

BOOKS and their AUTHORS

THE CURIOUS QUEST.

By E. Phillips Oppenheim, 208 Pages, Price, \$1.50, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, Publishers.

E. Phillips Oppenheim has few equals in some respects among modern novelists. He is prolific; he is untrifling in his invention of mysterious plots; he is a clever weaver of the plausible with the sensational, and he has the necessary gift of facile narrative. His 1918 success, "The Zepplin Passenger," has been rapidly followed by "The Curious Quest," an entrancing novel of an entirely different type. For once he has for saken his usual spy theme, and has produced something in a distinctly lighter vein. The story is a most delightful one.

Ernest Bliss, an idle millionaire, consults a noted physician regarding his health, which is falling rapidly owing to nervousness. After a heated discussion, in which the specialist reproaches him with not having sufficient backbone to work for a living, he makes a wager that he will earn his own living, without touching his millions for his own use, for one year, or pay twenty-five thousand dollars to a hospital in which the doctor is interested. Then he goes out on his quest for work. He ends his life in a bed of roses, and works for terms of short duration as a stove salesman, a wagon driver, a chauffeur, a caretaker, rubber heel salesman, a greengrocer and finally as an omnibus driver. In these positions he learns much of the seamy side of life, but he never once breaks his resolve to earn his living for the specified time. By a clause in the wager, however, he is enabled to help a large number of deserving people who are in difficulties, without himself benefiting by these gifts. He also matches his wits and his muscle against those of some clever crooks, and, as is usual for the hero in the world of fiction, he comes out on top. A pretty romance, which ends in his marriage to a hard-working typist who becomes his friend during the days of trial, and is a staunch sharer of his joys and sorrows, renders complete the charm of the story. At the end of the year he returns to his former position with a new wife, with a new idea of life, and a firm resolve to make his life count for something in the world.

The moral of the story is a good one, and it is worked out with all the usual thoroughness of Oppenheim's novels. "The Curious Quest," however, to make it very distinctive. It is simply one of those novels which will have a short run of popularity, and will then pass away into forgetfulness. It is a pleasing little story, but nothing more, and it will be treated by the reading public.

INVALIDED OUT.

By Ruby M. Ayres, 246 Pages, Price \$1.35, Hodder & Stoughton, Toronto, Publishers.

Ruby M. Ayres is known as a writer of the very lightest of fiction, and this, her newest book, is no exception to the rule. It is the story of an impetuous young girl and a very gallant English officer. A chance acquaintance of a railway train, in which Pauline, the heroine of the story, pours out her family secrets to an invalided officer whom she has never seen before, is the beginning of the novel. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, this officer is Capt. Stanford, a saying guest at the home of her step-mother, where she is going at the close of her school days, and with whom a match is being arranged with her beautiful but haughty step-sister.

In spite of the disclosures she makes to the captain while ignorant of his identity, the engagement takes place, with no love on either side. Then events begin to happen at breakneck speed, and the story moves through a bewildering chain of incidents, until when the reader comes to himself, he finds that Pauline has married Capt. Stanford. This happens through the love of the step-sister for another man, and the generosity of the captain in making financial allowances for this rival. But how the two principals come to the happy stage of matrimony can only be learned by reading the story.

It is a light vivacious novel, with no solidity in its texture, somewhat amusing in parts, and never once getting really serious. Its action is very rapid, and as a pastime, it suits admirably, for it is a book which, in most cases will be read through at the first sitting. For those who read only as a means of amusement, it will appeal very much, and its writer should add to her admirers by this bright little novel, which is deserving of a certain amount of praise.

THE PRICE OF A THRONE

By Joseph Hocking, 320 Pages, Price \$1.25, Hodder & Stoughton, Toronto, Publishers.

The intrigues and diplomatic tangles of Greece seem to have a great attraction for Joseph Hocking, for following upon "The Maid of Athens" he gives his readers a sequel, "The Price of a Throne," the plot of which is woven around the events in Greece in the days immediately preceding the abdication of King Constantine. John Penrose and Athene Averbury, as well as Tom Polard, the principals of the former novel, again play a large part in this story, although the main interest centres in Teddy Onslow, an English officer who has been sent to Greece with Penrose to try to find out how the wily Constantine is really acting

BOOKS.

Books are a part of man's prerogative. In formal link the thoughts and voices hold. That we to them our solitude may give, And make time present travel that of old. Old life, Fame pierce at the ent, And books if farther backward, do extend. —Sir T. Overbury.

In connection with the war in the Balkans.

Onslow, by a clever strategy, obtains a post as private secretary to the Greek premier, and in that capacity learns much of the internal affairs of the court. He so far gains the confidence of his employer that he is commissioned to drive the king, disguised, to a house in the northern wilds of the Balkans, where a meeting with the Kaiser takes place. He overhears a conversation between the Kaiser and "Tino," and finds out exactly what he needs, that a number of telegrams have been sent by the Greek king to the Kaiser, which, if discovered, will result in the destruction of Constantinople. He then plans to get hold of these telegrams, but unfortunately his employer's daughter falls in love with him, and discovers that he is really a British secret service agent. He is forced to leave his position and flee from Athens.

Next appears, in company with Penrose, at the house of the master who is behind all the intrigue and trickery in Greece, and by use of the weapon of bluff, the couple secure the incriminating telegrams. The end then comes quickly, and the result of the abdication of the king. So much for the plot of the novel, which is really quite thrilling and full of dramatic incidents. The romantic element is supplied by the love of Onslow for an American girl who is a guest of the Greek premier, and who proves herself a staunch friend of the Englishman. Little attention is devoted to the working out of the love story, but it ends happily, and that satisfies the reader.

Hocking has given his followers many books of this kind, but this is perhaps the most interesting of them. It grips the attention from start to finish, and it is at all times impossible to guess the conclusion, which is not often the case in novels of this kind. This factor of uncertainty and doubt as to the result adds to its attractiveness, and should make it one of the popular novels of the spring season.

ESSAYS ON OCCULTISM, SPIRITISM AND DEMONOLOGY.

By Dean W. R. Harris, 181 Pages, Price \$1.25, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, Publishers.

Interest in psychical matters is growing daily, and during the past two years many books have been written giving the spiritualists' side of the question. Chief among these are "Raymond," by Sir Oliver Lodge, "The New Revelation," by Conan Doyle, and "The Twentieth Plane" by Albert D. Watson. All these books are written as propaganda in favour of the movement and give particular instances of supposed conversations with the spirits of people who have passed beyond to other worlds, some of them recently, and others who lived centuries ago. The cult of spiritism is growing at an astonishing rate, and people of all classes are taking an unusual interest in the subject. Many seem to be losing their heads, and are becoming fanatical, and religious bodies view with alarm the growth of their numbers.

The latest addition to literature on the subject from the pen of Dean W. R. Harris, who has written many essays on subjects bearing on spiritism, and who has lectured widely on psychic phenomena. In the book he makes a great attempt to combat those who would spread the cult of spiritism, and takes a firm stand as one who deprecates the fact that it should have so great a following. It is largely a criticism of the statements made by writers on the subject, and he endeavors to prove that messages received by means of "ouija" boards and other agencies are not received from the spirits of those who claim to be speaking to the medium, but are the whisperings of evil spirits, after the similitude of the evil spirits with which Christ had to deal while he was on earth. He admits that there have from time to time been certain phenomena which seem to be inexplicable, especially in the way of the appearance in dreams of those who are dying, but accounts for these by the sixth sense which he claims was once possessed by man, but is still possessed by animals, but became extinct in human beings through disuse.

The main interest in the book, however, centres in the strong denunciation of spiritism, which he claims is a cult which exists for the destruction of the Christian church. In one section he says: "Spiritism is a heresy with which the members of Christianity have nothing in common. And yet men and women of high aim, sincere and honest, if not always avowedly Christian belief, are every day entangled in the subtleties of this pernicious deception."

In another place he says that spiritism is an evidence of moral decadence, and that it had grown into a cult with which thousands are obsessed. He also says "Spiritism is a development of Paganism, an outgrowth of heathenism in every age of history, and is found with pitiable forms of devil-worship among nations that are most deeply sunk in idolatry. Its permanency, then, among Japhetic races in modern times is an alarming mark of the degeneracy of our boasted civilization." Then, in conclusion, he writes, "It will be noticed by the thoughtful reader that the end aimed at by both spiritists and materialists is the same—the destruction of Christianity. The reader will also notice that at no time in the history of the human race have the spirits, or spiritism, contributed anything to the advancement of knowledge or the progress of civilization."

The message of this book is significant. In these days when people are seeking frantically to obtain messages from loved ones who have given their lives in the war, it should do much to put a check upon the impositions and the foolish claims of spiritists and spiritualist mediums. Although it is true that many leading minds have contributed to the growth of this movement, it is equally true that in most of these cases there had been a large amount of eccentricity present, and the analysis of a keen intellect and a thoughtful brain such as we believe Dean Harris to possess will do much to let the public see the movement in its true light. This is a notable and valuable contribution to the literature of the times on psychical matters.

Primarily and essentially a book is something to be read, not to be treated as an object of art, to be taken down and occasionally shown to a friend.

5,000 FACTS ABOUT CANADA.

By Frank Yeitch, 85 Pages, Price 25 cents, Published by the Canadian Facts Publishing Company, Toronto.

The twelfth annual edition of this little storehouse of knowledge regarding the Dominion of Canada has just been published, and it is, as usual, up to the minute in giving information of every kind about our country. Every line of activity carried on in Canada is touched upon, and concise, up-to-date figures are given them. An interesting new feature is a section devoted to war facts, which tells in detail exactly what Canada has done in the war. The little book will be as welcome as ever amongst men who are interested in the growth and development of their country.

QUEEN'S QUARTERLY.

Published by the Publishing Committee of Queen's University, Kingston.

The first issue for 1919 of Queen's Quarterly has just made its appearance, and one is at once impressed by the solidity of its contents. This magazine is almost entirely supported by the university staff, and it would be extremely profitable to thinking people quite outside the university world to peruse its pages. The articles it contains are scholarly and broad in view, and treat a large variety of subjects in a more than intelligent manner.

First of all comes an essay by Prof. W. M. Conacher on "Esprit Francais," which describes the heart of France as it is shown in the works of her religious writers and teachers from the middle ages to the present time. Rev. T. B. McCormick, M.A., of Deseronto, contributes an article on the liturgy of Calvin; Barker Parley has an appreciation of John Massfield and his writings; Fred B. Millett writes on the courtesy literature of England before 1557; Prof. A. L. Clark's lecture on the countries of extreme cold, given before the Queen's Alumni in December, 1918, is reproduced in full, and R. A. Wilson, of Saskatoon, contributes a very exhaustive, educational survey of Saskatchewan.

The chief contribution of the quarterly, however, is made by Dean James Cappon, who discusses on current events. In an article entitled, "Bourgeois and Bolshevism," he throws much light on the great world wide upheaval which is going on to-day. His analysis of the events in Europe, and especially in Russia, is well-balanced, scholarly and instructive. The tyranny of the Bolsheviks, their suppression of free speech, and their denial of the ideals of democracy, are all plainly and temperately set forth. The article leaves the reader with a more hopeful view of the whole situation. The final article of the magazine is a comprehensive summary of the results of the recent British elections.

The public who are interested in these questions of world-wide import will find them splendidly treated in Queen's Quarterly. A very high intellectual standard is maintained throughout, and the publication deserves a large circulation outside of university circles. There is no reason why the general public should not have the benefit of the work of these scholars of high standing who contribute to its pages.

"More Pep" for February.

The February number of "More Pep," the breezy little business magazine published by the British Whig Publishing Company, is now being circulated. The same high standard of workmanship which characterized the previous issues is again displayed, and the book, both in design and execution, is a credit to the printing department of the Whig. Its contents, as in former numbers, deal mainly with the injecting of more life into business methods, and in boosting business for the city and the Dominion. Its articles are short and pithy, and written with that amount of punch which makes them effective. Problems of business, men dealing with advertising and up-to-date methods are dealt with in an interesting and instructive manner which should appeal to all who read the magazine. A number of very interesting facts regarding the policies, features and circulation of the Whig are given, facts which should be known by every business man in the city, as well as in many other centres of the Dominion. "More Pep," which is entirely free is growing rapidly, and copies can be had on application, either personally or by mail, to the Whig office.

A Great Piece of Literature

William Allen White's "In the Heart of a Fool," is being endorsed by the clergymen of America, many of whom are finding in it themes for sermons and series of sermons. Rev. Clark Oliver, Rector of the Episcopal Church, St. Mark's, in a letter to Mr. White, says: "In my opinion you have produced the greatest piece of literature that has come from the American press in a generation. I hail you as the great preacher of the gospel with whom we have been trying to proclaim these many years. If I can get people to read your book, I shall have done better than preach a thousand sermons."

Similar commendation comes from Rev. C. Stetson, of St. Mark's church, Washington. "Mr. White's book is a masterpiece of literature. It is a summing up of what I hope we may call the American spirit. Some call it the social conscience, others foolish idealism, but Mr. White makes us see that the best Americans realize that we are here on earth, not so much to secure wealth, but to try to secure, as to discharge some very important duties."

Sir Rider Haggard's New Novel

In his new novel, "Moon of Israel," Sir Rider Haggard tells the story of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, as it might have appeared to an Egyptian, Ana, who took a leading part in the circumstances which surrounded that tremendous event. The lines of the Old Testament narrative puts his own interpretation upon some of these happenings. To him they seem to represent a war between the God of Israel and the gods of the Egyptians, of whom Anon, or Amen, was the chief, as indeed he did according to the Bible. It remains to be added that Ana really lived in the time of Seti II, and was the author, among other romances, of the famous, "Tale of Two Brothers."

The period is that which is generally accepted as the date of Exodus, at or about the end of the reign of Pharaoh Menepthah, the son of Ramesses the Great, and is based on the theory which the late Sir Gardner Maspero, of the Louvre, has advanced, and which is that the Israelites, immediately succeeded Menepthah, and was the actual Pharaoh of the Exodus. The love interest in the tale is furnished by his heroine, a Hebrew lady named Merapt, the Moon of Israel.

Work is Worship

Properly speaking, all true work is religion; and whatsoever religion is not work may go and dwell among the Brahmins, Antiochians, Spinning Dervishes, or where it will; with me it will have no harbour. Admirable was that creed of the old monks, "Laborare est Orare." "Work is Worship." Older than all preached articulate gospels was this unpreached, inarticulate, but ineradicable, for ever enduring gospel. Work, and therein have well-being. Man, son of earth and of heaven, lies there not in the innermost heart of these, a spirit of active method, a force for

work; and burns like a painfully smouldering fire, giving thee no rest thou unfold it, till thou writest it down in beneficent facts around thee. What is immethodic, waste, thou shalt make methodic, regulated, arable, obedient and productive to thee. Wheresoever thou findest disorder, there is the eternal enemy; attacking him swiftly, subdue him; make order of him, the subject not of chaos, but of intelligence, divinity and thee. The thistle that grows in thy path, dig it out, that a blade of useful grass, a drop of nourishing milk, may grow instead. The waste cotton-shrub; gather its brawny white down, spin it, weave it, that in place of idle litter, there may be folded webs, and the naked skin of the man be covered. Thomas Carlyle, in "Past and Present."

The Tragedy of Mental Blindness

"Nothing save mental blindness can be sin; All seeing saves, all hearing, all delight." "The Mad Shepherd," Mr. Jack's most delightful creation, speaks of a condition which he describes as being "stuck in one's skin." Books are not necessarily a remedy for it. Many bookish people indeed acquire a solid calf-skin binding which is even harder to break through than the integument they were born in. But the really great things in literature have only come from people who have learnt how to escape from their skin. Hence great literature may be one way of escape from the mental blindness of Philistinism, is just the state in which so many of us spend our lives without being aware that anything is wrong with us. It is a state, in Masfield's phrase, of "mental blindness, of being 'stuck in one's skin.' Like Peter Bell, of famous memory, we find in the primrose by the water's brim a simple primrose, and we thank God that we are as other men are. In his poem, "The Wanderer," Masfield has a vivid passage describing a winter morning's walk, "breasting up the fells." He says, "And soon men looked upon a glittering earth. Intensely sparkling like a world new-born. Only to stick was spiritual birth. So bright the rain-drops ran along the thorn. So bright they were, that one could see almost pass Beyond the twinkling to the source, and know The glory pushing in the blade of grass. That hidden soul which makes the flowers grow. It is that 'spiritual birth,' the sudden flash of seeing that saves, that delivers from the mental blindness that is the real sin against the Holy Ghost. Canada has already shown that she can bring seers to the birth. No one not hopelessly stuck in his skin could look at Tom Thomson's pictures of the Canadian north without some sense of awe. There was a man who had seen the reality behind the veils, had seen God's face and died of it. But, rightly used, the remedy that lies nearest to us is great literature. A young and virile country, especially in this age of efficiency and industrialism, is in danger of materialism, which is just another name for being stuck in one's skin. But the right use of the best books is one of the most potent forces towards the creation of a spirit which can make a nation truly great in the best sense. It was Virgil's spirit that led Dante to the final sublime vision of the power 'that moves the sun in heaven and all the stars.' One who has been brought, by consorting with the seers who have written down the visions, to see something of the beauty that is truth, can say with the hero of the old fable of Apuleius, 'I have eaten rose leaves, I am no longer an ass.' —Professor Samuel Henry Hooker, M.A., B.D., in "The Canadian Bookman."

Notes of Interest to Booklovers

Ray Stannard Baker, whose work as a journalist and publicist has made his name well known throughout the world, has been appointed by President Wilson to have charge of the publicity machinery through which the people of America will be informed from day to day concerning the proceedings of the Peace Conference. Mr. Baker is the author of numerous books, two of which, "Our New Prospects" and "Seen in Germany," are of special interest at present.

Following closely upon the heels of "The Eyes of Asia," Rudyard Kipling has prepared a volume of verses for publication at an early date. Its title will be "The Years Between," and will include, in addition to Kipling's war poems, a number of pieces which have never before been published.

Frank H. Simonds, author of a history of the war, has been decorated by the French government with the Cross of Chevalier. This history of the war has been translated into Turkish and Armenian, and published in these languages, and French and German editions are soon to be brought out.

The publication of Col. William McCrae's "In Flanders Fields,"

which was announced for fall, but the Whig, is now definitely promised for this spring. Besides the title poem, it will contain a large number of the soldier-poet's best works.

From a sales standpoint, "Dere Mable" was one of the most remarkable humorous books ever written, and its successor, "That's Me, All Over, Mable," promises to equal, if not to exceed, its record.

The story of Dr. Henri Berland, which has been running as a serial in the Whig, is to be published this spring in book form, when it is expected to have a big sale.

This year's centenaries include James Russell Lowell, Charles Kingsley and Walt Whitman, and the commemoration of these literary celebrities should create a revival of interest in their works. This is also the centenary year of the late Queen Victoria, which is also of literary significance.

The melodious quality of Irene McLeod's poetry has appealed greatly to composers, who have drawn on her volumes of poems for words for several beautiful melodies. Among composers who have supplied musical settings for Miss McLeod's poetry are Sidney Homer and Cecil Forsyth.

"In Orchard Glen," by Marjiam Keith, who won her way so well with "Duncan Polite" and her subsequent novels, is another idyll of the Scotch folk of Ontario. It presents a most entertaining love story of the two "ugly ducklings" of the village in which most of the action takes place, and with it is provided a fund of whimsical humor, vivid drama and characterization of a very high order, the spirit of wartime Canada furnishing a strong background.

A novel which is a reply to Waugh's "Loom of Youth," is to come shortly, from the pen of Martin Browne. Its title is "A Dream of Youth."

Ralph Connor's "Sky Pilot in No Man's Land," which was postponed from last fall, is to appear this month.

Leslie Homer has compiled a volume of "Fifty Famous Canadian Stories," which is to appear shortly.

"Hospital Love Stories," by Mary Roberts Reinhart, is an interesting announcement for early publication.

J. J. Bell, the author of "Vee MacGregor," is entitled to a free volume of thanks for another delectable volume entitled "Kiddies" in which the small boy and his mischief, pranks are portrayed as an entertainment for his elders. It is a little book brimful with humour and pathos.

Eleanor Porter's "Dawn," a new story to be published soon, is the tale of a blind boy who achieves self-mastery and success, and then devotes his life to the service of soldiers blinded in the war.

Agnes and Egerton Castle's "Miniglen" is a novel of the wild Cameron country of Scotland, with transfers in scene to London. In it there is a wealth of incident, including the adventures of a girl lost in the Scotch mist, the gay frivolities of a Scotch house party, and exciting scenes among London's suffragettes.

Wanted—A Censor of Books

An editorial in the Ontario Reformer, Oshawa, advocates the appointment of a book censor—on the hypothesis that there is even more reason for this than for a censor of moving pictures. The editorial says in part: "Germany has shown us what it means to have her educationalists writing and teaching false ideals. Unless there is some check put upon the large class of writers who cater almost exclusively to the sensual sentiment, a harvest of immorality must result. A large percentage of the cheaper books are saturated with it. If books can only be made cheaply by putting such stuff in them, it would be a thousand times better if there were no cheap books, as we believe the future will amply demonstrate."

American Slang

A book about America, by an Englishman, would not be complete if it did not have some reference to American slang, so it is not surprising to find in Frank Dillmot's "The New American," a bright and vivacious little volume about this continent and its people written by a newspaper correspondent who has resided in Canada and the United States for some years—a list of typical American slang phrases with their English equivalents. Here it is, and doubtless many readers will be amused as much amused by the staid English expressions as English readers will be at the wholly unaccountable American phrases.

WAR PUZZLES

NICHOLAS II



THE CZAR OPENED THE RUSSIAN DUMA

For the last time, three years ago today, February 22, 1916. Find a peasant.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Right side down in wreathage.

"Ascertain the facts." "To chaff you." "Take a chance." (From Steve Brodie, who dived from Brooklyn Bridge.) "Let me for another." "Stop that nonsense; get to business." "Evil spirits haunt me." "You've talked enough and too much." "He's smart, keep your eye on him."

Another Think Coming.

The following is contained in an Ottawa hospital statement: "That there is a considerable probability that the Medical Faculty of Queen's University might consider favorably the suggestion that the third, fourth and fifth years should be transferred to Ottawa—owing to the greater amount and variety of clinical material available. "Should Queen's University enter into this arrangement, funds are available for the establishment of clinical facilities."

YOUR SICK CHILD IS CONSTIPATED! LOOK AT TONGUE

Hurry, Mother! Remove Poisons From Little Stomach, Liver, Bowels.

Give "California Syrup of Figs" if Cross, Bilious or Feverish.



No matter what ails your child, a gentle, thorough laxative should always be the first treatment given. If your little one is out-of-sorts, half-sick, isn't resting, eating and acting naturally—look, Mother! see if tongue is coated. This is a sure sign that the little stomach, liver and bowels are clogged with waste. When cross, irritable, feverish, stomach sour, breath bad or has stomach-ache, diarrhoea, sore throat, full of cold give a teaspoonful of "California Syrup of Figs," and in a few hours all the constipated poison, undigested food and sour bile gently moves out of the little bowels without griping, and you have a well, playful child again. Mothers can rest easy after giving this harmless "fruit laxative," because it never fails to cleanse the little one's liver and bowels and sweeten the stomach, and they dearly love its pleasant taste. Full directions for babies, children of all ages and for grown-ups printed on each bottle. Beware of counterfeit fig syrups. Ask your druggist for a bottle of "California Syrup of Figs," then see that it is made by the "California Fig Syrup Company."

Public Library Bulletin

Have you seen a copy of the Times History of the War, illustrated?

Call at the library and examine our set, it will repay you.