

French Notes

FRANCOIS MAURIAC is young, and a Roman Catholic. It is not, however, to the Faubourg Saint Germain that the success of "Le Baiser au Lépreux" has been limited. All literary clans have saluted this short novel—125 pages—as a sober masterpiece of French fiction, showing that a living tradition is still running from "La Princesse de Clèves", "Adolphe", and

"Dominique" to our young authors of today. It is obviously to the technique of these novels, and to the ethics of the latter one and of Gide's "Porte Etroite", that Mauriac has looked for his models. The plot is not very involved; but the details of psychology and sensibility are of that acute precision which, garbed in the most elegant and careful language, give the great French books of fiction their distinctive quality. "Le Baiser au Léproux" is the eighth book issued in the "Cahiers Verts", a remarkable series edited by Daniel Halévy, which has already included the famous "Maria Chapdelaine", "Le Cœur des Autres" by Gabriel Marcel, "Le Passage de l'Aisne" by Emile Clermont, Logan Pearsall Smith's translated "Trivia", Louis Bertrand's "Flaubert à Paris", Joachim Gasquet's last book, and, by Daniel Halvéy himself, a "Visite aux Paysans du Centre". This is a gathering which new writers will be proud to join.

A trilogy of books, by Abel Hermant, has now been completed with the publication of "Le Crépuscule Tragique". The two first volumes, "L'Aube Ardente" and "La Journée Brève", took a young man in the early 'eighties and followed him through the period leading from one Franco-Prussian war to the other. The last book ends with the armistice of 1918. If the French Academy does not open its doors to Abel Hermant after this accomplishment, following such works as "Le Cadet de Coutras", "Les Grands Bourgeois", "La Carrière", the delightful and crazy "Transatlantiques", and many others—there will be a strong suspicion that the Academy has missed a new and fine opportunity of recognizing talent.

To an already long series of books—half fiction, half technical descrip-

tions—devoted to various trades and handiworks, Pierre Hamp has added "Le Cantique des Cantiques". A new perfume has been baptized "The Song of Songs", and Hamp retraces its history, from the flower fields and factories of Grasse, where it is born, to the dressing table of the beautiful woman for whom it is finally intended.

Roland Dorgelès, the successful author of "Les Croix de Bois" and "Le Cabaret de la Belle Femme", has written "Saint Magloire"—not without a few points in common with Fogazzaro's "Il Santo"—wherein adventure, mysticism, and social redemption play their conflicting parts in a present day setting of provincial France.

Also in a provincial frame, "Les Taupes", by Francis de Miomandre, presents the silent work of envy and calumny with a bitterness to which we are not accustomed in this smiling and indulgent author. Edouard Estaunié, who has been noted for several remarkable books, is rising to a very high rank with "L'Appel de la Route". So, at least, says Edmond Jaloux, and Jaloux is a good judge.

La Nouvelle Revue Française has printed or reprinted various short books of Jules Romains: "Les Copains", "Amour Couleur de Paris", etc. Also a new edition of "Les Poésies d'André Walter", Gide's very first work, out of print since 1893—this time with a portrait of the author by Marie Laurencin. And also "L'Abbaye de Typhaines", one of Gobineau's novels and not the least interesting from the standpoint of present events in rural revolutionary Russia. The "Repertoire du Vieux-Colombier" has published several Russian plays, by Alexis Tolstoy, Evreinov, Gogol.

"Ouvert la Nuit" is the new book of Paul Morand. It will be eagerly read

by those who admired “Lampes à Arc”, “Feuilles de Température”, and “Tendres Stocks”. Many people consider that Morand not only “*sait garder le charme d’une sensibilité bien française*”, as the publisher’s jargon puts it, but stands as one of France’s most original literary individualities.

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