

obviously a serious mental illness, and poor Penelope dies quite insane, back again at Brighton, after living over in exact detail, in her poor, disordered mind, a repressed youth.

The book is, as this brief sketch will show, a somber one, but very well written; an unusual sort of thing that sticks in the mind after reading.

An Italian Holiday, by Paul Wilstach. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill company: \$4.

This is just the right kind of a travel book for the armchair traveler. The usual tourist sights are passed over lightly, the unusual enlarged upon. Starting in at Naples, Mr. Wilstach took the route south through Paola and Reggio, along the coast, while most travelers would start north toward Rome. Whenever he goes some bit of information, either historical or classical, is associated with the scene, and this, added to his beautiful descriptions, makes the book doubly fascinating.

In Naples the scenes of Caruso's early days are ferreted out, and the interesting story of why the great singer would never perform in his native city is told. The southern shore of Italy, which once was colonized by traders from Greece, still retains ruins of great Grecian temples, though few travelers ever visit them. Up the Adriatic coast between Bari and Brindisi are found the curious conical houses, the trulli, which are perhaps the least known curiosities of Italy. They are off the beaten tourist routes and consequently very few visitors ever see them.

In Bari Mr. Wilstach witnessed the land and water fetes in honor of San Nicola, better known to us as Saint Nicholas. It is in Bari that the good saint is interred, but here his name is not known in connection with the Christmas celebration. He is revered as the patron saint of mariners and children.

Farther north, near Rimini, there are at least three rivers for which is claimed the distinction of being the Rubicon which Julius Caesar crossed during his march on Rome. Not far from Rimini lies the smallest republic in the world, San Marino. Venice and the "redeemed" provinces and cities east of the Adriatic furnish material for several chapters. Asolo, in the foothills of the Alps mountains, beloved by Robert Browning and famed as being the last resting place of the famous Eleanor Duse, Busseto, at one time the home of Verdi, and a great many other places complete Mr. Wilstach's story of his Italian holiday. C. F.

Scarlet Sister Mary, by Julia Peterkin. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill company. \$2.50.

Julia Peterkin, whose novel "Black April" was accepted by the critics as being one of the best books ever written about the southern negro, has again essayed a character study of the same kind. The central figure is Mary, a negress of the Blue Brook plantation. All of the characters, with the exception of one, and that a minor one, are black folk.

At the age of 15 Mary, a high-spirited girl, a leader of the younger set, was engaged to marry July, described by Budda Ben as "a wicked sinner, a crap-shooter, a poker player, a gambler and a dancer." Both Budda Ben and Maum Hannah, Mary's foster mother, wanted her to marry July's brother June, who was a steady, easy-going youth. But July won out, and after the wedding they settled in one of the old, dilapidated houses of the quarter. For a while July was contented to come home each night to his little cabin, and when the first baby arrived it seemed that he had forsaken his waywardness and had settled down. But when Cinder, one of his old flames, appeared on the scene, July gradually drifted back to his old ways, and one fine day he took Cinder on an excursion down the river and did not return.

Mary's lonely life was soon brightened by June, whom she annexed by the aid of a conjuring rag which she had secured from old Daddy Cudjoe. After a few years June, too, departed for points unknown, leaving

Mary to take care of the ever-increasing number of children. The conjuring rag was brought into play frequently during the ensuing years, so frequently that when July at last arrived home after an absence of 20 years, Mary remarked to him, "Sho I got chillen. I got plenty o' chillen! Plenty! Dey ain' none o' you-own, July, so it ain' none o' you business how many I got."

"Scarlet Sister Mary" is every bit as good as "Black April."

The Tragie Empress, by Maurice Paleologue. New York: Harper & Bros. \$3.50.

Nine years ago the Empress Eugenie, widow of Emperor Napoleon III of France, died. At that time it was supposed that she had written an autobiography which would clear up many disputed points about the second empire, relating especially to the reasons for some of the apparently incongruous diplomatic moves of her late husband. It transpired that the emperor had forbidden her to write her memoirs, but she had found

THE WEEK'S BEST SELLERS IN PORTLAND.

Compiled From Lists Furnished by the J. K. Gill Company and the Meier & Frank Company.

Fiction.

"Footprints," by Kay Cleaver Strahan. (Doubleday-Doran.)

"Poder Victorious," by Rolvaag. (Harper.)

"Explation," by Elizabeth. (Doubleday-Doran.)

Non-Fiction.

"Elizabeth and Essex," by Lytton Brachey. (Harcourt-Brace.)

"Magic Island," by W. B. Seabrook. (Harcourt-Brace.)

"The Untold Story," by Mary Desti. (Liveright.)

another method of presenting her side of the story to the world. As early as 1901 she had been in touch with a French diplomat and historian, Maurice Paleologue, and had been telling him the inside story of her ill-fated reign. Mr. Paleologue had been recording the gist of his conversations with the empress, and had been given permission to publish his material after her death. These conversations took place at various times and places whenever it was convenient for the two to meet, and were scattered over the years from 1901 to 1920.

This is not a connected story of the second empire, but it contains some extremely interesting statements of fact and conjecture made by the "tragic empress." It clears up a number of mysterious points concerning especially the Prussian war of 1870 and the Mexican expedition of 1864. C. F.

Form and Style in Poetry, by W. P. Ker. London: Macmillan & Co.

The soundness of the scholarship shown in this volume on form and style in poetry by the late W. P. Ker is startling in contrast with the welter of claptrap which passes for scholarly work in this age of catering to popular fancy. This book is a collection of 24 lectures given at University college, London, from 1911 to 1921, and part of his lectures on the same subject given elsewhere from 1897 on. Ker's familiarity with his subject over a long stretch of years and his ripeness of intellectual power serve to make it particularly outstanding as a study in literature. It is a significant contribution to the field of poetry. No less scholarly is the manner in which R. W. Chambers has edited the notes left by Ker.

Some of the topics touched on all too briefly in Ker's "Epic and Romance," the work by which he is best known, are continued and developed here. Outstanding among them are the lectures on the history of the ballads in relation to the development of form, and those on Chaucer and the Scottish Chaucerians. Seventy-five pages of notes and illustrations from many literatures add more value to an extremely valuable text-book.