

Her satire is not harsh, but it is extremely effective. The British lion quivers beneath her darts, but he cannot help laughing at himself and admiring her marksmanship. A first-rate book which will be enjoyed by intelligent people.

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The Judge. A Play in Four Acts. By Maxim Gorky. Translated by Marie Zaksrevsky and Barrett H. Clark. New York: Robert McBride & Co. \$1.50.

THROUGH fierce hatred of people and love of tormenting others, one man seeks to ruin another's life. Mastakoff, sentenced to the galleys for a murder he did not commit, has escaped and built up an honorable and prosperous career, the plot thus far reminiscent of "Les Misérables." His pursuer is a fellow prisoner who did not succeed in escaping, and who finished his term a worn-out old man. The old man appoints himself judge over Mastakoff and creeps into his life at the time he is about to make his home and happiness complete through marriage. With the whole foundation of his security shattered, Mastakoff loses courage in spite of the faith and protection of the woman who loves him, and commits suicide. Sad, sad Slavic soul!

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Backfurrow. By G. D. Eaton. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.00.

A TRUTHFUL, conscientious story of the struggle of a Middle-Western farmer with life and his environment. The veracity of the book does not keep it from being grievous. It is written with a dark or Russian fidelity; barring a few passages, such as the poetical conversations of Mr. Heinrichs which strike one as purple splashes on a drab background, the tone is hopeless and dreary from the start. The hero gets no pleasure at all from being a vertebra in the backbone of his country nor from being a husband and father as well as a husbandman. One does not wish to be flippant over an honest piece of work, but there are moments when one regrets the chapters which might have been titled "The Sex Life of a Hick"; these are painful moments. One does not recommend to Mr. Eaton the cheery optimism of a Rotarian or the Cheer-boys-cheer heartiness of a vice president of a Chamber of Commerce, but one wishes that he felt something of the joy and something of the genuine humor of country life in America. His picture is distinctly by a follower of the Russian school. Only the volley of revolver shots which terminate the rural Russian novel is lacking, that

ultimate moment in the Slavic dreariness when all the *dramatis personæ* pistol themselves because they find out that life is not worth living. In "Backfurrow," the hero does not shoot himself, but has brain fever instead, loses a good many of his wits, and spends his time watching ants being active around an ant hill while he babbles o' green fields. A worthy but depressing book.

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The Keys of the City. By Elmer Davis. New York: Robert McBride & Co. \$2.00.

FROM all external indications this novel is the latest product of Mr. Elmer Davis' workmanlike pen, but internally it shows every sign of antedating that charming, whimsical, and refreshing book, "I'll Show You the Town." The latter was unusual in idea and treatment, the former almost naïf in its conformity to type. "I'll Show You the Town" showed every sign of a humorous but chaste sophistication. "The Keys of the City" is wide-eyed and innocent. Its author seems to step forth all fresh from these great open spaces where men are men and boys are boys and dogs are dogs and fleas are fleas, and so forth.

However, if not both new and original, it is a good enough story and simply told. The villains are particularly black and foul, the hero is a nice young man, the heroine rather more interesting than most, and so on. There is a slack skeptical lawyer who quotes Latin, jeers at the pomposities of life, and is frowned on by respectability and the best credit ratings in Hollisburg, Indiana, whom Mr. Davis evidently intended to cast for a big part. Somehow, he failed to put him over.

The book is a step backward from Mr. Davis' previous achievements, but it is a nice story which any child may feel safe in recommending to his parents.

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Veterans All. Anonymous. New York: American Library Service. \$2.00.

CHEROKEE Roses, Southern Moon, Miss Virginia, "Aunt" Margaret, "Uncle" Bob, a Southern gentleman of the old school, F. F. V's, Dixie, the Blue and the Gray, the Great War, the Gold Star, One Flag. Now — everything is there that ought to be there, all the familiar ingredients swimming about in a fine, ripe, sentimental sauce. This book would Americanize a hundred Mr. Bok's, even if each one had two or three personalities like Edward. Aside from its moral value, it is terrible.

Orphan Island. By Rose Macaulay. New York: Boni & Liveright. \$2.00.

IN the eighteen-fifties a shipload of foundlings, two Victorian ladies, and a ship's doctor were cast away on an uninhabited but quite habitable island in the South Seas. To them come a family of explorers, a modern family who discover the strange civilization which has grown up on Orphan Island. The aristocracy of Smiths — descendants of Miss Smith — and the plebeian or Orphan party have contrived to duplicate many of the problems of English life. Miss Macaulay is a satirist of the keenest type, and her treatment of this Lilliputian situation is extraordinarily clever, amusing, and original.