

Books

THE University of Oklahoma Press, which has been the leader in southwestern literature, stepped over the regional boundaries with the publication last month of *The English Novel in Transition* written by William C. Frierson, English professor at the University of Alabama and an authority in the fiction field.

Devoted to modes of literary expression of the last 50 years, from 1885 to 1940, the novel traces the movements and currents during this period when transition in literary production was keyed up as never before. Beginning with the spread of French naturalism, Mr. Frierson follows the changing novel as it is exposed successively to Russian and American ideas.

Mr. Frierson does not pass lightly over the writers contemporary with this period. Indeed, he delves deeply into their works, analyzing, endeavoring to show by what movements and people they were influenced, and sometimes becoming too involved in his own discoveries. He takes each author individually and compares his own works, one against another, and then with those of other writers.

The book will be of most value to the person who wishes to get some general idea of the history and evolution of the English novel and to become acquainted with some of the men who figured in its recent development. The book is partially made up of short book reviews in which Mr. Frierson paraphrases, quoting from the work and interspersing with his own interpretations.

For the amount of territory covered, *The English Novel in Transition* is not long, running only slightly over 300 pages. It has a plain, attractive binding in a subdued gray-green tone and a well-done paper cover, the work of the University Press's art editor, Will Ransom.

Some of the chapter headings indicate the comprehensive treatment given the subject. For example, Naturalism in French Fiction, The Maupassant School in England, Orientation 1900-1915, The Years 1900-1915, The Life-Novel in England 1910-1917, The Postwar Novel 1919-1929: Impressionists and Freudians, The Postwar Novel 1919-1929: Sophisticates and Others, and Diffusion 1929-1940.

It is high time that a book such as this one, which covers the recent powerful trends in English literature, was forthcoming. Mr. Frierson has done the pioneering, perhaps paving the way for another expert who will critically analyze the tremendous amount of material and present some clear-cut conclusions, much as Louis Untermeyer has done in the field of English poetry.



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