

Wide Variety of Gift Books for Christmas

By Norman Kahl

IF YOUR friends can read, you ought to be able to get the bulk of your Christmas shopping done this year by browsing around for a few hours in the city's bookshops.

Selecting the right books for the right people is not always easy, of course. You may suffer an understandable squeamishness over trying to pick something suitable for those on your list whom you suspect of having discriminating literary tastes. Nevertheless, even if you travel around in circles where the rate of literacy is high, you should be able to find an ample variety of books which will satisfy any of your friends.

A few of them can be listed here. There are many others available in Washington's bookstores. The titles appearing in this article are a mere sampling of potential gift books and are intended to give you a rough idea of what to look for when you do your Christmas shopping.

Books Which Reflect The Christmas Spirit

Out-and-out Christmas books, which show up in profusion at this season, are always acceptable presents for nearly all ages of readers. Two particularly delightful new books in this category are "The Story of Jesus in the World's Literature," edited by Edward Wagenknecht ("Creative Age"), and "Mary and the Spinners," by Elizabeth Hollister Frost (Coward-McCann). The first is an anthology of verse and prose on the Nativity culled from the myriad of writers through the ages who have been fascinated by Christianity's most beautiful story. Miss Frost's book is a fantasy on the birth of Christ as told by five of Mary's schoolgirl friends.

Equally reliable as gifts that will be appreciated are the reprints of classics, which are abundant, as usual, this year. Such selections are always safe, since no real book lover ever looks disdainfully at a well-designed special edition, even though he may already have the classic in some other form.

Real Treasures to Be Found Among the Special Editions

Edward Fitzgerald's immortal translation of the "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" is with us again in two new versions. One reprint, put out by the Garden City Press, is illustrated generously by Edmund Dulac and comes, boxed, in a large and elaborate binding. The other, from Hartsdale House, is a bit more restrained in format but lustier in its illustrations, which were done by Edmund J. Sullivan.

For those who like their Shakespeare in one large gulp, there is "The Complete Shakespeare," which comes with de luxe equipment, including illustrations by Rockwell Kent a preface by Christopher Morley, Temple notes, glossary, a set of indices and synopses of all the plays.

Balzac's Droll Stories have also blossomed forth again, this time from the Garden City Press. The illustrations by Steele Savage are described by the publisher as "sly," which is probably as good a word as you can find for them.

Many Fine Reprints, And Anthologies

Also available in reprints this season are "The Love Poems of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning," selected by Louis Untermeyer (Rutgers); "Tom Sawyer," with remarkably earthy illustrations by Richard Rogers (Hartsdale); "The Count of Monte Cristo" (Whittlesey), and "Fables of Aesop" (Archway Press), issued in a handsome little boxed volume and written in the decorative hand script of Philip Grushkin.

Anthologies and collections continue to pour off the presses and can generally be counted on to give continuing pleasure to those who receive them as Christmas gifts. One of the best possible presents you could give to practically any couple you know is "The Twin Bedside Anthology," edited by Charles Lee (Howel-Soskin). The two boxed volumes bear the subtitles, "His Reader" and "Her Reader," and each contains stories, essays, verse and aphorisms which the editor regarded as appropriate to each sex. Also good gift material is the collection of "Russian Winter Tales," by Post Wheeler (Beechhurst), printed in superior typography and accompanied by 12 of the Bilbin illustrations in color.



SOME GIFT POSSIBILITIES—If you can't find Christmas gifts for your friends among the season's book crop, you'd better change your friends. This random selection represents only a few of the attractive volumes available in the city's bookshops. You should have no trouble finding something to satisfy any taste.

There are times when even people who can read don't want to. They prefer to look at pictures. The publishers accordingly have issued a large number of pictorial books which you should have no trouble locating in the bookshops.

One of the best is "Brooklyn, U. S. A.," by John Richmond (Creative Age). The layout and design were done by Abril Lemarque. Together, Mr. Richmond and Mr. Lemarque have concocted a volume that should appeal to any one who is entranced by the Brooklyn

legend. Practically everybody ever connected with Brooklyn, from Mae West to Clara Bow, has a place in this book. And such landmarks as Coney Island and Ebbett's Field are not neglected, of course.

And for Those Who Are Fond of Pictures

Other pictorial books are "As We Were," by Bellamy Partridge and Otto Bettman (Whittlesey), a nostalgic collection of old prints on family life in America between 1850 and 1900, with a running commentary; "The Inhabitants," by Wright Morris (Scribner's), which turns out to be a book chiefly about dwellings, rather than people; "Battle Stations" (Wise), a collection of 500 photographs of the Navy at war; "Look at America," compiled by the editors of Look Magazine (Houghton Mifflin); "The Houses of Parliament," by Hans Wild and James Pope (Oxford), containing both text and photographs, and "People of the Southwest Pacific," by H. Ian Hogbin (Asia Press), containing 128 photographs and perhaps not just the thing for any former serviceman who put in his wartime stint on some lonely isle.

For the Art Lovers and Collectors of Americana

Attractive to art-lovers, historians and collectors of Americana is "The New World," edited and annotated by Stefan Lorant (Duell, Sloan & Pearce). This volume contains reproductions of John White's watercolors from 16th Century Virginia and some of the paintings of Jacques le Moyne de Morgues, depicting life in the French colony of Florida during the same period. It also carries accounts of some of the early voyages to the American continent.

For those with more specialized interests, there is plenty to choose from in virtually every classification. Fishermen, for instance will find "Great Fishing Stories," compiled by Edwin Valentine Mitchell (Doubleday); "Now Listen, Warden," by Ray P. Holland and illustrated by Wesley Dennis (Barnes), and "Blue Angels with Wings," written and illustrated by Robert Gibbings (Dutton). Combination hunting and fishing books are "Game Bag," by Nash Buckingham (Putnam), and "Dud Dean and His Country," by Arthur R. Macdougall, illustrated by Milton C. Weiler (Coward-McCann).

Books About Dogs and Cats And Life in the Country

Dog-lovers should find delight in such titles as "Simple Secrets of Dog Discipline," by Horace Lytle (Putnam); "The Master," by Holland again and illustrated by Everett Ward (Barnes); "We Lived with Peter," by John Weston (McBride), and the Morgan Dennis Dog Book (with some cats included), put out by Viking Press. The crop of cat books includes "Know Your Cat," by John Hosford Hickey and Priscilla Beach (Harper), and "How to Live with a Cat," by Margaret Cooper Gay, illustrated by Roberta MacDonald (Simon & Schuster).

For those who think they want to live in the country there is "This Country Life," by Samuel R. Ogden (Barnes). And for those who just want to live anywhere in a house of their own, the following titles should be appealing: "Furniture for the Home," by Gladys Miller, illustrated by Harriet Meserole (Barrows); "Antiques for the Home," by Alice R. Rollins (Harper); "Sewing for the Home," by Mary Brooks Picken, illustrated by C. Florence Valentine and Marie Struve (Harper), and "Handbook of Color," by Ina M. Germaine (McBride).

Making a Book List Is Lots of Fun

You will also find, without any trouble, books on how to do things, on games and hobbies, on cooking and sailing and woodcarving and archery and plumbing and anything else you may be looking for.

It would be a good idea to start looking around now and drafting a tentative list of the books you plan to get for your friends and relatives. As a matter of fact, it's a great deal of fun poring over books—which is more than can be said for most other kinds of Christmas shopping.

What's more, if you get your gift books early enough, you'll have time to read them yourself, before you have to wrap them in tinsel and give them away.

A Reader's Guide to the Year's Best Books

THIS is the second issue of The Star's Christmas Book Supplement. It is intended to perform two services for you.

First, it will furnish you with an authoritative critical guide to the books of 1946 which had been published up to the time of its going to press. Under their respective heads—as fiction, poetry, history, politics and so forth—those books are reviewed in its pages by writers, specially qualified. Also, for the Christmas shopper, there is an article dealing with books most likely to make attractive gifts, running from inexpensive pocket volumes all the way to costly handsomeness. And children's books, of particular interest at this season, are given special treatment by an expert on the subject, M. Ethel Bubb in charge of the children's department of the Washington Public Library.

Second, the Christmas Supplement will bring you a picture of literary conditions in those foreign countries whose books are most frequently read and translated in America. With an unbroken year of peace behind them, writers everywhere are finding their feet and beginning to give expression to the new conditions which face us all. The Christmas Supplement undertakes to place before its American readers a resume of the literary movements taking place in the lands most closely associated with our own.

To that end, its editors have invited prominent writers from the United Kingdom, France, the countries of Northern Europe and Latin America to contribute articles on the current literary picture in their respective regions. Putting the several summaries together, you will be able to attain a revealing view of the contemporary moods of those lands with which we maintain our closest literary ties.

Last year, The Star, in its Christmas Supplement, invited your attention to your own city, to Washington, "a city of books," stressing the vast amount of reading done by the local population and the great book treasures which Washington possesses in its libraries. This year, The Star wishes to reassert that emphasis and to stress further that your city of Washington is one of the world's great literary and intellectual capitals as well as one of the great political ones.

These are the main aims of this issue of the Christmas Book Supplement.

Their fulfillment, however, does not end the Supplement's material. Never has there been a time when there was greater interest in the personalities of writing people than exists at the present moment. The Supplement accordingly furnishes you with a feature on this subject.

And finally, it has not neglected humor, for the whole spectacle of book production today, combining as it does the aspects of big business and solitary artistic creation, high pressure publicity and exquisite sensibility, literature in the old immutable sense of the word and contemporary literary grist, is not without due amusement.

All the articles in the Christmas Supplement were written exclusively for The Star. Madame Undset and Mr. Verissimo made their contributions in English; Mr. Ambriere wrote in French, the translation being arranged for with the Library of Congress.

The Star urges you to use the Christmas Supplement freely in forming your opinions of the books of 1946. Whether you are buying books to keep or to give, or merely want to inform yourself on the merits of the year's printed harvest, it will furnish you with authoritative guidance.