

Book Review

By Arden X. Pangborn
ART OF THE NIGHT, by George Jean Nathan. New York: Knopf.

The super-critical Mr. Nathan has offered his super-critical best in "Art of the Night," a group of essays on the stage, dealing with subjects ranging from the laughter of the actor, which is as realistic as that of a horse, to the peculiar genius of Mr. Reinhardt, who prostes his greatness by eating sausages for newspaper publicity.

Although many readers of Mr. Mencken and Mr. Nathan—for Mencken cannot be left out where Nathan is concerned—do not agree with their views, there are few who will not admit that the two have a discerning vision and a style that is striking. The subject matter of "Art of the Night" is a trifle less controversial than that usually dwelt upon by Nathan and the style is a trifle less spleenetic than usual; consequently, the wit contains more of real humor. "Art of the Night" does not necessarily limit its appeal to ardent playgoers; it is of interest to any cultured reader.

THE CURSE OF TARNIFFS by Edward von Keyserling. New York: Macaulay.

An air of rather decadent sophistication marks the "The Curse of the Tarniffs" by Edward von Keyserling, which has just been released by Macaulay.

The story which bears the book title is by far the best of the three stories included in the volume. It relates the amours of Gunther von Tarniff with admirable restraint and a surprising use of colors in the depiction of the three women whose hearts he breaks. His wife is delicately portrayed with white and cream tints, his peasant sweet heart in vivid reds and browns and his mistress, a beautiful singer, in blues and golds. Their relationships with each other are well pictured.

"My Love Affair," the second story of the volume, is less convincing than the first and much less simply revealed. It becomes a boring triviality after a short time. The third tale, "Father and Son" is really a well-drawn character sketch and less of a narration than either of the other two stories. The adolescence of the boy is convincing and not over-emphasized.

THE IMPERIAL ORGY, by Edgar Satus. New York: Modern Library.

The burning pen of Edgar Satus was aimed in 1926 at the Russian czars, whose long and almost unimpeded reign of horror and despotism has just recently—as history is calculated—wakened and toppled to earth with a crash that was heard throughout the world. The Modern Library has republished the volume which was the result of Satus' scathing attacks, "The Imperial Orgy."

Satus ruthlessly jerked the masks from the faces of those rulers whom modern historians, having been deadened by time to the terror and repulsion of human slaughter, have come to picture as great—Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Catherine the Great and the smaller "great" ones who fitted in between, strewing the land with their own poisoned despotism and their own subjects' heads.

Satus, of course, tells only one side of the story; but it is a side that needs to be told and one that is seldom more than casually mentioned. "The Imperial Orgy" is a worthy addition to the mounting list of volumes between the limp bindings bearing the Modern Library Colophon.

THE TICK OF THE CLOCK, by Herbert Asbury. New York: Macy-Masius.

The bloodthirsty Mr. Asbury has at last completed his second detective yarn—and has surprised many of the readers of his first tale by his evident change of heart. Asbury's first mystery novel, "The Devil of Pei-Ling," published a few months ago, was filled with gore and ghemera—so much of it, in fact, that Asbury must have himself become sated. The present story is much less gory; what it has lost in blood, however, it has not lost in interest, for it is as readable or even more so than its forerunner.

Inspector Conway is given a better chance to solve the mystery of "The Tick of the Clock" than he was to solve that of the previous book. The mystery in this instance surrounds the murder of James H. Walton. The clues, as in all good detective novels, are slender, and the problem seems completely impossible of solution. The reader is introduced to the culprit and convinced that he could not have had anything to do with the crime until denouement.

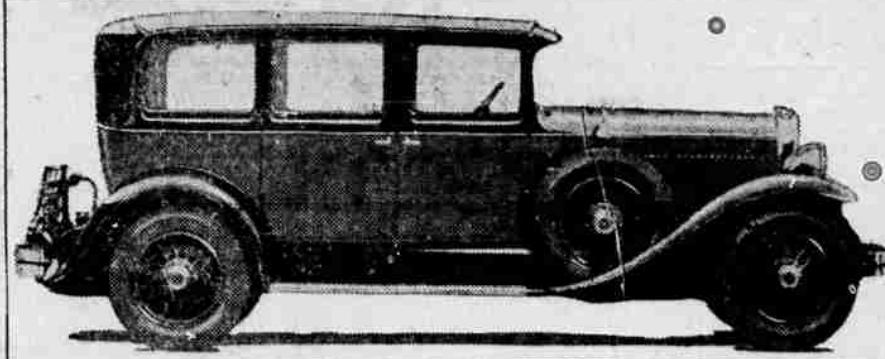
Asbury's literary prestige lies a considerable distance behind his entrance in the field of detective fiction. He will be remembered by even casual readers as the man whose article "Hatsack" in the American Mercury stirred Boston to ban the whole issue of the magazine from the city a few seasons back.

A DAUGHTER OF VENICE, by Isabel DeWitt. New York: Ray Henkle.

Bianca Cappello was an outstanding character of the sixteenth century, a woman who "left her mark" on the histories of Venice and Florence. Her descendants are proud to recall her title of "A Daughter of Venice"; not all of her escapades are recognized by her practical family, and possibly some of her "affairs" still are suppressed.

The story is a romance in the grand manner, full of action, running through a series of tavern brawls, abductions, midnight encounters, secret duels, garden romances and involving princes, and paupers, cardinals, priests, patricians, plebeians, soldiers of state, and soldiers of fortune and chief of all Bianca Cappello and Francesco de Medici, the great Duke of Florence.

Miss DeWitt has captured the atmosphere of the period of her tale, and throughout its pages one glories in the achievements of her strutting characters.

Graham-Paiges Attract Attention in Medford

GRAHAM-PAIGE FIVE-PASSENGER SEDAN, MODEL 629

The Graham-Paige models 60, 619 and 629 are now on display at the Crater Lake Automotive Company on South Riverside Avenue.

Where Moses Held Forth

WASHINGTON, D. C., Mar. 17. Discoveries which have led some archaeologists to accept the view that the hidden city of Petra, near Dead Sea, is the real "Mount Sinai" from which Moses obtained his laws, gives that mysterious and unique city a new interest. A bulletin from the Washington, D. C., headquarters of the National Geographic Society tells of Petra and its unusual site.

"Petra is like a fairy city" hidden in a mountain," says the bulletin. "It is as though a huge peak had been disemboweled and the ancient city set down in the chasm." Enter Through Canyon

The old entrance to the city, which was an important factor in its strength, can be used today! From a semi-desert plain one enters a narrow canyon which is a mere cleft in towering walls of red sandstone. Along the bottom of this canyon a little stream flows. The high, jagged walls, at many places overhanging, give the passage a gloom even at midday. At one point the floor of the canyon narrows to twelve feet, and at no place is it wider than 40 feet.

"After one has followed this tortuous chasm for two miles he comes out unexpectedly into an open plain, approximately a mile across, entirely surrounded by sheer cliffs and precipitous slopes. Through the center winds the little stream, a municipal water supply ages ago. On the level ground on each side of the stream rose the ancient city.

"Buildings" Carved From Cliffs "Nearly all traces of the ancient structures that rose on the plain have disappeared. But against the cliff walls remains a unique, and almost imperishable Petra. One piece of buildings have been carved out of the solid sandstone and are almost as well preserved today as when the chisel of their creators were laid down."

"One of the most striking of these creations is the so-called Treasury of Pharaoh," a product of the Greek period several centuries before Christ. The front of the edifice stands in deep relief. Its pillars, capitals, pediment, and superstructure intact. A doorway leads into the cliff from which rooms were hollowed.

"Another carved masterpiece is

the rock-hewn Greek theater that seated some 5000 spectators. Temples also are carved in the cliffs; but the most numerous of the monuments are tombs. Thousands of them look down on the Petra plain, many showing the elaborate and exquisite carvings.

Was Ancient Distributing Center

"Petra has been called by poets the 'rose-red' city half as old as time." Its deeply-colored walls—rose, purple, yellow, crimson—are indeed beautiful; and the skillful use of the colored strata in the carvings shows that the Petra artists made the most of the aesthetic possibilities. But Petra did not exist for beauty alone. It

possessed a chamber of commerce in its heyday of importance, that organization could have boasted truthfully that Petra was the world's premier distributing center and that its weekly "bank clearings" ran into many hundreds of talents.

"The city was the Suez and Panama of its day, a meeting place for the chief trade routes. Incense, spices, and other treasures of the East came from India, Persia, and farther Arabia to this safety deposit city of the desert. From there goods were distributed to Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, and through Egypt and Sidon to the Mediterranean countries to the west. An important special traffic of the city was the furnishing of Dead Sea bitumen to the embalmers of Egypt."

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A Flapper Goes to Housekeeping

There are those who will tell you the modern flapper has nothing beneath her sleek bobbed hair except a vacuum, and that when a girl enters the business world her domestic instincts vanish forever, so it remained for one such to get

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