

James Branch Cabell Plays Hide and Seek With the Censors

Keeps Vice Society Guessing

Figures of Earth Shows Evidence That the Author Must Have Been in a Playful Mood

FIGURES OF EARTH, A Comedy of Appearances, by James Branch Cabell. Published by Robert M. McBride & Co.

WITH one eye on the censors, James Branch Cabell has completed his most recent addition to the Jurgen-Dommel cycle, tales of the legendary Foiteesme country.

Hardened by his bitter experience with the ill-fated Jurgen, which was suppressed by the New York Society for the Prevention of Vice, Mr. Cabell has grown over-cautious. At times he fairly coddles the Vice Society agents. When he comes to a passage which the fears might aggravate these guardians of the public morals he neatly side-steps with "but this must not be told."

If It Can Be Told

If ever the bans are lifted and literature is permitted to run riot again, possibly Mr. Cabell will emulate Philip Gibbs, the war correspondent, and bring out a volume of Now It Can Be Told. It might make rather interesting reading for those who go in for that sort of thing.

Cabell points out that in the original medieval romances, from which the tradition of his story comes, "both in their prose and metrical form, there are occasional allusions to natural processes which make these stories unfit to be placed in the hands of American readers, who, as a body, attest their respectability by insisting that their parents were guilty of unmentionable conduct, and such passages, of course, necessitate considerable editing."

Later he hopes "that the Jurgen epics may some day be made accessible to American readers."

Various Dedications

A novelty in the way of dedication is introduced in Figures of Earth. The book is divided into five parts and a foreword, each of which is respectfully inscribed to a staunch friend who stood by to lend a helping hand or an encouraging smile when Jurgen piled up on the rocks of legal controversy. So we find these names immortalized in the Cabellian pages: Sinclair Lewis, Wilson Follett, Louis Untermeyer, H. L. Mencken, Hugh Walpole and Joseph Hergesheimer.

In his Now It Can Be Told perhaps Mr. Cabell will reverse this system and dedicate each chapter to an arch enemy—to the censors and critics who have trodden his works with no respect or affection.

We seem to be drumming up quite a little trade for this purely tentative volume. Mr. Cabell may not fall in with the idea at all. But still we have no notion that the censor will ever be less vigilant than he is to-day. The "now-it-can-be-told" era in literature probably will never return. We are not progressing in that direction.

But with all his watchfulness Cabell has done splendidly with his story of Manuel of the High Head. We like best the chapter in which Manuel deals with the stork.

The Magic of Manuel

At the start of his career Manuel has sacrificed his sweetheart, Nisfer, that he may go on and follow his own desire. Later he regrets this and wishes Nisfer back. Not until he learns the magic of the Asparasas can he do anything about it. Then he models Nisfer in clay and draws her soul into the figure with his magic. Nisfer complains rather plaintively that Manuel has botched one of her legs quite miserably in his modeling but, on the whole, they live happily until Nisfer decides that she wants a baby.

"Yes, yes, a baby or two!" says Manuel. "I think myself that would be an excellent idea, while we are waiting for Queen Sultitia to make up her subjects' minds and have nothing else in particular to do."

Manuel promises to look into the matter and acquaint himself with the local customs in the country in which they are living. He remembers that the stork is under personal obligation to him, but he wants to be sure what the people of Philistia do about babies.

"Still, Manuel," says Nisfer, "the Philistines themselves have babies, and I do not see how they could have con-

ceivably objected to my having at any rate a very small one if only—"

"Not at all! Nobody objects to the baby in itself, now that you are a married woman. The point is that the babies of the Philistines are brought to them by the stork; and that even an allusion to the possibility of mis-guided persons obtaining a baby in any other way these Philistines consider to be offensive and lewd and lascivious and obscene."

"Why, how droll of them! But are you sure of that, Manuel?"

"All their best thought-of and most popular writers, my dear, are unanimous upon the point; and their Scramin have passed any number of laws, and their oil merchants have founded a guild especially to prosecute such references. No, there is, to be sure, a dwindling sect which favors putting up with what babies you may find in the cabbage patch, but all really self-respecting people when in need of offspring arrange to be visited by the stork."

"It is certainly a remarkable custom, but it sounds convenient if you can manage it," said Nisfer. "What I want is the baby, though, and of course we must try to get the baby in the manner of the Philistines if you know that manner, for I am sure I have no wish to offend anybody."

Stork Is Willing

So Manuel summoned the stork and reminded him of the three wishes which had been promised when Manuel saved the stork's life; and Manuel said that he would take a son for each wish. The stork thought that this could be arranged.

"Not this morning, though, as you suggest, for indebted as I am to you, Dom Manuel, I am also a very busy bird. No, I have any number of orders that were put in months before yours, and I must follow system in my business, for you have no notion what elaborate and exact accounts are frequently required by the married men that receive invoices from me."

"Come now," says Manuel, "do you be accommodating, remembering how I once saved your life from the eagle, and my wife and I will order all our babies now, and spare you the trouble of keeping any accounts whatever, so far as we are concerned."

The stork finally said that by a little management he could let them have one of the children within a month or so, and would give promissory notes for the others.

Manuel and Nisfer were fishing by the river bank late one evening, when they saw the stork arriving with the baby. The baby was suspended from the bird's beak in blue wrappings, so that they knew at a glance it was a girl. Later in the evening Manuel went to Nisfer and found her sewing.

Necessary Sewing

"My dear, this will not do at all," he said, "for you ought to be in bed with the newborn child, as is the custom with the mothers of Philistia."

"What nonsense!" says Nisfer, "when I have to be changing every one of the pink bows on Melicent's caps for blue bows."

"Still, Nisfer, it is eminently necessary for us to be placating the Philistines in all respects, in this delicate matter of your having a baby."

Nisfer grumbled but obeyed.

Two Murder Tales

Craig Kennedy Again—A House of Horrors

THE FILM MYSTERY. By Arthur B. Reeve. Published by Harper & Bros.

THE CROOKED HOUSE. By Brandon Fleming. Published by Edward J. Moe.

CRAIG KENNEDY, Arthur B. Reeve's famous detective hero, is just as infallible as ever in The Film Mystery. A moving picture actress, Stella Lamar, is fatally poisoned. Shortly afterward another actor in the same film drama dies in the same way, and an attempt is made on the life of still another character. The criminal in every case displays a remarkable knowledge of the subtlest and deadliest poisons and a diabolical skill in committing his crimes behind a thick screen of concealment.

But Kennedy is the murderer's master, both in scientific learning and in natural wit, and the whole network of criminal intrigue is cleared up in highly dramatic fashion in the concluding chapter, where Kennedy employs the negatives of moving picture films in revealing the murders which have been committed. The Film Mystery is full of exciting and baffling situations. Arthur B. Reeve hasn't written a better scientific detective story for a long time.

THERE is a suggestion of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in The Crooked House. The sinister horror of madness broods over the story. The action centers about a mysterious mansion which is full of winding halls and passageways and which is surrounded by a garden that is a perfect maze of devious and confusing paths. In this garden a beautiful woman is found horribly murdered. It takes all the skill of a French detective to divert suspicion from an innocent man sorely pressed by circumstantial evidence and to track down the real murderer.

A piquant situation arises in the book because of the juxtaposition of two men, one of whom, really sane, believes that he is mad, while the other, thoroughly mad, gives a deceptive but convincing impression of sanity. The Crooked House is warranted to produce a large number of thrills, and the ending comes with the shock of genuine surprise.

By all means get a copy today of "The Mirrors of Downing Street," by a writer who calls himself "A Gentleman with a Duster." A book in which the anonymous author indulges in the frankest studies of a dozen of the great British leaders, who have made and are still making history. The New York Herald says: "Of fascinating interest, with a style pungent and epigrammatic. . . does not contain a dull line. . . there is scarcely one of the great controversies which agitated British political waters during and since the war that is not touched on. . . the author is partisan in his friendships, and he is a good hater, so his work is altogether engaging." Estimates of Lloyd George, Lord Carnock, Lord Fisher, Mr. Asquith, Lord Northcliffe, Balfour, Lord Kitchener, Lord Robert Cecil, Winston Churchill, Lord Haldane, Lord Rhonda, Lord Inverforth, Lord Leverhulme. At All-Booksellers \$2.50. Putnam, New York.



JAMES BRANCH CABELL, who has learned caution from past experiences with the censor

A Man and His Books

Through the Printed Page the World's Great Minds Talk With Us

By Harry Emerson Fosdick, Professor of Practical Theology in Union Theological Seminary

IT IS a great pity that when all of us are reading so much of the time, when, as some one has put it, "life is a blur of printed paper," there are not more who make it a religious duty to acquaint themselves with the great dynamic literature of the spiritual life.

When one considers how much we do read, how reading creeps in at all the cracks and crannies of our lives, how our ideas are shaped, our views formed, our suggestions by our reading, how the possibilities that lie in books to ruin or exalt man's life are open for a few pennies to all of us, one must agree that few questions are more important to the culture of the spiritual life than the question of a man and his books.

Great books are the finest of all democrats. They come to us all alike on equal terms. If St. Augustine, or Wesley, or Phillips Brooks were alive, only a few of us could see them and hardly any of us could have private seances with them. But this is not true of their books. Though we are so poor that we must buy them in paper covers, they will all be there. They will sit down in our plain rooms and talk with us. If at first we do not understand them, they will repeat their message again and again. If we forget their truth, we can come back next evening and they will tell it to us once more.

If kings and queens were waiting to talk with us, if noblemen and princes were holding audience till we should come, how long would we stop to barter

mind that is born of doing right and following the path of duty. If I can be of use to my country and the cause of justice and freedom I am perfectly willing to give my strength, my mind and my life, knowing that life who gave me life and has watched over and guided me so far will still bless me and look after me. Without this knowledge I would fear to face the bullets and shells of the Germans, but as it is I will not be afraid. I may never reach the front; I hope not—as I do not want the war to last that long—but if we do I know that will be followed by the prayers of my father and mother. Pray that I may be brave and do my duty, and if I fall that it may be doing my duty. Do not sorrow for me, but rather be glad that your son has been privileged to give his life for his country and his king and in the service of his God."

Maple Leaf Heroes

Canadian Bank of Commerce Honors Its Soldiers

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT, Volume 1. Edited by Charles Lyon Foster and William Smith Lamb. The Canadian Bank of Commerce, Toronto.

MORE to be desired than the scholarly writings of generals, strategists and tacticians are the written impressions and records of experiences under fire of the men who obeyed and fought. Canada's response to the call of the motherland in 1914 was instantaneous and, as is ever the case, the most eager of those who were ready to go to France were young men of good position in family and in business. Blood always tells, and so it was that the Canadian Bank of Commerce was heavily drained at the start. "Four hundred and sixty of its best young men went forth in the first year of fighting."

We have, open before us, the beautifully prepared tribute of the Canadian Bank of Commerce to its heroes, Letters From the Front. The book is labeled Volume I, and we look forward to the coming of the second volume with the greediness of a keen anticipation. For this is a soldier's book, filled from cover to cover with letters sent home to Canada from all England's far-sweeping battle lines. Originally published in pamphlets, these letters are here sheafed in one whole, a body of war literature unique and of extreme value. A man who can read the pages of Letters from the Front, papers filled with the glorious ardor of youth, devotion to right, love of country and scorn for death, without feeling a quickened beat of his heart, is a graven image. For there is more of the reality of the late war in this single book than in a hundred and one other books, so-called "experiences," that we have read.

A Red Textbook

CREATIVE REVOLUTION. By Eden and Cedar Paul. Published by Thomas Seltzer.

THE most important doctrines of this work by two English Communists. The authors repudiate altogether the conception of a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. They insist upon the necessity for violent revolution, accomplished through the instrumentality of the most radical section of the proletariat. They revile the institution of democracy as an obsolete institution of capitalism, and extol the merits of the working class state, based upon the rule of Soviets. There is very little likelihood that Messrs. Eden and Cedar Paul will ever see their extreme theories put into practice, either in England or in this country; but their book possesses some informative value as a compilation of Red ideas.

Business Letters

MODERN BUSINESS WRITING. By Charles Harvey Raymond. Published by The Century Company.

THE psychology of business correspondence is illustrated with numerous concrete examples in this comprehensive work. In form letters the author shows how to apply for a job, how to approach buyers and sellers, how to "boost" a product, how to collect bad debts. The book contains many useful hints about advertising.



JANE BURR, whose The Passionate Spectator, first published in England, caused much comment in London

The Passionate Spectator

London Professed To Be Shocked by American Woman's Book

THE PASSIONATE SPECTATOR. By Jane Burr. Published by Thomas Seltzer.

THE PASSIONATE SPECTATOR, the work of an American, Jane Burr, was first issued in London, whence come reports that London was a little shocked and stirred and gave to its author the sobriquet "The Mad Woman of the West."

It does not seem likely that London, with its own considerable group of outspoken women writers, could have been greatly startled by this, save for a certain quality of naivete in the story that heightens the turgid effect.

Until she is thirty the woman of the story lives the virtuous existence of a middle-class wife. She has three children and is an ardent mother. When all three children die of infantile paralysis she has a break-down, and then wakes up to find that her life is dull and her husband more so. At this juncture her younger sister appears seeking a refuge from her husband, whom she has left. She has radical ideas on the economic independence of women and her freedom to live her own life, and she communicates them to her sister.

From this point the woman's new life begins. She leaves her husband and comes to New York, and in New York she finds a varied experience in

sex. Her first lover abandons her to marry a rich woman, and in her wretchedness she goes down grade rapidly, until she is a drug addict. At this lowest point an early lover, a physician, turns up, persuades her to marry him, and cures her. But she is not in love with him, and when he leaves for a long business trip she is easily interested in other men. Her affections are then engaged by a young promoter, a persuasive young Irishman, whom she accepts as her lover, planning to divorce her husband to marry him, until she finds with horror that he has engaged himself to marry a rich woman and is quite satisfied to keep their relationship what it is. This is the last blow to her idealism, and she decides on suicide. She has only one illusion left, one person remains her beacon light. This is her saintly Aunt Caroline, an elderly woman, whose life has been a pattern of sweetness and nobility. Before shooting herself she goes for a sort of final union to her, seeking a refuge from her husband, whom she has left. She has radical ideas on the economic independence of women and her freedom to live her own life, and she communicates them to her sister.

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English Leaders

Downing Street Personalities Sketched

THE MIRRORS OF DOWNING STREET. By a Gentleman with a Duster. Published by G. P. Putnam's Sons.

THE anonymous author of these pungent character sketches, reviewed at length in The Tribune when the book appeared in England, evidently believes that English statesmen would be better off if they could see themselves in the mirrors of honest criticism. He holds his duster vigorously, and some of the distinguished figures whom he describes fare rather badly at his hands.

He believes that Mr. Lloyd George's idealism has become considerably tarnished during his long tenure of office. He feels that the Premier has suffered a moral let-down, that he is more interested in preserving his power than in preserving his principles, that he has become somewhat corrupted by constant association with third-rate men. Arthur Balfour is shown in a very unfavorable light. He is represented as a cold, selfish, unsympathetic man, with an insatiable hunger for public office.

The incurable mediocrity of Mr. Asquith is rather neatly hit off in the following sentences:

"Nothing in Mr. Asquith's career is more striking than his fall from power; it was as if a pin had dropped.

"Great men do not at any time fall in so ignominious a fashion, much less when the fate of a great empire is in the balance."

The author is rather sympathetic in his sketch of Winston Churchill. However, he feels that this statesman's brilliance misfires because of his lack of firm purpose and conviction. He recalls the fact that General William Booth of the Salvation Army once told Mr. Churchill that he stood in need of conversion.

"That old man," says the author, "was a notable judge of character."

Lord Haldane and Lord Leverhulme perhaps suffer least from the strokes of the duster. Lord Haldane is praised for his splendid equanimity in the face of a torrent of undeserved abuse; and the author believes that the govern-

What Is a Moon Calf?

Floyd Dell Defines the Title of His Much Discussed Book

By Floyd Dell

"MOON-CALF" is an old English word dating back to Elizabethan times. It is applied by one of the drunken sailors to Caliban, "The Tempest." It signifies literally a person under the influence of the moon; an oddity, a green character, a "moon-struck fellow," and a "calf" to boot—a raw, awkward youth. Every one goes through the period of "calf-love"; the "moon-calf" will always retain some of the awkwardness and impracticable idealism of that period throughout life. I should define a "moon-calf," briefly, as an awkward young man with a touch of intellectual lunacy.

The moon is traditionally the mother of all queer fancies. A young man who is more interested in ideas than in baseball is a child of the moon rather than a citizen of the ordinary daylight world. According to Baude-laire, who discourses upon The Gifts of the Moon in one of his Poems in

Prose, the child of the moon will always love "the place where he shall never be, the lover whom he shall never see."

His nature is less like that of the friendly and faithful dog than like that of "the cat that walks by itself."

In Mark Twain's The Prince and the Pauper, the crowd of street urchins crowns the Prince "Fofofo the First, King of the Moon-Calves."

The moon-calf, with his queer and Utopian ideas, being a citizen of Nowhere (as the word Utopia signifies), and devoid of ordinary loyalties to established institutions, may become a politically dangerous figure in times of social upheaval. Thus Carlyle uses the word to describe a young French Terrorist in his History of the French Revolution.

"This huge moon-calf of sanctulism, staggering about, as young calves do, is not mockable only, and soft like another calf; but terrible, too, if you prick it; and through its hideous nostrils blows fire!"

Turkish Memoirs

Secrets of Downfall of the Ottoman Empire Revealed

MEMOIRS OF ISMAIL KEMAL BEY. Edited by Somerville Story. With a Preface by William Morton Fullerton. Published by E. P. Dutton & Co.

THE causes which led to the downfall of the Ottoman Empire are clearly set forth in this interesting volume of memoirs. Ismail Kemal Bey was at once an Albanian patriot and a Turkish statesman. Although he was first of all loyal to Albania, the land of his birth, he served the government at Constantinople over a long period of years and did what he could to bolster up the rapidly falling power and prestige of the Sultan.

During the last half of the nineteenth century Turkey, hopelessly backward alike in political and industrial development, was saved from dissolution only by the mutual fears and jealousies of the great European powers. On one occasion Constantinople was saved from capture by the Russians only by the intervention of an English fleet. The author, who occupied various administrative posts, fought constantly against corruption and decadence and presented a long memorandum to Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid, with many suggestions for reform.

All his efforts were fruitless, however, and matters became still worse with the accession to power of the Young Turks, who practically made Turkey a German colony and alienated the subject races by initiating a program of violent and injudicious Ottomanization. Forced to choose between loyalty to Turkey and loyalty to his native country and put himself at the head of a movement for independence at the time of the First Balkan War. Albanian aspirations, however, received slight consideration at the hands of the powers, who assigned the incompetent German prince, William of Wied, to rule over a mutilated and partitioned country.

Ismail Kemal Bey spent the last years of his life in exile, and his countrymen are now reported to be making an almost hopeless struggle for autonomy in the midst of Greek, Italian and Jugo-Slav intrigues.

The memoirs describe an active, colorful career; they also throw some light upon the complicated course of Balkan history. The chapters dealing with the picturesque native customs of the Albanians are especially vivid and interesting.

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