

New Fiction

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purpose, but the vivid description is all there and the book is full of very fine phrases, but without any pretentiousness. There is also much sound comedy, a subtle humor that gives warmth and a glow to the narrative. It is too complex an affair to admit of a brief summarizing, but a bit of dialogue may serve to state at least part of its text:

"The modern girl," said Greg, "is selfish to cruelty. . . ."

"Is the modern girl any more selfish than the modern man?" said Joy quickly. . . . "I haven't noticed it, if it's so."

"From my point of view the man as he is to-day is the result of the modern girl," said Greg. . . .

"If she is selfish, so selfish that she wishes to have everything while giving nothing in return, so selfish that she looks upon the world as her debtor—she must mold men's attitude toward her. And men can no longer regard her with the chivalry and reverence in which men held women when women made the sacrifices that made the name of woman something to be worshipped."

"But we're sick of being worshipped!" cried Pelicie. . . .

The book calls for the heartiest commendation, and may be recommended to lovers of an interesting tale, as a tale, as well as to those who ask something more than amusement in literature.

THE WRONG MR. RIGHT. By Berta Ruck. Dodd, Mead & Co.

As one reads this story there is a growing consciousness of an oddly familiar flavor—where have we tasted this before?

It finally dawns on you that after all it is precisely the good old story that our grandmothers delighted in and to which their mothers objected as "wicked novel reading." The objection of wickedness has paled today and the thing wears a strikingly different dress, but it is essentially unaltered from the day when it reached its strongest flavor with the Brontes. Once upon a time it was a poor governess; now it may be a stenographer. Then it was a widower with three small children; now it may be any kind of employer. But the theme is the same.

The modern version is sprightlier and its action is not delayed by pages of sentimental reflection. There is nothing highfalutin about it, and there is at least an appearance of efficiency. It is as harmless as its ancestor—and as harmful. The one stirred up the unhappy governesses and "superfluous" women; this stirs up the stenographer. But have women really changed not at all since the early Victorian age, in spite of the vote and the more horrific manifestations of feminism?

This specimen is cleverly done. It is an affair of mildly innocent deceptions that lead to complications; the lady becomes an heiress, is engaged to the wrong man, is relieved of her money and marries the right one. It is not without humor and is an entertaining narrative.

THE IDOL OF PARIS. By Sarah Bernhardt. The Macaulay Company.

If any lesser name were given as that of the creator of this book

it may be suspected that it would not attract any very wide attention, for, it must be confessed, the "divine Sarah" does not shine as a story teller with much of the brilliancy of her actual personality on the stage, or of the piquancy of the abundant and more or less authentic gossip about her life away from the footlights. An out and out autobiography, especially if it were frank, might be quite another matter. Possibly she will, some day, oblige us with that, and, in the meantime, we are openly asked by the publishers to accept this story as—possibly—autobiographical. Viewed in that light, it is not very convincing. It has too much of the stiffness and rigidity of a posed figure, and is, at best, no more than fairly well made conventional romance.

Perhaps the authorship leads one to expect too much. The story in itself will do well enough as a picturesque but highly theatrical account of stage life and "high society" of a generation ago. The heroine of the book, Esperance, is an unmitigated genius as an actress, who gains her first success at the age of 16, being accepted by Victorien Sardou as an authentic prodigy. Thereafter it is a matter of various love affairs, quarrels, a duel (fatal be-

yond the standard of French duels, according to the comic papers) and a final emergence into happiness. There are some excellent scenes, and there are a few really stately figures among the aristocrats and a few vivid ones among the theatrical folk. Actual people, like Sardou, wander in and out of the narrative, and are, for the most part, good figures. One gets a glimpse of Mounet-Sully, and even of Mlle. Mars and the great Rachel, in the background. In fact, the background and the *mise en scene* of the whole thing are much more convincing than any of the personages who appear—as actors. One feels, on the whole, that Madame is not at her greatest in the present role.

THE HERITAGE OF THE HILLS. By Arthur Preston Hankins. Dodd, Mead & Co.

THE necessary modern knight errant comes riding pleasantly into the dreams of Jessamy, the one really nice girl among the very undesirable people of the hills known as the "Poison-oakers." It is in the Sierras, where so many queer things keep on happening in modern fiction. There is plenty of fighting and an unusually complete cleansing carnage at the end. There is also a secret, which must not be betrayed if the reader is after mystery: it is really a very good secret and Mr. Hankins works it in nicely. Of course there is, or was, a mine and a large assortment of outlaws. It is a substantial "thriller" with some individual frills a little out of the common. The book has a real feeling for the big outdoors, some pretty description and a sufficiently plausible scenario.

TIDE RIPS. By James B. Connolly. Charles Scribner's Sons.

MR. CONNOLLY needs no introduction or explanatory comment. His distinction as a writer of short stories reaches back to an era of production better than that of to-day's average. It is of good omen to find his work still

Prison Education

WALL SHADOWS: A STUDY IN AMERICAN PRISONS. By Frank Tannenbaum. George P. Putnam's Sons.

MR. TANNENBAUM has been the target of a good deal of hostile and not always very intelligent criticism in the past, and there has been a disposition shown in some quarters to regard him as an overexcited enthusiast, to use no harsher term. Whatever one may think of some of his sociological theory it is but just to realize that he is entirely sincere, very much in earnest and acting with the noblest of motives in his argument and recommendations. Also, it should be remembered that, in the case of this book, he is speaking from first hand knowledge. He is not imagining his facts. Possibly his presentation of some of them may—not unnaturally—be a little highly colored, but they are essentially facts.

It needs no argument to show that our whole prison system is far from being a success, either as a punitive or reformatory institution or as a sufficiently effective deterrent of crime. It may well be that no prison can have much effect in preventing or minimizing crime. That, moreover, is not the subject of this study. Mr. Tannenbaum is here concerned with the prisoner after he has been convicted, with his treatment as a prisoner, its effects upon him and the after effects upon the community as a whole.

The earlier chapters of the book are largely narrative and descriptive, although he starts with an examination of the "psychology of prison cruelty." As a picture of facts, most of which are pretty well established, it may be commended especially to any one who may think that things are being managed pretty well in most of our jails.

But of more importance than this is Mr. Tannenbaum's advocacy of reform measures. They may be boiled down to two: the so-called "prison democracy" idea and education in a broader sense. As to the first, the ideal is that "the prison must become a self-governing as well as a self-sustaining community in an economic sense." It is at least a line of hopeful endeavor that deserves

popular. This collection includes nine stories, all strongly salt, with the tang of the sea winds or the smell of the docks. To many readers the gem of the lot will be "The Rakish Brigantine," which is a delicious affair of pirates and a boy and the days when there were "flyin' jibbooms pointin' in over South street," a brigantine that was not only rakish, but long and very low and black. For less subtle readers "What Price for Fish?" may lead in interest. They are all excellent.

Mr. Connolly is especially felicitous in his careful stage setting in all these yarns. The scenery is not insisted upon too much and never gets in the way, but one sees it with clarity and with a wealth of detail. The book is unusually well printed—such work deserves a good, lasting dress—and is amply illustrated. The frontispiece calls for especial note, as it enters so well into the spirit of the story, with its mixture of Napoleon, Marie Antionette, the Rajah and the "dragon black as ink."

MASTERED MEN. By F. A. Robinson. George H. Doran Company.

AS the introduction to this collection of short tales, provided by the Rev. Charles W. Gordon (who is better known as Ralph Connor), asserts, they have the merit of being "rescripts of events that have happened in the author's personal experience." The author has been a missionary among the comparatively wild men of the West, in Canada, and is here recounting various episodes leading to the conversion and redemption of certain pretty tough human specimens. It is a simply, sincerely presented story of "the triumph of the Gospel in the souls of men," as the writer saw it. Some episodes are little more than anecdotes, but others have dramatic quality. It is a proof of its popular appeal that this is an enlargement, with new stories added, of a previous edition originally put out under the title of "Trial Tales of Western Canada."

much more careful study and further experimentation.

Perhaps even more important is the application of education, as such, to the prisoner. The possibilities here are obviously great, in spite of equally obvious difficulties. But where it has been seriously tried, as at San Quentin, Mr. Tannenbaum reports: "I found a genuine interest in education, and an ambition to attempt the experiment of turning the prison into an educational institution. . . . But the courses were mostly cultural. . . . All, of course, of value. But the men in prison need something different, and something new in educational work." He thinks the answer is to be found in "turning the prison into a community—with manifold community work." It is a well thought out, highly suggestive book.

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