THE charm of Sir Harry Johnston's novels is first a good story, and second, an amazing gallery of characters—odd, lively, astonishing—moving across the changing scenes of England, Africa, America, and the dominions beyond the sea. "The Veneerings" (Macmillan) is no exception, and these descendants of Dickens's Veneerings and their friends and kinsfolk are in a French resort for the bankrupt, in New York, and in South Africa. The period is spacious too—thirty or forty years or more, from the 1860's to 1901. There are many letters, a number of rakish characters (recalling some of Thackeray's) and some real personages, including Cecil Rhodes. Not a novel to be read as a duty, but a treat to be anticipated and enjoyed.

Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn's autobiography: "Up Stream; an American Chronicle" (Boni and Liveright), may well be contrasted, as it is suggested, with such an optimistic book as the autobiography of Mr. Edward Bok. Each may be read as corrective of the other; on one hand the successful business man, turning everything to money, on the reverse the struggling author and university teacher, who is further hindered by prejudices against him as a Jew, and after 1914 by the feeling against him as a German—a feeling which Mr. Lewisohn is sure was entirely unjustified. Mr. Bok's America is seen through glasses of a rosy tint; Mr. Lewisohn's spectacles are saffron. In both instances, allowance is to be made for discoloration.

The latter pages of "Up Stream" sound a trifle rasping; there is too much special pleading when Mr. Lewisohn finds with such ease a brutal British militarist on every hand to set off against the invaders of Belgium, the destroyers of passenger-ships. The apologists for Germany (not always pro-Germans, by any means—merely those professional opponents of the majority, without regard to right or wrong) have only reached the point of trying to explode what they call "the myth of the guilty nation." The blame must rest on all nations, not on Germany alone. It sounds familiar, somehow; there is that sinuosity about it which was endeared to us by the methods of the gentle German publicists from 1914 to 1917. The next step in the argument will doubtless be that there was not one guilty nation, there were two: France and Great Britain. The best and truest friends of France, Mr. Lewisohn finds, were the "defeatists" of 1916 and 1917. Is it more than a short step to point out that the real deliverer of Paris in 1914 was General von Kluck—if they had not stupidly kept him away? Mr. Lewisohn does not take that step, but another writer may yet do it.

He says many bitter and true things about the superficiality of our culture; he attacks with deadly precision the lynching spirit—that black disgrace of America—which is sometimes rampant; he depicts the brutal politician of a district attorney who quizzed him about his loyalty during the war; he describes the heavy-jowled ignoramuses (readers of *The Saturday Evening Post* and husbands of vulgar wives) who persecuted him. He points out many a weakness in and many a shameful fact about the country to which his parents were so glad to come. And I suppose it is all right and proper. I believe in destructive criticism; it is a great deal better than no criticism at all. Yet, somehow, under similar circumstances, I wouldn't enjoy doing it myself. It reminds me of a boy who has asked for an invitation to a party, who has come late, and who finally bursts out with: "Your lemonade is warm, and your ice-cream is punk, and I didn't get much cake, and your whole party is rotten!"

The larger part of "Up Stream" shows the cultured and generally sane critic that Mr. Lewisohn is when he is not "thinking internationally." That is an exercise which has an almost inevitable tendency to make Anglo-Saxon hypocrisy, corruption, and ignorance, look black indeed, while Prussian efficiency and charm glow in a golden and tender light.

This has been a week of good stories, and it would be foolish to pretend to have read them all. It is puzzling to know how William John Hopkins, even if he was a New Bedford boy, and reared in a whaling atmosphere, could produce so veracious sounding a narrative as "She Blows!" (Houghton). It is like the diary of a whaler—except that this whaler could write. He does not merely stamp on the page of his log a little picture of a whale, with a blank space amidships, to write in the number of barrels the whale produced. The whalers, some of them, did that, and it saved time which might have been spent in literary composition. I observe that Tim, the narrator of this whaling voyage, had a grandmother who lived in Newburyport. When his ship, the *Clearchus*, is off the River Plate, he sees a large bird rising from the sea, and it reminds him of a great blue heron which he once saw standing on the marsh near Chain Bridge.

Mr. Frank Harris shows that the inspiration for "A Ballad of Reading Gaol" came from A. E. Housman's "A Shropshire Lad." Wilde's ballad, despite its wonderful spirit of dread, is long and repetitious; "The Shropshire Lad," now published here by Henry Holt & Co., has the restraint of a fine and less self-conscious poet, To invite attention to the new edition I wish to quote a stanza or two—but it is hard to choose. The good verses on ale? The verses about the hanging —"There sleeps in Shrewsbury jail tonight"? "When I was one-and-twenty"? Well, the best known of them is still best for quoting:

> With rue my heart is laden
> For golden friends I had,
> For many a rose-lipt maiden
> And many a lightfoot lad.
>
> By brooks too broad for leaping
> The lightfoot boys are laid;
> The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
> In fields where roses fade.

A psychological study of a Swedish boy from the age of five to fifteen is Mr. Edwin Björkman's "The Soul of a Child" (Knopf). It is as typically European as Mr. E. M. Robinson's "Enter Jerry" is American. The author has lived long in this country; his hero is dwelling in Sweden long before the War—he has not that reason for world-sorrow. Yet it is serious, almost humorless. The troubles and complications of social caste are an important element in the life of young Keith Wellander. His story—so far as it is a story—is told with the care of an artist. But I will swap my copy for a set of Bolivian postage-stamps, a fishing-pole, or a good knife. Nobody will get my copy of "Enter Jerry" away from me.

Prohibitionists, the Puritans, and all other severe moralists, are smitten, hip, thigh, and shin-bone, by Mr. Michael Monahan in "Dry America" (Nicholas L. Brown). He calls to witness Quintus Horatius Flaccus; he punctures the illogical reasoning of Jack London's "John Barleycorn"—that curious book of a converted teetotaller who talked about his drinking days with so much more gusto than about his dryness; he talks of Blue Laws; and he deliciously reviews George Saintsbury's "Notes on a Cellar Book." It is a little encyclopaedia of anti-prohibition, but it is the work of a literary man, not of a maker of text-books, and it is never dry.

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