

## AMONG THE NEW BOOKS

**THE DESERT OF WHEAT**, by Zane Grey. Harper & Brothers Publishers. Book by courtesy of D. A. Calahan.

**T**HIS is an epic of wheat and the world war. It tells of a struggle in the great northwest between the growers of wheat and the I. W. W. captained by German agents posing as labor leaders. Back of it all we see the Hohenzollern dynasty and its ambitions, but in the foreground are loyal Americans, farmers, ranchers, cowboys battling with the motley crowds of treacherous despoilers and destroyers.

The action deals rather with what might have been than what was. We know from revelations at the I. W. W. trials what those vicious disloyalists planned. In this romance of the fight to save the wheat of the northwest and thereby save the world, the author has visualized a combat which might have happened had not the government so promptly smashed the I. W. W. by seizing its leaders everywhere in the land. In reality, however, all of these things happened—not in one particular corner of the northwest, but at various points in the country. The author has here massed the events in one swift and bitter struggle.

Kurt Dorn, son of an aged German whose heart is with the kaiser and the fatherland, is the hero. The father becomes involved with the I. W. W., but gradually his eyes are opened. In the excitement and exertion of the fight to preserve his wheat, which the I. W. W. will not spare, the old man expires. His last words are a prayer for his son's forgiveness.

The wheat is harvested and taken to the elevator, but is burned by a gang of I. W. W. working under the command of Glidden, a man of mystery. There is an enthralling contest to save the village from flames and to rout the I. W. W.

It is an odd feature of the fight, which is long and thrilling, that no one is killed. This is in the good, old manner of the refined novelist who hated to spill blood. Perhaps that was due to our pacifistic tendencies. In this connection, however, it is fantastic and unreal because, a little later, the hero goes to France, where slaughter is wholesale.

Some of the most interesting chapters treat of the Klu Klux Klan operations of the vigilantes who band together to expel the invading I. W. W. The climax is the capture of Glidden, in disguise as he is engaged in wrecking the largest wheat harvesting outfit in the region. The vigilantes meet, vote his death and he is hanged to a railroad bridge. The I. W. W. are rounded up, placed aboard several trains, and are deported by way of the rails that run under this bridge. The ghastly corpse affrights them as they are banished from the land they tried to destroy.

The love passages of the novel are weak and sickly sweet despite the at-

tempt to make them lofty and appealing. The love story is dragged in, according to the accepted canons of the popular novelist. He chooses his subject and then insinuates his love puppets into as many scenes as he thinks proper.

The hero is brought back from France insane and with one arm gone. The heroine insists on a wedding after all hope has been given up by the doctors. The wandering mind is restored and the hero mends slowly.

In the final chapters the novel takes on a mystico-idealistic tone, the heroine voicing those altruistic ideals by which our generation hopes to lift humanity to higher levels, and finally to abolish war.

It is a novel of unequal merit. Some of the chapters, especially those in the first half of the book, are red-blooded and virile. There is all the action that the most strenuous could desire. The chapters which take us to France and through the fighting there with the hero are not so convincing, but this probably is due to the fact that we have been sated with descriptions of battles and soldiering.

**SUGAR BEETS IN AMERICA**. By Dr. F. S. Harris. The Macmillan Company, New York.

**T**HIS work is written by a Utah man, Dr. F. S. Harris, Director and Agronomist of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station. The book is one of Macmillan's Rural Science Series, edited by Dr. L. H. Bailey, formerly of Cornell University.

Dr. Harris is probably one of the best informed men on the question of sugar-beets, from an agricultural standpoint, in the country. He is a graduate of Cornell University and for several years has been conducting extensive experiments on various sugar-beet problems; among the most important is his work on the irrigation of sugar beets, sugar beet breeding, and the commercial production of sugar beet seed. Besides his own work he has visited every important beet producing section of the United States and has made a study of their methods and problems. Dr. Harris is also a trained agronomist in other lines. Since he has been at the Experiment Station he has completed experiments on fertilizing and rotations, soil moisture, alkali and the irrigation of oats, wheat, and potatoes, which have proved to be of great benefit to the farmers of Utah. From this vast fund of information "Sugar Beets in America" was prepared.

The book is written in a very practical way, being intended primarily for farmers and agriculturists, as indicated by such subjects as soils, fertilizing and rotations, preparation of seed bed and planting, pests and diseases, and cost of producing beets. Students of the subject, however, will find it none the less interesting since it contains a very complete bibli-

(Continued on page 11.)

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