

Books for Convalescence*

IN the mad month of March everyone is either sick or recovering from sickness; if one's bed or armchair be near a window, one looks out and marvels at the vigour of men and women who are actually walking. And although the ways have been unspeakably foul with slush, to my flu-filled mind these cloaked and rubber-shod folk seem like the blessed angels moving in the meadows of Paradise. But as one is cabined, cribbed, confined, one turns to books for solace. Stevenson and Dumas are the best writers in the world for sick people; once I was cured of tonsillitis by reading "Treasure Island," and now I find relief in following again the fortunes of the incomparable d'Artagnan—what a man! Young Blackall, '18, told me that Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" cured him of the jaundice—lifted him right out of the hospital, in fact. Well, there is no limit to the power of books—in sickness or in health, in the day or in the night, my body is never more than a few inches away from some book.

A PLACE IN THE WORLD. By John H. Turner. New York: Scribners.

This is the second novel by the author of "Simple Souls," and is, as might be expected, full of originality, wit, and charm. A Russian bohemian beauty and an old Anglo-Saxon clergyman afford a delightful contrast. And after the caricatures of God's servants that we find in so many modern novels, it is refreshing to make the acquaintance of this witty and wise old boy, who really seems to think that St. Paul meant something by his remarks on charity.

LIFE OF MRS. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. By Mrs. Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez. New York: Scribners.

I confess this biography has given me an altogether new conception of the character of Stevenson's wife. Many admirers of Stevenson used to wonder, but they will wonder no more after reading these pages. The entire story of the life of an extraordinary woman is faithfully presented; and the days in Samoa made particularly vivid. It is inspiring to read of the courage and energy of Mrs. Stevenson—to see how splendidly fitted she was to be his mate. The world owes much to her.

THE TEMPERING. By Howard Buck.

FORGOTTEN SHRINES. By John Farrar. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Under the general editorship of my colleague, Charlton Lewis—who is himself a true poet—the University Press is publishing a series of small volumes of original poems written by young men of promise. These two books appropriately lead off and make additional evidence to prove the fact of the renaissance of poetry at Yale. The Campus is alive with poets. It is my hope that these two volumes will some day be of high value to book-collectors.

A QUAKER SINGER'S RECOLLECTIONS. By David Bispham. New York: Macmillan.

It is a strange fact, that whereas during the last fifty years America has given to the world so many stunning sopranos—perhaps more than any other country has contributed—we cannot produce male singers. We have plenty of second- and third-rate tenors and basses, but David Bispham is almost alone in the world's front rank, carrying our colours. This is an absorbingly interesting autobiography, both because the man himself is so interesting, and because so many figures of international fame are familiarly introduced to the reader. The book is filled with sparkling anecdotes, and is an enlivening record of a great career.

THE CRESCENT MOON. By Francis Brett Young. New York: Dutton.

When Mr. Walpole lectured at Yale last week he gave this young Englishman high praise for the quality of his literary style. And indeed this strange novel of Africa is

admirably written, written with real distinction in a manner that frequently calls to mind Joseph Conrad. Furthermore it is a thrilling story. Its chief blemish is astronomical. Most novelists treat the moon with singular independence, quite untrammelled by scientific limitations; but one wearies of the crescent moon in this book; it is always "rising," and climbing up the sky. Our novelist should either stick to the earth or consult an almanack.

MORE CHAPTERS OF OPERA. By H. E. Krehbiel. New York: Henry Holt and Co.

Here is a valuable and stimulating book by the Dean of American Musical Critics. It is valuable because of the immense amount of information—precise and tabulated—that it gives concerning the recent history of opera in America; it is stimulating because of the writer's vigour and enthusiasm. Let every one remember that since the year 1890 the Metropolitan Opera House has had the finest collection of singers on earth; and that since 1914 New York has been the musical capital of the world. Music has ceased to be a minor subject in America.

LAW AND THE FAMILY. By Robert Grant. New York: Scribners.

Judge Grant is a professional Probate Judge, a novelist, an essayist, a good citizen and a man of the world. In this volume he discusses, with a combination of learning and literary charm, such subjects as Marriage and Divorce, the making and breaking of Wills, the place of Woman in modern society, and other vital and contemporary questions. His long experience, backed by a real sympathy for humanity that his wit quite fails to conceal, makes this book interesting to lawyer and layman alike.

THE RUSSIAN THEATRE UNDER THE REVOLUTION. By Oliver M. Saylor. Boston: Little, Brown and Co.

This is one of the most interesting books I have read about modern Russia and I have read a great many. It gives the personal experiences of an inquisitive young American, who, during the most violent year of the Revolution, went to the theatre nearly every night. Nothing is said here to indicate any political bias; the whole book is a candid account of plays, operas, and ballets, at Petrograd and Moscow, showing how seriously the Russian takes the art of the theatre.

THE YOUNG MAN AND TEACHING. By Henry Parks Wright. New York: Macmillan.

The author's name will come as a sharp surprise to most Yale alumni, as we did not know that our beloved Dean had left any work in manuscript. This is one of a series of books dealing with the various professions open to young Americans; the intention being to help toward an intelligent choice. The series is under the general editorship of Professor Sneath, and the standard is high, each book coming from a master. The Law is treated by Governor Simeon Baldwin, the Ministry by Dean Brown, Public Service by President Taft. To read this admirable and Doric volume on Teaching—an expression of the whole life and character of its author—is to visit again the old office of Dean Wright, where so many of us—some voluntarily, some involuntarily—sought his advice. We see again his noble face and hear his quiet, sympathetic voice.

WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

Henry S. Canby, '99 S., Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English in the Sheffield Scientific School and Adviser in Literary Composition, has received a year's leave of absence from the University to become editor-in-chief of a new book review to be published by the New York *Evening Post*. Professor Canby is accepting this position in order to start and get under way a literary and critical review of recent literary works to replace the "Book Review," which is the present weekly magazine of the *Evening Post*. He will leave July 1. Professor Canby graduated in 1899, receiving his doctor's degree in 1905.

* This is the fourth in the series of occasional remarks on books that are worth reading.