

Books of the Week

Conducted by Una H. A. Cool

BOOKS REVIEWED

- "The Coast of Chance," by Esther and Lucia Chamberlain.
- "Prisoners of Chance," by Randall Parrish.
- "Seeing England With Uncle John," by Anne Warner.
- "Furze the Cruel," by John Trevena.
- Every Child Should Know Series, edited by Hamilton W. Mabie.
- "The Courage of Blackburn Blair," by Eleanor Talbot Kinkead.
- "The Hemlock Avenue Mystery," by Roman Doubleday.
- "More," a Study of Financial Conditions, by George Otis Draper.

loquacious and richly funny. Uncle John in England is still generous, still irritable, yet more loquacious, and funnier than he ever thought of being in France—only he never guesses he is funny; that's part of the fun.

Pretty Yvonne and Lee are married and living happily in Oxford when Uncle John cables, sans date, sans name of steamer, that he is sailing, please meet him in Liverpool. So Yvonne and Lee travel post haste to Liverpool to find Uncle John and "Dilly," a staid old college professor, the unhappy victim of Uncle John's hospitality, have rushed madly off to Carlisle. Uncle John stays scarcely any time at all in a place—though he does give Edinburgh a half day—the lost trunk and Dilly's, too, and his comments on English sights and English travel and Dilly grow funnier with every hour. Meanwhile Yvonne and Lee get real pleasure out of their sudden trip, set down in clever letters home; and at last the wild chase ends merrily in Oxford, and Uncle John starts home innocently but deliciously funny to the last.

"I must say I don't care much about churches myself, but they don't take long—there's that to be said for them."

"I don't see how you remember dates. The only date I'm ever positive about is when my wife died, and I remember her because she died on my birthday. I couldn't remember my birthday before she died—no, I couldn't, for a fact."

"Every time you'd come a place in Europe you can't help a feeling of real relief."

The book has some very clever and amusing illustrations by F. R. Cruzer.

"Furze the Cruel"

By John Trevena. Published by Moffat, Yard & Co., New York. Price \$1.50.

"Furze the Cruel" is a great book. The London Academy says it is almost a masterpiece, and after reading it one is inclined to leave out that "almost." The author's foreword explains the title and hints at what is to come in the following:

"Almost everywhere on Dartmoor are furze, heather and granite. The furze seems to suggest cruelty, the heather endurance and the granite strength. The furze is destroyed by fire, but grows again; the heather is torn by winds, but blossoms again; the granite is worn away imperceptibly by the rain. This work is the first of a proposed trilogy, which the author hopes to continue and complete with 'Heather' and 'Granite.'"

The book does not in any little point fail in its object. Such a picture of Dartmoor has never before been put into fiction, notwithstanding the fact that this part of England has inspired hundreds of novels. The lower classes of the people living on Dartmoor are incomprehensively ignorant, but one feels that the author knows the country and speaks truth as plainly as the author, the Tavy family, Mary and Peter, not for a moment dreaming that they deserve better things; Thomasine, the stupid servant girl, fine and clean physically until dominated by fear in the guise of a farmer; Lue, a half-blind, half-idiot, brightly, trying to earn the barest living honestly for himself and his mongrel dog, Ju. Right here the naming of Ju is an interesting bit, worth quoting:

"His name was Ju, which was an abbreviation of Jerusalem. One Sunday evening brightly had slipped inside a church, and somewhat to his surprise had been allowed to remain, although a sidesman was told off to keep an eye on him and see that he did not break open the empty poor box. A hymn was sung about Jerusalem the golden, a piece of pagan doggerel concerning the future state, where happy souls were indulging in bacchanalian revels and overeat-

ing themselves in a sort of glorified daisy filled with milk and honey. The hymn enraptured brightly, who was, of course, tired and famished, and when he reviewed to do justice to so strong a book and one that is likely to become a classic of Dartmoor.

Of course he undertakes the task, which would have proven unworkable to any one else, and equally, of course, he is successful; or we should have had no story. The fight on the Mississippi river is very graphically told; all sorts of difficulties are met and surmounted; besides Di Noyan and his wife and Beeten the party is recruited by wandering Puritan preacher, a crazy, intolerant person very fond of the sound of his own voice and with an insatiable appetite. He furnishes somewhat overdrawn but quite necessary comedy elements for the tale.

Up to this point the book is good reading. The tale is dramatic and full of strong, exciting situations; the character of Di Noyan is particularly well drawn—a man of inordinate personal vanity, willing to risk his life to recover his curling irons, of great bravery, but variable as the winds and extremely selfish. From the time when the party falls in with a band of white savages in the Ozark mountains, the story becomes too much for the credibilities of grown people. One can scarcely follow the events they are so lavishly contrived. The travelers have a lively fight but are captured and prepared for torture. The queen of the savages is an outcast French woman, thoroughly depraved and savagely cruel. How she has changed to be the queen of these people, calling herself "The Daughter of the Sun," is not explained, but there she is, and makes trouble. She falls in love with Di Noyan and he succumbs to her charm at once. All the members of the little party are imprisoned in different places, but finally Beeten and Eloise, a Catholic priest, who has been a victim of the savages for two months, manage to escape. The heavens come to the assistance of virtue at the last, and a bolt of lightning destroys the last of the mound builders. All sorts of explanations and theories about this prehistoric race of people have been offered by archaeologists, but never anything like the one in this novel. One could almost wish for the sake of Mr. Parrish's art that the last half of his book had not been so forced.

"Seeing England With Uncle John" By Anne Warner, author of "Seeing France With Uncle John," etc. Published by the Century company, New York. Price \$1.50.

A more maddening traveling companion than Uncle John one can hardly imagine; a funnier tourist to read about has never been put into a book. Uncle John in France was generous, irritable,

and trying to recall the music. He could think of nothing but Jerusalem for some days. He went into the public library at Tavistock and looked it up in a map of the world, discovered it was in a country called Palestine, and wondered how many rabbit skins it would cost to take him there. Brightly reckoned in rabbit skins, not in shillings and pence, which were matters he was not very familiar with. He noticed that when ever he mentioned the name of Jerusalem the dog wagged her tail, as though she, too, was interested in the dairy produce, so, as the animal lacked a title, Jerusalem was awarded her."

Poor Brightly—he inspires contempt as well as pity.

The dreadful character of the book is Pendoggat, and adjectives fail to describe his fiendishness. Robert Louis Stevenson once said that when you come across an incident or a character in a book which seems, if an incident, all wrong and inartistic and not true to life; or if you find a character too unnatural to have ever existed anywhere, it is safe to conclude that the author had no thought of art in creating them, but drew the picture from life. That suggestion applies to such a character as Pendoggat, for if one could be convinced that many such men were walking about the world, it would strike terror to the heart of many a brave man and woman. Everything he did for awhile seemed to prosper and every human being with whom he came in contact he injured, some of them wanting. His brutality was not always physical, though he was a vicious animal, but the injuries were more cruel often than blows. Contrasted with all this horror and the dreadful somberness is a genuine love story so sweet and beautiful, so real and convincing, that for it alone the book is a delight. One reads all the rest of the Dartmoor

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FRONTISPIECE TO THE "COAST OF CHANCE" BY ESTHER & LUCIA CHAMBERLAIN.

Elizabeth Hamerton and "Being a Boy" by Charles Dudley Warner.

"The Courage of Blackburn Blair" By Eleanor Talbot Kinkead, author of "The Invisible Bond," published by Moffat, Yard & Co., New York. Price \$1.50.

The author of "The Invisible Bond" had a purpose in writing that story which was to show the duty of a man toward his wife, and now in "The Courage of Blackburn Blair," its sequel, she attempts to show the man's duty to others. This novel falls far short of its object and is not nearly so interesting as its predecessor. In the first place, the author starts out with a chip on her shoulder. She disapproves of the code of honor in vogue in Kentucky and writes of it with scorn. To quote a few lines in regard to this same code of honor is almost to warn the reader against it: "That false and unrelenting public sentiment which demands that a man stand ever ready to take the protection of his life and honor into his own hands, questioning the courage of one who will not fight upon a certain provocation, no matter what the circumstances."

The hero is physically like one's ideal of a Kentuckian, but it ends there, for his other attributes are not particularly lovable, nor are they particularly Kentuckian. He is tall, dark and saturnine, but the beautiful courtesy which we associate more with southerners than any other class of men in America is lacking in him; he is overbearing and rude and his pursuit of the heroine is almost cruel. She is not an engaging little thing at all, but weak in character.

Miss Kinkead knows her Kentucky well and her descriptions of the country and scenery are superb; it is a pity not to have more of that sort of the author's style. She should be discouraged in trying to write novels like this with a purpose. The Gobel tragedy is brought into the story, but most readers have had all they want of that in the daily papers for the last eight years. It is a poor novel, but very well written.

"The Hemlock Avenue Mystery" By Roman Doubleday. Illustrated by Charles Greenwood. Published by Little, Brown & Co., Boston. Price \$1.50.

It is not quite fair to review in the accepted sense so good a detective story as "The Hemlock Avenue Mystery," for what can be said of it without half revealing the plot. Roman Doubleday, the author, has written a tale as puzzling as the famous "Leavenworth Case," which has stood for more than a decade as the best detective story in American fiction. "The Hemlock Avenue Mystery" is all about a murder and there is no solution, or suggestion of it, until the last chapter. There are three pretty love themes woven into the tale, all circling around the murder.

Usually it is necessary in detective stories to point out some one weak point to prove that the author is not infallible, but in this case one finds no flaw in the carefully constructed mystery nor in the equally carefully done solution. The plot is interesting at every point and the new author is to be congratulated. It is seldom that the best of an author's work gets and deserves immediate success. Excellent illustrations are by Charles Grumwald.

"More" A study of financial conditions. By George Otis Draper. Published by Little, Brown & Co., Boston. Price \$1.

George Otis Draper, the author of this book, is a younger member of a well known Massachusetts family, whose success in private business has often been amplified by honorable public service. He has developed a literary inclination through years of writing on technical subjects, and is recognized as an authority in the textile division of our commerce. Few men of his years have had so varied a business career or so good a chance to gain the experience necessary to effective writing on such subjects from the practical view point.

This book condenses Mr. Draper's views on trusts, the tariff, currency, unionism, socialism, government interference, etc., and while much of it appears to the lay intelligence to be involved, it is a book to study and to think over.

In the first chapter he lays down these laws: "More is the goal of de-

"The Making of a Millionaire" by Frank Rosewater. Century publishing company, Omaha. Price \$1.

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sire. Desire energizes evolution. Evolution is a progress toward perfection. In brief those three sentences are the book. One sees that the author is explaining constantly the reasons why we should acquire wealth and excuses people for wanting and getting more. He has no patience with popular reformers; the man who says "The world owes me a living" is an abomination in his sight, for usually the man who says that statement sits down and waits for that "living" to drop into his lap. The book is written in praise of the workers in all grades of society—the producers of property, the men who employ them, and the author believes they are more deserving of notice and praise than those who sit back and live on what they produce.

New Books Briefly Noted

"Yard and Garden," by Tarkington Baker (Robbs-Merrill company, Indianapolis). For the amateur first and any gardener second, Mr. Baker is the dramatic and literary editor of the Indianapolis News, but all his spare time is devoted to gardening. He has a small town place which is a hower of blossoms and a country place where his experiments are carried on on a more extensive scale.

Up to now most of the gardening books published have been written by Englishmen and the information in them could be applied only to English gardens and gardening, but this book is distinctly American and its advice can safely be followed anywhere in eastern or middle America. Few of its rules would be any practical use in California. Our climate is so different here from any other part of the United States that a special book must be written for this locality.

This book is a bulky in appearance it contains 413 pages and 133 illustrations that add materially to the text. The cover has a color design of a yard of red hollyhocks and underneath the title and author's name. It is a valuable book for a limited audience.

"British Highways and Byways From a Motor Car," by Thomas D. Murphy (L. C. Page & Co., Boston). Is the prettiest book of travel of the year. It is a record of 2,000 motor tours in England, Wales and Scotland, not given in guide book form at all, but like the talks of returned travelers. It is filled with beautiful illustrations, reproductions in color of famous paintings, also maps, etc., of much value to any reader, whether contemplating a similar trip or reading for pleasure.

"School Reports and School Efficiency," by David S. Sneddin, Ph. D., and William H. Allen, Ph. D. (The Macmillan company, New York). Is just what the name indicates. These two scientific men made the most careful investigation concerning school conditions in New York, at the request of the New York committee on physical education of school children, and this book is the result of their work. It will be of enormous interest to educators and laymen alike.

"Principles of Psychic Philosophy," by Charles B. Newhall, George S. Shepard Company, Boston). Is a book which purports to offer "a rational explanation and a practical application of psychic or soul science." It treats of the evolution of "spiritual man's" relation to God, the problem of suffering and disease and kindred subjects. Students of psychology will find much in the book to interest.

Gossip of Books and People Who Make Them

Charles M. Skinner, for 22 years on the staff of the Brooklyn Eagle, died at his country home in Vermont recently. It is his reputation as a writer for Mr. Skinner wrote a number of books on American folklore. These volumes, "American Myths and Legends Beyond Our Borders," "Myths and Legends of Our Native Land," and "Folklore and Legends of Our Own Land," were all published by the J. B. Lippincott company. In addition to these he wrote several nature books, among them "Flora of the Mountains," "The Mountains of the West," and "The Mountains of the East." Mr. Skinner was also a writer of several plays. He was a brother of Otis Skinner, who some 12 years ago produced his "Villon the Vagabond" and made a distinctly plausible character of the poet, who was later exploited by the Huntly McCarthy and E. H. Sothern in "If I Were King."

An autobiography which ought to be of more than ordinary interest is that of that Professor Church here who has been writing. Professor Church has written no less than 70 books. The fathers and probably the grandfathers of the new beginning to learn the delights of the classic poets reformed at an early age over his "Starves From Homer." He is one of the few men now living who knew Frederick Douglass intimately. He was Maurice's curate for seven years.

A rather singular book notice appears in the Athenaeum, written and signed by Maurice Hewlett, in which he says, "The Spanish Jade," written by me, is announced by the English publishers at the price of 6 shillings. I hope you will allow me to explain that the story is a short one (of 35,000 words) and that the price, which is that of an ordinary novel, has been fixed by the publishers against my wishes and in spite of my protests. Having parted with the copyright I have no authority in the matter and can only take the means of making my position clear to the public."

New printings of four books by the late Lafcadio Hearn are coming from the press of Little, Brown & Co. These include "Some Chinese Ghosts," "A Japanese Miscellany," "In Ghostly Japan" and "Exotics and Retrospectives."

Books Received

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PRISONERS OF CHANCE
RANDALL PARRISH
COVER DESIGN BY CLARA BRITTON

"The Coast of Chance"

By Esther and Lucia Chamberlain. Published by the Robbs-Merrill company, Indianapolis. Price \$1.50.

The first remarkable thing about this novel by the Chamberlains is that it is a San Francisco novel and it does not even mention the earthquake. For that, Allah be praised!

The story is supposed to be a mystery story with a psychological suggestion running through it. As to the mystery it falls, for the criminal is plainly indicated almost from the first mention of him. Barring this weakness the book is well done.

The heroine, Flora Gilsey, is a rich orphan, daughter of a nobody who has "struck it" in the mines. She has a paid chaperon living with her, a woman of whom she has an instinctive distrust, but who has successfully plotted her to an assured position in society.

The title for the book is found in the heroine's reflections at an exhibition of paintings given at a club. Looking over the pictures she stands around her she is pictured thus:

"She could recall a time when she had not even been quite sure of her clothes. Not Clara's subdued rustle at her side could make her doubt them now, but her security was still recent enough to be sometimes conscious of itself. It was so short a time since all these talking groups that made a personage of her had had the power to put her quite out of countenance. The women who craned over their shoulders to speak to her—how hard she had had to work to make them see her at all! And now she did not know which she felt more like laughing at herself or them, for having taken it so seriously. For when one thought of it, wasn't it absurd that people out of nowhere should suppose themselves exclusive? And she had been nowhere they were, herself and all the rest of them. From causes not far dissimilar they had drifted or scrambled to where they now stood. It was a question of quarter rights. The first on the ground were dictators and how long they could hold their claim against invaders' dubious cast of fate. For there were, forever fresh invasions and departures, and the victors were the sudden fallings back into oblivion, brilliant shootings through of strange meteors, and in the tide of fluctuation the things that were established or traditional upon this coast of chance were like islands in the sea, and the ocean. It was amazing, it was almost frightening, the fluid, unstable quality of life, the rapid, inconsequent changes, yet it was also this very quality of transformation that most stirred and delighted her."

Flora is with her chaperon and her fiancé, a young man who has not lived very long in San Francisco but who appears to know everybody and to have an excellent social position. The afternoon before there had been a private view in the "maple room" of the effects of Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter Chatworth, with her husband had been killed while on their honeymoon in the Alps. Society turns out to this private view, for the auction is scheduled for the next day. During this view the most interesting thing in the whole collection disappears. It is a ring like a bit of an old gold heathen god curled round himself, with his head, which was mostly two yellow sapphires, between his knees and a big blue stone on top. Soft yellow gold, so fine you could almost dent it. And carved! Even through a glass every line of it is right.

Flora's fiancé has told her all about the ring, and this ring is the clue to the subject of conversation than are the pictures which have come to see. Later at supper a Judge Butler and his daughter and an Englishman called Kerr and several others join them, and a story is told of a criminal at one time famous in England named Farrall Wand, too clever to be called an ordinary pickpocket, but that was the nature of his business. It appears that the judge in traveling had seen the man being taken on board a steamer and with a traveler's idle curiosity had "snapped" it with his camera. The names—they should have something real to do with the story. Most of the descriptive passages are poor; there is such an evident striving for unusual expression and it is so successful at times that all sense is lost. One would like to have the expression "deep boomed trees" explained, and isn't "hideous coffee" more than an unusual expression?

The book is well bound, with a picture of the ring on the cover and some excellent illustrations through it by Clarence F. Underwood.

"Prisoners of Chance" By Randall Parrish, author of "Bob Hampton of Placent," "Beth Norrell," etc. Published by A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago. Price \$1.50.

"Prisoners of Chance" is the tale of what happened to Geoffrey Benteen, a gentleman adventurer, "through his love for a lady of France." Mr. Parrish needs no introduction to the novel reading public which has enjoyed "When Wild-erness Was King," "My Lady of the North" and others of his readable romances; but this story is a departure in style, at least, from his other works.

The author explains his position in a most ingenious foreword. He says: "The manuscript of this tale has been in my possession several years. It reached me through natural lines of inheritance, but remained nearly forgotten until a chance reading revealed a certain chivalry; then, making note of correspondences in minor details, I realized that what I had cast aside as mere fiction might possess a substantial foundation in fact. Impelled by this conviction, I now submit the narrative to public inspection, but, as to others, better fitted than I may judge as to the worth of this Geoffrey Benteen."

He proceeds to sketch the career of Geoffrey Benteen, a resident of La Petite Rocher and also bits of history in Louisiana; how the French hated the governor, Don Antonio de Ulloa, and finally rose against him in 1763; how a certain chivalry, Di Noyan, led the rebellion and with other nobles remained in control over the year; how, at the end of that time, the Spaniards came back in overwhelming numbers with the dreadful "Cruel" and threw these nobles into prison and condemned them to be shot at dawn. And at dawn they were shot; all but Di Noyan, and his escape was wrapped in mystery and mystery. The faded old manuscript tells the whole story and the author submits it to us for inspection and opinion.

Geoffrey Benteen, gentleman adventurer and borderman, arrives in the state of New Orleans the day before this execution is to take place. A negro slave meets him in the street and tells him a lady would like to see him. He keeps the appointment made for him and discovers that the "lady" is a former sweetheart who has refused him because he was not of her religion, a Catholic. This refusal had driven him out into the wilderness, where he had led the life of a wild borman for five years, and he is doubly shocked to find that the lady, Eloise Lafurriere, has married Di Noyan, that he is condemned to be shot the next day, and that she wishes him, Geoffrey Benteen, to attempt his rescue.

Of course he undertakes the task, which would have proven unworkable to any one else, and equally, of course, he is successful; or we should have had no story. The fight on the Mississippi river is very graphically told; all sorts of difficulties are met and surmounted; besides Di Noyan and his wife and Beeten the party is recruited by wandering Puritan preacher, a crazy, intolerant person very fond of the sound of his own voice and with an insatiable appetite. He furnishes somewhat overdrawn but quite necessary comedy elements for the tale.