

# AMONG THE BOOKS

## G. K. Chesterton's Philosophic Detective

It makes very little difference whether it is "The Innocence of Father Brown" or, as in the present case, the "Wisdom of that rolypoly gentleman. Both books (John Lane, New York) present the sharpest novelty in short stories that the English bookshelves have seen in many years.

The novelty is not in the plots or the crimes or the mildly wondering excitement of the characters, though all these are novel enough. The notable thing about the detective work of the little Catholic priest is G. K. Chesterton and his point of view on life. If you have a falling for catholic mysticism, you sit at his feet. If you haven't, you sit—as he might express it—at his head, and have a very good time watching the wheels go round.

The outstanding fact of "G. K. C. ism" in "The Wisdom of Father Brown" is that all these detective stories are stories of propaganda as well. Sometimes the moral is the fact that the criminal is an atheist. Sometimes it is merely a matter of a Catholic priest defeating a man of adhesion. And all the time intuition is tripping over deduction as a method of detection, and Mr. Chesterton is writing in his own very personal way about the truth of things and the strength of inference, and how words look like cold steel and other things that happen to strike him in just that mystic way.

But whatever he may be doing, you get a final impression of a certain sort of way of looking at the world. Even in a book written for entertainment, he is a philosopher and indirectly a propagandist. And that is because a man of such definite notions as Mr. Chesterton can't help getting his amusement just where he gets his inspiration. It isn't any the less entertaining for that.

## Germany's War Mania

"Germany's War Mania" (Dodd, Mead & Co.) should prove particularly soiling to its British readers. It is a compilation to prove that Teutonic greed, both commercial and political, is a desire to rule the world's markets of trade and to establish a world empire, and the intolerable insistence that German kultur must be the world-standard, are the real causes of the war that is now shaking Europe.

With a brief introduction, employing the war pamphlet by the Hon. Viscount Bryce, the book is a collection of speeches and writings by leading Germans, including the Kaiser's, which reveal the German war spirit. These speeches and writings unquestionably show that the Teuton has long sought his place in the sun and that he would use all manner of force to gain and hold it. Writings are cited from the Kaiser, the Crown Prince, Doctor von Bethmann-Hollweg, Prince Bernhard von Saxe-Coburg, General von Bernhardi, Baron von Goltz, General Carl von Clausewitz, Prof. Heinrich von Treitschke and Prof. Hans Delbrück.

## How to Enjoy Pictures

Mrs. Henry Head's book, "How to Enjoy Pictures" (Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York) is written for children, and will be found very entertaining for grown-ups. It should help decide the question whether the child's taste shall degenerate into the average acceptance of pictures as unimportant playthings or whether he shall be encouraged to appreciate for himself the best in art.

The book is beautifully illustrated. There are 34 colored plates of famous pictures that arouse interest at once. Italy and her painters, early Flemish painters, Jan Van Eyck and Hans Memling; the German, Albrecht Durer and Holbein; later Flemish artists, Rubens and Van Dyck; Dutch, Frans Hals, Rembrandt and Peter de Hooch; Spanish, El Greco, Velasquez and Goya; French, Clouet, Watteau and Chardin, and the English school from Hogarth to Morland, including a little group of late Italian painters, are all covered in a manner that is a joy for even the connoisseur.

The reader is led through many ages of painters, with many varying styles, all so attractively treated that the book is read with only with regret. The reader is taught never to forget to love beauty and to train himself with all diligence to appreciate them. The reward will be great if the reader assimilate all the author's ideas.

And there shall be for thee all edict delight  
A little torch and a casement open at night  
To let the warm love in!

## The World War

"The World War," by Elbert Francis Baldwin (MacMillan, New York), purports to be an analysis of the great war—"how it looks to the nations involved and what it means to us." Although, in a certain, superficial sense, the book accomplishes what it aims to accomplish—to be absolutely just and impartial in statement and conclusion—it is by no means satisfactory, from the point of view of a deeper analysis of the social and economic forces which have brought about the conflict. One need not be very much on guard against oneself to be fair and impartial in the analysis of the events and diplomatic negotiations immediately preceding the declaration of hostilities. It is quite a different matter to be "impartial" when it is the desire of an author to enter into a closer discussion of the responsibility of each of the nations involved.

The book sets forth in a very clear manner the positions of the respective powers: of Austria, Russia, Germany, France, Luxemburg and Belgium, Holland, England, the English and the German seas, Rumania and Italy, Turkey and America. We find here a clear and concise statement of the particular political axe which each of the belligerent nations has to grind, as well as a considerable acquaintance with political and diplomatic affairs in Europe. But we do not find what is unquestionably more important—the economic factors behind the particular diplomatic axe which each of the Powers was compelled, by the force of circumstances, to grind. When it comes to analyzing this phase of the situation the author of less book shows a distinct superficiality. He seems to place the blame for the struggle on the avarice and ambitions of individuals, rather than upon irresistible and inexorable forces of social and economic development. One can be altogether impartial in the analysis of these forces, for only in such analysis will the thinker find satisfaction and a positive reply to the vast mass of argument and disagreements which have caused so much ink and paper to be spent.

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## A Sonnet Sequence

Ever since George Meredith wrote his incomparable sonnet sequence "Modern Love," poets with discipline strong enough for them to master the sonnet form, and emotion deep enough to make a sequence possible, have offered their work against that "incomparable." Not many have been published; not many were as deserving of publication as the "Sonnets of a Portrait Painter" by Arthur Davidson Ficke, which Mitchell Kennerly has just brought out.

Mr. Ficke attempts in the strict form of the Shakespearean sonnet to do what Mr. John Hall Wheelock did with such extraordinary success in the inchoate shoutings and in the freely metrical outbursts of his "Human Fantasy." That he suggests the outlines of a story, bizarre at times, and tragic, and at the same time he develops an astounding variety of moods, Mr. Ficke's qualities are not difficult of definition. He has an evocative phrase, and a clear imagination; he has charms of expression and depth of feeling. Yet of the 37 sonnets which compose the little book, very few are perfect. One can mention the 13th, 15th, 16th and 21st. The author's fondness for the sonnet rhyme is unfortunate; so is his attempt at the commonplace, which succeeds, finally, in being like Sir Herbert Beecham's "Hamlet," "funny without being vulgar." Yet Mr. Ficke deserves much better than this, from his publisher's announcement: "Delicacy, charm and fitness mark Mr. Ficke's work, but it has vigor and vitality as well." Mr. Ficke is precisely one of those who the only substratum upon which delicacy and charm can be wrought. The "but" protests too much.

Interpreting Party Government in U. S.

In "Party Government in the United States," by William Milligan Sloane (Harper Brothers, New York), the author, who is Seth Low professor of history at Columbia University, displays a rare and unusually calm manner of thought. In this book he sets forth, from the conservative point of view, the trend of political thought and development in this country. The work, for the most part, is purely theoretical, conservatively theoretical. In a certain sense the method of analysis used by Professor Sloane reminds one very much of the abstract method of thinking which was characteristic of the French materialists of the eighteenth century, when they endeavored to create a "perfect system of social legislation" upon the abstract and vague principle of the "brotherhood of man." Professor Sloane seems to be using the same method of thought, only applied to conservative ends—ends which do not represent a great transformation, a tremendous social upheaval, but the perpetuation of the status quo.

The book contains a fund of valuable information which the student as well as the general reader will find of great value. The conservative interpretation of what the Government of the United States really is and how it came to be formed is found here in its purest form, free of all cheap and superficial attempts to laugh the radicals of the arena of discussion. All those who are interested in the questions of government, past and present, will be amply repaid by reading this book.

The book is a history of American politics and an exposition of party political tendencies in practice. The tariff and slavery questions, the Monroe doctrine, rotation in office, the veto, party conventions, party machinery, platforms, civil service reform, the silver question, the growing power of the executive, state paternalism—are treated fully, with all their causes and effects—as the author sees them.

Parties and Congress, the formation of the Electoral College, the committee system, etc., follow next; then parties and the judiciary; parties and city government and parties and public defense. The trend of the United States Govern-

ment from the Revolution is traced down to the present Mexican trouble. A theoretical work mostly, but a valuable one. Theories and theoreticians help to bring romance into the processes of the intellect. And whether it be revolutionary romance or the conservative romance, it stimulates thought and contributes greatly toward the final solution of the questions of government involving the establishment of the exact extent of social responsibility on one side and individual liberty on the other.

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From a Letter to the Publishers.

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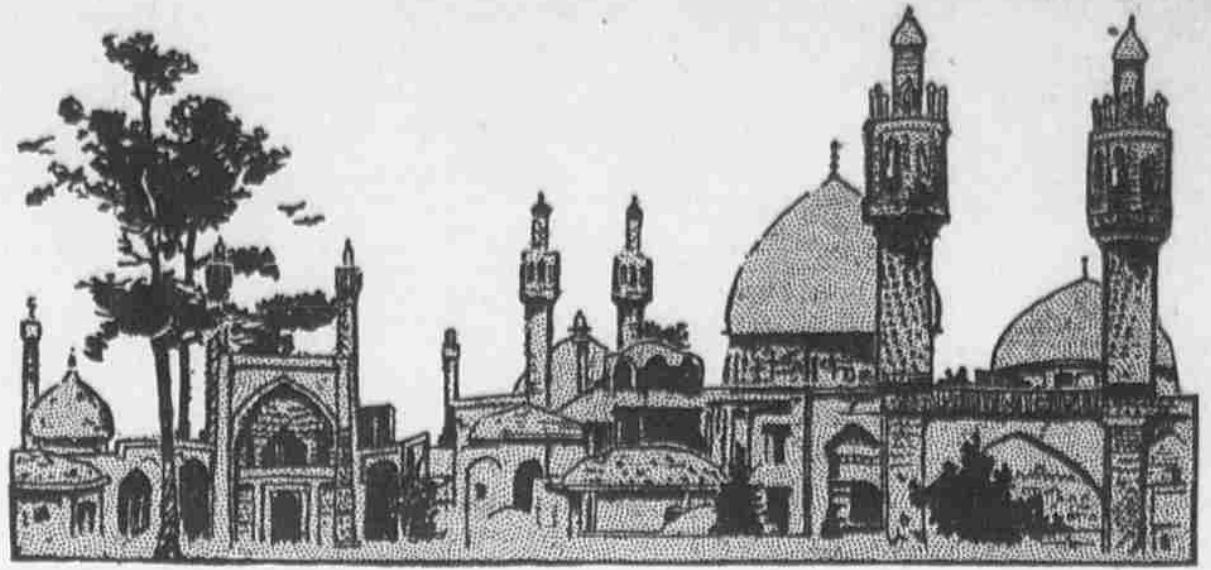
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