RECENT BOOKS IN BRIEF REVIEW

FOR all those who can assimilate works of art and Italian food with equal facility, Arthur Milton's "Rome in Seven Days" (McBride) is an ideal guidebook to the Eternal City. As in his useful works on London and Paris, Mr. Milton, accompanied by his uncle and aunt, sees and explains all the historic sights and menus of the place on a strict schedule that might well be adopted by the hurried traveler. Monday's program sounds attractive, with St. Peter's and the Vatican in the morning, *antipasti misti* for lunch, the Castle of St. Angelo in the afternoon, and for dinner *gnocchi di patate*, not to mention *zabaione* and a bottle of real stuff. "The Dying Gladiator" with maraschino sauce, the Thermæ of Diocletian with chicken livers lightly fried in butter with sage leaves, and the "Laocoon" — which Mr. Milton says is known to some visitors as "Foreigners Trying to Eat Spaghetti" — are only a few of the delights. One may make the trip, of course, without an uncle and an aunt, but Mr. Milton's relatives proved manageable and appreciative. Uncle quoted poetry and even observed on one occasion, "Rome was not built in a day."

The American reader will have one great difficulty in appreciating Giovanni Papini's "The Failure" (Harcourt, Brace). This autobiography of a soul was written to be read by his compatriots, persons who had followed his erratic literary career, had read his scoffing, atheistical writings, and who had called him "genius" and now called him "failure". But Americans know Papini as the reverent writer of a "Life of Christ". Even if they are told that the book is a "vestibule" to that "Life", they will find much of it obscure. It is the story of the interior man — of his tortured, morbid mind. Papini was an Esau of the intellectual world — but he shifted from philosophy to philosophy — until finally he went off to the mountains to become God — and returned humbled. This defeat made of him the "failure" — it made of him the new man who could write the "Life of Christ". It would be interesting to hear what the doctor says after he looks at this piece of literature.

Nine modern French authors, from Stendhal and Sainte-Beuve to Sacha Guitry and Anatole France, take on an added glamour, vividness, and reality under the agile and appreciative pen of Arnold Whitridge, whose "Critical Ventures in Modern French Literature" (Scribner) display keen insight and a pronounced faculty for observation and analysis. Both as essays in criticism and as reading matter valuable for its sheer intrinsic interest, Mr. Whitridge's work deserves to be commended; for the author has not only illuminated the salient features of each writer's contribution but has briefly and clearly delineated the personality of the man himself — hence has distinctly traced the relationship between literature and the makers of literature.

If there is anything that has been neglected in the work of that champion scapegoat of unnaturalness, Oscar Wilde, it is the soundly moral quality ever struggling for possession of that

prince of pariahs' real self. "Echo de Paris" (Appleton) is a report by Laurence Housman (hitherto generally a dull fellow) of a chat outside a Paris café, in September, 1899, among three friends welcoming back Wilde from prison, with the latter quite properly appropriating the conversation following his entrance upon the scene. Memory and conscience which embraces charity have here combined into making Mr. Housman, the pale mimic, as it were inanimate mouthpiece for one of the brightest, best, most substantial little tragi-comedies in English.

Let none be deterred from reading "Our Foreign Affairs" (Dutton) by its bulk, or the fact that it is a plea for better American diplomacy and more of it. Paul Scott Mowrer conceives that our manifest destiny requires us to enter more fully into the field of international relations. To calm the isolationist fear of what may happen when America hangs its clothes on the hickory limb, he suggests that thus nations learn to swim better and that America already has the makings of a good swimmer. The only excuse for describing such a book as one might a newspaper cartoon is that it displays much the same type of common sense and plausibility. But Mr. Mowrer can present a serious subject at length without becoming tedious. Nor does he enliven his discourse with the verbal flipflops commonly resorted to by journalists for fear that they may grow dull. Mr. Mowrer, without shattering traditions, has contributed some new ideas on an old subject.

There was a day when only those who had scaled the heights of Olympus were expected to gather the fruits of a lifetime of success and public acclaim into a "volume of reminiscences"; the Indian summer years were obviously bestowed for no other purpose. But today, when youth treads recklessly on the heels of age, the story must be told, or at least begun, as soon as one is secure in the foothills. Cosmo Hamilton has put much into the early years of what promises to be an unusually fruitful life, and life has retaliated generously. From Fleet Street to Hollywood, by way of the Royal Naval Air Service and an energetic period of propagandist effort in this country, Mr. Hamilton has run upon incident, anecdote, adventure, and experience which make interesting reading in "Unwritten History" (Little, Brown). As novelist, political writer, editor, playwright, officer, and public speaker, he tells of a circle of friends and acquaintances from King George to Charlie Chaplin, from Lady Astor to the Duncan Sisters. He has succeeded in bringing much of his optimism and keen intelligence to this very human record of recent personal events.

An Australian surgeon who recently cut into literature and delivered a post mortem on Henry VIII's second queen, so evidently was suffering from a complex himself that his essay left one convinced of a need for a new biographer to arise and give the unfortunate Anne some show of fairness. Philip W. Sergeant fills this need in "The Life of Anne Boleyn" (Appleton). Quoting copiously, throughout 319 pages, from the only sources available — the documentary evidence of the facts in Anne's life have been destroyed — he constantly reminds the reader that his citations are drawn from the tattling of her enemies. Sergeant makes her no saint, merely an ambitious woman, no worse than, for instance, her daughter, who even today is known as "good Queen Bess"! The biography has six-

teen illustrations and will appeal both to the scholar and the lay reader.

"Cherry-Stones" is what Eden Phillpotts calls his little book of poems (Macmillan). Prefatory stanzas indicate he chose the title to explain that he was hewing no marble monument. Still, "Cherry-Stones" is too modest a title for these verses — and "Cameos" would be too austere. "Netsuke" — the daintily wrought Japanese fasteners, which are the subject of one poem in the book — more nearly expresses the spirit of these pages. A few lines are commonplace; the single Horatian translation is stiff. But "Cider Makers" attains the dignity of a Georgic. Most of the poems possess the virtues of brevity and pungency — many of them are worth retaining in the memory.

"Letters of the Tsaritsa to the Tsar, 1914–1916", with an introduction by Sir Bernard Pares, K.B.E. (McBride), offers some difficulty to the reader who is not a special student of the old régime in Russia, for in its voluminous pages there is constant and often confused reference to the interplay of unknown or forgotten personages, and the explanatory index is by no means complete. But the book will more than repay, on several scores, attentive reading. Seldom has a more pitiful record been brought to light. It presents, more clearly than most theses written on the same subject, the miasmal bog of political intrigue. In this case the Tsaritsa herself assisted in its creation and the Tsar foundered helplessly in it. There has scarcely been in history a more determined enemy to constitutionalism than the Tsaritsa. To political conviction she added the unreasoning, possessive greed of a mother: it was for her son that she wished to preserve the autocratic dominion over Russia intact. This was her fundamental mistake; but even more harmful to the welfare of the country and the dynasty was her mystical subservience to the famous charlatan, Rasputin. Whatever this "man of God" wished she pressed with fanatical insistence on her husband. The contrast between her frenzied strength of will and the Tsar's weakness becomes more striking and more pathetic as she slowly effects his ruinously complete isolation from saner counselors. She believed fervently, of course, that she and practically she alone, with the help of Rasputin, was working for the salvation of Russia, her husband, and her son. Her devotion to the Tsar was unlimited, to the point of seeming, in the garbled English she wrote, extravagant. Her quality as a woman, which must be admired even while its unwise manifestations are deplored, is most beautifully shown in her words when she heard of the Tsar's abdication for himself and for their son: "*Et lui tout seul là-bas!*"

Fascismo is the "Black Magic" of Kenneth L. Roberts's book (Bobbs-Merrill) in which is described "its beneficial use in Italy, its perversion in Bavaria and certain tendencies which might necessitate its study in America". The "tendencies" are all red, pink, socialist, pacifist, bloc, and similar movements — including the promotion of government assisted cooperatives. Since Mussolini's cohorts effectively suppressed such manifestations in Italy, the Fascist operations there are described with much glee. The delight is inspired more by the sight of a good scrap, won by two-fisted fellows who stood no nonsense, than by any emotion roused by the lofty Mussolinian oratory. Nor did

the beer hall Fascisti of Bavaria deceive Mr. Roberts. Although he wrote before failure of their *coup*, he foresaw the event. As for the "dangerous tendencies" here, the author advocates the promotion of such organizations as the American Defense Society, the Better American Federation, and the National Civic Federation as one means of opposing them. Oh, how earnest Mr. Roberts is! — but his style is studiously jocose.

"Dog and Duck" by Arthur Machen (Knopf) is a collection of papers most of which have as their subject matter some characteristic, a festival or the weather, of the month in which they first appeared. The good old convivial life is extolled and science denounced with humorously exaggerated vigor. We do not find here, naturally, the subtlety and beauty of Mr. Machen's purely creative works, nor their strange, mystical implications. There is evidence of some strain in the necessary tone of simplicity; but it is genially maintained, and erudition is brought into play only very tactfully and lightly in graceful circumlocutions. The essays are pleasant reading; but how doubly charming, and surprising, they must have seemed in the columns of the Lyons "Mail"!

While it cannot pretend in a single volume, even of 917 pages, to take the place of Riemann or Grove, Waldo Selden Pratt's "The New Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians" (Macmillan) admirably supplements them, and in certain fields — definitions and descriptions, bibliographical notes, places, institutions and organizations — gives valuable information not otherwise available in handy reference form. That the useful list of "Operas and Oratorios since 1900" furnishes no clue other than that supplied by the composer's name as to the relative importance of the work does not do away with the fact that Dr. Pratt's volume (copiously illustrated) contains more information anent music and musicians in a single volume than any other existent in English.

In "My Crystal Ball" (Boni, Liveright) Elisabeth Marbury gives herself away in the subtitle: "Reminiscences of a Busy Life". This one phrase is a keynote to the whole book; it has the harsh aspect of the personal pronoun. The author falls quite easily into the usual and tiresome attitude of "Great Souls as have been revealed to Me". When one has known Wilde, Bernhardt, Sardou, and their like — unless one is of kindred genius — the natural attitude is a reportorial and not a personal one. Yet Miss Marbury never permits her reader to forget for one minute that she is along. Just when one feels that she has been left somewhere in the background and the notable at hand is about to be humanly revealed, she pops up with an astonishing platitude. This much can be said for the book — the writer had certainly a distinguished calling list.

The latter day poet has many advantages not enjoyed by his forerunners. There was a time when mere jingle was not sufficient in itself to palm off the wares of a verse maker. The public wanted a moral — something that taught or pointed out. The poet who hadn't this generally sucked his thumbs for want of better nourishment. Now, however, we are content with music alone — if we are fortunate enough to get it. We do not care, necessarily, whether a couplet points the way to a New Truth or a Greater Understanding. All of this, by the way,

leading up to the fact that in "The City's Voice" (Marshall Jones) by Morris Gray there is neither music nor mental stimulus, melody nor cheery thought. A feeble offering at best, containing, among other gems, such unswallowable bits as "A Woman's Love", "The Larger Vision", and (Heaven help us all!) the brilliance: "Eternal as the race of men Thy sovran rule, O queen of Love, holds sway."

Very often what youth sets down in malice, growing conservatism writes in friendship. Thus, with Gerald Cumberland's "Written in Friendship" (Brentano): the at times perniciousness of "Set Down in Malice" now smooths out to such petty spleen (all flesh is heir to) as hating editors, whose business policy must (occasionally) dictate rejection slips for our unquestioned masterpieces. Hence, Mr. C. dislikes Thomas Moult. Now kindly shows leniency toward Shaw, Beerbohm, Chesterton. Is cautious before such newcomers as "Margot", A. R. Orage, and T. S. Eliot. Raringly dislikes, however, Harold Monro, Squire, Sassoon, J. Middleton Murry, "Eddy" Marsh, H. J. Massingham — young Englishmen in position to pull up old horses who would run over them. Dislikes C. R. W. Nevinson. Likes George Robey, James Agate, Walter Winans. *Worships* Frank Harris. But bores infinitesimal gimlet holes to let the very daylight through more defenseless armors. Asks us to judge of such worshipers of beauty as Symons, Machen, Ralph Hodgson, through their stomachs! Extends free advertising for the "culture" of A. E. W. Mason and E. Phillips Oppenheim! Fathers Rebecca West and Sheila Kaye-Smith! Mothers Caradoc Evans! Betrays a wise liking for (as well as just merely betrays) John Cournos. *Pings* hundreds of writers, entertainers, artists, editors, Welshmen (only friends avoid at least a scratch from this naughty intellectually-half-grown-up's itchy arrows)! Writes entertainingly. Writes like A. S. M. Hutchinson. Like *this!* Yet, despite all boresomeness, here is a book to borrow!

The most important thing about Martin Johnson's "Camera Trails in Africa" (Century) is that it is undoubtedly a truthful narrative of the happenings which befell the author on the hunting trail. And this is remarkable. So many men see Africa — and lie. They always — they would have us believe — brought off marvelous shots, showed superhuman bravery, exhibited uncanny ability in following the spoor of animals, and had a keen insight into the psychological make up of the natives. But not so Martin Johnson. He confesses his failures — and they are as interesting as his successes. A man has to fail many times in Africa before he gets a "seeing eye" and becomes veld-wise. Of course Johnson and his charming wife had adventures —with lions and rhinos; elephants and buffalo. They make good reading, specially good because there is no boasting; no glorying in insensate killing; no killing for the sake of killing. For that reason alone the book should appeal to sportsmen. We understand that Johnson has returned to Lake Paradise — it is well named. We wish him, enviously, good hunting. We'd like to be with him — but we'd want to strangle his pet monkey.

Campbell Dodgson, keeper of prints at the British Museum, has done more than write the text of a book on eighteenth century color prints. He has given us in his "Old French Colour-

Prints" (Halton and Truscott Smith) all the charming, almost artificial romantic gaiety of the prints of the period of Watteau and Boucher. This atmosphere is not confined to the author's most readable text but infuses as well the entire make up of the book, from the beautifully mounted color reproductions to the appropriately decorative binding.

"Some Thoughts on Hilaire Belloc" (Lippincott) is drivel. Patrick Braybrooke, the author, is a David tossing pebbles in the general direction of Goliath, but he has not strength enough to send the missiles within range nor an aim accurate enough to endanger. As to the style of the critic, let this single sentence indicate: "Yet it would be quite inconceivable that proprietors should not look upon their controls in a commercial light, added to which it must be recognized that today that which is backed by commercial consideration induces the greatest enthusiasm, I am certain to look upon a newspaper as a commercial concern is one of the surest ways of making that journal a 'live' one, it stimulates those who have the actual production to know that there is money in it, the public are likely to be considered as it is quite obvious that if a proprietor wishes to make his paper commercially successful, he will put what is palatable or perhaps rather that which is interesting, before them."

After ten years of experience in city politics, Henry H. Curran is well qualified to tell something about it. "John Citizen's Job" (Scribner) is an open invitation to the man who confines his activities to saying loudly that "politics are all rotten", to come on in and help. There is work for everyone, it seems; and the more intelligent people who interest themselves in questions of schools and tenements and the spending of city funds, the better for the city. It is a readable little book, filled with anecdotes and written in a humorous, colloquial style. It proves among other things that Mr. Curran is a sensible man with good ideas about city government. Which must be the reason that he was so overwhelmingly defeated when he ran for mayor.

A critical appraisal of F. H. Pritchard's "Training in Literary Appreciation" (Crowell) seems impossible. The book is planned to assist readers in becoming more discriminating in their literary tastes. Certain fundamentals of construction, style, etc., are pointed out. Questions and suggested readings are appended to each chapter and a bibliography of reference works is included. Rhythm, change and recurrence, words and letters, prose and poetry, forms of verse, story and setting, comprise some of the chapter subjects. Mr. Pritchard has done a workmanlike job and, as a textbook for individual or class use, his book will doubtless prove helpful. From our standpoint, any conscious effort in the direction of making readers more discriminating is utterly futile. Admitting this bias, Mr. Pritchard's work seems as good as any on the subject — and far better than most.

"Mr. Archer, U.S.A." (Doubleday, Page) is published under a titular handicap. This book has nothing whatever to do with one hundred percenters. It is not a minor "Babbitt" nor a glorification of the Babbitt type. It is the record of an old army trooper as told to R. H. Platt, Jr. Humorous anecdotes are packed into it, together with a generous assortment of most dramatic situations. Nothing just like

it is among the current biographies. Though the character himself was not an important figure in this country's development and military performances, Archer stands for the army which has had a big rôle. His narrative is frank, naïve, and delightful.

Marguerite E. Harrison is nothing if not thorough. In her latest book "Red Bear or Yellow Dragon" (Doran) she describes her journey through Japan, China, Manchuria, across Siberia to Russia, and it is positively startling to read of the intrepid manner in which she pursues the very uneven tenor of her way about these hazardous countries. She can be counted on to give a social, political, and economic view of each place she visited, and her severely journalistic style, although it robs the account of any personal charm, nevertheless makes it sound trustworthy and unbiased. Her adventures closed with her second imprisonment in Russia; the details that she gives on the Soviet régime shed an interesting light on this mysterious government, although they are not likely to flood Cook's with eager tourists. There may be compensations for life in some odd corners of the earth, the South Seas for example, but Siberia sounds like unadulterated horror. That a woman ever came across it alone and alive strengthens one's faith in a merciful providence.

"My Life" (Duffield) was told by Anissia, a Russian peasant woman, to a sister-in-law of Leo Tolstoy. It comes to us exactly as it was related, barring a little revision by the Count, and is therefore a chapter out of human experience, apparently unmarred by literary finish, and moving one by its very simplicity and directness. Yet so powerful is the effect produced with such economy of means, that some believe the story to have been written entirely by Count Tolstoy. This, to the translator, is evidence not only of "the racial authenticity of the great writer of Russia", but of the fact that the skeptical "have not had the opportunity to appreciate [the Russian peasant's] extraordinary gift of storytelling, to admire the precision of his account, his sharp sense of the picturesque, his finesse and his communicative emotion".

Edwin Muir, star book reviewer of the late lamented "Freeman", in his "Latitudes" (Huebsch) preaches the gospel of criticism of minds, not beards. Only "by treating literature purely as the emanation of spiritual energies" can we so far forget "the appetites, trivialities, and meannesses" of our "subjects" as to see the forests, say, through stubbly beards, "warts and all"; only thus may we avoid the paraphernalia of the merely picturesque, of envy's barbed shafts, scandal's salacious sidetrackings of whatever is not grossly material, "scholarship's" pussyfooting, piddling, and doddering (these graceless epithetical outbursts ours, not Muir's). Examining Scottish ballads, Burns, Conrad, Dostoyevsky, Ibsen, George Douglas; "against" profundity (Lawrence, Joyce, Anderson); "against" superstition, "the wise", optimism, pessimism, "being convinced", etc., this *canny* young Scotsman does the best he *can* (!). A bit juvenilely Nietzschean, hastily synthesized, this little study in æsthetics is one of the sanest ever assumed by an American publisher.

"Essays of To-day: An Anthology", edited by F. H. Pritchard (Little, Brown), confines itself to selections of twentieth century work. The list of

contributors is comprehensive and judicious enough to preclude special mention of any particular writer. A specifically modern, rebellious spirit is not, despite the implication of the introduction, to be found in these essays; rather, they have a traditional, gentle charm. They are faithful to the best of their genre; but we cannot help wishing that they were also representative of their authors' work. Taken from their original context in previously published books, they look a little forlorn and sound somewhat abrupt. For the most part they are too fragmentary to indicate in any way the stature of the writers. They should be read for the musing pleasure of renewing an old acquaintance, not with the hope of making a possible discovery.

"Westward Hoboes: Ups and Downs of Frontier Motoring" by Winifred Hawkridge Dixon (Scribner) is a very modern magic carpet on which to experience adventurous travel while ensconced in an armchair. It tells of an automobile trip taken by the author and a thoroughly feminine friend through Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and corners of other states. There are eleven thousand miles of details, variations all on three themes: accidents, scenery, and people. Yet the journey does not, to the reader, seem long. It is made delightful by Mrs. Dixon's sense of humor, which revels in predicaments and idiosyncrasies, and by her offhand, blissfully unsentimental style. She has a flair for pithy, vivid description, and a fine discrimination for shades of difference between objects superficially similar. The multitudinous impressions she recaptures are rarely blurred. She saw extraordinary and beautiful things, and because she is honest and unpretentious in her report she does not dwarf them. It is a genuinely entertaining book, not only to leaf through for the photographs but to read.

A celebrated author may justly fear death more than does the ordinary mortal. There is a fair certainty that his publisher will issue a posthumous volume of miscellaneous material "hitherto unpublished". For this purpose the zealous editor will exhume a mass of ephemeral products — such hack work and potboilers as a search of old magazines and dusty papers will reveal. "The Glorious Mystery" (Covici-McGee) is just that sort of book. Arthur Machen, however, has a fine liking for the horrible and may enjoy this foretaste of terrors to come. The contents of the book are largely controversial reviews of books on theology and debates on the legend of the Holy Grail. The hopeful blurb writer declares, " 'The Glorious Mystery' is a genuine First Edition for collectors of the writings of the Welsh master." Any such collector will be furnished, on application, the name of the second hand bookstore which will buy this reviewer's copy.

Lack of perspective is the malady which ails Rosalind Travers Hyndman's story of her husband — "The Last Years of H. M. Hyndman" (Brentano). She sat too near to that undoubtedly great man's heart and soul, too near to what she conceived to be the heart and soul of the English Social Democratic Movement, to be able to see either of them in its true proportions or its true light. It is a sadly ironical fact that the part of Mrs. Hyndman's book which best portrays the greatness of Hyndman is the collection, at the end, of tributes, sympathetic messages, and general and

personal opinions of friends and enemies. Among these is a batch of reviews and letters from the pen of George Bernard Shaw. Shaw gives us Hyndman as a simple soul, an earnest thinker, and a great and unpurchasable idealist. We love that Hyndman. Mrs. Hyndman makes of her man a god, a giant figure, impossibly, irritatingly infallible; and somehow he annoys us so that his cause annoys us too.

"Immigration" by Edith Abbott (University of Chicago) constitutes a comprehensive and invaluable textbook for the student of the problems of the alien: his admission, his exclusion, his expulsion, his assimilation, and his social environment. The volume covers all phases of the subject, historical and legal as well as economic and political; it provides voluminous documentary material from actual research work, and shows by specific examples the actual conditions and problems which typical immigrants have to meet. While designed for the specialist rather than for the general reader, it contains a large amount of material of interest to all who are concerned with social advancement.

All success to Forbes Watson's "The Arts Monographs" (Duffield). The first two volumes of this series have recently been published. There is a great need today for well illustrated and intelligently written books on the fine arts which are modest enough in price to be within reach of the professional man. The forthcoming monographs will deal with both native and foreign artists, some of the attractive subjects announced being Arthur B. Davies, Aikens, and Toulouse-Lautrec. Walter Pach has written the first volume on Georges Seurat; and Forbes Watson, who so capably edits "The Arts", is the author of the second volume of the series, on the American artist William Glackens.

Gertrude, Claudius, Ophelia, even Polonius, have been accorded justice at last. Hamlet has been set back several notches for the misanthropic, "unfilial" fellow that he is — when he is not too mad to be termed "unfilial". All this in one modest sized book, Lillie Buffum Chace Wyman's "Gertrude of Denmark: An Interpretative Romance" (Marshall Jones)! Whitewasher extraordinary, this new and splendid Amazon asserts for herself much the same relation to hitherto "incestuous" Gertrude, the object aforetime of many an Hamletian bit of impoliteness (to put it mildly), that one Rafael Sabatini now bears to one much-posthumously-blackened Cesare Borgia. Burlesque or sermon, novel or critical treatise — despite any and all our prejudices — this book is a friendly, "civilized", humorous, beautiful, and assertive entry into the lists of Shakespeariana. Deserving to become at least a classic of curiosity.

The young poets of Oxford still tread lightly on the broad highway of English poetic tradition. From "Oxford Poetry, 1923" (Appleton) one gains assurance that the old forms are best, that for this gently humorous, resigned, fastidious phase of undergraduate life nothing that is chaotic or raw can take their place. It is almost as if these young men were afraid to take life too seriously, having come lately to such bitter grips with it. They play with poesy as with some delicate bauble, extracting from it exquisite lights and colors, as in Harold Acton's "The Pensile Gardens of Babylon", or Lord David Cecil's "Beauty Unsought"; laughing over it, cynically, perhaps, as

in Geoffrey Curtis's "Unparadised"; and sometimes finding through it the inevitable perfect phrase, as in P. P. Brown's "Dirge". Their poetic expression is like new, sweet wine, and the old sturdy, shapely bottles of English versification hold it well.

Men working in the creative arts are ever trying to enlarge the sphere of their practice. And so we have the oils of Pablo Picasso, the music of dissonance, the poetry of E. E. Cummings, and the new art of biography. Departing frankly from the methods of the graduate schools, it teaches that biography should approach the condition of fiction. Its patron saint is J. A. Froude. Lytton Strachey is Lord Bishop; Philip Guedalla his sacristan. Gerald Bullett, author of "The Innocence of G. K. Chesterton" (Holt), shows himself in this engaging volume to be the most devout and tractable of acolytes. Mr. Bullett's vivacious account of Chesterton's intellectual quests is more pleasant reading than most fiction, and far more penetrating. He is interested in ideas — Mr. Chesterton's and his own; and he is a tolerable parodist, for so closely does his style and manner approximate Chesterton's that at times the gracious mediævalist himself seems to be launching the paradoxes. "The Innocence of G. K. Chesterton" is heartily to be recommended as an introduction to the new biography, and to the biggest belletrist in the United Kingdom.

It is gratifying to see how well the American contributions reproduced in "Fine Prints of the Year" (1923) compare with the Continental selections. This year's annual review of contemporary graphic art, edited by Malcolm C. Salaman (Halton and Truscott Smith), is particularly interesting for the space devoted to the recently revived art of woodcut printing both here and abroad.

Life in its tragic mutability is the theme of James Oppenheim's poems, collected now in one volume called "The Sea" (Knopf). Like the deep, his soul's existence surges up in magnificent waves of glory, and ebbs away from the ghastly shore of failure. Like the deep, too, his inspiration falls occasionally into a dead calm, when poetry is submerged beneath the prosy monotony of an autobiographical narrative. Ardent followers of Mr. Oppenheim may find something to worship in that portion of the book called "The Mystic Warrior", in which the poet chronicles with almost childish exactness the incidents of his life. We do not quarrel with the too frequent triviality of these incidents, but rather with the dull, formless primer style in which they are told. Against their drabness, the vivid, sentient portions of the book flash like lightning across a dead sky. The images electrify; in the love poems, especially, they spring like arcs of fire across the page. This is true, not only of the short lyrics, like "Action" and "Folk Hunger", but of such long sustained pieces as "The Song of the Sea". In this really splendid sequence, the uneven rhythms rise and fall in magnificent swell of song with the recurrent supplication to *Mare æternis!* Of himself, the poet says, "I am one of those who are born with a stoop-shouldered spirit." Perhaps it is this characteristic that has kept so much of his verse at the level of gutter pavements. But it is the same characteristic that, when his face is turned to the sky, makes the beauty reflected there shine with a blinding brilliance seldom seen on the countenances of those who walk always in the light.