RECENT BOOKS IN BRIEF REVIEW

TO improvise successfully a long series of Johnsonian animadversions upon a Johnsonian plurality of topics requires a skilful parodist well versed in the idiom of Boswell, and a public with an indefatigable mind for satire. Both are present in the publication of "The New Boswell" by R. M. Freeman (Stokes). Mr. Freeman knows his Johnson well enough to hit off topical subjects with sufficient fidelity to be amusing. The conversations purport to have been communicated from Elysium, and touch upon the Irish question, golf, auction bridge, daily journalism, infant welfare, Bolshevism, the Elysian telephone service, America, Coué, and prize fighting.

This would probably be a strange world if everyone in it gave way to his inclination toward vagabondage. The road opens wide and only the obligations — real or imagined — of modern society hold most people at home. There are many who would love to wander aimlessly. There are plenty who would emulate Vachel Lindsay and even some who would follow Harry Kemp. The wanderlust is not confined to those who listen to the voice that gave to the world the priceless rambling essays of Robert Louis Stevenson. However, every wanderer is not a poet and there is an immense gap between R. L. S. and the tramp. Nels Anderson has shown this in "The Hobo" (University of Chicago). He has made an investigation of the hobo not only in his Chicago haunts but on the road. This sociological study is the result. Contact with the tramp has taken away any false sentimentality from the student, while a study of his problems, their causes and their results, has killed any latent antipathy toward the hobo on the grounds that he is an I. W. W. The book is the product of a well balanced observation — a splendid sequel to the work started by Carleton Parker. The migratory worker is probably a long way from serious consideration by the country's legislators, except in their tendency to pass laws against him, but books of this kind help educate the unthinking critics.

Poetry that is full, round, minted from the rich veins of plain homely life, crisp with the green watercress quality of English countryside, unforced as a full voiced brook — such a miraculous combination does indeed appear in the new volume of "Georgian Poetry" 1920-22 (Putnam). Well known Georgians such as Walter de la Mare, Drinkwater, Gibson, Graves, are herein joined by seven younger English poets wearing the same instinctive badge of loyalty to the sound and the felicitous in English life. How these young poets have been able to keep so close to the simple and the heart stabbing elements of poetry while our own youngsters are still wallowing in the nets of the superficial, is certainly puzzling. A cool and artless aroma of field and wood exudes from the volume, together with the tang and doughtiness of English character, telling of poetic roots set deep in a rich productive soil.

Once upon a time a certain English gentleman came to America, spent a

few weeks in lecturing and observation, went home and wrote a book. But wait! — this book did *not* tell Americans what is wrong with their government, or how to reduce the H. C. of L., or how to improve transit facilities; it even forebore a comparison between Oxford and American universities. Of course, this is passing strange, and you will want to know the name of this man. He is none other than Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. And what did Sir Arthur write about? Well, he ran amuck of daylight saving; remarked, after viewing the Washington monument, that "Americans know how to honour their dead leaders, even if they do occasionally place them in rather difficult positions when they are alive"; visited Macy's department store, saw Houdini's famous trunk trick, took in the Bronx Park zoo on a hot day, lectured a few times on spiritualism, and apparently enjoyed his visit from first to last. Whether you believe in or discountenance spiritualism, "Our American Adventure" (Doran) is absorbing reading, for Sir Arthur has not forgotten how to interest a reader, even if he no longer has the assistance of the late lamented Mr. Holmes.

Theodore Roosevelt's idealism, particularly his religious idealism, furnishes the scheme on which Reverend E. H. Cotton has built his new Roosevelt biography, "The Ideals of Theodore Roosevelt" (Appleton). Roosevelt's career is traced in smooth running narrative, with frequent anecdotal excursions such as are requisite to popular life stories of great Americans. Mr. Cotton makes a neat synthesis of the more accessible Roosevelt material, emphasizing strenuously those facts and incidents which best suit his own purpose. This volume, like most thesis biographies, presents a partial and highly eulogistic view of the subject and must suffer, in consequence, a certain loss of esteem among those readers who are not quite ready to grant all of Mr. Cotton's assumptions. Corinne Roosevelt Robinson contributes a foreword.

So much enthusiasm has been expended in the admiration of the wit and picturesqueness of Lytton Strachey's brilliant dissection of Victoria and other nineteenth century luminaries, that it is high time for Mr. Strachey to be considered more soberly, and with a more detailed reference to his solidity and his scholarly pretensions. The reissue of "Landmarks in French Literature" (Holt) furnishes the occasion. Mr. Strachey's peaks and promontories are the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the age of transition between Montaigne and Louis XIV, the age of the great Louis himself, the eighteenth century, the romantic movement, and the nineteenth century — preeminently "the age of Criticism". Take up "Landmarks" yourself; notice with what meticulous care Mr. Strachey has immersed himself in French literature; what account he takes of the "fourth dimension" in criticism; how precisely he measures his statement; with what psychological insight he interrogates the classics in order to align his signposts. Indeed, in its erudition, in its delicate intellectual conscience, this volume of "Landmarks" demonstrates impressively what sound foundations go to support distinguished satire.

"Joys of the Road" (Atlantic) is a little anthology "in praise of walking" edited by Waldo R. Browne for those who have a genius for sauntering, for those who understand "the art of

Walking". Bliss Carman, C. Fox-Smith, Thoreau, Arthur Symons, John Burroughs, and William Morris contribute verses and essays, and of course "On Going a Journey" and "Walking Tours" by those inveterate walkers and talkers, William Hazlitt and Robert Louis Stevenson, are included.

Amelia Leavitt Hill in "Redeeming Old Homes" (Holt) handles ably a subject all too attractive to those with only the dangerous amount of knowledge. She lapses into neither a cheap and pretentious æstheticism nor the literary method of "The American Boys' Handibook", although her subject matter is minutely detailed and essentially practical. The text is more convincing than the before-and-after illustrations, some of which make one tremble for their effect upon a public enthusiastic over almost any *old* thing! But her advice is both sound and sensible, and will be of value to those capable of applying it.

The Irish question ran its course in the newspapers of a year ago, and then ceased to hold the public's interest, partly because there seemed to be so many sides to the fight that it was difficult to follow. Now the conflict has taken on book form, and some of the issues are made clear. In "The Drama of Sinn Fein" (Scribner), Shaw Desmond, Irish and a believer in the cause of the Irish republic, sets forth rather sketchily, and in the present tense, the externals of the fight from 1916 to 1923. He explains that Sinn Fein itself is both an idea and a society which, under the leadership of Arthur Griffith, tried to occupy a middle ground, asking from England a metaphysical freedom which did not necessarily imply separation from England. Later, its policy of passive resistance went to pieces because the nature of the Irish was against it. De Valera, we learn, is the son of a Spanish artist and a New York Irish mother. We are given the details of the negotiations with Germany by Roger Casement, and of the conflict between Irish forces and the Black and Tans. The book closes with a discussion of the treaty which founded the Irish Free State and with the author's passionately reiterated belief that Ireland must separate from England, that only then can the two countries know and be of real service to one another.

Primarily "The Burgess Flower Book for Children" by Thornton W. Burgess (Little, Brown) is for the younger ones, although the technical names of flowers are also given, and an appendix is inserted at the end of the book for older boys and girls. Peter Rabbit, famed for his curiosity, adventures among the wild flowers, and the descriptions he gives of the many flowers he sees are such that they can easily be recognized — an advantage which both children and "lay" lovers of flowers will appreciate. The illustrations are excellent.

"Egypt — Old and New" by Percy F. Martin (Doran) is a sumptuously bound and illustrated book. The pictures thoroughly make up for the fact that the informative narrative concerning the country of Tut-Ankh-Amen is somewhat arid.

Why should we read? What should we read? How should we read? These neither superfluous nor idle questions Georg Brandes raises and answers in his charming essay, "On Reading", reissued by Duffield and Company. Mr.

Brandes damns the newspapers, bans what he denominates the dangerous and wearisome books, and commends the classics with a temperate sanity, insisting only that they be read when they convey the verisimilitude of life — when they increase our knowledge, dissolve our prejudices, and crystallize our personalities.

Genuine, individual, and very lovely are these poems of Hazel Hall's entitled "Walkers" (Dodd, Mead). The same viewpoint is maintained in them all; a watcher from the window sets down her impressions of passers by. Some of the people go over the same route every day, and the interpretation of these frequently seen walkers is more detailed, and intimate. Some few pass only once, and these are caught in vivid, swift touches that bring out a salient point of character. The imagery of the poems is especially fine, the philosophy of them seems most poignantly revealed in the poem called "Protection":

> I have envied, I have pitied,
> Wrapped their sorrows over me
> Like a shawl, to keep from knowing
> Cold that is colder than the sea.

All ye lovers of melodrama, rally round and hark the lugubrious wail of Clare Sheridan's literary saxophone as she jazzes the Irish Rebellion, skips in erratic arpeggios over Paris, sobs over the fate of Greece, and assails the ear with a dolorous smear, symbolizing the woeful conditions obtaining in Smyrna, Turkey, Russia, etc. The sob sister art is brought to perfection in "West and East" (Boni, Liveright). The Irish Rebellion lends itself admirably to the lacrimatory fireworks of a saxophone, but there is something decidedly inapropos about the instrument when used to interpret the horrors of the Near East. If we are to take Mrs. Sheridan's word for it, circumstances in the Near East are incredible in their misery and endless hopelessness. Wherefore we decry the typical commencing-in-next-Monday's issue sort of newspaper sensationalism that fairly oozes out of the bindings of Mrs. Sheridan's book. If the "World" correspondent had done what her editor told her to do, we could write "stet!" on the flyleaf. She was bidden "to write about women and children, nationalism and the evolution of the new generation; prices of clothes, food, street cars, theatres, books and papers". For a time she sticks to orders, and then human nature gets the best of her, and she attempts political philosophizing, with a most inharmonious result. We confess a predilection for good sob stuff, wherefore much of the book appeals; but for mere twaddle of a third rate sort we have no stomach, and much of the book falls under that head.

"The Evolution and Progress of Mankind" (Stokes) by the distinguished scholar, the late Hermann Klaatsch, discusses many problems of importance, but the most interesting to him and to us is that of the racial origin and development of man. The heart of the problem is the relation of man to the anthropoid or manlike apes. The mingling of human and animal features in these apes, he says, caused them to be regarded as ancestors of man, but the facts point instead to a common ancestor from whom both man and the manlike ape of today diverged. In fact the larger amount of modification of this original type is on the side of the ape, whose ancestors were much more like man, possessing for example canine teeth no larger than man's and a thumb which has since atro-

phied. More important still, Professor Klaatsch presents evidence for more than one ancestral type. Not only were there an African gorilloid from which diverged the gorilla and the Neanderthal man, and an Asiatic orangoid from which diverged the orang and the Aurignac man, but there is evidence in the Heidelberg jaw of a gibbonoid and in the Weimar jaw of a chimpanzoid. Professor Klaatsch concedes that these had a common origin, but considers it extremely remote.

A "myth-maker, a poetic pioneer", Dr. Stuart P. Sherman who edits this volume of Joaquin Miller's "Poetical Works" (Putnam) calls his hero. The poems themselves are of especial interest after a reading of Dr. Sherman's account of their writer and the various influences exerted upon him. Many of the poems are narrative in character, and still more are set in western scenes. There is little variety of verse form, but there is much and lavish beauty mingled, here and there, with sentimentality and overemphatic rhythm. Even in the most erring of them one comes upon memorable lines, and recognizes the sincerity and vigor of this pioneer who was born in a covered wagon, and who spent his last years on the hills overlooking San Francisco Bay.

Could a man who is interested in such diverse subjects as is Arnold Bennett fail to be himself an interesting subject? Although the title of "Things That Have Interested Me — Second Series" (Doran) puts the emphasis on the "things", the real hero is Mr. Bennett, with his gift of seeing into the soul of the commonplace. He discusses men, events, objects, and ideas with the self-revealing informality of a personal letter, and gets a calm but satisfying joy out of doing it. In this mood he and the reader are one, for the pleasant hours that went into the making of the book are as nothing compared to the pleasant hours that will be spent in reading it.

An unusual group of poems is Wilbur Snow's "Maine Coast" (Harcourt, Brace), simple, straightforward, objective, setting forth in metre, unrhymed for the most part, the beauty and humanity of a little village of "moon-white houses and big red barns" along the sea. Many of the poems are a boy's remembrance of the old men of the village visioned with sympathy and admiration, and portrayed with such homely detail as makes them very real to a reader. This is the author's first book. His second will be worth watching for.

The extravagant Egyptian craze following in the wake of the Carnarvon-Carter discoveries in the tomb of King Tut-Ankh-Amen has overwhelmed the market with books (that seem to spring up over night) about the ancient Thebans. Among the few volumes of informative value that have appeared is Arthur Weigall's "The Glory of the Pharaohs" (Putnam), containing interesting and accurate facts written by a keen student who for years studied his subject at an advantageous proximity as the former Inspector General of Antiquities for Upper Egypt. Mr. Weigall states that the former inhabitants of the Nile were "a gay and frivolous people, fond of dancing and red wine"; not the serious people of stern and sombre mien heretofore portrayed.

A strong vein of sympathetic understanding and appreciation has been

woven into E. M. Tenison's biography of Louise Imogen Guiney (Macmillan), for years her intimate friend and correspondent. It is a scholarly study of a singular personality — a purist; strong, forceful, yet tender and compassionate; a devout Catholic of high and noble spirit; a champion of lost causes, and reviver of forgotten names of her "beloved yesterdays", mentally living within the careers of the men she so painstakingly portrayed. Miss Tenison's selection of excerpts from her subject's writings, manifesting lyrical spontaneity and perfect execution of the art, should win Miss Guiney many new readers.

In "Things That Are Mine" (Steen Hinrichsen) Scottie McKenzie Frasier trills cheerfully and unabashedly over a few slurred and time worn poetic roundelays. Like the indefatigable robin — which bird might be called her mascot, so often does she wear it on her shoulder — Mrs. Frasier's song is yellow billed and trite, verging on the quack, bare of distinction save for an occasional felt word or phrase. It is this unrelieved authority, this brightness, this alertness which is the despairing feature of her verse. One feels that the author, like the robin, is too busy being assertive to listen to the secret stilly singing whence proceeds real creation.

Makeshifts of letter form do not conceal the fact that Zora Putnam Wilkins's "Letters of a Business Woman" (Marshall Jones) are a series of preachments that take into account no relation of mother and daughter except that of a business adviser and his client. The Woman's letters have the condescending air of a textbook on business success, while her daughter's contribution is a how-I-won-my-way story with the usual substitution of a sentimental dénouement instead of the commercial success which alone might have justified the book as a stenographer's guide. If, by any chance, the author's final turning of the tables was intentionally ironical, the book is cleverer than it seems.

Were it not that Charles Hanson Towne gives something of the effect of being determinedly charming at any cost, "Ambling Through Acadia" (Century) might be more nearly an ideal travel work. As it is, it is delightful. Mr. Towne's Acadia is no Longfellow land (to quote the tourist folders) of forests primæval but a place of blossoming apple orchards, sunny sands, quiet fishing villages, and lilac bushes. He delighted in Halifax, concerning which other travelers have spoken ungently. And he insisted on having a glorious time, to the annoyance apparently of his fellow travelers. At any rate, the annoyance fails to reveal itself in the illustrations of William Heitland who went along.

A volume of concentrated wit, satire, and philosophy that can no more be taken in large doses than bouillon tablets can be consumed by the score, is to be found in "The Wisdom of Balzac" by Harry Rickel (Putnam). This collection of epigrams, aphorisms, and witty sayings taken not only from the "Human Comedy" but from the private letters and personal statements of Balzac, tends to justify the opinion of Michael Monahan who, in the preface, declares of the great French novelist, "Incidental to his fiction, he has set down a body of *marginalia,* pithy epigrams, sagacious counsels of life, intuitions of human destiny, many-faceted diamonds of wisdom and wit, the like of which

cannot be duplicated from any other modern writer." Here are two examples, selected at random:

Evil, no doubt, is a form of good of which the results are not immediately manifest.

Perhaps thoughts and feelings are strongest in those who have but few of them, simply because they have but few.

A part of what America is contributing to the world's supply of light verse fills "Poems from 'Life'" (Macmillan). Oliver Herford has dug from the files of that journal what he considers the best metrical material it has published. He has written an introduction and Charles B. Falls has done a bit of illustrating. One wonders how some of the verses won this book appearance, while being grateful that others have been revived. All in all, it is just what "Life" is. If one smiles with that periodical, he will smile with these familiar contributors in their earlier work.

An impression of frenzied imitative extravaganza, in some cases strained and tiresome, in others a brilliant blend of execution and wit — such does one cull from "Parodies on Walt Whitman" (American Library Service). It is ostensibly not the aim of these parodies to reflect the deep resounding core which is Whitman's contribution to art, but to clothe some ridiculous parallel in the master's peculiar and characteristic medium. There is a fearful and wonderful disparity in the matter and manner of these parodies; from H. C. Bunner's "Home Sweet Home with Variations" to the "Chant Pagan" and "Epithalamium" is a far and faint cry. Many swing out from the shore of sense, borne by the strong tidal current of overwhelming style, others struggle for the flow and lose it, a few do succeed and, by a springing felicity of wit united to a rush and beat of verse, achieve a sounding joyousness that would have wrung a chuckle from old Walt himself.

Clark Wissler's "Man and Culture" (Crowell) is an elaboration of a number of lectures, the object of which was to interpret the results of anthropological research and thus to present the problems and the scope of anthropology as a science. It makes available to the general public data that has to a large extent been confined until now to special reports and technical discussions of original investigations. In the first part of his book Dr. Wissler clears the ground, defining culture as any, instead of merely our own, mode of life; in the second he describes its form and content, the patterns which it assumes, the methods by which it is acquired, transmitted and diffused, and its actual historical development; and in the third he discusses its relation to man, his environment, his behavior and his ideas.

The great development of Palestine as a Jewish homeland since the world war has almost obliterated the memory of the Zionist colony there before the war. In "The Feet of the Messenger" (Jewish Publication Society) Yehoash, the Yiddish author, who had lived there, gives a series of portraits of the colony. Isaac Goldberg's translation is not to be accused of smacking of the Yiddish idiom, but it has the peculiar quality of much of the writing in Jewish periodicals in the English language. This is no great drawback, but it is doubtful if the charm of the writing is sufficient to attract anyone not interested in the subject matter.

The reminiscences of Solomon Bulkley Griffin, for forty years editor of the Springfield "Republican", run through his book "People and Politics" (Little, Brown) and make most interesting reading. The newspaper side of American history is a large one, and New England for so many years played a prominent part in selecting and directing our statesmen, that the discussion of that period, from the 'sixties through the 'nineties, comes best from a New Englander. Mr. Griffin's wide acquaintance and his fine insight enable him to present his characters and draw his conclusions with a fairness which lends distinction to his recollections and his underlying philosophy.

It is more or less the mode to laugh at old-fashioned persons who think Victoria's laureate was a poet. "Tennyson, a Modern Portrait" (Appleton) by Hugh I'Anson Fausset, mindful of the modish and the outmoded, sets out to give a real interpretation. The poet was, far more than his queen, typical of his age in life and works. The author so reveals him. "He never climbed Parnassus, striving year by year to approach the summit. Rather he sat musingly on one of its pleasant middle ridges where destiny and temperament had planted him," Mr. Fausset declares, and later says: "This was a man good, noble and true according to his lights, but his lights were dim and often clouded." Such a portrait fits well with the author's conception of civilization plunging bravely and blindly toward a world catastrophe.

Many people who visit London and Paris with the intention of acquainting themselves with the various points of interest in these cities, will scamper about aimlessly for weeks and on leaving find to their utter disappointment that they have missed almost everything of importance. To just such people the publication of Arthur Milton's "London in Seven Days" and its companion volume "Paris in Seven Days" (McBride) will come as the gift of the gods. One is guided through these cities with such great economy that there is not a lost moment nor a superfluous step, and not an interesting spot is passed unnoticed. It seems, however, that the perfect guide book has yet to make its appearance. These hasty little guides lack the photographs by which one may visualize one's route, although their jackets specify "illustrations". Maps are provided but no one of them covers the entire city. Intended primarily for "people in a hurry", these books can be used with equal advantage as the guide of the more leisurely.

Guy de Maupassant should be read along with those moderns who choose to emphasize sex; not, of course, as a counter irritant, but to show how far the English-writing moderns have yet to go to attain mastery in this field. He seems the perfect prestidigitator, manipulating his tricks with a skill that defies detection, while, in contrast, the moderns seem thick fingered magicians, bungling their acts and exposing the way in which they are done. Or, he might be said to handle his themes of passion as something one need not be afraid to talk about and, therefore, something that need not be clothed in ridiculously involved euphemisms. He never seems to grit his teeth and say: "Now is the time to shock them a little." If some of his tales are flippant, it is because, one feels, he knows that some loves are just that

way. He handles passion as he handles death — his two favorite subjects — with the knowledge that both are inevitable and both should be met and used as they are. If some loves and some deaths are unpleasant, he does not try to perfume them with a bouquet of roundabout phrases, nor does he attempt to hide the beauty of other loves and other deaths by closing the door with asterisks. The third and fourth volumes of the typographically attractive Knopf set of Maupassant are "That Pig, Morin, And Other Stories", and "A Woman's Life", both excellently translated by Ernest Boyd. "Doctor Heraclius Gloss" (Brentano) is an early work of the same artist, printed in English for the first time — a translation by Jeffery E. Jeffery. In an introduction Ernest Boyd points out the tendency of the young writer to follow Voltaire before the permanent Maupassant method developed. Though interesting, this volume's chief value is for the student rather than for the amusement seeking reader. It does not seem like Maupassant at all.

Albert Bigelow Paine, Mark Twain's biographer, who these many years has been indefatigable in the collection, ordering, assorting, cataloguing, and embalming of Twain's "remains", publishes the final and authentic collection of "Mark Twain's Speeches" (Harper), uniform with the format of the Mark Twain volumes previously issued by the same publishers. The book is made up of eighty-four specimens of Mark Twain's wit and humor, expended upon such a characteristic variety of topics as "Woman", the press, "The Ladies", "The Weather", "The Babies", Adam, "Morals and Memory", "The Sandwich Islands", and "Accident Insurance". Mr. Paine writes a short introduction, and there is an appreciation by the late W. D. Howells.

The Song of Songs is the inspiration of Alexandre Kuprin's "Sulamith", "a prose poem of antiquity", translated from the Russian by B. Guilbert Guerney (Nicholas L. Brown). Here the story of Solomon's love for the naïve, lovely Shulamite peasant girl is considerably altered, amplified, and romanticized, and all with a skilful and entrancing simplicity. The erotic frankness of "Sulamith" in the hands of an Anglo-Saxon would win for the book an honored place on Everyman's little shelf of pornographia. M. Kuprin's handling of the love theme, however, is redeemed by a poetical delicacy which is probably considerably more contemplative and imaginative than the Bible version.

"Dead Souls" (Knopf) is the first delivery of a promised uniform set of Nikolay Gogol's works, translated by Constance Garnett. If the other translations are as well done as this one, the set should prove a valuable addition to the European works prepared for American unilinguists. The two volumes of "Dead Souls" are, in a fashion, a Russian "Main Street". With just enough story to bear the weight of the long descriptions and character sketches, Gogol has made a broad panorama of Russian life in the early nineteenth century. Sometimes, it seems, the story is too weak to bear the weight of the many, many words. The frequent sardonic laughs at his compatriots ease the heaviness of the long passages of description, however. How they did eat in those days! One finishes the book perplexed as to which was the greater — the appetite or the credulity of the Russians here caricatured so delightfully.