

the military novice. It is also of interest to note that the prevalence of malingering tended to be greatly exaggerated in the first two years of the war. It is now pretty well agreed that any serious attempt to malingering is in itself the sign of a psychopathic condition. The normal adult is too critical of intellectual processes to try to go back to the tricks of his school days. Neuropsychiatry and the War is bound to be welcomed in army medical circles if only on account of its convenient condensation; the average army doctor is kept far too busy to have much time left for any extensive reading. Supplements to the volume, of which the first has just appeared, will keep its material up to date.

THE KINGDOM OF THE CHILD. By Alice M. H. Heniger. Dutton; \$1.50.

Mrs. Heniger has done more than anyone to develop the "Children's Theater" and persuade teachers and parents of the importance of giving young children an opportunity to express themselves in drama. In this fresh and persuasive little book she works out at some length the educational theory that is behind her enterprise. Child life, she shows, is intensely and universally dramatic. Make-believe is the world children live in. But this pretense cannot be confined to the imagination: It needs definite expression, definite dramatization. Children can use almost any symbols, but there must be symbols. That is why the acting out of stories appeals to practically all children, dull and bright. Mrs. Heniger shows suggestively that much juvenile crime is nothing more than inappropriate dramatization—acting, in other words—done in places or with symbolic tools that adults find inconvenient. If dirt is merely matter in the wrong place, then juvenile offenses are usually merely drama in the wrong place. The problem of home and school becomes, then, how to use this dramatic instinct of the child so as to turn it towards interests and activities that will be important and useful for later life. The kindergarten, built up on a theory of metaphysics rather than of dramatics, has failed on the whole to supply the educational need it pretended. The schools are learning that much more vivid impersonation is required really to awaken the children's imaginations. Few are the schools nowadays that do not approach the rudiments through the pathway of play: stories are acted before they are read, and even arithmetic proves susceptible to the dramatic instinct. In this book Mrs. Heniger says little that is new, but what she says is too important not to bear repetition.

THE LAUGHING GIRL. By Robert W. Chambers. Appleton; \$1.50.

In his newest novel—newest at least for the moment—Mr. Chambers gives a clever imitation of the novelization of a musical comedy plot written

by a college senior whose specialties are Anthony Hope and Richard Harding Davis. This may not be intentional. There is always the theory that Mr. Chambers is widely and determinedly cultural in his presentation of people whose beauty is surpassed only by the number of gifts and graces they have developed, in the hope that the great American public may profit by the examples of these supermen. But whether the prolific creator of glorious beings means to be absurd or helpful, or both in a tangled sort of way, his latest volume is such a mixture of melodramatic burlesque and silly intrigue as to be a disappointment to his most devoted worshippers. An incredible nightmare of a story this is, with a rendezvous of some of the crowned heads of southern Europe in a Swiss chalet, where duchesses serve as maids and fall in love with cultured Americans. It is evidently satiric in intention, and it becomes cloyingly sentimental and heavily parodic by turns in result. But the American public continues to indulge itself in these stirabouts of grotesque shadows of things—the direct descendants of the Bertha M. Clay style of literature.

FREE AND OTHER STORIES. By Theodore Dreiser. Boni & Liveright; \$1.50.

Mr. Theodore Dreiser may always be depended upon to show his readers what an essentially commonplace and fatuous thing life is. His novels—from the really exceptional *Sister Carrie* to that ponderous commentary on Weininger's *Sex and Character*, *The "Genius"*—abound in situation and auctorial asides on the extreme, irremediable banality of man in conflict with himself, his fellows, and with the universe. This attitude, which is the logical conclusion of the realist (or perhaps one should say the naturalist) philosophy in literature, sits upon Mr. Dreiser's bowed shoulders like the mantle of a prophet; and this prophet delights to utter his mournful, harpy-like lamentations at the impoverished banquet of existence in a tone whose skepticism is a little too like self-impotence always to convince. In the present volume he deserts the novel for the short story, but he still wears the mantle and executes the familiar gestures of realism. These eleven tales are not only so many Zolaesque slices of life of the most drab content, but in structure and style they are deplorably inadequate. Quite aside from the author's frequent perversions of good English—especially his irritating habit of splitting infinitives—the development of practically every story in this book obeys the prescriptions not of art but of journalism. A police-court reporter with a modicum of culture and literary aspirations could do no worse. And even Mr. Dreiser, whose claims to literary ability have received the confirmation of more than one genuine achievement, could scarcely do worse.

The fact is that Mr. Dreiser, in this book, has committed the ultimate blunder: in his worship of

the trivial he has taken up the position of supposing that the mere "presentation" of the insignificant is enough to render a story "vital." Accordingly he insists upon eliminating from his situations and characters every hint of those incalculable factors which lend dramatic power to the lives of even the sorriest peasant and charwoman. It is not, be it understood, that Mr. Dreiser lacks feeling for real character and psychology—Jennie Gerhardt proves the contrary—it is just that in these rather colorless tales he has failed in responsibility to himself and to his artistic ideals. With the exception of *The Lost Phoebe*, a really charming study in the pathos (and pathology) of old age, and in the sketch of a village Bovary, *The Second Choice*, the sensitive reader would find it difficult to distinguish between these awkwardly written footnotes to a thesis and, say, the "sobstuff" of some exceptionally clever journalist. As an example of what real genius might have done with such material as this book contains read the Dubliners of James Joyce. Any reference to Tchekhov or Garshin or Galsworthy would perhaps be spreading it on too thick. *Free and Other Stories* is a book Mr. Dreiser will have to live down. It mars his reputation as an exact, patient student of the prosaic, offends by its unpardonable uncouthness of style, and seems conclusive evidence that its author will never master the difficult, heart-breaking technique of the short story. Yet, in the two exceptions above mentioned, there is indisputably a spark of promise for Mr. Dreiser in this field. Now if he will just fan this spark into a flame for us . . .

WE OTHERS. By Henri Barbusse. E. P. Dutton; \$1.50.

The danger in following up a writer who suddenly publishes a popular masterpiece lies in finding that he has not always been writing masterpieces. The present run on Barbusse is drawing out material that makes the fact of *Under Fire* all the more bewildering. How did a writer of such doubtful talent produce so amazing a book? It must indeed have been the war, and Barbusse one of the few writers whom the Great War did directly inspire and endow with his own best powers. The doubtfulness of his previous talent is well documented in this collection of short "stories of fate, love, and pity," as they are described. These stories are the merest feuilletons, such as the Parisian reads of a morning in his cheaper newspaper on the tram or suburban train. Many of them deal with the more improbable forms of murder and sudden death, and they all have a decisively hollow and unnatural ring. The ingenuity of Barbusse in imagining the ghoulish explains perhaps why he could make a masterpiece out of war. For here was a wide and thoroughly congenial frame which would absorb horror to the limit of one's inventive capacity. And

through the horror he seems to have attained a humanity and truth which his earlier work certainly does not show. His unconvincingness in these stories is helped by his use of that strained and bizarre style which the second-rate French writer of today so loves to affect.

Books of the Fortnight

The following list comprises THE DIAL's selection of books recommended among the publications received during the last two weeks:

- The People's Part in Peace.* By Ordway Tead. 12mo, 156 pages. Henry Holt & Co. \$1.10.
- The New State: Group Organization the Solution of Popular Government.* By M. P. Follett. 12mo, 373 pages. Longmans, Green & Co. \$3.
- History of the Jews in Russia and Poland: From the Earliest Times Until the Present Day.* By S. M. Dubnow. Translated by I. Friedlaender. Vol. II: From the Death of Alexander I. until the Death of Alexander III. (1825-1894.) 12mo, 429 pages. Jewish Publication Society (Philadelphia).
- The Dawn of the French Renaissance.* By Arthur Tilley. 8vo, 636 pages. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$8.25.
- Cities and Sea-Coasts and Islands.* By Arthur Symons. 12mo, 353 pages. Brentano's. \$3.
- The Day's Burden: Studies, Literary and Political, and Miscellaneous Essays.* By Thomas M. Kettle. 12mo, 218 pages. \$2.
- A Writer's Recollections.* By Mrs. Humphry Ward. Illustrated, 12mo, 500 pages. Harper & Bros. 2 vols. \$6.
- George Meredith: A Study of His Works and Personality.* By J. H. E. Crees. 12mo, 238 pages. Longmans, Green & Co. \$2.
- Four Years in the White North.* By Donald B. MacMillan. Illustrated, 8vo, 426 pages. Harper & Bros. \$4.
- Edgewater People.* Tales. By Mary E. Wilkins Freeman. Illustrated. 12mo, 315 pages. Harper & Bros. \$1.35.
- Corn from Olde Fieldes: An Anthology of English Poems from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century.* By Eleanor M. Brougham. 12mo, 298 pages. John Lane Co. \$1.50.
- Lanterns in Gethsemane.* Verse. By Willard Wattles. 12mo, 152 pages. E. P. Dutton & Co. \$1.50.
- The Village Wife's Lament.* Verse. By Maurice Hewlett. 12mo, 72 pages. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$1.25.
- A Family Album.* Verse. By Alter Brody. With an introduction by Louis Untermeyer. 12mo, 132 pages. B. W. Huebsch. \$1.25.
- Growing Pains.* Verse. By Jean Starr Untermeyer. 8vo, 64 pages. B. W. Huebsch. \$1.