RECENT BOOKS IN BRIEF REVIEW

WHEN the Poincaré government fell, one of New York's leading newspapers prefaced its editorial comment with an apology. Its readers had been given no inkling of the impending event and explanations were due. As far as Americans knew, Poincaré and his policies had been overcoming all opposition. Something of the actual state of affairs may be understood from Sisley Huddleston's "Poincaré" (Little, Brown). Writing as early as March, 1924, he foresaw the doom of the Poincaré Ruhr policy, and envisioned its culmination in the resignation of Millerand. The author is the Paris correspondent of the New York "Times". His foresight is sufficient indication of his acuteness as a student of political affairs. Moreover, he is a student of character. The book is an interesting contribution to the generally stodgy field of political biography.

Psychoanalysis can explain anything, say the Freudians — our daily behavior, mistakes in spelling, crime, love, hate, and all the emotions. Just at present there is a tendency to apply it to the life and achievements of great men, showing why they did thus and so. In "Psychoanalysis and Æsthetics" (Dodd, Mead) Charles Baudouin has applied the method to the life and works of Emile Verhaeren. He has shown to his own satisfaction, at least, how the Belgian poet passed through the various stages in the development of his libido, how he was first an introvert, then an extrovert, and finally struck the accepted balance between the two tendencies. The translation, by Eden and Cedar Paul, is especially good, but the fact that it is French poetry to which the psychoanalytic method is applied furnishes an added difficulty to the English reader. Even without that he would find M. Baudouin's speculative flights somewhat giddy.

The "Last Essays" (Scribner) of Maurice Hewlett round out a full life as gracefully as the inevitable final lines of some great poem. There is here "nothing for tears, or knocking of the breast". With a kind of Olympian simplicity, tinged with delightful prescient mischief, Mr. Hewlett contemplates the horizons of men and books, as a god might look at his world. And in no other book of his, it seems to us, is literature unrolled so widely like a map before the eyes, the strongholds of time and place marked with the peculiar personalia of a sympathetic critic of life and the written word. This is the ultimate pinnacle of sophistication: when artifice and sentimentality alike are cast aside, and men's hearts alone speak to the reader in their writings. We found nothing in the book quite so delightful or brilliant as the essay called "Art and Heart", a colloquial comparison of Flaubert and Georges Sand, though the sparkling chapter on "Endings" would make excellent copybook reading for the young writer. To Hewlett, the past has ever been a living glory, but not all ancient things are precious, we find. Of such vulgarian fare as "Gammer Gurton's Needle" he has amusing and penetrating things to say. "Merrie England", after all, was not so merrie

as some present day restorers of the Elizabethan age would have us believe. It is not surprising, on the other hand, that he should smack his lips over sly morsels of Gallic wit, and we are grateful that he has brought certain little known but altogether charming perpetrators of this wit to life.

In this day of high individualism it is next to impossible to do some one thing that has not already been done dishearteningly well before. Such being the case, Elie Faure's "History of Art" (Harper), translated by Walter Pach, represents very nice achievement indeed. In the last volume of the series, "Modern Art", M. Faure brings to a close an excellent treatise on the arts through their adolescent as well as more mature stages. Art as Faure sees it is a growth with the trend of civilization — occasionally branching out into divers channels but in the end seeping back to the great torrent itself. The Dutch artists of the Reformation, the Romanticists and Realists, and the hundred and one schools of compromise and undaunted theory, form the backbone for Faure's final volume. It is admirably illustrated — with the illustrations so arranged as to afford a pictorial plan of development.

Even if the text were poorly written, "Pearls and Savages" by Frank Hurley (Putnam) would still be a noteworthy book, for the illustrations are excellent. Rarely, indeed, have we seen such marvelous photographs: each one has atmosphere and is a very accurate pictorial record of some phase of savage life. In addition the text is readable and at times exciting. No account of an exploration into the wilds of New Guinea could fail to be that. Captain Hurley is to be congratulated for drawing attention to the districts from which certain implements, tools, headdresses and so forth come. Ethnologists will appreciate that. But, again from the viewpoint of an ethnologist, the book fails in that it is a record of observation instead of investigation. For our part, we do wish the author had not referred to trousers as "unmentionables".

A tranquil and benign book is Anatole France's "The Latin Genius" (Dodd, Mead). Little in it suggests the mocking iconoclast who wrote "Thaïs" and "Penguin Island". One might well expect in a volume of literary biographies from such a hand to find the lives of Villon, Rabelais, Hugo, Voltaire, Rousseau — possibly Corneille for the Classicists — the rebels and the fighters. True, one does read here of Scarron and the more modern if less known Albert Glatigny — but they are not typical. Here is a discussion of "Daphnis and Chloe", the Queen of Navarre, Molière, Racine. But strangest of all one finds a series of authors — men who lived through the years preceding and following the French Revolution — men who wrote singularly unaffected by this great movement — Le Sage, the Abbé Prévost, Saint-Pierre, Châteaubriand, Constant, Sainte-Beuve. The biographies are not scintillatingly brilliant; they are cynical occasionally, gently and indulgently cynical. Wordsworth wrote of this era: "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive." Anatole France views the period in the haze of an afternoon — the beautiful afternoon of happy old age.

In his "Howells, James, Bryant, and Other Essays" (Macmillan) William Lyon Phelps makes it a baker's dozen (at least) of critical tomes on various literatures. This lovable pedagogue

is a follower of both Howells and Lowell, respectively, in his yeoman service toward the popularization of Russian particularly, and all sorts of literatures generally. It is not surprising therefore to find him at or near his best in the two of his seven critical chats devoted to these great American pioneers of suavity and catholicity. On the other hand, Whitman and Thoreau, even Lowell and Bryant, suffer here from a failure to touch minds and hearts with what is most towering, sprightly, deep delving, painful, and ecstatic in them. Imagine: "I do not believe that Whitman was a greater poet than Tennyson"! The solemn quotation as good gospel of exquisite little R. L. S. pecking away at the inexhaustible inwards of unexquisite (and super exquisite) old Walt! Professor Phelps, despite such sophomoric lapses, however, has seldom been heartier, more worthwhile as the almost ideal popularizer of things literary. Yet even here one still clasps hands far too seldom with any new grasp of things, thoughts, and theories.

All honor to the enthusiast who can say of his project: "Tried thrice in three places, it has been rejected in two and crippled in the third. *It can still be done!*" Such is Thomas Mott Osborne, who in "Prisons and Common Sense" (Lippincott) reiterates his advocacy of the Mutual Welfare League. His is a convincing argument for the League as an aid to prison discipline — as a method of prison reform. That the League has any but the faintest relationship to social justice must seem ridiculous in the week this is written — during which a tawdry "bobbed haired" bandit goes to jail for ten years, and a swindler of millions gains liberty after three months of technical imprisonment.

The Studio has just published a book on "Old Naval Prints" with sumptuous plates in color and in monochrome. A brief outline of the history of the more famous engravings and mezzotints of sea battles is written by Commander Charles N. Robinson, R.N. In a volume so richly made up, one feels it a pity that there is not more text relating to the romantic tales of the thrilling seventeenth and eighteenth century men of war and their gallant commanders. In other words, the personal interest is lacking; but as a record for the print collector and the naval enthusiast, this book has great value.

"The Basis of Social Theory" by Albert G. A. Balz, with the collaboration of William S. A. Pott (Knopf), sponsors the proposition that "the control of human affairs — the possibility of genuine Progress, if Progress at all be real — depends upon the attainment of a more adequate body of social science, and that the first condition of this attainment is the development of a more adequate science of human nature". In accordance with this view, the authors seek to show the relationship between social psychology and psychology in general and to indicate the road to the development of a more thorough understanding of the human mind and consequently to a deeper insight into the fundamental social forces. The book, although speculative, is well reasoned, sponsors a definite point of view, and makes an undoubted contribution to social theory.

It is the cumulative toll of small human pain that makes war so terrible. Lest we forget this, Lord Dunsany's prose sketches of devastated France have been brought together in a little book called "Unhappy Far-Off Things" (Putnam). In a style that is finely

etched and self contained we are reminded that sweet meadows have been turned into waste places pitted with ugly holes, great numbers of peasants left with nothing more than a heap of stones for a house, and cathedrals that have weathered the centuries, gutted and maimed by war. Without rancor or undue emphasis on horrors, the author has picked out some of the strange contrasts and bitter verities that follow in the track of disaster. Pictorially the "innumerable separate sorrows" of Albert, Bapaume, and Arras are appealing; framed in the Dunsany remoteness and unearthly quality, they form a mystic gallery of vignetted desolation.

The Right Honorable Herbert Henry Asquith in his "Sketches and Studies" (Doran) reminds us of Bacon's remark that "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." Surely this new volume, for which we are indebted to the distinguished ex-premier, can be placed in the first category. Composed of fifteen ill assorted articles and public addresses on topics ranging from an account of the Last Crusade to a criticism of Spender's Life of Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, it is certain to produce a violent attack of literary indigestion unless one now and then samples an independent chapter after having fortified the system with something more substantial. Mr. Asquith discourses readily enough, and with the erudition generally accredited English statesmen, on the art of Tacitus and Fanny Burney's friendship with Dr. Johnson; but the subjects can no better be mixed than can the varieties of style required by a commencement address at Eton and a paper before the London School of Economics.

Distinctive as an example of the eclectic school of history is "The Old Soak's History of the World" (Doubleday, Page). Combining at once the plan of documentary research with the older method of Herodotus (that of traveling over the scenes of the events chronicled), Mr. Clem Hawley, whose observations are recorded by Don Marquis, has uncovered much that is highly original. It is the social (not to say the convivial) aspect of the past which engages Mr. Hawley's attention. "What people want to find out about the history of the world is mostly how people acted . . . and what they et and drunk", he declares at the outset. This postulate determines the character of the volume, much as Admiral Mahan's naval experiences decided the character of his historical works. Possibly the critical may object to a certain bias — such as appears in the chapters on Sampson and the Phillipines and on Ceeser, Umpire of Roam. To them, and to those captious ones who may find the execution of the work inferior to its conception, we quote one of the author's noblest sentiments: "One of the moral lessons I am going to bring in to my histry of the world is the lesson you orter live and let live."

"To try and suffer and try and perish. . . . We love and kill and go on . . . . Inertia goes on and routine presses till one is out of the world." "The Taking of Helen" (Macmillan) by John Masefield, first issued here in October, 1923, indeed is well worth this second of what should become many editions. Not so much, though, may be said for "Fox-hunting", "Play-writing", and "Letters" — which pad 100 pages to 170, in tribute to the poet's own "Renard the Fox", the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and Niagara Falls. As

very often with him, Masefield seems to have allowed his publishers to enlarge his royalties a little, and publishers' profits a lot, with junk (the proper word here; not slang). The shame is vastly heightened here because in his title prose narrative this perhaps noblest of living poets adds to the freshness of sentiment of, say, the narratives of Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight and of Apollonius of Tyre, a new poet's old certainty that we eventually, all of us, are destined to "stand on a sea-beach and see the planets rising, and talk folly" — unchanged soldiers here in this best of all possible worlds which, despite all, we'd not have otherwise.

"There is no frigate like a book", said Emily Dickinson, and there has seldom been launched a book bearing more precious literary cargo than the group of travel poems collected under the title "The Magic Carpet" (Houghton Mifflin). The compiler, Mrs. Waldo Richards, has chosen a variety of verse from many authors that gleams with the diverse colors of a dozen lands. Here we found such familiar selections as Masefield's "Sea Fever" and "Cargoes", Edna St. Vincent Millay's "To the Not Impossible Him" and "Travel", as well as a number of little known folk ballads and translations of songs from the Welsh, French, and Scandinavian. Of the more than three hundred and fifty poems in the book, only a handful are guilty of mediocrity, and these the compiler has included because they are definitely reminiscent of the mood of a foreign place. From Michael Drayton and Thomas Campbell through Browning, Tennyson, and Byron to poets of our own day, the little volume covers a wide range of time and space, fills the reader with a warm enveloping sense of strange peoples and places, and brings back echoes of quaint European customs and folk longings. If it is true that all who read travel, then we concur with the compiler when she calls this collection "Poems for Travellers".

Somewhere in one of those writings of Macaulay which are fed to college students, is a demonstration that an intelligent and rational person is quite capable of holding two mutually inconsistent beliefs. No doubt Ludwig Lewisohn would object to use of his "The Creative Life" (Boni, Liveright) as a case in point. Yet this volume of criticism is largely devoted to reconciling conflicting opinions on life and literature and developing a consistent philosophy from them. There is a Freudian aspect to such procedure, but it may be more profitable to turn to the Einsteinian. In these days of relativity a critic who is at once a radical and a classicist may easily find a common factor for his incommensurables. And of course, he may make a book about it. The content of this one is composed of numerous essays, largely contributed to "The Nation", and welded to a more or less homogeneous whole. In quantity these writings make less easy reading than one who has read them piecemeal would expect. Despite the pleasant cadence of Mr. Lewisohn's style there is a monotonous swing to his periods that distracts the reader's attention from the subject matter.

The artistic and architectural marvels of ancient Athens and of Rome, of Egypt and of Persia, of Mycenæ and of Malta, of Byzantium and of Burma, are picturesquely described in the third volume of "Wonders of the Past", edited by J. A. Hammerton (Putnam).

This book, which covers substantially the same field as the previous two members of the series, maintains the high standard of the other two; and, like the other two, is more interesting for its wealth of splendid illustrations than for the somewhat meagre text. A particularly engaging chapter is devoted to the artistic achievements of the old Stone Age; and other delightful chapters are concerned with the mysterious images of Easter Island and with the resurrected ships of the Vikings.

To the student of Tolstoi very little that is new is offered by Charles Baudouin in "Tolstoi: the Teacher" (Dutton). Tolstoi loved life and hated dogma; loved art, religion, and science because they were ways to enjoy life and hated dogmatic art, religion, and science because they were merely escapes from life. He sought a system of education that should be as flexible, as free from dogma as life itself; he found that through suggestion and hypnosis moral principles are forced upon children whether the teacher will or no. The fact that he had ceased to doubt and was becoming dogmatic about religious principles himself made Tolstoi give up his aim and confine himself to giving advice on how to teach morality.

Those who have enjoyed the thrill of seeing the sergeant-at-arms quell a turbulent Senate by bringing in the mace with all majesty, will approach "Forty Years in Washington" (Little, Brown) with due respect. David S. Barry, onetime page, was also correspondent in Washington for the New York "Sun", receiving his training under Charles A. Dana. His record of men and events, covering the administrations from Hayes to Harding, is by no means written in newspaper vein, being in fact more critical than witty, more historical than clever. The presidents, and Blaine, Tilden, Hanna, Thurman, Pinchot, Bryan and others fill the book to overflowing; but a work of this kind is incomplete without glimpses of other statesmen and lobbyists following claims and riding hobbies nationally important. The dusky Queen of Hawaii, the flannel clad Clemens, the dignified Senator from Georgia, A. O. Bacon, the silver tongued Daniel of Virginia, Dr. Harvey Wiley, to say nothing of Dr. Mary Walker and others equally picturesque, are conspicuous by their absence. These memoirs seem more valuable than some mirrors, and it is hoped that the sins of omission will be blotted out by the publication of a second volume.

In these hurried, progressive days when the modern world is too, too much with us, a book such as Christopher Columbus's "Journal of His First Voyage to America" (A. and C. Boni) comes not only as a decided relief, but as somewhat of a revolution in our conception of the scheme of things. How many of us actually realize that in 1492 our flourishing continent was a mystery as dark and uncomprehended as are the geographical peculiarities of Mars today? Of course we all learned about Columbus in our schoolbooks; but the real surge and thunder of that splendid Italian Odyssey is quite lost in fifth grade paraphrases. Beneath the simple and lucid prose of a ship's log lie the fear and uncertainty and wonder that gripped the hearts of those forgotten adventurers. Christopher, "The Admiral", must rally the flagging spirits of his crew with deceptions and promises, with high hopes that he himself so often felt to be vain and fruitless. Then there was the land that turned out to be a cloud, and the many signs of land that were lying messengers.

And with the final discovery came the crowning disappointment — this was not the fabulous Indies, not the desired empire of the Great Chan! To those who "know all about Columbus" this Journal will bring a true knowledge and a real understanding of that tiny expedition that unearthed a New World — yet had the supreme audacity to be dissatisfied.

When that vast and august body, vaguely known as "lay readers" or the "general public", finally bestirs itself to applaud genius, it often singles out for praise the artist's most adventitious and unimportant qualities. One hears of the "philosophy" of Montaigne and Dr. Johnson; the "style" of Theodore Dreiser. Edgar Allan Poe, that much misapprehended genius, was long ago appreciated and esteemed in France and England as a great thinker and a penetrating critic. His countrymen seem to have concentrated their attention on Poe the thriller, and Poe the resigned rhapsodist of death. In Sherwin Cody's "Poe — Man, Poet, and Creative Thinker" (Boni, Liveright) will be found the greater part of Poe's most valuable critical work together with such of his shorter poems as represent the poet at his best. Here also is included his "Eureka", in which poet, philosopher, and scientist link arms in the quest of a solution to certain baffling cosmic mysteries. Mr. Cody has added a brief but excellent biographical study and some provocative pages on the position of Poe in the literature of the twentieth century.

Gene Markey's newest book of caricatures is "Men About Town" (Covici-McGee) — the town alluded to in the title being Chicago. To readers not familiar with "men about" that particular city, the collection is not so interesting as was its predecessor, "Literary Lights". The drawings on the whole do not seem to be up to Markey's best average. There are of course exceptions, among them the delightful caricature of Frederick Stock wielding his baton and an amusing sketch of Lorado Taft clasping his hands in delight as he beholds "his vision of Chicago, the City Beautiful".

One's first impression of "The Boyhood of Edward MacDowell" (Stokes), by Abbie Farwell Brown, is that it is written far too prettily, too sweetly. It is necessary to keep ignoring this fact in order to get at the actual material, which is most interesting and is handled with much sympathy and charm. There is a short account of MacDowell as professor of music to some children in a mediæval *Schloss*, which is full of color and unusually amusing; an earlier one of him drawing excellent likenesses of his own tutors, and of places and people seen on his first European trip. There is a simple and most impressive account of his burial. The illustrations are unusually good. The difficulty lies in an effort to give a fairy tale quality to the book, so as to convey something of the imagination and beauty expressed in MacDowell's music. This is certainly an excellent idea, but it loses by overemphasis.