William Beebe's "Jungle Peace" Essays

By HARRY ESTY DOUNCE.

THE curator of birds up at Bronx Park Zoo, who is also director of the New York Zoological Society's tropical research station in British Guiana and a distinguished military aviator to boot, needs no further introduction to this audience. But it probably is well for Mr. Beebe that his standing as a scientist was secure before his delightful volume of essays, *Jungle Peace*, was published.

That is not because anything in the essays smacks even faintly of nature faking (how could it with Col. Roosevelt a minority stockholder in the honor of the author's dedication?), but because his way of writing is so capitally different from the way most scientists write when they stoop to entertain the laity. Mr. Beebe may, and we know he does, biologize with the profoundest. He writes about his field trips like a prince of amateurs—in the honorable sense of the word amateur, meaning one who does something worth while for sheer delight in doing it, not for x dollars a week. He is the paradoxical person who can eat his cake and keep it, have his fun and perpetuate it for himself and for the rest of us.

But amateur is an epithet with two edges. Confusion is easy. Having made up our minds that the word applies to William Beebe, the essayist, we are in danger of inferring that William Beebe the witness for science is an amateur the other way—or rather we should be in danger if the latter Beebe were not so widely known.

Mr. Beebe is blessed with a rare faculty of shutting his shop when the day's research is done and coming outside his profession. His laboratory and his inkwell are in separate rooms. Some scientists are scientists between 9 and 5, others—many others—between 12 and 12, and a depressing lot those are too; Germany was chock full of them, and now look at the damned nation! Mr. Beebe is of the 9 to 5 variety. Set him down in a jungle vista and after he has ornithologized the birds, botanized the ferns and creepers, entomologized the bugs and so on he can look at the whole scene again with fresh eyes, and forgetting his trinominal nomenclature, respond to its magic and mystery like a poet in love. Meteorological considerations do not ball and chain his emotions in the presence of a splendid sunset; he can slough off the physics of light to rejoice that the sea is blue, and a bird's song to him is pure music as often as it is a secondary sexual whatsthenameofit.

And now about writing. A professional writer worth a continental is two beings. One is an ardent creator, a rhapsodist; one a hardened critic. The rhapsodist, catching fire, smears everything down on the paper. The critic then steps in, and knowing that when you put everything down you really get down nothing, he scratches and erases with the coldest of experienced calculation, until no more remains than will surely suggest the whole to the imagination of the reader. The late Richard Harding Davis could *write* as far as writing goes with any one you please, and we know from a friend of his what his method was and how uncommonly Spartan the critic in him was. But all who really earn their salt by writing practice such revision in their heads if not on their tablets. A bitter apprenticeship has taught them to do it, and how.

Mr. Beebe having a pleasant evening with his pen is quite properly the rhapsodist with the critical torturer virtually excluded—which is to say, he is the amateur. He writes as he enjoys doing, draws in as many details as he likes and splashes on adjectives to his heart's content. It would never do for a journeyman author who was an amateur naturalist of evenings, but for Mr. Beebe nothing else would do as well. He has an exceptional gift of instinct of written expression and his joyous, unlabored product is good and admirable frequently.

If you wish the difference between this rare bird sort of amateur and a fine professional appropriately illustrated you have only to read a page of Mr. Beebe and then one of Mr. John Burroughs, the best of our elder naturalist essayists, as Mr. Beebe is the best of our younger ones. The contrast of their "handling" is like the contrast between Burroughs's beloved Hudson Valley hillsides and Beebe's beloved jungles. We are lucky in having both.

Here is some Beebe, partly to make the point and partly to make you buy *Jungle Peace:*

"Trees were so rare that one was compelled to take notice of them. High above the bamboos, high above even those arboreal towers of Pisa, the cocoanut palms, rose the majestic silk cotton trees, bare of leaves at this season, with great branches shooting out at breathless heights. Like strange gourdlike fruit three sizes of nests hung pendant from these lofty boughs: short, scattered purses of yellow orioles, colonied clusters of the long pouches of yellow backed *banyahs*, and finally, the great, graceful, woven trumpets of the giant black caciques, rarely beautiful, and like the trees, scarce enough to catch and hold the eye. The groves of cocoanut palms, like a hundred enormous green rockets ever bursting in mid air, checkered the sunlight, which sifted through and was made rosy by a host of lotus blossoms beneath. Then the scene changed in a few yards, and low, untropical shrubs filled the background, while at our feet rose rank upon rank of cattails, and we might be passing across the Jersey meadows."

JUNGLE PEACE. By WILLIAM BEEBE. Henry Holt & Co. $1.75.

'Poleon to the Rescue!

IT was the wildest chance to take. Round and round in the rapids spun the frail craft. There was a crash of swirling waters—a girl's voice shrieking—and then—but 'Poleon Doret saw and heard—'Poleon Doret, whom you have seen in the movies and loved.

Read this new story about the man whose business is "just livin'." In

The WINDS OF CHANCE

by Rex Beach

he takes you again up into that magic country of the Klondike—that land he knows so well and tells about so much better than any other writer.

It is a book full of the joy of living—full of the big, wholesome laughter that keeps men sane and happy—for Rex Beach's men and women are real and human.

It is a big story—with a big idea back of it—a story such as only Rex Beach could have written.

Don't lose a minute. Get it at once at the nearest bookstore. $1.50.
Read it and pass it on to a soldier.

HARPER & BROTHERS Established 1817

A GREAT NOVEL AND A MARVELOUS PICTURE OF FRENCH AND GERMAN CHARACTER

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

By VICENTE BLASCO IBANEZ

Author of "The Shadow of the Cathedral," etc.

BECAUSE it is beyond question the greatest novel the war has produced—certainly the book most talked of everywhere just now, one that every one will find of deep interest.

BECAUSE, besides being a story of compelling interest, it is a analysis of the shaping of national character which tremendously concerns the American people—the more effective because it is so unobtrusive.

BECAUSE, in the opinion of many critics, it is one novel which will long survive the war. As one critic says, it has all the elements which assure to a novel life. It is full of the pain and beauty and desire of life, but it is never hectic, it has a large canvas but is never uncertain of focus, and its author knows life deeply and yet has faith in it."—(N. Y. Times.)

BECAUSE this very human and interesting story in its last scene "turns the reader's mind away from the horrors of war and the great crime of the Germans to the time when other life shall inhabit the earth and be the wiser and the freer for the sufferings of this generation and this war."

BUY IT, AND GIVE IT AS A THING OF VALUE TO BE KEPT AND REREAD.

THE DIAL: "Blasco Ibanez is, above all things, a writer of intense, radiant power . . . . he triumphs in scenes demanding epic description, until we are overwhelmed with the sense of actuality and feel a strange thrill of actual participation . . . the Spaniard stands easily in the forefront of those who have written of the present conflict."—Isaac Goldberg.

Authorized translation by Charlotte Brewster Jordan, $1.90

At all Bookstores. If not obtainable through your dealer it may be ordered direct from

E. P. DUTTON & CO., 681 Fifth Avenue, New York

Thirtieth Edition on the Press

Britain's Day, December 7th

It is important and opportune that on the same day that America formally acknowledges the great debt of honor and gratitude which she owes to Great Britain there should be published such a book as

British-American Discords and Concords

A Record of Three Centuries, Compiled by the History Circle

An authoritative review for the great public which reads our common language, summarizing the relations between Great Britain and America since Englishmen first settled on American soil.

A knowledge of British-American relations is an essential guide in formulating international relations which will maintain peace, and several of the foremost Professors of History in American Universities have collaborated through the History Circle in the production of a record of these relations through the past 150 years.

12° *Facsimile Letters and Map.* 75 *Cents.*

New York — 2 West 45th St. Just West of 5th Av.

ALL BOOKSELLERS

G. P. Putnam's Sons

London — 24 Bedford St., Strand