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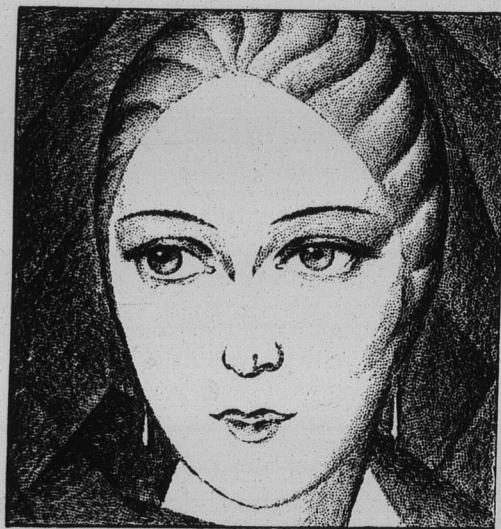
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Compiled by
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COMMENT on BOOKS and AUTHORS

Story Without Plot

TWENTY YEARS A-GROWING.*
By Maurice O'Sullivan. Translated by Moya Llewelyn Davis and George Thomson. The Viking Press.

This book, which has no plot, no psychological analysis, no progression, may appear monotonous to certain readers, but to others it will be welcome just because of these lacks. It is a book which has the poetry, humor, high spirits, of a lively, good-hearted, and, so far as poetry and story-telling go, a cultivated people. And it has something else besides these qualities. Surprisingly it reproduces the style and idiom of Irish literature of eight or nine hundred years ago—the swift and humorous impressionism which makes certain of the early Irish stories so living when compared with other medieval literary creations.

The scene is the Blasket Islands off the coast of Kerry, where about two hundred people, speaking Irish and carrying on the tradition of seventeenth century Ireland, that is to say, the tradition of fifteenth century Europe, live without shops or markets, and are born and go to their graves without seeing a building more than one story high.

Source of the Modern

To live with these islanders, using their speech and following their avocations, is to go back to that imagination, faith, and humor out of which modern art and philosophy have come.

The excellence of the translation of "Twenty Years A-Growing" should not be overlooked. Translation from Irish into English is singularly difficult for the reason that Irish is an unsophisticated and English a sophisticated language, that modern Irish is an unwritten and English an over-written language. To get the spirit of this countryside, oral, terra-a-terre speech into English, or indeed into any of the metropolitan languages of today, is a feat which demands not only great skill in the handling of English, but an exceptional literary tact.

It is completely objective, and the only continuity it has is through one day of a man's life following another. Any chapter can be read as a separate narrative. But the whole is held up by an unflagging interest and delight in the world.

Anglo-Saxons Surpass French in Mysteries

In 1932 the French Prix du Roman d'Adventures was won by Jean Tousseint-Samat with a book now translated under the name of "Shoes That Had Walked Twice" (Lippincott). It presents unusual features, but it seems that the Anglo-Saxon is far more adept than any Frenchman when it comes to unfolding a first class mystery in a first class way. Both the crimes committed and the crimes prevented in this story are horrid enough, but a little academic and synthetic. Nevertheless the book was a great success in its native tongue.

ELECT MAURIAC

M. Francois Mauriac, the French poet and novelist whose "Vipers' Tangle" has just appeared in this country, has been elected a member of the French Academy. He was born in Bordeaux in 1885. His first volume of verse appeared in 1910 and his first novel in 1913.

Writes It for Youth

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, MAN OF ACTION. By Sadyebeth and Anson Lowitz. (Doubleday Doran.

At 28 Roosevelt became the democratic state senator in a New York republican stronghold by taking his case directly to his constituents. When he was 35, as assistant secretary of the navy, during the war period, he was already showing his hand as a man of action. He looked into the future, saw what was to be done, and did it.

"Red tape be hanged," he said, "we're at war now."

His fight for his friend Al Smith, his victory in the New York gubernatorial contest in the face of another national republican avalanche and other notable achievements are still too fresh in the minds of newspaper readers to need recounting here.

All through the book, written simply and primarily for the youth of America, one discovers that Roosevelt is not the opportunist many claim he is. Rather, he is carrying to conclusion on a national scale his policies as state senator, assistant secretary of the navy and governor of New York.

"Franklin D. Roosevelt, Man of Action," is a fine book for young people, yet carries enough between the lines to be of interest to the adult reader.

Prize Winner Writes Provincial Art Story

The Harper Prize Novel for 1933, "The Fault of Angels," by Paul Hogan of Roswell, New Mexico, was announced for publication on August 24. "The Fault of Angels" is the sixth Harper Prize Novel. The judges for the 1933 contest were Dorothy Canfield, Harry Hansen, and Sinclair Lewis. Writing to the publishers as one of the judges' committee, Mr. Lewis says: "I am glad that the vote has been given to 'The Fault of Angels.' The central character is brilliant and evocative. As a story it has a plan and gets somewhere. Furthermore this is one of the first American novels (there have been others, not very successful) which portrays that extremely interesting and increasingly important phase of American life: the arts in a provincial city."

BEAVER, KINGS AND CABINS by Constance Lindsay Skinner. Mac-Millan company.

Constance Lindsay Skinner knows whereof she speaks when she tells of the fur trade in her forthcoming book, "Beaver, Kings and Cabins."

Miss Skinner's grandfather came over from England with the Hudson's Bay Company to Vancouver island when there was only the trading post, and no settlement. Her father was born and grew up in England until he was 15, when he went to the north and was adopted by an Indian tribe. Later, he joined the Hudson's Bay Company as chief trader of the Caribou district. Miss Skinner herself was born in the northern wilds of British Columbia.

SPARKLES WITH LAUGHTER

"French Summer," by Guy Gilpatrick, will be published next month by Dodd, Mead. It is a novel that sparkles with laughter and action. The setting is the French Riviera; the characters, four American expatriates. Written by the author of the famous "Muster." Glencannon stories.

Truer and Fairer

BEGINNING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: A History of the Generation that Made the War. By Joseph Ward Swain. W. W. Norton & Co.

Any age is reflected in its leaders. The leaders reflect the ideas and environment of their youth. Accordingly Professor Swain, in his excellent account of the origins, progress, and settlement of the World War, sketches in an introductory chapter the conditions of the second half of the nineteenth century under which the statesmen, writers, and people of 1914 grew to manhood. He aims to give the history of the generation of men who made the war—a "Cavalcade" produced by a professional historian instead of by Hollywood.

Domestic "Progress"

Following the introductory chapter, Part I describes effectively the domestic development of the eight chief countries from about 1890 to 1914. It was in this domestic field that the men who made the war achieved their great triumphs in industry, science, and all that was optimistically hailed as "progress." In Part II comes the sad story of their international relations. Their sincere efforts to create a peaceful world community were more than offset by the counter-factors of increasing nationalism, militarism, economic imperialism, and mutual fears and suspicions, which resulted in the international anarchy of 1914.

Professor Swain rightly shows the constant interplay of domestic politics and foreign relations, most notable in the case of England and France. He thereby gives a fairer and truer picture of those men who strove for peace and yet brought on the most terrible of wars. And in the crisis of July, 1914, he "makes clear how unjust it is to stand over them (the diplomats) with a stop-watch, compelling them to account for every move, and assuming that when shown new telegrams they at once understood them in all their bearings as fully as do modern scholars with all the advantages of hindsight and after years of study."

Watching the Diplomats

In Part III comes a clear account of the military and diplomatic history of the war, with emphasis on the opening and closing campaigns and the effects of the Russian Revolution and American participation. This is followed by a severe analysis of the Peace Settlement and some features of the subsequent liquidations of the war during the past decade.

FIRST TO GO BACK, by Irina Skariatina. The author of "A World Can End," the first Russian aristocrat allowed to revisit Soviet Russia, tells what she saw and heard and learned.

RANKS WITH COMPANION

In importance and interest "Riddles of the Gobi Desert," by Sven Hedin, will rank with its companion volume, "Across the Gobi Desert." The book will be published soon by E. P. Dutton.

MORGAN PARK CADET

Of the three Kenilworth boys who were cadets last year at Morgan Park Military academy, only one, Carl Buehler, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Buehler, 151 Abingdon avenue, is returning this fall. Carl leaves for school September 13. The other two boys are Jack Coale and Horton Johnson. Jack will enter his sophomore year at New Trier, and Horton will go to Lake Forest academy.