

IN BRIEF REVIEW

ONE of the most thought stimulating books written for some time, on the basis of definite personal opportunity to draw deductions, is John Carter's "Man is War" (Bobbs-Merrill). It echoes Spengler's pessimist philosophy that all social institutions carry within them the seeds of death. It holds that violence — war — "expensive, absorbing and inefficient" yet "entirely satisfactory to the emotions of humanity", is the bloody mechanistic Seidlitz powder which will continue temporarily to clear the world's greed and ambition clogged system until man is extinct. The picture of our civilization as it is at present, of its masses and political leaders, in practice centuries behind the noblest rational idealist preaching of the day, is brilliantly drawn — in red and black. And though necessarily the author's conclusions are speculative, they are largely based on the logic of fact. Mr. Carter closes on a note of doom and despair: that this bad old world of ours will not change; that its period Saturdays must continue to have their blood baths. To this conclusion the whole past history of the human race is opposed. Man is a thinking as well as a fighting animal; he has ideals as well as biologic urges, logic as well as blood lusts. Nevertheless, "Man is War" is a book Americans should read: it is constructive; it reflects the world as it really is today without any bias, and should stimulate a desire to better it.

It is rather hard for anyone who attends a modern football game, in a monstrous stadium, surrounded by fur coats and gay hats and all the color of a

sporting crowd, to conceive of a time when the game was actually in disfavor, looked upon as a fearful and bloody battle of brute strength not fit for ladies to see. And harder is it to believe that one man could make the change from that primitive state to the modern game. But Harford Powel's biography of "Walter Camp" (Little, Brown) tells the story of this change, and of the man who effected it. Even for one supposedly not interested in the game, the book is really fascinating. Not that it is well written, for it is not. Nor is it even competent from the point of view of factual biography, there being several hiatuses of years in the account of Camp's life. But in the first place it tells the story of an intensely interesting and unusual figure, and in the second place it tells the story of football from an angle so different, so fresh, and so strange that the story should arouse the interest of the veriest tyro at sports.

During the last few years of the nineteenth century a new poetical era, which for sometime had been in the embryo, took definite form. It was sponsored largely by the Rhymers' Club, a small yet active organization of advance thought, including among its members such men as Ernest Dowson, Richard Le Gallienne, and W. B. Yeats. This group, together with a few additional writers, definitely cast aside the conventions of Victorian literature and set out to follow its own ideas. It is this new trend that C. E. Andrews and M. O. Percival have sought to illustrate in their collection, "Poetry of the Nineties" (Harcourt,

Brace). With an obvious measure of care they have chosen from the works of the rebelling authors those poems most significant and representative. The result is an admirable one: an anthology has been compiled that is not only splendid for its content but also for the unity of its aim.

G. W. Russell, more frequently known as A. E., and another of the rebels of the nineties, has probably had a more varied career than any of his contemporaries. At first active in business, he later attempted painting, finally becoming a leading member of the Dublin Theosophical Society, as well as one devoting a large part of his time to the economic and agricultural improvement of Ireland. During all these experiences, however, he clung steadfastly to his poetry. Throughout the entire content of his "Collected Poems" (Macmillan) is to be found that mysticism so characteristic of him. Despite the fact that his sense of rhythm is at times inclined to be poor, there is in the work a maturity of thought existing only among those with a large, worldly experience.

Horace Wyndham has a new compendium of sundry celebrated episodes of crime and scandal, "The Mayfair Calendar" (Doran). For those readers whose curiosity concerning the more sensational acts in the behavior of mankind demands a satisfaction above the level of any to be had from the tabloids, this book will prove both satisfying and enlightening. For all we know, the author may be right in the contention advanced in his preface that one of the best ways to study man is to examine in specific instances some of his acts of greed and bloodthirstiness along with the fair record of motivating ideals that history and poetry preserve.

At any rate, when served up with a sensitiveness to humorous and ironic values that Mr. Wyndham's treatment displays, the journal of crime and scandal makes vivid reading.

Hilaire Belloc writes with such facility that the children of his brain might almost be said to be born in litters. Yet this easy grace of production is matched by an ease and grace of style, a piquancy and readability, which justify his books in quantity as well as in the individual exemplar. "Miniatures of French History" (Harper) is a connected series of delightful pen pictures. They review the pageant of French history, in vignettes of moments high and heroic or humble yet significant, and always with some outstanding human figure in the foreground. Drawn with color and charm, these miniatures follow each other in dated sequence from the founding of Marseilles, 599 B. C., to the concluding "Two Men of the Marne", and should make anybody's history of France more enjoyably comprehensive.

Sixteen members of the University of Chicago faculty, each one an authority of high standing on the special science with which his essay deals, collaborated on the production of "The Nature of the World and of Man" (University of Chicago Press). The material was originally that prepared and used for an annual survey course open to exceptionally intelligent first year students of the university. But it has here been revised and simplified in order that its value and appeal may be extended to include every class of serious reader. As a complete outline of science, the volume deserves commendation and preeminence above all late contributions of its kind to liberal, readily acquired knowledge. The editor of the