

New Books in Brief Review

Poets of America. By Clement Wood.
New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. \$3.00.

AN interesting book of criticism which deserves a long review. Mr. Wood has critical standards as clean-cut as his opinions. Curiously enough, he seems more convincing in his estimates of the relative values of living poets than in his appreciation of the dead ones. He does not succeed in making Adah Isaacs Menkin appear as important as he thinks she is, but his analyses of Edna St. Vincent Millay, Amy Lowell, and Robert Frost are intensely acute and just. His phrase describing the flaw in Miss Millay's superb performance — "a cleverness substituting for sincerity" — is as penetrating as it is true. Like most admirers of Whitman, he seems to take a lot of sham heroics and fustian enthusiasms for genuine emotion; but he draws the line at the larger wallowings of Lindsay and Sandburg, and the modern or cuckoo school leaves him quite scornful and cold.

He has the excellent habit of illustrating his critical opinions with adequate quotations from the poets criticized, and in most instances contrives to uphold his verdicts by chapter and verse. Altogether, a stimulating and interesting book.

The Pot of Earth. By Archibald MacLeish.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. \$1.25.

IN spite of occasional felicities and much thoughtful verse, Mr. MacLeish's talent shines dimly through the abrupt shifting symbolism of this poem. A genuine lyric gift and a high emotional intensity are in this poet's verse often veiled and hidden by a cold, overmastering passion of crowding thought. But, in the present instance, few readers will follow or understand just what Mr. MacLeish is thinking and saying. Partly, that will be his fault; partly, it is his. His last volume, "The Happy Marriage," was not obvious to the multitude, but it was crystal clear compared with this one. Mr. MacLeish hovers constantly on the edge of superb accomplishment. He has not achieved it in "The Pot of Earth."

The Fugger News-Letters, 1568-1605.
New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
\$6.00.

FROM all over Europe, from India, Japan, and the Americas, letters on current events, real or imaginary, poured into the home offices of the great bankers of the Renaissance, the Fuggers. Many of them absurd accounts of reputed

miracles or prodigies; many of them carefully observed transcripts of events or shrewd comments on men and politics, they represent an extremely valuable cross section of European life in that period. There is humor in their archaic simplicity and a dark irony in the slow-moving, tragic history of the time as seen by contemporary eyes. From a strictly scholarly standpoint one wishes the documents had not been edited quite so much for modern taste. The book would then have greater value as an historical document, if less charm for the polite, modern reader who takes his Middle Ages sugar-coated and prefers his Renaissance greatly diluted.

The Dramatic Works of Gerhart Hauptmann.
Translated by Willa and Edwin Muir. Volume VIII. Poetic Dramas.
New York: B. W. Huebsch. \$2.50.

THREE plays by a master. The translators have been faithful to Hauptmann's essentially poetic genius.

The Turn of a Day. By C. A. Dawson Scott.
New York: Henry Holt & Co.
\$2.00.

A FINE, sincere piece of work, telling with feeling and intensity the story of a day's tragedy on the Cornish Downs. Mrs. Scott shows herself entirely competent in the handling of her small, poignant drama. The setting, the background, and the characters are equally convincing.

The Passer-By and Other Stories. By Ethel M. Dell.
New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.00.

JUST about what one would expect. Richly sentimental stories about rich, sentimental people.

Anna's. By C. Nina Boyle.
New York: Thomas Seltzer. \$2.00.

THE author has enough material here for half a dozen novels: two bigamies, several murders, two missing heirs, villains galore, a suicide, a graveyard full of family skeletons. The reader is confused by such an embarrassment of melodramatic riches. Nor is he helped by the abrupt, chatty style which seems to assume a considerable acquaintance on the reader's part with the people of the book. Nevertheless, a remarkably interesting story, tied together around the personality of Anna, a reprehensible but somehow

disarming villainess. The author leaves her characters in a rather bad pickle, and one assumes will continue their story in her next.

The Cradle of the Deep. By Sir Frederick Treves.
New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. \$4.00.

A REPRINT of a travel book, first published in 1908, concerning the islands and mainland of the Caribbean, which is still a valuable handbook for travelers and an interesting volume in itself. This edition does not contain descriptions of the latest developments in all the islands, but, except for revolutions and the landing of United States Marines, there are not very violent changes. "A Bible in Spain" and Ford's "Handbook For Travelers," are still among the best books on Spain, though written eighty-odd years ago, and the islands of the Spanish Main do not change much more rapidly than the parent country.

The Roar of the Crowd. By James J. Corbett.
New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.50.

"GENTLEMAN JIM'S" autobiography, and a surprisingly interesting book. It has an unmistakably genuine quality. It is written by Corbett and not by some hireling scribe. He tells of his battles with the egotism of the champion idol, but with the cool, canny intelligence which made him famous; of his home life with Irish sentimentality, and of his social career with a slight touch of unreality. One wishes he had not stopped with his retirement from the ring. It would be interesting to have his experiences as a second to other fighters and as a notable figure in the world of professional sport. In any event, it is the best genuine autobiography of a heavyweight champion yet written, which should entitle the author to a belt bound by Zaehnsdorf.

A Voice From the Dark. By Eden Phillpotts.
New York: The Macmillan Co. \$2.00.

A DETECTIVE story in which there is never any doubt as to the identity of the criminal. The difficulty is to catch him — to "get the goods on him." This is done with patience, ingenuity, courage, and the endurance of a human bloodhound. The story moves rather slowly at first, but once under way, there is no putting it down.