

BOOK REVIEWS

New Story of Francois Villon

By RAYMOND GIRARDIN
Francois Villon, By D. B. Wyndham Lewis, Coward McCann and Edwin V. Mitchell.

It strikes me this book is significant for three things: the cleverness, beauty and understanding of the actual writing, the author's insistence that the plight of this poet, murderer and thief, Francois Villon, was due in part to treatment at the hands of Katherine Vasselles, and the comprehensiveness of the work—the most exhaustive I have seen of Villon.

It is only here is material in the life and writings of this Fifteenth Century poet of the Paris streets for a wonderful story. His guardian, Guillaume de Villon, a priest who took him from his poverty-stricken parents and saw to his education through the University, saved him from the gallows twice and perhaps three times, in so doing, this kindly father made possible some of the finest poetry in the world's history. According to his own mores, Villon was a rascal. Most crimes on the books are attributed to him. He was a wild, gaunt vagabond, living in crime and misery and possessing the soul of a god. His biographers, however, until the advent of Mr. Lewis, have been a dull lot, with very little of interest to offer. Robert Louis Stevenson, who made a serious attempt to write of interesting Villon in his "Studies of Men and Books," so completely missed understanding the fellow that the work, to me, has always been a horrible thing. Others have set down his life and the criticisms of his poetry with a dry pedantry that stifies.

But Mr. Lewis seems to know the heart of this poet, thief, murderer. He knows Paris at the time Villon roamed its streets, ducking into doorways as a Watch approached, carousing at the house of Fat Margot, setting off with other rascals to rob, getting into dungeons awaiting a trip to the gibbet which claimed the lives of his friends, or being subjected by cruel jailers to the Question Ordeal.

Mr. Lewis knows the heart of Villon at the time he was a student at the University, wearing a black hood and walking with hump in his back, waiting until the good

upon inspection. Mr. Lewis seems to have lost his nerve.

The author stresses to so great an extent Villon's "devotion of an entire week to the study of a broken man, tortured by the thought of Katherine Vasselles, of his mother, of his treatment at the hands of authorities and of the hopes of his youth which collapsed."

The book includes his best poems in the original, and in translation, both in their poetic form when such translations are available, and in prose. Although Mr. Lewis attempts to "give all" in such levels as the "Ballade of Slanderous Tongues," and the lines to Fat Margot, he presents their translations in a somewhat apologetic manner. He seems to say "These lines are good, but one else has the guts to reprint them. I have. Now don't be offended. Here they are, but they are not 'here,' it develops

About Thornton Wilder

By DOROTHY E. WILLIAMS
The Angel that Frothed the Waters, by Thornton Wilder, Coward McCann, New York.

The author of The Bridge on San Luis Rey and The Cabala has given us a sort of biography of himself in a book of plays. He has called this set of dramatized notes "three minute plays." The first of these was written in 1916 in such level as the "Ballade of Slanderous Tongues," and the lines to Fat Margot, he presents their translations in a somewhat apologetic manner. He seems to say "These lines are good, but one else has the guts to reprint them. I have. Now don't be offended. Here they are, but they are not 'here,' it develops

chronological order. From the "Angel that Frothed the Waters" to the title number, "The Angel That Frothed the Waters" there is an underlying tale of the life of the author.

It is a young artist who writes "only tears can give sight to the eyes," but it is a man who writes "the very best of ourselves cannot persuade the wretched and blundering children on their wretched brief spools. There is always that suggestion of symbolism that characterized his work which held the audience, of his 'Trumpet Shall Sound.'"

Thornton Wilder already has a place in literature attained by few for the things that he has written. He is most speculative as to his future I recommend these plays. They are most worthy of Wilder.

OUTSTANDING BOOKS OF YEAR NOW AVAILABLE AT BALDWIN

With the advent of 1929 comes a list of the outstanding books of the past year. A selection of these which may be obtained at the Baldwin Public Library is as follows:

Beard, Charles A., ed. Whither Mankind; A Panorama of Modern Civilization. Logmans, Green & Co.—Some of the foremost writers and thinkers of the day attempt to weigh dispassionately the good and lesser of modern life in comparison with conditions under older civilizations.

Beebe, William, Beneath Tropical Seas. G. P. Putnam's Sons.—"Through William Beebe's sensitive perceptions and reactions, the story of the Hawaiian expedition becomes more than scientific history. It becomes also writing of the most attractive and fascinating travelogue and adventure into the deep-sea world."

Benet, Stephen Vincent. John Brown's Body. Doubleday, Doran & Co.—A narrative poem of the Civil War of extraordinary power. His story is moving, dramatic and profound, its execution brilliant and beautiful."

Beveridge, Albert J. Abraham Lincoln. Houghton, Mifflin Co.—The story of the preparatory phases of Lincoln's greatness, with his eloquence and dramatic force, which Senator Beveridge was made.

Bradford, Gamaliel. Life and I: An Autobiography of Humanity. Houghton, Mifflin Co.—The celebrated biographer comes upon those experience in life which are common to us all.

Bry, Richard E. Skyward. G. P. Putnam's Sons.—A story of aviation and of the author's famous trans-Atlantic and North Polar flights. Also outlines the story of the Antarctic expedition upon which he has now embarked.

De Kruij, Paul. Hunger Fighters. Harcourt, Brace & Co.—Written in the same picturesque style which characterized "Microbe Hunters." Stories of men who have toiled to protect our food supply from disease and disaster.

Frank, Harry A. The Fringe of the Moslem World. The Century Co.—"Being the tale of a random journey by land from Cairo to Constantinople with enough of present conditions to suggest the growingly antagonistic attitude of the followers of Mohammed toward those who profess Christianity." Sub-title.

Frost, Robert. West-running Brook. Houghton, Mifflin Co.—A collection of his best poems with the grace and style and ripe thought which have characterized his work in recent years.

Gilbreth, Lillian M. Living With Our Children. W. W. Norton & Co.—Mrs. Gilbreth has successfully applied in her family life the methods of planning and management which she and her husband were associated in the industrial world. Full of helpful suggestions and observations.

Greenfield, Wilfred T. Labrador Looks at the Orient. Houghton, Mifflin Co.—The famous "all-around doctor's" log of a happy-go-lucky twelve months trip around the world.

Hendrick Burton J. The Training of an American: Letters of an American to His Son. Houghton, Mifflin Co.—The story of Page's early life and education. Of his literary career and his contacts with the most distinguished men of letters, has all the charm of his later account

of events at the Court of St. James during the war.

Ledger, Sir Harry. Roamin' in the Gloamin'. J. B. Lippincott Co.—Anecdotes of his early struggles and later triumphs, including that peculiar brand of humor for which he is famous.

Ludwig, Emil. Goethe: The History of a Man. G. P. Putnam's Sons.—A dramatic and comprehensive picture of Goethe's career and personality. Letters, diaries, and quotations from his published works are woven into the narrative with great skill.

Mauvois, Diersell. A Picture of the Victorian Age. D. Appleton & Co.—A biographical study characterized by the imaginative power, quick intuition and charm of manner which were so much admired in the author's earlier books.

Merz, Charles. The Great American Band Wagon: A Study of Exaggerations. The John Day Co.—"An accurate chronicle of contemporary standardized American life, as true as it is amusing."

Millay, Edna St. Vincent. Buck in the Snow. Harper & Bros.—Some of these poems have all the charm and simplicity of the author's earlier work, while others show her in a new mood.

Mussolini, Benito. My Autobiography. Charles Scribner's Sons.—Besides recounting the thrilling experiences of his many-sided career and throwing a new light on diplomatic events in European history which were the victims rope before and since the World War, the autobiography reveals an original and stimulating philosophy of life and bears throughout the imprint of a powerful personality.

O'Neill, Eugene. Strange Interlude. Boni & Liveright.—In this play, now being presented by the Theatre Guild in New York, the author has attempted to show what the characters are thinking while they are speaking and writing, and has thus introduced an interesting innovation in dramatic technique.

Oversleet, H. A. Book About Ourselves. W. W. Norton & Co.—A popular presentation of "Behaviorism" to show how an understanding of our mental and emotional natures may give us a mastery over them.

Shaw, George Bernard. The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism. Brentano's.—A brilliant, witty and provocative summary of Shaw's gospel for national and racial living, which he calls his "last will and testament to humanity."

Strachey, Lytton. Elizabeth and Essex. A Tragic History. Harcourt, Brace & Co.—Excellent drawn portraits of the Virgin Queen, the unfortunate Essex and other famous personages of her court.

Thomas, Lowell. Raiders of the Desert. Doubleday, Doran & Co.—The experiences of the German submarine crews and the Allied sailors who were the victims of the U-boats.

make a breathlessly exciting narrative."

Novels

Bojer, Johan. The New Temple. The Century Co.—A sequel to "The Great Hunger."

Brown, Katharine Holland. The Father. The John Day Co.—A romantic story of life just before the Civil War in which Lincoln appears as a friend and neighbor of the principal characters.

Byrne, Donn. Destiny Bay. Little, Brown & Co.—Tells of Irish gentleness who uphold the traditions of their proud race.

Chapman, Maristhan. The Happy Mountain. Viking Press.—A story of the Cumberland Mountaineers of unusual vigor and charm.

Daeping, Warwick. Old Flybush. Alfred A. Knopf.—An engaging story of a venerable old man.

Galsworthy, John. Swan Song. Charles Scribner's Sons.—The closing chapters of the Forsyte Saga.

Gibbs, Philip. The Age of Reason. Doubleday, Doran & Co.—Depicts the disastrous marriage between an able biologist and a young, somewhat old-fashioned girl.

Lewisohn, Ludwig. The Island Within. Harper & Brothers.—A novel of frustration and defeat, strikingly dramatic in human.

McCoy, William. Pilgrims of Adversity. Doubleday, Doran & Co.—A colorful background to this story of sea faring men.

Parrish, Anne. All Kneeling. Harper & Bros.—The deftly drawn portrait of a woman who not only subjugates others by her charm, but is self-deluded.

Salten, Felix. Bambi: A Life in the Woods. Simon & Schuster.—A fascinating and unique animal story of exceptional charm and beauty.

Udsett, Sigrid. The Axe. Alfred A. Knopf.—A tale of two lovers in Medieval Norway.

Van Dine, E. S. The Greene Murder Case. Chase Scribner's Sons.—A baffling murder mystery solved by Philo Vance.

Walpole, Hugh. Wintersmores. Doubleday, Doran & Co.—A romance of present-day English society.

Wharton, Edith. The Children. D. Appleton & Co.—An indictment of loose standards of modern society in regard to marriage and divorce.

Wilder, Thornton. The Bridge of San Luis Rey. Albert & Charles Boni.—Distinguished for the beauty of its style and its deep insight into human nature.

Young, Francis Brett. My Brother Jonathan. Alfred A. Knopf.—The contract of two brothers of different character and temperament.




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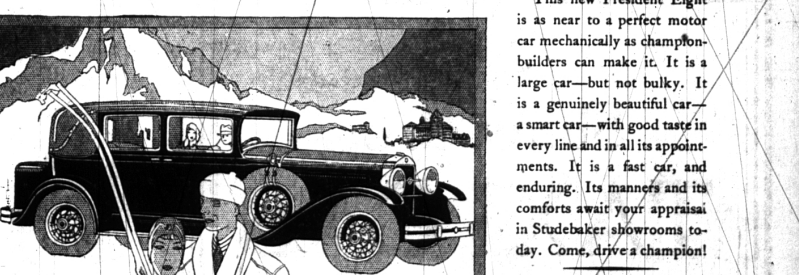
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