroad, on transports and in all Y. M. C. A. huts and Red Cross hospitals.

How to Help.

"The committee's members, young girls of New York, are personally soliciting books. We do not ask for new books or checks, though both are acceptable; but we do ask that every one who owns books—and almost every one does nowadays—go to his shelves and select volumes of fiction, travel, poetry, text books (if not out of date), scientific books—in fact, books of all kinds; for there is nothing published that some of the men who are fighting our battles do not want and ask to read! There are hundreds of thousands of books lying idle here at home doing no one any good. Let's give them to our men; it's a way of doing our bit."

Books old and new may be sent to the Junior Book Committee's president, Miss GRACE ASTOR BRISTED, at 64 East Seventy-seventh street, or to the secretaries, Miss EDITH GOULD of 857 Fifth avenue and Miss MARISE BLAIR, 2 East Seventieth street. If those who have books which they may care to give but which they cannot conveniently deliver will advise Mrs. WOODRUFF at her home, 14 East Sixty-eighth street, the Committee will see that they are called for.

Checks for the purchase of books should be sent to the committee's treasurer, Miss EVELYN BYRN-SMITH, also at 14 East Sixty-eighth street.