

the event of death. But Mr. Altounyan, inverting the normal poetic process, vulgarizes what it is necessary for him to exalt by reducing a potentially rare emotion to its vaguest and most artificial synonyms. The result is more epitaph than poem; its rhetoric, its celebration, its references commemorate a static occasion when they should commemorate an experience.

CHRISTOPHER LAZARE

CLAUDE By Genevieve Fauconnier. Translated by Lauren Ford. The Macmillan Company. \$2.50.

There used to be a critical cliché to the effect that everyone is capable of at least one first-rate novel, though unfortunately only one in many millions seems to have the talent to write it. Mme Fauconnier's "Claude" is the novel that, theoretically, every woman ought to be able to write but actually only one woman in all France could write. If it is not a great work of art, it is at any rate the product of a private dream, and not the contrived story of a professional. The style, perceptively rendered by Lauren Ford, is impressionistic. Patches of revelatory color exhibit and illumine the scenes as in a painting by Monet. The effect is kaleidoscopic. Here are the fragments—episodes, or landscapes, or gestures—recollected from the life of a woman reared in the French countryside, who marries and bears children and works by her husband's side and keeps her private memories. Her life is interrupted by the war and saddened by the last stirring of certain suppressed impulses of childhood and girlhood toward a "great cause, a noble love." But day by day she hurries over into the years, while she and her husband mature together—"as if leaning upon each other, yoked together—and digging the same furrow."

MICHAEL SAYERS

DOWN EAST. By Lewis Pendleton. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.

Mr. Pendleton has hit upon the agreeable device of inventing two men of Maine who write letters to the *Gooseport Weekly* about the exploits of their respective grandfathers, Captain Isaac Drinkwater and Jedediah Peabody, and in the course of doing so became competitors at the tall tale, not to say enemies of each other. The novelty of the book is its dry style, proper of course to the region but refreshing as well because the tall tale by and large does not come dry. Of late it has been coming with a tiresome and self-conscious jiciness, so that the thin, pickled malice of these old fellows is by contrast most effective. Their invention too is more gorgeous than a careless reader would ever know, for in the coolest of voices they tell the hottest of lies, and in the briefest imaginable space. "Down East" may very well become a classic in its kind.

MARK VAN DOREN

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY ISSUES. By Charles R. Whittlesey. McGraw-Hill Book Company. \$2.50.

Writing from Princeton, home of Dr. Kemmerer, the leading American exponent of the gold standard, Dr. Whittlesey has brilliantly presented the case against gold. He denies that a fixed standard of exchange is as important in international economic relations as it is ordinarily asserted to be, and argues that world trade, foreign investments, and economic stability can be attained more satisfactorily under a free system of exchanges than under the gold standard. In justification of this somewhat unorthodox position he points out that international economic development cannot be achieved as long as the domestic economy is throttled by an inflexible monetary standard. Nationalistic trade policies are held to be not the result of competitive currency depreciation but a reflection of unwise

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