# RECENT BOOKS IN BRIEF REVIEW

OSTENSIBLY a series of biographies, "Strenuous Americans" (Boni, Liveright) is really a set of portraits, against a background of the latter half of the nineteenth century. With the pet ideas of this century, "an uncompromisingly merciless economic creed, and a piously lachrymose humanitarian creed" as the book describes them, R. F. Dibble, the author, has little sympathy. His characters suffer as they stand for these creeds, and, accordingly, Jesse James and P. T. Barnum receive by far the kindest treatment. Admiral Dewey's biography, the longest of the seven, is essentially the story of how America seized the Philippines. Mark Hanna and James J. Hill serve to illustrate the financial and political machinations of the age. It may be that the financially successful Brigham Young was taken to show how well the economical and humanitarian creeds harmonized —although the author does not say so. Frances E. Willard, of the W.C.T.U., is the only woman represented. Her reforming activities serve less well to portray the spirit of the times than do the tales of financial monopoly, of political subservience at home and imperialism abroad, recounted in the biographies of the six men.

A beautifully printed little book is Thomas Moult's "The Best Poems of 1922" (Harcourt, Brace), and edited with an unusual taste. Mr. Moult has chosen his poetry from both English and American periodicals with quite obvious joy in the poems, without regard for the fame or lack of fame of their authors. This does not mean that poets of renown are absent. Thomas Hardy is represented with his magnificent "An Ancient to An-

cients", Carl Sandburg with two poems, and there are Amy Lowell, Elinor Wylie, G. K. Chesterton, Robert Graves, Louis Untermeyer, J. C. Squire, and Aline Kilmer. A catholic collection to be sure, and one that is designed to prove nothing, except that good poetry is being written. Says the editor in the introduction:

> But apart from the actual selection the same general conclusion would doubtless have been arrived at, however different the policy dictating the compiler's labour. That, at least, may be said with assurance, for poets of fame and distinction in two countries are plainly writing with as much beauty, truth, and strength as ever they have done, and poets whose distinction is in no way proportionate to their fame have seldom written better. It is a matter for pride that the poets of England and of America have here assembled together for perhaps the first time in literary history (at all events, so far as English publication is concerned) in a manner that gives the reader no guide to their nationality except what is revealed by the work itself. How and in what ways that work may be different if produced on one or the other side of the Atlantic will, the compiler believes, be well worth studying. And if readers in America accept this opportunity of surveying contemporary poetry in England, and English readers be persuaded to take a wider interest in American poetry, then the desire that the present compilation might be the first of a series of annual volumes will have additional justification.

Newman Flower, in "George Frideric Handel" (Houghton Mifflin), has endeavored "to outline Handel the Man" against "a background of the times in which he lived and the people with whom he had to deal". He has in fact woven a first rate biography into a first rate piece of social history and criticism. Not a little of one's interest must be attributed to the skill with which the volume is written, the dry humor, the sophistication and the deftness of Mr. Flower's personal comment. From the smooth narrative one does not suspect the years of investigation to which he makes only passing reference, and evidence of which one discovers only in the acknowledgments of assistance and the bibliography. They, however, enable Mr. Flower to make important corrections in the prevalent notions of Handel and his works.

To reread W. H. Hudson is to summon visions of the privileges of contemplation that clung to a slower and now all but vanished age. The time is past, we fear, even in England, for this leisurely and minute observation of living things. In "Hampshire Days", now reprinted in this country by Dutton, Hudson, the naturalist and philosopher, writes delightfully of the humblest inhabitants of field and forest, of insects hitherto unhonored and unsung, and of people whose habits and customs are as little known to the great world of cities as those of some rare wood spider. Of himself he says, "The blue sky, the brown soil beneath, the grass, the trees, the animals, the wind, and rain and sun and stars are never strange to me; for I am in and of and am one with them; and my flesh and the soil are one, and the heat in my blood and in the sunshine are one, and the winds and tempests and my passions are one." And of dwellers in cities, "They are out of my world—the real world. All that they value, and seek and strain after all their lives long, their works and sports and pleasures, are the merest baubles and childish things; and their ideals are all false, and nothing but by-products, or growths, of the artificial life —little funguses cultivated in heated cellars." In spite of this fierce hostility toward progress, a spirit justified by the devastating inroads that modernity has made on natural beauties, it is not for his "world strangeness" that we remember Hudson, but

for a mind and heart intent to catch the pain and joy of all living things that fly or crawl.

In several of the bitterest of his "Contemporary Portraits: Fourth Series" (Brentano), of a truth Frank Harris seems to succeed fully in sinking to the level of the worst implications of the word "gargoyles", certain favored impersonations he lists among his present most precious aims. If gargoyles be portraits, Mr. Harris's Charlie Chaplin, Gorky, Mark Twain, Woodrow Wilson, and Sing Sing must be tolerated—even though they suggest that quondam mastery seems now sinking into senility. More comprehensible, however, are the author's Grant Allen, Herbert Trench, Max, "The Incomparable", Leonard Merrick, Roosevelt, Emma Goldman, and Olive Schreiner. Mr. Harris's worst is several degrees below pernicious—but his best, even now in his weakening state, is probably perdurable.

"A Guide for the Greedy" (Lippincott) by Elizabeth Robins Pennell has been revised and reissued, to the delight of the gourmet. It places cookery among the fine arts and proves that enjoyment of food is not the crass materialism we have thought it, but an expression of an artistic impulse as commendable as the appreciation of poetry or nature. In these pleasant little chapters, Mrs. Pennell outlines some of the rarest and most delectable menus, and if her American readers have to leave home and country to obey such instructions as "smother them in a rich wine sauce", it sounds as though it might be worth the trouble.

Of making lists of books there is no end, and every such list is sure to leave out or to include certain books at the compiler's fancy and to the great disgust of the reviewer. But Jesse Lee Bennett is armed against such protest, for in "What Books Can Do for You" (Doran) he develops a thoroughly sound theory of reading for the sake of "harmonious self development" and names books because of their consistency with that aim. His exposition of this theory is not only ample justification for most of his choice, but is a regular "Outline of Reading" as well—an unusually meaty condensation of the whole field of human culture in simple, highly popular form. Almost anyone can read this book with pleasure, and almost anyone from the Hairy Ape to the human thinking machine can be helped by it toward developing a "self well adjusted to a world well understood".

The second volume of "The Outline of Literature" (Putnam) comprises fourteen chapters on English literature from Shakespeare to Shelley, two on French literature in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and one on the great Germans: Goethe, Schiller, and Lessing. No other European literatures are represented. Granville-Barker writes of Shakespeare in a fresh, unhackneyed manner; the editor, John Drinkwater, has an excellent chapter on Milton. The skilled hand of Professor Erskine of Columbia appears in certain footnote corrections or demurrers to statements in the text, and the whole volume has doubtless profited through having passed under his critical eye. The colored and half tone illustrations, over one hundred and sixty in number, are admirably chosen, and form a rich portrait gallery of permanent literary and biographical value.

"The Soul of the City", compiled by Garland Greever and Joseph Bachelor (Houghton Mifflin), unlike most anthologies has a unity of purpose and a coherence of subject matter altogether noteworthy. Its *raison d'être* is not merely a collector's whimsy, a grouping of poems and poemlets by various writers doing justice to no one poet so much as to the collector himself. The compilers in this case have gone about their work with the definite objective of collecting all those poems which they thought reflected some aspect of the modern city. They have neglected neither the gay nor the tragic, neither the sordid nor the beautiful. They have approached their task with a fine catholicity of taste ranging from the poetry of John Keats to that of T. S. Eliot. As a result of their diligence "The Soul of the City" is not only one of the most plausible anthologies we have ever had the pleasure of reading, but about as complete a picture of city life as could be hoped for under the conditions.

Poor Emma Goldman! It is hard to be shorn of illusions, but to lose them when one has been wrapped in them one's life long and when one is no longer young is tragedy. "My Disillusionment in Russia" (Doubleday, Page) is the story of a very tired woman, one who had hoped to see miracles in self government fulfilled and who found selfishness, injustice, and corruption in the Communist Republic. It is evident enough that a commonwealth functioning ideally by Marxian standards would not have satisfied this anarchist—and the Russian government is not functioning ideally by any standards. Apparently, the volume has undergone some editorial revision. A chapter mentioned in the preface is missing, and the book breaks off abruptly at the end.

In a history so painstakingly impartial as Dr. Robert McElroy's authorized biography, "Grover Cleveland, the Man and the Statesman" (Harper), it is difficult to perceive what the author really thinks of his subject. This is no "background" narrative—the kind in which the individual's portrait is merely the means to an interpretation of the age in which he lived. It is largely a personal narrative and not an overlaudatory one. The last flaming up of Civil War hatreds, the tariff, civil service reform, the silver coinage issue, and the ominous growth of imperialism externally and labor troubles internally were the problems Cleveland had to face. One may discern some faint disapproval of the futile way in which the President tried to uphold Hawaiian independence in the face of "manifest destiny", his arbitrary conduct in the great Pullman strike, and the obstinate stand in the dispute over the Venezuelan-British boundary. The author also makes justifiable complaint against the involved style in which Cleveland wrote. No one will make this complaint against Dr. McElroy or against Elihu Root, who contributes the introduction.

Donald Ogden Stewart is funny. That was established some time ago. But he is also gifted with an appreciation of human frailties which, when coupled with a sense of humor, makes an enviable combination. When that combination is turned into literary production something as worthwhile as "Aunt Polly's Story of Mankind" (Doran) results. The characters in this book are more than talking dolls manipulated to produce mirth making

sentences. Despite the exaggeration of contemporary types, the persons in the book approach plausibility, and the story becomes worth a dozen or more of the so called humorous volumes that regularly torture the tender sensibilities of hack reviewers.

"Wonders of the Past", edited by J. A. Hammerton (Putnam), is a four volume work which would be an adornment to any library. The first volume deals with the ruins of dead civilizations from the point of view of the traveler and the archæologist—with the tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen, the ruined cities of Indo-China, the monuments of the Maya culture, the shrines of the Buddhists, the temples of Pompeii, the courts and columns of Thebes, the palaces of Nineveh. The various articles which comprise the book are more descriptive than historical, more popular than scientific; and one of the chief values of the work is in its illustrations, which are delightfully abundant and excellently chosen and reproduced.

There is something exceedingly rich and strange about both the format and contents of "The Borzoi Cook Book" (Knopf). The Princess Alexandre Gagarine has translated and compiled a collection of recipes from a great Russian household that make delectable reading, and, we have no doubt, if prepared by one sensitive to the nuances of Russian cookery, delectable eating as well. There are dishes with which we are familiar from dining in Russian restaurants: borstch, kvass, tchee, and kasha, as well as some that will be new even to those accustomed to the exotic and savory cookery of this nation. Just how far the conservative—in cookery, at least—American housewife will go in following the Borzoi recipes it is hard to say. We confess to a certain skepticism as to the possibility of a Russian culinary renascence like that recently stirred up in the decorative arts.

"Silver Wands" is a new volume in the Yale Series of Younger Poets. The author, Marion M. Boyd, has collected a score or more poems, chiefly short, that exhibit a certain lilting grace, a kind of delicate feminine singing quality. It is a touch not often felt in current poetry. Clear cut, thumbnail sketches in a mood of fine restraint are the best of the collection. Less interesting are longer attempts in dramatic vein. "Carpe Diem" and "A Prayer in Winter" typify the fleet lyricism of this young author. The same effect, used in a decorative way, is attained by "Sleep Is a Dark Flower" and "Blue Cups". Artlessness combined with a finely tempered idiom makes verses that may never be great but will always be pleasing.

In a dizzy round of extreme fiction, esoteric philosophy, intense poetry that isn't poetry at all, and the rest of our modern whirl of literature (in the strictly etymological sense of the word), some of us are so fortunate as to run across a volume that tells its story with neither blare of trumpet nor stench of the unconventional; that moves steadily along, like some irresistible force, and when it has reached the end makes its dignified bow and retires discreetly. Of such is "Holland Under Queen Wilhelmina" by A. J. Barnouw (Scribner). Here is no grandiloquence, but a smooth, readable bit of history that in no way sacrifices accuracy to style. Queen Wilhelmina, the Victoria of Holland, for over twenty five years ruler of the

Dutch people, is to many scarce more than a name. Learning of her long reign is captivating entertainment, and we are sure that a beginning with Dr. Barnouw's volume should whet the appetite for further knowledge.

Sailors' yarns have a traditional reputation which they ought to share with reporters' reminiscences. The high spots in a journalist's life are high indeed, and he is usually trained in the telling of them. Sir Philip Gibbs's "Adventures in Journalism" (Harper) are the cream of newspapermen's tales. Best of them all is the story of how he unmasked Dr. Cook, the "discoverer" of the North Pole. Adventures with royalty and with murderers, anxious moments during strikes and battle, the eccentricities of Lord Northcliffe and of the British censor—these are some of the many strange things that Gibbs saw and tells about.

There is sufficient reason why Howard Carter and A. C. Mace should have dedicated "The Tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen" (Doran) to the late Lord Carnarvon, but no apparent reason why it should be spoken of as an "account of the Earl of Carnarvon's famous discovery", and why therefore it should include a chapter on his lordship's life by one of his family. From this chapter it appears that "digging" was only one of a series of hobbies which he rode with the tremendous seriousness that English gentlemen misapply to their eccentricities for lack of other objects; and from the rest of the book it appears that he rode it *in absentia* through the agency of Mr. Carter. It was the latter who inferred from exceedingly scanty evidence that the tomb was in the Valley of the Kings, and who, with Lord Carnarvon's financial and moral aid, dug for six seasons until, when on the point of surrender, he unearthed the entrance. This was then covered again, and Lord Carnarvon was wired to come and help discover. Mr. Carter's contribution to the book is delightful. It is of course only a preliminary account written when the inner shrine had not been opened; hence it includes a great deal of interesting introductory material, most of it historical, some of it expository, together with the story of the search and discovery and a description of the objects found in the antechambers of the tomb. There are a large number of excellent plates.

The art of the informal, humorous essay has perhaps no better exponent in America than Frances Lester Warner, and one opens her latest book with pleased anticipation. "Groups and Couples" (Houghton Mifflin) lives up to all one's expectations. It is charming, whimsical, feminine. The first year of married life has provided the author with plenty of new material and she has the gift of being able to draw the last ounce of humor out of any given situation. This little volume is to be recommended for reading aloud to the entire family; any attempt to read it individually will only result in constant eruptions of, "Now listen to *this!*"

There can be no sadder fate than to be expected always to be funny. Stephen Leacock on several occasions was funnier than anyone had been for a long time, and the world, surprised and delighted, came flocking to his door. So he has nobly tried to give it more of the same. "College Days" (Dodd, Mead) has a promising title; one expects something really amusing

this time. But it isn't. Here and there one finds a gorgeous bit which proves that Leacock did write it himself, but for the most part these are quite ordinary little sketches. The exception is "Idleness, A Song for the Long Vacation", a nonsense jingle of the very best.

A supplement has been added to the "Library of Southern Literature" (Martin, Hoyt), bringing it down to date. This "record of the achievement of Southern men and women in letters during the last decade or two" includes thirty three writers. Besides the names one would naturally look for, it is good to come upon newer luminaries whose work has made one curious for personal details. In each case there is a biographical and critical essay, based it would seem on first hand information, and contributed by such writers as Kenneth Brown, Dorothy Scarborough, C. Alphonso Smith, Cale Young Rice, DuBose Heyward, and Annie Steger Winston. This sketch is followed by illustrative extracts from the subject's work, and a bibliography which lists not only books but contributions to magazines and even newspapers.

"The Life of Mrs. Humphry Ward" (Dodd, Mead) has been written by her daughter, Janet Penrose Trevelyan, and all the varied phases of this remarkable woman's activities are brought out. Mrs. Ward's religious and charitable interests were second only to her literary ones; the constant ill health that handicapped her made her accomplishments seem the more amazing. Almost every name that belongs to the literary group of her time figures in this book, and not a few in other branches of public life from Gladstone down to Admiral Jellicoe. Unfortunately the very mass of the material obscures the personality of its subject, and the pages are so heavy with detail that the volume becomes more of a reference book than anything else.

E. R. Turner's "Europe: 1450-1789" (Doubleday, Page) comes as a reminder that the intensive study of historical periods calls for more than "Outlines". The three centuries from the Renaissance to the French Revolution pass before us in a broad processional of events, whose purely human, intellectual, religious, and artistic interrelation is made clear in a tense, interesting narrative. Professor Turner's work is a fine one. The past he covers, its men and women, its problems and passions, really lives again in his pages. In these days the story of vanished centuries must pulse with life, their problems revealed in the light of our own. Professor Turner has given his work this quality of living interest which should insure its being read by his contemporaries.

The shivery delight of the movie fan who is allowed to peek "Behind the Screen" (Doran) has been somewhat dulled by the fatuity of moving picture press agents convinced that they could fool all the people all of the time. Samuel Goldwyn's reminiscences serve, therefore, to counteract some of the effects of a decade of blatant, mendacious publicity by their frankness and humor and very evident respect for facts. At the same time, the book gratifies the insatiable curiosity of moviegoers for a glimpse of that Olympus peopled by gods and demigods of the screen. From this point of vantage as a producer and promoter, these divinities take on

dimensions that are rather nearer their proper size than the mythical magnitudes attributed to them by eloquent publicity men. Mary Pickford, for example, is described inimitably by Mr. Goldwyn as a "captain of industry". Undoubtedly the most sustained piece of satire in the book, and an altogether delightful bit of character work, is contained in the chapter on Elinor Glyn, who floated through Hollywood during the reign of the "Eminent Authors". Another commendable quality lies in the author's unwillingness to make emotional capital out of his own rise from obscure poverty to a position of great power and influence in the theatrical world.

One visualizes the bookworm browsing among his treasures, touching here and there, lovingly, a volume at random. That is what Walter T. Spencer, London bookseller and noted collector of rare first editions, does with his memories of "Forty Years in My Bookshop" (Houghton Mifflin). He touches one here and there, lovingly — and lovably — at random; and with each touch he evokes the spirit of one of the great. Thackeray (intimate and onetime associate publisher with Spencer); Trollope; George Cruikshank the artist; Phil May, artist no less great, no less eccentric, but how vastly different, both in craftsmanship and in manner; Kate Greenaway; and a host of other Olympians walk these pages. And the genial soul of Dickens, the master who will ever live close, it would seem, to Walter Spencer's book warmed heart, beams over all and sends sunshine flooding through the delectable volume. There are fascinating reproductions of priceless plates — drawings of Cruikshank himself; a wonderful water color sketch by Thackeray; gems from the magic brush of "Phiz". "Forty Years in My Bookshop" is at once a feast and an appetizer. It brims over with *news;* and yet it does no more than whet the curiosity of the true lover of books, tempting him to explore to his heart's content the many delightful lands of romance, which, in this single-volume flight of memory, can be visited only fleetingly.

"Robert Burns, His Life and Genius" by Andrew Dakers (Dutton) is a book that will bring delight to all lovers of the Scottish song writer. This study, which is in part a biography and in part a defense of a noble poet against ignoble detractors, offers us vivid glimpses of Burns the man, his hardships and his temptations, his weaknesses and his misfortunes, his strength and his tenderness, and that essential loftiness of soul which lends to some of the simplest of his lyrics their sublime pathos and sentiment. Mr. Dakers can hardly be accused of not doing justice to Burns; if anything, he is a trifle too just and has something of the air of the hero worshiper in his reverence for his idol. Yet he has given us a book that is not only well written but interesting and informative, and that cannot but exalt the character of Burns in the eyes of the reader even though it can do little to add to one's good opinion of his poetry.

In "Fiction Writers On Fiction Writing" (Bobbs-Merrill), edited by Arthur Sullivant Hoffman, one hundred and sixteen authors tell how they do it. Contrary to being one of those harmless publications about "people who make our books", as Donald Ogden Stewart puts it, the volume is highly interesting. Mr. Hoffman, ed-

itor of "Adventure", sent out a questionnaire to over a hundred writers. Their answers and his comments make up the body of the book. While designed primarily with the idea of assisting the layman in getting some idea of how his professional brother works, the book nevertheless is attractive from the psychologist's point of view. Mr. Hoffman does not make the pedantic error of telling the young writer what to do; he simply presents the theories and working rules of the professional himself, letting the reader accept or reject as he chooses. And when writers such as Sinclair Lewis, Joseph Hergesheimer, and Booth Tarkington "lay bare" their artistic souls, talking in terms of quill pens and story themes, the result is bound to be enlightening.

The Gentleman with the Duster and Margot—both rather confiding souls —having whispered into the ever ready ear of the public and then departed, have automatically made room for another refined retailer of gossip. "Myself Not Least" (Holt) constitutes the personal reminiscences of "X". The publishers beg to state that "X" is a person of sizable reputation as well as considerable éclat; thus reassured that our anonymous informant is no common sort, we receive him with an open mind. "X's" business is with "personalities rather than political causes and effects"; he proceeds to turn up tempting, if eventually unsatisfying bits concerning Whistler, George Moore, Gladstone, Queen Victoria, Oscar Wilde, Shaw, Ruskin and the rest. While many of the anecdotes are amusing, one constantly feels that with such an excellent entrée "X" might have done an intelligent thing where he has done an entertaining one.

A curiously naïve book comes from the pen of one of the most accomplished court ladies of modern times. Anna Viroubova, blamed by revolutionaries, perhaps overzealous, with having helped Rasputin to ruin Russia, has little of a sensational character to say in her "Memories of the Russian Court" (Macmillan). Like Mme. Dehn, another intimate of the Tsaritsa, she pictures the Emperor and Empress as having been strangely undespotic folk, pious to a fault, gentle, courteous, sentimental, virtuous — mid-Victorians three quarters of a century too late, who took their mission and themselves with unaccountable seriousness. Yet queerly enough neither she nor any of the court circle seems to have known much about public affairs. They lived in sheltered ignorance of the great movements that were shaking the foundation of social order, in such utter ignorance as to confuse the dynastic intrigues of palace politics with the hunger for blood that centuries of starvation breed. However, as an inside view of a fascinating aristocratic circle, this book is full of interest for all who like such gossip.

"The Cheerful Giver" (Houghton Mifflin) by Samuel McChord Crothers is a rather uninteresting presentation of essays. The fault lies perhaps not so much with Dr. Crothers as with his selection of subjects — and his own generation. In Oliver Wendell Holmes's day he might also have been, in his way, another autocrat of the breakfast table. At any rate, as they now stand, his essays have distinctly that garrulous breakfast table flavor. Dr. Crothers discusses everything under the sun from "The Leisurable Hours of John Wesley" to "Listening in on the Irish Question".

"Some Authors: A Collection of Literary Essays, 1896-1916" (Oxford), by the late Sir Walter Raleigh, is at or near its best in critical work already accessible and familiar. In his long introductions to Blake's poems, Lockhart's "Burns", and Sir Thomas Hoby's translations from Castiglione, Sir Walter is as little tedious as when he very briefly reintroduces Shelley, Matthew Arnold, and the pre-Shakespearian throaty songster Thomas Howell. A catch all as well for speeches, lectures, and contributions to standard periodicals, this book, even though by a professor, is actually scholarly in the best sense: never deadly dull, always apropos of the reader's independent development æsthetically. All these very personal appreciations — including others particularly fine on Boccaccio, Don Quixote, and Whistler — lacking, would have been a lasting loss to our literary awareness and joy.

"My Windows on the Street of the World" (Dutton) by James Mavor, author of "An Economic History of Russia" and emeritus professor of political economy in the University of Toronto, affords an exceptionally versatile 400,000 or so words concerning almost everything conceivable in the social, economic, and literary life of Scotland, England, Canada, and, in a lesser way, of Russia, elsewhere in Europe and Asia, and in the United States, for the last threescore years or more. A Scotsman's humor pervades every page of personal remembrance, and (generally) a breadth most strangely un-Scottish permeates all. Here are two canny tomes no university professor of any subject whatever will do well to risk being without. They are encyclopædic of bosom friendships with great movements and great men. That they are occasionally hasty in their generalizations — as in touching these United States, for example—cannot be helped. Their imperialism, too, is to be expected.

The fact that the Civil War is over (although, despite vehement assertions to the contrary, the scar still gives us a twinge when the political weather is inclement) does not seem to stem the flow of books treating every aspect of the subject. Lincoln has been eulogized until it is almost impossible to view his life and work dispassionately. But poor Jeff Davis, the man who was the figurehead of the losing cause, has been sadly neglected. H. J. Eckenrode, in "Jefferson Davis, President of the South" (Macmillan), offers a philosophical study of the causes which prevented Davis from leading the Confederacy to a successful culmination of their ambitions. The book, strange as it may seem in these days of barren prefatory promises, *is* a philosophical study, and throughout the volume there is a viewpoint that is both unique and exceedingly interesting. It is an honest attempt to inquire into the characteristics of Davis, and to determine wherein these characteristics were responsible for the failure of the Confederate army to prevail. Mighty interesting reading!

"The Humanizing of Knowledge" by James Harvey Robinson (Doran) is a succinct statement of the necessity for disseminating the attainments of science. The small compass of the book makes omissions and generalizations obligatory; but this very uncomplexity serves to put the case plainly before those who had not hitherto envisaged it. Dr. Robinson's

work is in every detail constructive: instead of attempting to annihilate the opponents of scientific enlightenment, he exhorts these adherents, with a far greater ratio of effectiveness, to recoordinate, simplify, and publish their knowledge so that it may become widely serviceable. An extraordinarily pertinent plea for small, highly specialized books is entrenched with irrefutable arguments. Dr. Robinson's vision is ideal but attainable; his suggestions are immediately applicable.

Once in a while we come upon a book of humor that arouses in us feelings of mingled envy and delight. When we read "The Collector's Whatnot" (Houghton Mifflin), for instance, we were torn with jealousy at the thought of the pleasure that the author — or authors — must have had writing it. Under the gorgeous nomenclature of Cornelius Obenchain Van Loot, Milton Kilgallen, and Murgatroyd Elphinstone, there has been produced a book of solemn foolery on the allied passions of collecting, antique hunting, and interior decorating. The illustrations are even funnier than the papers.

One attitude of the Chinese scholar toward poetry is indicated by a remark made by Yang Hsiung, a poet born fifty years before Christ. In his new book, "The Temple" (Knopf), Arthur Waley attributes to this scholar-poet these words: "When I was a boy I amused myself with the childish fretwork of poetry. Now that I am a man, I know better." It is hard to reconcile Yang Hsiung's own impressive and vigorous poem, "Poverty", with this elegant contempt for the form. There is in it the same element of strange beauty and sombre lyricism which distinguishes the work of so many of the poets represented in this volume. Theirs was the early literary poetry of China, known as *fu* to distinguish it from merely words-for-songs, the older form. Mr. Waley prefaces the pieces with some chapters of highly interesting biography relating to the poets themselves and the circumstances under which some of the selections were composed. That it takes a poet to catch a poet is as true of the translation of Chinese poetry of the time of Christ as of any other alien tongue or age. As in his previous books on the subject, Mr. Waley in "The Temple" proves himself both a poet and scholar of great enthusiasm and sensitiveness.

A fine piece of literary criticism is Patrick Braybrooke's "Gilbert K. Chesterton" (Lippincott). Although he is both kinsman and admirer of the master of paradox, he judges him quite fairly and from an unbiased point of view. He does not hesitate to criticize good humoredly and even oppose on occasion. The chapter on divorce is as neat a rebuttal of all Chesterton's arguments as one could well find. Mr. Braybrooke values Chesterton most highly perhaps as a poet, though his praise for his work as essayist is loud indeed. "The only fault is that he is at times so clever that it is a little difficult to know what he means." The book is not biographical in any sense, but a feeling of Chesterton's personality seeps through perforce. As a survey of his literary achievements, it is a complete and finished production, written with discrimination and no little style. Mr. Braybrooke sums up his subject by saying: "In a word, he is that thing in literature that occurs once or twice in every century—an epic."