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COKEBURY PRESS

Nashville

Tennessee

The New Books
Juvenile

(Continued from preceding page)

THE MAGIC FLIGHT. Jewish Tales and Legends. By YOSSEF GAER. Frank-Maurice, Inc. 1926. \$2.

A Jewish Grandmother tells her grandchildren a group of tales out of the history and folk lore of their own people. Some of these are about familiar Old Testament characters:—Queen Esther, King Solomon, and Moses, others are of forgotten mythical personages who had much to do with many of the Hebrew customs and religious rites carried on today. The stories are all told simply and clearly and with plenty of conversation to make them attractive for young readers. They are a little less vivid to our way of thinking than they should be. Somehow they lacked the vitality and spirit authentic folk-lore, though the book is readable enough in its way. We did not care much for the rather formal black and white illustrations, though the colored frontispiece showed considerable beauty of design and coloring, and the book itself is better made than most juveniles.

TALES OF LAUGHTER. Edited by KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN and NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH. Decorated by E. MACKINSTRY. Doubleday, Page. 1926. \$3.

This re-issue of an old and popular edition of merry folk tales selected and retold by the late Kate Douglas Wiggin and her sister Nora Archibald Smith, seems to us a particularly happy venture on the publisher's part. Surely there can never be enough good fun in the world and these stories, ranging from early folk tales to the joyful nonsense of Edward Lear, make delightfully refreshing reading for "the young of all ages." Such intriguing titles as—"The Rats and Their Son-in-Law;" "The Nose-Tree;" "The Three Sillies;" "The Story of Little Black Mingo;" "How the Sun, the Moon, and the Wind Went Out to Dinner," and many more beckon the reader on from page to page as do the spirited decorations in color and black and white by that most skilful wielder of the reed-pen, Elizabeth MacKinstry. Her delectably gay and quaint decorations are as full of vitality and beauty and fun as anything we have come across in months. So perfectly do they catch the spirit of the tales that one cannot think of the stories without her picturesque people and landscapes, her humorous animals and elfish children. The full page colored illustrations are unusually successful. We liked in particular the charming "King Thrush-beard" and the group of nonsensical children for the Edward Lear tale of the "Four Little Children Who Went Round the World," and of course the great white goose stalking grandly across a whole page by itself is the kind of drawing that only happens once in a great while. Altogether for text and format "Tales of Laughter" is a delight from cover to cover. Certainly one of the most distinguished books, in the juvenile field, of the year.

TALES FROM THE ENCHANTED ISLES. By ETHEL MAY GATE. Illustrated by DOROTHY P. LATHROP. Yale University Press. 1926. \$2.

Every year or so from the Yale University Press in New Haven comes another collection of fairy tales by Ethel May Gate. They are simple, authentic fairy and folk tales, not old ones retold, but new and fanciful ones in the old and unchallengeable fairy tale manner. After the oversentimental and striving-to-be-clever kind written in a cheap and hurried modern manner, these more conventional ones, told with

dignity and often with very real beauty of feeling and expression, are indeed a relief. The author is not afraid to begin with "once upon a time;" to go through the old and happy, but never threadbare, formulas of lost princesses; fighting dragons; rescuing elves and fay folk, and to finish with the satisfactory "they live happy ever after" end. Of course there are times when one wishes for a little more of the poetic inspiration of Hans Andersen or the quaint humor and surprising twists of the Brothers Grimm, but taken all in all the tales are well done and written with much literary charm.

"The Lamp from Fairyland" and "The Singing Water" happen to be our special favorites, but this may be due in part to the illustrations that Dorothy P. Lathrop has made for them. Miss Lathrop's work is too well known to need any introduction after her successful handling of Walter de la Mare's sprites and Fairy Folk in "Down A-Down Derry," and her delightful children for the poems of Hilda Conkling. Here the artist has concerned herself chiefly with Sea-People and her mermaids and sea-horses and water-sprites are as lovely as anything she has done to our way of thinking. There is a fine-spun quality to her work; a frail vitality and beauty of line and form to everything she touches, but it is in poetry and fairy tales that she comes most truly into her own. Miss Gate is lucky indeed to have her for illustrator and both author and artist are lucky to have the Yale University Press behind them to turn out such a beautifully made book.

THE HUNGRY TIGER OF OZ. By RUTH PLUMLY THOMPSON. Illustrated by John R. Neill. Reilly & Lee. 1926. \$2.

This is a tale founded on the famous "Oz" stories by L. Frank Baum. Such a lovable and unvoracious beast, resembling strongly the lions in Daniel's den! He is stolen by the wicked Rashers and his escape with his friends Betsy of Oz, Reddy, the Rightful Heir to the throne, and the Vegetable Man, makes a yarn that could go on indefinitely. The Oz books for wonder-rousing material carry their own label. There are none like them. No doubt there will still be a crop to console our children in their dotage.

THE WHITE LEADER. By CONSTANCE LINDSAY SKINNER. Macmillan. 1926. \$1.75.

One is sure to get from the writings of Constance Lindsay Skinner, historian as well as story-teller, authentic pioneer portraits based on patient research. Such she gives us now in the *White Leader* of the Creeks—McGillivray, who in the first part of his career allied himself with Spain against America, when the Southwest border was at stake.

It is a distinct accomplishment to create story enchantment from the materials with which this author works. In such books the danger of dullness by dwelling too long on facts of history is ever present. To create color and excitement there is a constant temptation to build the story around great men and important battles. Miss Skinner does not yield to such temptations; she excites and holds interest by her own invention working upon historical facts. The result is that in "The White Leader" boys and girls have a book that attracts by virtue of its story interest, and that subtly leaves on the reader's mind an accurate picture of the days when General Wilkinson intrigued to join Tennessee to Louisiana under Spanish rule.

DAVID HOTFOOT. By DAN TOTHEROH. Doran. 1926.

Dan Totheroh (he must write well for children to remember that name) gives us refreshing color and originality in this delightfully illustrated volume. We imagine that it was Jackie Coogan's petted, guarded life that suggested to the author his hero, David Stanley, a boy-star in Hollywood who rebels against the shouting director with his megaphone, the buzzing cameras, the watchful parents, the fur-lined coat, the "fan" adoration, and runs away.

The boy falls in with Slivers, a gentleman of the road; sups fragrant mulligan stew out of a battered tin pan; gets rid of his curls; exchanges his velvet suit for a Huck Finn garb, and becomes a "Road-Kid," traveling carefree with the ragged, fatherly tramp past blossoming orchards—until those disillusioning adventures begin.

Dan Totheroh knows hobos—knows Hollywood. He understands too the heart of a child. Out of his knowledge of them all has come one of the most engaging juveniles of the season. No adult need be afraid to permit a child to follow David into this hobo camp, for the road-kid at last sees life in its true colors.

THE MOUNTAIN OF JADE. By VIOLET IRWIN and VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON. Macmillan. 1926. \$2.

Whaling, walrus hunting, ice jams, Arctic treasure—magnets of interest for the older boy. It is the story of a white youth and a copper youth—Gerry Raikes, ex-sailor, and Kak the Eskimo;—of how Kak led his white companion into Arctic hunting and adventure.

These writers, in a happy partnership, have captured the wild North, its people, customs, and creatures, and put them into this book with a vividness and reality that gives it strength and attraction. The treasure thread is the weakest, yet the book is so rich in other adventures that it does not need the inevitable treasure note to make it fascinating. Here is a story that instructs while it entertains, but that fortunately keeps any suggestion of instruction concealed from the reader. A worth-while juvenile indeed!

Miscellaneous

THE THIRD MATE: How to Become an Officer in the U. S. Sea Service. By F. GRIFFITH. New York: The Anchor Press. 1925.

Frederick Griffith of 2031 Columbia Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa., to give him name and place, in fact to locate him both by latitude and longitude in these United States, has written, printed, and bound, himself alone, a work on seamanship and navigation, the like of which may never come to pass again. Fancier books, finer books, cleverer books, are being published every day, almost every hour, but seldom do we come across a more honest book, or a more interesting one.

Briefly, for this is a short review, the work has to do with the subjects of navigation, the duties of junior officers at sea and in port, sea life, hygiene, ethics, smuggling, etc. Five hundred pages set up on a small hand press, each set separately, by the author, and a limited first edition of five hundred strictly hand-made books, should appeal to the collector, let alone the youngster going to sea. Of course the books are hand bound, also by the author, who, being a man of imagination as well as energy, constituted himself "The Anchor Press."

Looking at the book from a strictly professional point of view we declare it accurate, soundly presented, and intensely interesting. Viewing it with the jaundiced eye of a paid reviewer, and no meaner animal exists (as all regular authors are ready to testify) we declare it a work of unusual merit. Doctors, who try and confound us with unusual words, will find their tricks exposed in the section under *hygiene* of Chapter 25.

The lay reader (lying comfortably in bed of a Sunday morning while his wife and kids go to church) will find a rich cargo of wisdom in this chapter. Mr. Griffith minces no words. Butter and egg men, both fresh and stale, might take warning from him.

Under "Drinking" he offers sound advice. We gather that American crews, when abroad, of course, are noted for their thirst. "Drinking alcoholic liquors will never make a better navigator out of you," he states positively. Once American crews were no worse than, let us say, British crews. Now, so it seems, they are superior, or inferior, depending upon which side of the Constitution you prefer to swear allegiance.

Short sea story writers might get much data from his pages on smuggling, but let them also buy or borrow this rare book. Mr. Griffith is so full of philosophy, so well stowed with wisdom, his honest book reads like the Sayings of Solomon at sea. The best and most honest book we have read in the past year.

Poetry

WILD PLUM. By ORRICK JOHNS. Macmillan. 1926. \$1.25.

This is a little book of seventy-one pages of lyrics done in a well turned way, *à la mode*, in the style of the present "lyric renaissance." Orrick Johns possesses a considerable facility in verse. Yet only once or twice does he escape from the formula of this kind of thing:

A tiny bell the tree toad has,
I wonder if he knows
The charm it is to hear him
Ringing as he goes?

"To a Dead Classmate" has spots of genuine feeling. All the rest, including the title poem of "Wild Plum," which the lady who writes the blurbs at Macmillans avers "shows Orrick Johns' magic of touch and the singing quality of his lines," is—well, just the kind of thing that sings and sings itself into oblivion.

The Reader's Guide

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to Mrs. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*.

A BALANCED RATION
A VICTORIAN AMERICAN. By *Herbert Gorman*. (Doran.)
THE MAKING OF A MODERN MIND.
By *J. H. Randall, Jr.* (Houghton Mifflin.)
THE MEANING OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION. By *Everett Dean Martin* (Norton.)

E. L. C. M., Chicago, Ill., asks for a list of "rip-snorting detective stories, well-told and artistically developed," saying that life being at the moment somewhat monotonous he would "like to read about criminals and such-like social aberrations."

ANY list of the season's mystery stories must begin with Mrs. Belloc Lowndes's "What Really Happened" (Doubleday, Page), the most important novel of this type since Ronald Knox's "Viaduct Murder" last year, but it is so much more than a detective story it must be set apart from the others as a searching study of real people involved in a poignant situation. Someone said this summer in England—where it made an instant sensation—that if all murder stories realized their characters so completely as sinning, suffering human beings, no determined reader of them could stand the strain. The suspense, which does not crack until the last sentence of the last page, is the more extraordinary considering that the material facts come out early in the book.

As a straight detective yarn with an unexpected solution, the banner book is "The Murder of Roger Ackroyd," by Agatha Christie (Dodd, Mead). I had gone through everything I could find by Freeman Wills Crofts, whose exercises in this line I prefer even to those of Fletcher, and was somewhat disdainful of lesser artists in crime, when the girl in the bookshop said with a conviction deeper than any sales-argument, "I don't care what you think about anything else by Agatha Christie, you'll like this." She was completely right: it is a book that everyone reads twice in immediate succession. Mr. Crofts's latest is "The Cheyne Mystery" (A. and C. Boni), in which his famous Inspector French goes on another long, steady, and unwavering pursuit. Another well-known literary detective appears again in H. C. Bailey's "Mr. Fortune's Trials" (Dutton): this man is unusually attractive. G. H. Chesterton's favorite hero comes back in "The Incredulity of Father Brown" (Dodd, Mead): he is real enough, but in mystery stories Mr. Chesterton seems to me to be working out crossword puzzles he has himself made. "Death at Swathling Court," by J. T. Connington (Little, Brown), seems about to break the rules of right mystery tales by introducing a "death ray" as yet unknown to science, but this is only a mask for a much deeper plot. In Eden Phillpott's "Jig Saw" (Macmillan), a story with a cruel sort of solution, the first victim is found in a room as impenetrable as a safe. "Sinister House," by Charles Booth (Morrow), has some professional criminals in it as well as the amateurs that usually form the cast of these dramas; as a result it is more violent than the run of drawing-room crimes. "The Detective's Holiday," by Charles Barry (Dutton), gives a chance for comparative study of French and British methods when a Scotland Yard man on vacation in a French fishing village is called in to catch an elusive criminal. "By Candle-light," by Gertrude Knevels (Appleton), takes place in an old house up the Hudson, and is creepy and jumpy enough to keep anyone awake after finishing it; it follows the American method of involving a love-story. I see that the classic example of this type, Anna Katherine Green's "Hand and Ring" (Dodd, Mead), has been brought out in a revised edition, and I will read this through the instant it comes under my eye, to see how and where it could be revised. It was the prize mystery story of my girlhood. E. P. Oppenheim's "Harvey Garrard's Crime" (Little, Brown), is more romance than detective story, though the force does come in toward the end. "The Red-Haired Girl," by Carolyn Wells (Lippincott), sets her pet sleuth on the trail of two flatirons and a wet footprint. "The Club of Masks," by Allen Upward (Lippincott) is a poison mystery with a psychological slant, and a tight tension on the plot. "Ann's Crime," by R. T. M. Scott

(Dutton), would be disqualified by Chesterton because it has a political secret society in it, and I may add that for years I have read no further in a crime story than the point where a mysterious Russian lifts his head. But the list, printed in the front of the book, of magazines in which Secret Service Smith is appearing—sixteen of them and a syndicate of newspapers—shows that others have not these prejudices. I found out Chesterton's opinions on this point from his introduction to Walter S. Masterman's "The Wrong Letter" (Dutton), which is better than the book itself. Talk about putting people in high places into novels—this murders a Home Secretary; it must give the actual gentleman holding the title a curious sensation.

E. S. Z., Harrisburg, Pa., asks information about systems of reading for the blind, their respective merits and cost, and where books may be bought. E. D. Q., New York, asks for advice on the choice of a book to be put into Braille.

THERE are but two types in use, Braille and Moon; the latter, simple raised letters, is taught when the beginner cannot read Braille; the limited number of books in it can be bought only from the National Institute for the Blind, 224 Great Portland Street, London. The Braille alphabet is the same in all countries, but contractions used in order to quicken the process of reading vary in every language. For convenience Braille is divided into three groups: Grade 1, in which no contractions are used; Grade 2, with about 200 contractions; Grade 3, even more highly contracted. The great bulk of English books are embossed in Braille, Grade 2. When Braille was adopted in the United States as the standard type, about 1917, it was thought best not to use only 44 of the 200 contractions of Grade 2; Braille as used with us is called Braille, Grade 1½. This information was given me by Miss Lucille Goldthwaite, librarian for the blind at the 42d Street Public Library here, where anyone interested should examine the equipment. (But if you visit the rooms, pray do not make the mistake of many sighted persons and assume the blind people are also deaf).

In America the largest firm for books

and music is the American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville, Ky., printing new titles in Braille, 1½. Other sources in this country for buying such material are the Perkins Institution for the Blind, (Continued on next page)

The Young Voltaire

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The dramatic episode of Voltaire's exile to England at the age of thirty-one is the basis of the book. Bringing new facts and a new point of view, the author gives the English visit a wholly fresh value. In fact, his conclusion is that Voltaire's intimate contact with the world of Pope, Bolingbroke, Swift, and Oxford completely revolutionized his philosophy and affected the content of all his subsequent writing. In developing this idea the book modernizes the current conception of Voltaire, still largely an inheritance from the nineteenth century.

"Bright, easily flowing style. . . . Mr. Chase entirely vindicates his purpose in this book. He fills a gap that really existed and he brings original thought to bear upon his subject"—*N. Y. Times Review of Books*.

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