

## NEW BOOKS

THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. By Leon Trotsky.  
Victor Gollancz, London. 18/-.

Of making of books about Russia there seems to be no end, and much Soviet literature is a weariness to the flesh. When Trotsky takes the pen, however, a fresh breeze comes from the arid steppes, and the flagging interest revives. Many of our treatises are coldly objective. They aim at a balanced judgment on the state of affairs in that revolutionary land. We are invited to show a measured sympathy with the experiment of the Communists, we are assured that their present enthusiasm has a certain religious glow about it and may be reckoned for righteousness; but the appreciation is very likely to close with a sage shaking of the head, and a grave warning not to believe all that we hear, and that it is the part of prudence "to wait and see". With Trotsky it is quite different. His statesmen and revolutionists are no lifeless pawns to be moved indifferently on the chess-board of Russian politics. They are human beings, though with names that baffle the memory, men to be loved or hated, followed or opposed, obeyed or shot. Trotsky knew them personally; and perhaps one of the most illuminating traits of his history is the tense, at times brilliant, way in which with a few strokes of the brush he reveals the real man, and lays bare the complex and often contending motives that actuate his conduct.

Indeed as the reader becomes enmeshed in these passionate pages, all Russia takes on the aspect of some superhuman unmanageable giant that is awaking from the sleep of the centuries, confused as to where he is, and blindly groping after new possibilities. There is something childlike about the giant, as there always is about great mass movements. There are so many conflicting interests, so many cross purposes, and yet there is a simplicity and directness about what he wants, and that was the end of the World War, at least so far as he was concerned. The unhappy *mujik* enlisted, drilled, driven to the front to be either killed or maimed for life, has no interest in the War, he does not know what it is all about. His one passionate desire is for peace, which he will have at any price, and his allegiance will be given to the party that secures it for him. Had it been the Czar, the Romanoff might still have been on the throne, and there are not wanting hints of treason at the Russian Court. But the Czar delays. An unplanned Labour demonstration on an accidentally fine day when everybody is in the street, a casual wink by a mounted Cossack announcing friendship, and soldier and workman are in fraternal embrace. Czardom is at an end. A bourgeois Government succeeds, but concludes no armistice. A dual management of Liberal and Soviet is attempted under Kerensky, who is still loyal to the Allies. Under his direction the army moves forward, a temporary victory and then a severe check; there is no peace. Disappointed, angered, the Bol-

sheviki break away under the pressure of Lenin's personality. They demand peace and the rule of the proletariat. Here Trotsky ends his first volume, to be followed by two others which will trace the revolution to its conclusion.

It is a thrilling drama, with passages of real power, written by one who like Vergil could say, *quorum pars magna fui*. There is bitterness, prejudice, national antipathy, especially toward Britain, the hereditary foe, but it is the revolution written from within, and by one whose pen scintillates at times with flashes of genius.

C. M.

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BALLADS AND SEA SONGS OF NEWFOUNDLAND. Edited by Elizabeth B. Greenleaf and Grace Y. Mansfield. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Mass. 1933. Pp. xliv, 395.

If the "Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns" were revived in this century with the old folk balladists as the Ancients, their opponents would be hard put to it to make a case. In the present volume we have first the variants of the true old English and Scottish folk ballads: as usual, by their strength, directness, freedom from sentimentality, and their power of suggestion, they are the finest in the collection. Then comes the banality of the sentimental 18th- and 19th-century songs, relieved here and there by some full-throated humour. And lastly, we have songs indigenous to Newfoundland. Poems of wrecks and heroism, of a simple strenuous life, they rank next the genuine ballads in appeal. But their power lies rather in the matter than in the telling. The folk ballad tells its story economically through revealing flashes; in these poems of Newfoundland life we occasionally find this quality, but as a rule the unknown authors tell too much: "The art of boring," as has been said, "is to leave nothing unsaid". Again, the old ballad measure is too frequently replaced by a long, lumbering line; and the "Come all ye" formula is all too common. A fair poem is sometimes spoiled by obvious moralizing, a weakness not found in the genuine ballad. Despite this inferiority to their mediaeval forerunners, these native poems are still readable and much to be preferred to the mawkish products of the two preceding centuries.

It is fortunate that the Vassar Folk Lore Expedition to Newfoundland was organized. This rich heritage must inevitably pass under the combined blows of the radio—there are two references to it in the volume—the industrializing of the country, and the widening contact with the outside world. Plainly, no two people better qualified for the work than Mrs. Greenleaf and Mrs. Mansfield could have been found. The *Introduction* reveals sympathetic insight into the simple lives of the singers, the foot-notes frequently show a sense of humour, and the editing is a model of its kind. There is no parading of knowledge, and references are made to the work of previous editors to avoid needless repetition of facts. To Mrs. Mansfield fell the difficult task of recording the music, a task that she seems to have done excellently.

To a Britisher it seems needless to spell *lieutenant*, *leftenant* (p. 50); *poor*, *pore* (p. 228); and *patent*, *paytent* (p. 254); for these are the only correct British pronunciations; but this is indeed a very minor criticism. The editors note that there is much Gaelic and French material available in the oldest Dominion; one regrets greatly that two such accomplished investigators were not qualified to record it.

That the book is from the Harvard University Press is fitting, for it was at Harvard that Child did his great work on the popular ballad. It seems almost unnecessary to add that it is a beautiful specimen of printing and book-making. In recent years, every department of Harvard has had money lavished on it, except the Harvard University Press. May the President-Elect be able to endow it handsomely, so that more poor scholars can buy its really splendid works.

B. MARTIN.

SELECT DOCUMENTS IN CANADIAN ECONOMIC HISTORY 1783-1885.

Edited by H. A. Innis and A. R. M. Lower. The University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1933. Pp. viii., 846.

This volume is the continuation of an ambitious work, the first part of which was published by Professor Innis in 1929. It aims to do for the economic and social history of Canada what Professor W. P. M. Kennedy's *Statutes, Treaties and Documents of the Canadian Constitution* has done for Canadian constitutional history.

In this effort the advantage was all in favour of Professor Kennedy, in that much had already been written upon constitutional history, all the land-marks were comparatively well known, and his task was merely to amplify the story by appropriate illustrations. But, by comparison, it may be said that Professor Innis had to break new ground in economic history, much as the pioneers about whom he writes had to do; and, as they had time only occasionally to blaze a path through the woods, so he has had to pile up illustration after illustration of economic principles that are as yet only dimly discerned. If we keep in mind, therefore, the nature of his problem, and contemplate the bewildering mass of material from which he has made his selections, we cannot but feel that he has accomplished much in laying foundations for the scientific study of our economic history.

In the first volume of this work Professor Innis took as his guiding star the fundamental importance of the fishing industry in the early development of the Atlantic seaboard and the Gulf of St. Lawrence and of the fur-trade in the interior of Canada along the St. Lawrence and its tributaries. Around these two staple industries he grouped his documents, so as to illustrate the changing technique of these industries, and the settlement and subsidiary industries that followed in the wake of the one or on the trail of the other.

In the second volume, now under review, although Professor Lower has been called in to assist in the work, the same principle has been maintained throughout. His selections cover the period 1783-1850, and are arranged in two main groups, illustrating settlement, communications, industry, commercial policy and monetary problems, first in the St. Lawrence Valley and then in the Maritime Provinces.

The choice of dates, 1783-1850, is rather interesting. A political or constitutional historian would have made the same division, for the reason that the recognition of the independence of the United States marked the beginning of the second empire, while the achievement of responsible government foreshadowed its end. Likewise the politico-economic historian would have chosen the same dates because, though the Thirteen Colonies were lost in 1783, the old Navigation Acts were retained until 1849; so that it was not until 1850 that the British North American colonies could begin to formulate their own commercial and fiscal policies. But the editors of this volume make 1850 a transition period on purely economic and technological grounds, the advent at that time of steam navigation and the railways.

After 1850, therefore, when Professor Innis again takes up the work of selection, the documents are concerned with "the coming of industrialism based on steam" and with "the transition from an economy based on wood and water to an economy based on iron and steam, and to a large extent on wheat as a staple export". This new feature of mechanized transport brings two new sections of Canada into the study, the Hudson Bay drainage basin and the Pacific coast drainage basin, with new resources to be developed, of wheat, lumber, minerals and fish. The task of illustrating these developments has therefore doubled in area and also in difficulty, because these areas were opened up within the memories of some still living, and at a time when descriptive and controversial literature poured from the newspaper and the publishing house, and fairly swamped the reader. In making his selections, Professor Innis has confined himself mainly to official reports of governmental bodies; and, while this has made his section of the book authoritative, it has somewhat dissipated the glamour of romance that attracted home-seekers or gold-seekers in vast numbers to the western Plains or the Pacific Coast.

The work, as a whole, is very stimulating and of fundamental necessity. As the theories propounded are more or less cautiously and tentatively stated, one cannot disagree vigorously with the editors but rather should be grateful for such a wealth of massed material that can be worked over at leisure, and about which one can weave one's own theories. Though the proportion of the book devoted to the Maritime Provinces is less than one-fourth of that devoted to the St. Lawrence Drainage Basin, this cannot become a Maritime grievance. The fault is our own for not having devoted any attention to a scientific study of our economic history, in order that we ourselves should understand it, and be able to supply the general historian with definite illustrative material from which selections could be made.

One helpful criticism could be offered for a second edition. A little more consideration should have been shown to the reader, in enabling him to relate the various selections to some principle or theory of development. This could have been done by more frequent and fuller introductory notes to the various documents. As the book stands at present, many pages might have been lost without being missed by any but the editors, and only they know what economic principle some other selections are supposed to illustrate. Perhaps the best solution of the problem would be a short economic history of Canada, by the editors, based upon their own documents.

D. C. HARVEY.

THE CHRISTIAN RENAISSANCE. By G. Wilson Knight. Pp. 374.  
The Macmillans in Canada. \$3.50.

At one time, there was a fairly common type of expository literature which might be described under the general title "The Religious Message of the Poets". But production in this department of writing lately has rather fallen off. A new spirit is struggling to impress itself alike in religion and in poetry, and we must probably wait some time before the "message" can be heard. This new spirit is at work fully in the book which Professor G. Wilson Knight of Toronto has written. He defines his objective as "that marriage of poetry and Christianity it is my purpose in this book to celebrate". But the marriage is a "Scotch one," not yet quite acknowledged by the Church. Briefly, Professor Knight wishes us to turn brave and look again and more closely at the main streams of poetic inspiration during the Christian era, especially in the work of Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe and Milton, that we may observe how they have been touched by the Christian spirit. To enable us to do so, he brings us to a new point of view, and he proposes a new method of interpretation. Through the gate-way of symbolism we shall penetrate to the secrets of the masters. Some may think that he has overwrought his theory in detail; but, even so, we are left in no anxiety as to his meaning, nor, at least in a general sense, as to the value of his method. He does not confine himself to the orthodox "poets", but seeks to make poetry with its sacramental symbolism the highest, almost the inevitable medium of spiritual truth. Thus Jesus, St. Paul, and, most of all, the Fourth Gospeller, are all studied as masters of the symbolic method. The writer has been deeply influenced by Bergsonian philosophy, and his studies of the *Prophetic Imagination* and *Creative Newness* in the early parts of the book are of special merit. A little reiterative in style, he is never obscure, and it is alike a delight and an inspiration to travel by fields old and new in the company of a teacher who really has something new to say that is worth saying. Students of modern poetry will find his studies of D. H. Lawrence and T. S. Eliot of particular interest.

JAMES S. THOMSON.

POETS IN BRIEF. Rossetti. Cambridge, at the University Press.  
Toronto, The Macmillans in Canada.

This work is representative of a series of anthologies made, each with an introduction, by Mr. F. L. Lucas. In an age of selected and edited classics it claims attention for companionable format, for unerring and catholic discernment in selection, and for appreciative criticism in the introduction, which is reprinted, with additions, from Mr. Lucas's chapter on Rossetti in *Eight Victorian Poets*. With it may be mentioned three other works received from the Macmillans in Canada which deserve notice among "new books" on the grounds of editing and publishing rather than of content. The Scholar's

Library, edited by Guy Boas, is represented by the Diary of Samuel Pepys (selections) edited by N. V. Meeres, and Kingslake's *Eothen* edited by Mr. Boas. The books are of about three hundred thin but opaque pages, attractively bound, and furnished with a brief introduction. There are some useful notes, and a section of "questions on the text" which suggests that the term "scholar's" is to be taken as referring to pedagogy rather than to erudition. In any case, these are handy and inexpensive books for the general reader. The volume of Restoration and Eighteenth Century Plays in the Modern Library Giants can lay no claim to compactness. On the contrary, its special merits are bulk and comprehensiveness with economy. Eighteen widely representative plays for a dollar. The texts, so far as is disclosed by a cursory examination, appear to be accurate and complete.

C. L. B.

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A PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION. By Ambrosius Czakò. With an Introduction by the Rev. Nathaniel Micklem, D.D., Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford. London. H. R. Allenson, Ltd. 1933. Pp. xi, 159. 5/- net.

If a philosophy of religion means an extended and systematic treatment of the intricate problems involved in an intellectual defence of a religious view of the world and human life, this book, despite its title, scarcely falls within these limits. Perhaps it is something more valuable or, at any rate, more calculated to impress the spirit of our age. "I have attended the University sermon for forty years," said Squire Bedell, "and I thank God that I am still a Christian." An over-readiness to defend may often cloak an unacknowledged vulnerability to attack. The most effective defence of Christianity is the continued vitality of such Christians as Dr. Czakò, concerning the depth of whose religious experience no reader of this book can remain in doubt. But Dr. Czakò does more than exemplify the spirit of that essential Christianity which underlies denominational differences. His early chapters are an exposition of the value of Christianity in meeting human needs, and especially in rendering meaningful that struggle against consciously recognized limitations which is the essence of developed human life. In Chapter V he addresses some remarks to atheists. But I fancy that to most readers Chapter IV, the longest in the book, will prove the most interesting and the most instructive. Here with admirable detachment and impartiality Dr. Czakò surveys the differences between Catholic and Protestant, both in matters of belief and in the practical religious life. As a Roman Catholic monk, some time ago received into the United Church of Canada, he is well fitted for a task which requires a very rare blend of sympathy and penetration. Protestants frequently entertain very far-fetched notions about what Catholics are actually required to believe. Dr. Czakò's "Comparative Study of Denominations" should do much to dispel ignorance on both sides. We are informed that the author's native tongue is Magyar, and that this is "his first philosophical essay in English." Considering

this, we must agree that the number of obscurities and departures from the English idiom is remarkably small. The writing is not very lively, but occasionally, as in the description of the psychological effects of the Mass in some "magnificent mediaeval Gothic cathedral" (p. 116), there is a slight stirring of enthusiasm: "The cathedral lures us back, and it may well be that through the cathedral itself we may revert to that which we have once rejected." Perhaps the highest wisdom remains with those simple inhabitants of the Cévennes who so repeatedly assured Robert Louis Stevenson that "It is a bad idea to change."

F. HILTON PAGE.

JOSH BILLINGS, YANKEE HUMORIST. By Cyril Clemens. With an Introduction by Rupert Hughes. International Mark Twain Society, Webster Groves, Missouri. 1932. pp.197. \$2.00.

The older readers of this *Review* will recall how the American humorist, Josh Billings, added to the gaiety of their young days; although, after his death in 1885, interest in his work declined, a distinct revival of the author and his books is now not surprising. Abraham Lincoln said that next to William Shakespeare, Josh Billings was the greatest judge of human nature the world had ever seen. Mr. Clemens, of the International Mark Twain Society, has just published a concise and very interesting account of Henry Wheeler Shaw—for that was his real name—to which Mr. Hughes contributes a suitable introduction.

Shaw was born in Massachusetts in 1790. His account of his ancestry is most amusing. He says:

Adam Billings was the first of the Billingses. He was named after the first man, and it was said by his friends he resembled his illustrious namesake in form and features. He was born, as near as I have been able to figure, about the year 1066. His temper was as even as the figure 2, and his habits as pure as the mountain dew. He went barefooted until his 32nd year, and is said to have been one of the best dancers in his entire neighborhood. He was very fond of the marvellous; indeed I have thought his great-great-grandson, your uncle Josh, inherited that particular trait from him in a very marked degree. I really don't believe the old man intended to lie; but, to put it mildly, he did at times handle the truth in a very careless and reckless manner. The reputation he left behind him was strictly low-middling. Great Grandpa Hezekiah Billings was a fiddler by birth and persuasion, but he never attained more than a third-rate reputation, even at that. . . It was often said of him that he was never known to shed a tear or pay an honest debt. . . Bildad Billings was a very close man; but he once gave \$3.00 to help build a meeting-house, and after that he took such a deep and abiding interest in religious affairs that the deacons had finally to give him back his money. He often swore he'd sue them for the interest; but, be it said to his honour, he never did. He finally died and was buried without much fuss or feathers. I could say more about him, but I can't do so without telling the truth.

Mr. Shaw got his rudimentary education from a country school marm, of whom he gives a characteristic picture, beginning with the remark that he had never known one to be over twenty-three years of age.

His college career was interrupted. By reason of some prank of which he was guilty, he was dismissed. Later in life he was making a speech in praise of his college, against which he had no hard feelings, and said that Hamilton College had turned out many distinguished men, and, after giving a long list of really distinguished men, he added "She turned me out also." He was, nevertheless, a good classical scholar; he quoted Greek and Latin readily from memory, and for a time he taught Latin.

After roving through many parts of the States, he returned east and became a real estate dealer and auctioneer. Of the latter calling he remarked that he never knew an auctioneer to lie unless it was "absolutely convenient." Then began his work in lecturing and writing. A lecture on Milk and an essay on the Mule were among his earlier literary efforts.

Mr. Clemens's book contains many of Billings's choicest sayings. We will be content to give a few extracts from a pretended letter from Mark Twain, written by Josh himself. Mark could not stand Josh's eccentric spelling, and in this letter upbraids him for it. Mark is made to say:

I cannot abide your spelling. It does seem to me that you spell worse every day. Sometimes your orthography makes me frantic. It is out of all reason that a man of seventy-five years of age should spell as you do. Why do you not attend a night school? You might get the hang of easy words.

I am sending you a primer by this mail which I know will help you, if you will study it hard. Even the very first word of your Annual is an atrocity: "Allminax" is no way to build that word. I can spell better than that with my left hand. An ignorance so shining and conspicuous as yours—Now I have it—go on a jury.

A man whose humor, drollery and clear-cut common sense win the admiration of Abraham Lincoln, Agnes Repplier, Irving Cobb and G. K. Chesterton comes to a new generation with no mean credentials.

J. A. C.