



Outstanding Books

NEXT to the Bible, the volume which was mentioned most frequently in the many lists of outstanding books was Richard Llewellyn's "How Green Was My Valley." The "Oxford Book of Verse" held premier place among the various poetry anthologies; "Madame Curie," by Eve Curie, proved the favourite biography; and the most popular New Zealand book was Nelle Scanlan's "Pencarrow."

The prize-winning competitors were "Khorasbad," Marlborough, first; "S.J.M.," Hicks Bay, and "Eleanore," Auckland Province, second equal; "Pang," Auckland, and "M.P.G.," Gisborne, highly commended.

First Prize

TO make a selection of 15 from the many thousands of outstanding books in world literature is no easy task, but, at the risk of offending many of my old bedside favourites, here is my choice and some reasons for making each selection.

1. The Bible, because it is the inspired Word of God, and its precepts, language, and imagery are a source of inspiration for past, present, and future generations.

2. "Imitation of Christ," by Thomas a Kempis. A little book written long ago, but to which no one has ever turned without finding words of good counsel and encouragement.

3. Plays of William Shakespeare. These are the bedrock of our national literature.

4. "Henry Esmond," by William Thackeray. This perfect period piece of Queen Anne's day deserves prominent place among the great novels of the nineteenth century.

5. "The Oxford Book of English Verse." Between its covers is a treasure trove of the loveliest lyrics in our language.

Above.—A view of the reading room, first floor, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

6. "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom," by T. E. Lawrence. A volume which has already become a classic.

7. "The Ballad of the White Horse," by G. K. Chesterton. A stirring ballad in book form of the time when "the sea folk broke about our land, a Christless chivalry," and "there was not English armour left, nor any English thing, when Alfred came to Athelney to be an English king."

8. "The Worst Journey in the World," by Apsley Cherry-Garrad. This graphic, sensitively written account of Captain Scott's last expedition, told by one of his party, is more than a travel book, it is literature.

9. "Tarka the Otter," by Henry Williamson. Simply the life story of an otter, "his joyful water life and his death in the country of the Two Rivers," but distinguished by superb descriptions of Nature.

10. "Sparkenbroke," by Charles Morgan. A novel in the grand tradition: a modern classic, perfect in construction and style.

11. "The Flax of Dream," by Henry Williamson. Four-part novel describing a poet, Shelley-like in his life and tragic death.

12. "Winged Victory," by Victor Yeates. In the opinion of T. E. Lawrence this is the finest novel about the R.F.C. (1914-18 war) to be written.

13. and 14. "Kristin Lavernsdatter" and "The Master of Hestviken," by

Competitions

MAY

Don't forget that entries for the "PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTEST" close on May 15. Negatives to accompany each print if possible, also a description of the subject up to 100 words, and a stamped addressed envelope for return of photos.

JUNE

I was tidying my bookshelves the other day and I came across a volume which was one of my childhood favourites. The tale concerned three children and a tall stranger who wore flowing oriental robes and owned a Persian carpet. It looked very much like any other Persian rug in colouring and design, but it had one remarkable difference—it could fly over land and sea like a bird. You had only to sit down upon it, close your eyes, and wish, and hey presto! you were immediately transported through the air wherever you desired. As I turned the pages with their lavish illustrations of that much-travelled family exploring the bazaars of Baghdad, or learning how to paddle an Eskimo kayak, or walking beside the great wall of China, I began to ponder which part of the world I would most like to visit if I were fortunate enough to possess such a unique means of transport. I wonder what destination you would choose if the stranger suddenly appeared and offered you a trip on his magic carpet.

"IF I HAD A MAGIC CARPET—"

First prize 10/-, second prize 5/-.
Closing date, June 15.

"MARY,"

C/o "Journal of Agriculture,"
Box 3004, Wellington.

Sigrud Undset. Two brilliantly-written, dramatic sagas in novel form of life in thirteenth century Norway.

15. "The Road to En-Dor," by E. Jones. Truth which reads more strangely than fiction comprises this exciting story of two soldiers in a Turkish prison camp.—"Khorasbad," Marlborough.