

Fairyland of Books is Ever Increasing



"... Rooms of paper to describe the scandal consumed and digested with a cup of tea."

TRAVEL books have been the most popular lately, the librarian says, and H. V. Morton's books are always popular. If you want a delightful holiday you can't do better than pile into his tiny car with this charming author and go in search of Scotland, England, Wales, or what you will. He has the mass of detail of a guide book but you would travel the clock round before you found one fact put in guide book fashion. He has a fund of delightful anecdote that is an unending pleasure.

A recent and amusing travel book is J. and C. Gordons' "Three Lands On Three Wheels." Lawrence, still under a cloud with some people, is likely to be popular with his "Etruscan Places."

Unemployment, and the eternal search for the elusive dollar, have stimulated a demand for sociological literature, and during the last five years the amount of general reading has increased by 300 per cent. Solutions of economic and governmental problems are being sought in any books dealing with Russia, the Five Year Plan, the U.S.S.R., Fascism, Nazism, Communism, Socialism, democracy and the Swiss Constitution. Much of this reading seems to be prompted by the new national societies and prophets with a new idea.

A definite return to the more healthy and simple family novel, which for so long has been overshadowed by the slightly morbid psychological type, is, freely speaking, what Nelle Scanlon professes to seek in her recent works. "Tides of Youth" is more popular than any of her others and there is no doubt she is gaining an army of admirers. "Half Caste,"

CAST a cursory glance through the pages of a public library's inquiry book and be amazed at the heterogeneous literary tastes of New Zealanders! You bookworms, with your feet on the mantel-piece and your hearts in the saddle with Seltzer, little dream that there are people whom the disease has depraved to the extent of wanting to know all about tung oil, the life of Borgia (a more human depravity), or the habits of the common fly. But there it is in black and white and the man who fossicks out this morbid material ought to know what people read. Fortunately most people want only a swatting knowledge of flies and Marie Dressler interests them more than Borgia.

the first novel of another young New Zealander, F. A. Baume, a former Christchurch journalist, is a not very kindly criticism of the Maori. It is creating considerable interest.

People are still reading the history of New Zealand, and "Pages From the Past" has recently been written by C. A. McDonald. It deals particularly with Marlborough. Most of the ground has already been covered but McDonald treats it from a new and interesting point of view.

MARIE DRESSLER has written humorously and interestingly about herself and Hollywood generally and she appears to have a legion of admirers. Gene Tunney, who mixed Shakespeare with his training for the world's championship, is aiming to be a literary giant with his "Men Must Fight." There must be a certain amount of sympathy with G. B. Shaw, who says in his introduction to the book that it is too conscientiously written. Tunney goes into detail regarding his life, whereas the public wants to know how he k.o.'d his opponents.

Amazingly popular have been a number of very clever and amusing historical and satirical satires on the lines of the humorous histories so popular a few years ago. "1066 and All That" and "Now All This" (Sellar and Yeatman), "Shakespeare and That Crush" and "The Hilarious Universe" (Dark) and "Economy Must Be Our Watchword" (Dennys), are some of them. They are delightfully illustrated.

Sinclair Lewis has reappeared with another axe to grind in a prison reform book, "Ann Vickers." In some ways it is rather ugly and occasionally slightly gruesome. A book that has established a record for popularity, and deservedly so, is Munthe's "Story Of San Michele." Morgan's "The Fountain" was one of the best novels of last year and is still popular (Continued on page 39).