RECENT BOOKS IN BRIEF REVIEW

JUST because mythology has no record of a muse concerned with the art of bamboozling, we should not discredit her existence, for from some unknown source William F. Mannix drew a more than human faculty for cheating the world. We speak of it as the *art* of bamboozling advisedly, for such it was with Mannix, and we are willing to do homage to the artistry of this superlatively imaginative genius — or liar, if you will — who composed "The Memoirs of Li Hung Chang" (Houghton Mifflin). A reissue of this book has just been made. In it Ralph D. Paine gives a sketch of this arch forger's life, of which the colossal wholesale bamboozling represented by the Chinese memoirs was the high spot. Few fictionists could excel in novels the unmoral events this Mannix lived, upsetting as he did all the accepted conventions of honor and duty to turn a dull existence into a riotous romance. The incomparable rascal was glorious in his unsocial program, sinful though it was according to civil law and decalogue. Memory nor Münchhausen could lie like Mannix. Besides this life of the author, there are in the reissue the fictitious memoirs, just as good now as when they fooled Chinese scholars everywhere ten years ago.

There is much sound sense in G. K. Chesterton's "Fads versus Fancies" (Dodd, Mead), though it masquerades in a clown's costume. And there is also much inversion of truth spun out thinly. Mr. Chesterton likes to assume that people mean to be logical, and then to show them by very concrete instances just what would happen if someone took them at their word. He applies psychoanalysis to Hamlet, calls prohibition "that American system of class privilege", defends H. G. Wells's digressions from story writing, and pokes fun at the uses women are making of their comparatively new political rights. Taken all in all, Mr. Chesterton's single track, reductio ad absurdum method of confuting all opponents (to his own satisfaction) is most unconvincing. This is not, after all, a logical world. It is too much dependent on rain for the crops and what one did the night before, for that. Chesterton likes to prove that two things are in the same class and therefore . . . but proving that psychoanalysis and measles are both diseases does not imply that the cure for both is the same.

The strong New England flavor of everything that Alice Brown writes is dominant in "Ellen Prior" (Macmillan) and gives it a fresh, clean beauty that belongs to its subject. It is a long poem in verse, telling Ellen's story — her passionate love, the struggle between her devotion to her blind mother and her desire to serve her husband, and finally her pathetic end. But the story is of infinitely less importance than the form in which it is written. There are any number of beautiful lines, of exquisite phrases, bits that one marks and intends to go back to some day and memorize. Not only is the metre ex-

pertly handled and the rhyming carefully done, but the thought is conceived with that sense of imagination and spiritual insight into life which is real poetry. An example is the picture of the mother waiting for Ellen's return from the woods; she

> . . . loved to hear her quick returning tread
> Breaking the surface of contented thought
> Into bright shards of wondering what she brought.

"Russia's Women" (Dutton) by Nina Nikolaevna Selivanova is full of astounding information. Here is pictured the life of Russian wives from early history to the present day. It is a sketch rather than a treatise but it contains enough to make one wonder anew at the ability of humans to force a complete readjustment of living. From a most degraded position a hundred years ago the women of Russia have pushed each generation closer to a fair place in the run of social and political life. The influence of the Near East was killed by the more liberal life of the West, and this account of the transformation of Russian women gives hope for any sort of evolution or revolution by any ill used group.

Hazlitt is unfortunately one of those academic immortals; required courses in school and college have well nigh ruined him. It is a shame, because his essays are the top notch of a difficult and delightful art. He was a great man who wrote splendid prose in a manly way and with plenty of humor. P. P. Howe, his recent biographer, has collected some of his best work in a convenient little volume entitled "The Best of Hazlitt" (Doran). It makes a fine cocktail to whet the appetite for more thorough reading.

"We had arrived as enemies and were leaving as friends — a rare occurrence in history." These, the final words of General Henry T. Allen's "My Rhineland Journal" (Houghton Mifflin), are the expression of German opinion on the American forces in Germany — and represent the experience of our troops as regards the Germans. Unfortunately, the experience with the French was not so pleasant. The General, as governor of the Coblenz bridgehead and more or less official representative of the United States on the Rhineland High Commission, had continually to oppose a French policy of attempted domination. When the Ruhr enterprise was in prospect it became evident that the French action would lead to the withdrawal of the Americans. At this point the General made a "private and unofficial" attempt to bring about a renewal of negotiations between France and Germany — with no result other than a rebuke from the State Department. And so ended a chapter in American history in which, according to the General's account, we acquitted ourselves with credit in a situation of great difficulty. The French are still in the Ruhr; this journal may throw light on that problem. Nothing in the diary nor in the accounts from the Rhine country foretells the outcome of the enterprise.

When the literary history of our generation is written, there will be a very curious chapter devoted to the vogue of the anthologists in this decade, and the character of their achievement. Most reasonable excuses for poetical synthesis have been exhausted, and editors and publishers, perhaps in response to a stubborn popular demand, are still casting

about for subject matter, historical circumstances, or peculiarities of authorship which will justify a new compilation. Midway between reasonable excuse and mere pretext comes "Famous Single Poems" (Harcourt, Brace) edited by Burton E. Stevenson. Mr. Stevenson has observed that "One swallow may not make a summer, but one poem makes a poet." So here they are — "Casey at the Bat", "Ben Bolt", "Kaiser & Co.", and a dozen other solitary immortal verses by poetasters who bloomed and withered without leaving the bibliographers half a chance! The circumstances of composition are appended to each poem, with some biographical material concerning the author.

Ellin Craven Learned entitles her guide for the unmannered "Everybody's Complete Etiquette" (Stokes). Yet when we read: "A dinner of twelve or fourteen persons cannot be properly served without two or three servants to wait on the table and a maid in the pantry" (not to mention the cooks), we feel that some of us come without the pale. We are confirmed in this belief when we learn that "nothing is in worse taste than ungloved hands when traveling". And we are crushed at the thought that "even when recognizing an intimate friend it is not correct to accompany a bow with a broad smile. There may be a 'smile in the eyes', etc." Laura Thornborough, in "Etiquette for Everybody" (Barse and Hopkins), is a shade more reassuring. She actually alludes to an informal Sunday night supper when the servants are away, and makes the startling assertion that "the youth of to-day, practicing this new freedom, has relegated the chaperone to the lumber room." Her hints as to behavior in games and sports could well be taken to heart by certain bridge fiends and motorists of our acquaintance.

James Truslow Adams dates his "Revolutionary New England" (Atlantic Monthly) from 1691 through 1776 and takes up, in very readable detail, the management and mismanagement of the various governments both in the Colonies and abroad. Among the interesting features are Samuel Waldo's advertisement of Eastern Lands (1734); the Tradesmen's Protest against the proceedings of the merchants (1773), and other proclamations; also cartoons of events that aroused nations when they first appeared. The book is the second of a series which promises to rank highest among histories of America. It must be invaluable to the student delving for facts; and it is so delightfully written that the general reader is sure to be charmed with it.

About seventy-five years ago a group of women, asserting that they were part of the "people" of the United States, embarked on an ambitious crusade. Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler in "Woman Suffrage and Politics" (Scribner) have done more than merely tell the story of woman's great adventure. Without recrimination or invective they have disclosed the methods by which the political interests fought and blocked her progress at every step. Their book is a dismaying record of the corruption and chicanery of American politics.

We are deeply indebted to Christopher Ward for "The Triumph of the Nut" (Holt). For we have now given up the struggle of manufacturing

bright conversation with which to regale our bookish friends. We simply read these parodies aloud to them, and the evening is made. Take your choice: there's the title piece, whose subtitle is "Too Many Marriages"; or else "Joseph and the Bright Shawl"; "The Perils of Peregrine"; "Blacker Oxen"; "One of Hers"; "Paradise Be Damned!"; "Some Freedom!"; and a dozen others equally enticing. Their charm lies in the fact that they are startlingly like the originals; yet they will entertain you even if you haven't read the novels.

The third volume in the "History of Art" (Harper) by Elie Faure, translated by Walter Pach, concerns itself quite admirably with Renaissance art. The first and second of the volumes were well received by the intelligentsia at large, and this last volume gives every indication of meeting with a similar popularity. Beginning with Florence, M. Faure discusses in turn Rome and the School, Venice, the Franco-Flemish Circle, Fontainebleau, the Loire and the Valois, and Germany and the Reformation. There are understanding and penetration here not usually found in such treatises — a welcome tendency really to get at the fundamentals of artistic creation and discover what causes actuated certain effects. The book is admirably illustrated.

From Walter Damrosch's "My Musical Life" (Scribner) one gets the impression of an honest man with little intellectual sophistication, hence absolutely without the ability to see himself as others do in his proper relation to the cosmos. Mr. Damrosch's very modesty seems a conscious modesty demanded by propriety and belied by his immense self complacency. True, he has a right to be complacent, for it was noble pioneer work he did for many years, and in the cause of musical education his name is one of the first. But he takes his achievements far too seriously. His accounts of famous persons are trivial or saccharine; his treatment of more controversial questions is flabby; but these defects in his book may be attributed in part to the audience for whom it was intended.

Alexander Meiklejohn should not need to depend on his notoriety for readers. Whatever his record may be as president of Amherst makes no difference. He is an essayist worth the time of anyone interested in thoughtful work. If his touch is not light, there is compensation in the discovery that his thoughts are scholarly. To old New England he may seem radical, but his essays appear conservative enough to one accustomed to younger writers. Even if reading his work makes one quarrel with his conclusions, that is worth something. The papers in "Freedom and the College" (Century) give this deposed executive an enviable position among the radical conservatives.

The day when children's reading was an indiscriminate medley of fairy stories and "Elsie books" is long since past. The best writers of the day lend their pens to juvenile literature, the best artists illustrate it, and the best critics pick the wheat from the chaff for the small readers. As the supervisor of work with children in the New York Public Library, Anne Carroll Moore has given many years to the study of this field and she has a keen appreciation of the child's needs as well as a wide knowledge of the

books of the day. "New Roads to Childhood" (Doran) is a collection of her articles, many of which have already appeared in THE BOOKMAN; and it follows up her first volume on "Roads to Childhood". Both of them are charmingly written; they should be read by anyone who is directing the reading of a child.

"The Case for Prohibition: Its Past, Present Accomplishments, and Future in America" (Funk, Wagnalls) by Clarence True Wilson, D.D., and Deets Pickett, all in all certainly answers our jovial apologists and arch propagandists for appetite *über* Constitution in the United States; this, despite the fact that it smacks of the old Andover temperance school at times. Blind pigs and kitchen bar rooms certainly did receive less free advertising than the present bootlegger gets. Why did the Keeley Cure Institute quit two months after prohibition went into effect? How the sons and daughters of laborers are unwontedly crowding our colleges! Drink Postum — and grape juice. There are reasons.

The truth is often depressing in contemporary autobiography. The anonymous author of "Haunch, Paunch and Jowl" (Boni, Liveright) tells the true story of "When New York Was a Wide Open Town". It was not so long ago and is sordid enough a tale, in all conscience. The author purports to be a judge of the Superior Court who bought the position as the price of silence regarding some very unpleasant matters. He had founded an opulent legal career, indeed, on unpleasant matters. As a shrewd product of Ludlow Street he cultivated the pose of professional Jew, friend of the people, and scourge of the unrighteous wealthy members of the opposing political faction. His motto was, "Play the game as you see it played." He had an uncanny knowledge of the common American, and a complete, cynical contempt for him. This gave him poise and a philosophy. His moments of self distrust, the stirring of a rudimentary idealism within him, give the book a tragic, mordant edge, an exquisite irony constantly felt but seldom quite explicit.

In "An American Looks at His World" (U. of Delaware) Glenn Frank, editor of "The Century Magazine", certainly is socially useful in his favorite fields of forensic—"Muckraking Our Peripatetics", "Slang and Jargon", "Piety and Playfulness", "The Social Aim of Education", "Americanizing Americanization", "Academic Peonage", "The Acid of Docility" — anywhere except in the deceitful lists of politics. In politics he shows himself no mean master of "The Art of Saying Nothing". He is more worthily employed in coming between H. L. Mencken and Stuart P. Sherman than in dealing with capital and labor. Anyway, Mr. Frank's sense of the fitness of things and of humor runs to Stephen Leacock and to Christopher Morley rather than to Paul Elmer More and Professor Sherman. He will have no truck with Ph.Doc-racy and better-than-thou-ness. After this, is it possible to consider Mr. Frank a scholar, an American, and a gentleman?

Christopher Morley is so versatile that when he produces such a collection of verse as "Parsons' Pleasure" (Doran) one is at a loss to classify it. The poems here run a wide range: most of them good, some of them—

such as the unforgetable introduction to "Where the Blue Begins"—excellent. In the "Evening Post" Mr. Morley tries a little bit of everything, and from those attempts he has again gathered many things. The book is divided into three sections, and from their titles one may guess how diversified the contents are: "Parsons and Pleasures", "Translations from the Chinese", and "Epi (sodes, grams, taphs)".

"The Pioneer West" (Little, Brown) is a collection of extracts, mostly from fiction, intended to give a picture of the many phases of "the great, the never-to-be-forgotten epic of our newer civilization". From a chapter of Lewis and Clark's journal through Bret Harte, Mark Twain, General Custer and others, Joseph Lewis French, the editor, carries the reader. The book covers such a big field that it becomes a catalogue urging the reader to go further and read the entire books of which chapters are given here. Hamlin Garland has written an introduction.

None but golfers are expected to read "The Epic of Golf" (Houghton Mifflin), a lengthy rhyming composition by Clinton Scollard. Assuming, without any reason, that most golfers are not discriminating in their poetic tastes, this book should go well as a gift affair when ties, handkerchiefs, and socks seem inadvisable. A. B. Frost has done characteristic sketches to illustrate the ordinary text of golf enthusiasm.

There is no better short life of Shelley than the admirable "Shelley" of A. Clutton-Brock (Dutton) which is now reissued in revised edition, with very handsome dress and four illustrations. For its facts the book relies largely upon the contemporary accounts of Thomas Jefferson Hogg and Edward John Trelawny; for its informing spirit upon the justness and vivacity of Professor Clutton-Brock himself. He descends neither to advocacy nor censure in dealing with Shelley's life. His aim is to present Shelley as he was in the flesh, and to sum up the best critical opinion of his poetry. It requires no great generosity of spirit to affirm Mr. Clutton-Brock's unqualified success in the achievement of his intention.

Through the magic door of his bookcase Conan Doyle leads us into the El Dorado of his favorite authors. No startling revelations or literary discoveries does he make; but he gives us much sound and rather erudite criticism that is as valuable today as it was on the original appearance, seventeen years ago, of "Through the Magic Door" (Doubleday, Page). Sir Arthur reveals himself as a lover of the nineteenth century classics, especially of historical works, and most especially of records of the Napoleonic era. Not content with writing merely about books, he adds some fascinating word portraits —some his own, some quoted—of the writers. It is interesting, in the light of the author's later development, to note occasional allusions to his conviction of spiritual interposition in human affairs.

Oriental philosophy holds a strange fascination for occidental minds. And doubly attractive is this philosophy when it is couched in the beautifully simple poetic prose of Kahlil Gibran's "The Prophet" (Knopf). A modern, mystical touch is imparted to the book by the twelve drawings with which

the author ornaments his text—highly artistic drawings of graceful nudes rising from chaos, as if to illustrate the striving toward clarity of more or less complicated ideas.

One may well expect the first biography of a newly inaugurated president to be a bit overlaudatory — especially if the biographer be an old colleague. R. M. Washburn in "Calvin Coolidge" (Small, Maynard) has fortunately failed to fulfil such expectations. It would appear that the man who originated the title of "Calvin the Silent" has the wit to banter his hero gently, and just enough compunction to apologize for so doing. The chapter on Calvin's not-so-bright college years at Amherst may make the subject writhe a bit. However, Mr. Washburn is a bit overawed by the dignity of office and grows more solemn as he leads Mr. Coolidge higher in rank. The book is no profound analysis of a great character; time enough for that when the new president establishes his place in history.

The primary allegiance of a humorous book is not to literature, but to laughter. The fundamental question to be asked of it is, "Is it funny?"; strictly speaking, it should not be considered from the literary viewpoint at all. But "As Is" by Henry William Hanemann, illustrated by John Held, Jr. (Harcourt, Brace), at once attains that harmony, approaching indivisibility, which is the desideratum of all art, and satisfies the reader's risibilities with almost unprecedented completeness. Penetrating observation of life and an instinctive selection of those elements that lend themselves to humorous accentuation are the basis of this book; it is built up with a real mastery of every form of humor into a revel of fun. In especial the "Lessons in New Yorkese" are as inimitable as they are priceless. The illustrations follow, of necessity, the lead of the text; they are apt and witty. But there can be no second hand appreciation of such a book; it must be known and enjoyed personally.

A curious mixture of unimaginativeness and intelligence flavors Frank Jewett Mather's "A History of Italian Painting" (Holt). Perhaps the one is Professor Mather's natural bent and the other a result of teaching art professionally. The book covers its field ably enough; but when the author begins to get too heavily statistical the reader wishes he might have forgotten dates and names and allowed himself to infuse more color into his pages. As it is, he has succeeded in doing exactly what is expected in supplying a rather interesting textbook concerning everything from Botticelli to the Realists and Eclectics. Here is a book to interest a layman but not especially likely to attract an advanced student.

"Our ideals and moral traditions are in conflict with our racial and national loyalties. A close examination may show that loyalty to race and nation may make for greater good to the world than will the attempt to realize these ideals." So (in substance) says Charles Conant Josey, Ph.D., in "Race and National Solidarity" (Scribner). The exposition of this thesis is performed in a laborious and tedious manner. Each chapter closes with a lengthy bibliography—anything from Lothrop Stoddard to Nietzsche. The ideas presented are by no means complex; it

must be the style that makes the book such ponderous reading.

"Three Generations" (Little, Brown) by Maud Howe Elliott, the daughter of Julia Ward Howe, is a book of reminiscences which verges close on autobiography. It is packed with impressions of the famous people who have met Mrs. Elliott. And it is also a travelogue with emphasis on the scenes and events which made particular places interesting at certain times. In between are personal anecdote and family pictures. On the surface, it seems important as an historical source book. But it is, finally, too personal, almost too superficial. Written in a curiously compounded style, it goes along pleasantly enough for a while, and then the reader begins to realize that it is a very long book. There is apparent, however, the author's intense interest in what she tells; this gives the work a certain amount of gusto. And in a definitely minor key, it does a little for America (that is, mainly Boston) what "Queen Victoria" did for a partially corresponding period in London. The European chapters, which make up about half, seem slightly extraneous.

Though Walter Gaston Shotwell handles his threads of narrative well and gives deserved emphasis to less celebrated engagements, less trumpeted generals, in his "brief" 450,000 word story of "The Civil War in America" (Longmans, Green), too little is given by him of this war's causes, civilian accompaniments, and after effects. Less of military manœuvres and reports, occasional maps and charts, and more cries of the private, "There goes Jackson or a rabbit", "Ulysses don't scare worth a d——n", more of the "damaged" nobility of such pariahs as Benjamin Lundy, Hinton Rowan Helper, John Brown, Ben Butler, Van Dorn, and Burnside — these would have humanized the two big, monotonous volumes. Mr. Shotwell's facts and figures occasionally contradict one another, and he may be accused justly of some unfairness toward the south. On the whole, however, this is a painstaking and significant history.

Critics of our handling of the prohibition question seem often to forget that, like the Bolshevistic efforts of Russia, national prohibition in the United States is still in the experimental stage. A profound moral revolution, though formally approved by a majority of voting citizens, cannot be expected to become firmly established in a few years: man is too much a creature of habit in thought and life to be easily derailed from his accustomed track. That is the explanation of the difficulties with which the Prohibition Department of our government has had to cope. Indeed, it speaks much for the efficiency of the department that its agents have already succeeded in their task to the remarkable extent that Prohibition Commissioner Roy A. Haynes reveals in "Prohibition Inside Out" (Doubleday, Page). In addition to valuable sociological information, this book gives thrills a-plenty for the lover of tales of adventure. Not the least interesting point Mr. Haynes makes is his discrediting of the popular belief in widespread corruption among the prohibition agents.

Although "Ventures in Book Collecting" by William Harris Arnold (Scribner) has intrinsic value its interest is not a fixed one; it depends

on the enthusiasm of the reader for the subject matter of the book. Those who share the author's fondness for the chase of literary rarities will listen with sympathetic pleasure to his stories of the game he caught and the sport involved; and they will find much to appreciate and enjoy in his display of trophies. Mr. Harris unlocks his treasure chest with a frank "I'm a lucky fellow" that is engaging, because he is happy in his luck rather than proud. He brings forth, against an appropriate anecdotal background, copies of a large number of notable letters and facsimiles of autographs and title pages the originals of which, among other sought after items, were in his collection. The book is bibliographically an important one, if only for the Stevenson letters, notes, and poems here published for the first time. For this generosity not only the bibliophile but the general reader must be grateful.

Irvin Cobb, that able literary prestidigitator, has now put forth in cook book form the laugh recipes of a couple of generations. Cobb's Complete Joke Book is with us. "A Laugh a Day Keeps the Doctor Away" (Doran), while perhaps not quite so valiant as its title indicates, is nevertheless an unusually good collection of humorous anecdotes. In a book comprising some three hundred and sixty haw haw generators, it is really creditable that so many do actually tickle the ribs. You will find here, of course, the one about the Traveling Man and the Spinster as well as the one about the Irishman and the Jew—but to Mr. Cobb's credit, and as he points out in his preface, it should be stated that in not one of the stories is there a colored boy named Rastus.

In "Europe Since 1918" (Century) Herbert Adams Gibbons has given us, as a result of close contact with events and their principal actors, a summary of the important treaties, negotiations, and political happenings in Europe since the war. This is a straightforward unbiased narrative that makes easy, comprehensible reading for every person interested in modern history. Mr. Gibbons obviously intends us to feel the instability and the sinister threatening condition of the Old World, and quite fully succeeds. He points out that the Allies were as unprepared for peace as for war, that they found themselves in the midst of peace negotiations without having anticipated or prepared for them. He emphasizes what we have been hearing so often from every source—the universal greed, distrust, and desire for revenge that seem to motivate the nations more strongly than ever before. As a result, he states, practically every treaty and conference since 1918 — with the possible exception of the Washington disarmament parley — is impossible of fulfilment, and will eventually prove to have been ineffectual. Truly this volume fills one with forebodings, and gives cause for sober reflection.

Magazine editors are constantly warning young hopefuls that everyone in the country is writing verse, so that chances of success in this endeavor are small. Just when this warning begins to take effect, the young hopeful realizes that books of mediocre verse are being published and he knows he can improve on them. Young hopefuls on the brink of despair may find assurance by reading the conventional "River Dusk and Other Poems" (Evans Brown) by Agnes Kendrick Gray.