

A First Novel Full of Business

THE other day a surgeon read us his first poem and all we could find to say was that it showed great love of the woods. Mr. Henry G. Aikman's first novel, *The Groper*, shows great love of business and does not, as do most business novels, confine itself to one line. Dry goods, real estate, automobiles and a smattering of advertising and speculation go to make it one of the most completely commercial novels of recent years. Lee Hillquit is the hero's name, and a fine name it is for the purpose. He is a young visionary about to start for the city when the story opens, and although the balance of our attention is held toward the business end, there is enough human interest to save Mr. Aikman from ruin in his earliest fictional endeavor.

Lee is not made to bite the dust. He has a small allowance from his mother, which saves him from clinging to bakery windows and falling into the bread line, but he does come near enough to actual want to show how little earnest effort and upright character, ideals and latent ability help in tight places. His friends desert him. College mates refuse him help when he needs to be helped and lead him astray when he doesn't need that; his love affair comes to a tragic end and his mother, of course, dies. There are not more than two or three cases on record where the mother of a hero in a business novel lives beyond the middle of the book. Luck seems to be against Lee until he meets a wealthy young widow who inserts him as a link in her chain of lovers and sets him up in her dry goods establishment, where he is able to work off some of the enthusiasm which has been frustrated by lack of opportunity.

Hereafter follows a long mixture of business and society. Lee ploughs ahead until there has grown up a gigantic fortune on the foundation of his distasteful affair with his benefactress. The fruits of success are both sweet and sour. Friends who once cut him publicly cringe at his slightest word. He begins making addresses to young men on "How to Succeed" and establishes an automobile company which he insists upon having named after himself. This was at the time of the tremendous automobile boom in Detroit, when, as Mr. Aikman says, "the could-have-put-money-in-the-Ford-company individuals waxed as prevalent as Mayflower ancestors." On the day when the first Hillquit touring car was finished Lee decided upon a triumphal tour of the city, and at a hoarse blast from the factory whistle prepared to make his start:

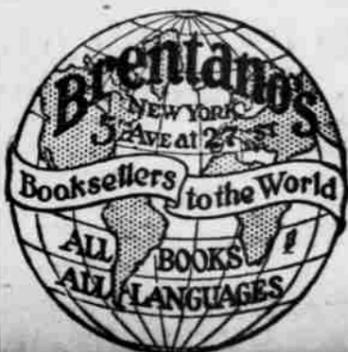
"It was purely incidental that Lee could not, for the life of him, make the car budge. The newspapers were induced to make no mention of the fact and the moving picture photographers obligingly 'killed' their film from the point where Lee, at the conclusion of the preliminary ceremonies, resumed his top hat and clambered into the refractory automobile."

Rather a nice bit of satire, and useful as indicating the direction of the wind. The automobile company failed providentially and Lee was a new man, having had the big, sobering smashup which every man needs. The widow had already been disposed of, and he selected a running mate fit for the job, and, having finished groping, prepared to do battle with life in clear eyed earnest.

THE GROPER. BY HENRY G. AIKMAN.
Bonis & Liveright.

The Other Side of the Wall, maiden effort of a new American novelist, Henry Justin Smith, will be published September 27 by Doubleday, Page & Co. It has already reminded a critic of Frank Norris.

Booth Tarkington's future dignity as Dean of American Letters in succession to Mr. Howells has been forecast by a New York newspaper. "Who seconds this nomination?" ask his publishers. We do, and if given a chance we would make a speech about it!



The Author in the House



HER pen name is Jean Roy, her book is *Fields of the Fatherless* (Doran) and she is a member of the household of the "mccenister" of the Old West Kirk, Greenock, Scotland, in a capacity that will appear from his deposition:

"20 May, 1919.

"I guarantee that the photograph enclosed with an article on 'Jean Roy' is an authentic portrait of 'Jean Roy' who has been employed as a domestic servant in my home for several years.

"ADAM CURRIE,
"Minister North Parish, Greenock."

An American M. D. in War

MAJOR HAROLD M. HAYS of the Medical Corps of the United States Army served three months as a medical officer with the British Expeditionary Force between November, 1917, and February, 1918. He has described his experiences in an extremely entertaining little book with the singular title, *Cheerio!* This word is the British Tommies' colloquial equivalent for "Hail and Farewell."

Cheerio! is the kind of a "war book" we used to get after the war was well under way—a personal narrative of a man new to war who was undergoing ways of living and of working totally different from anything most of us knew. Much of what Major Hays has written here, particularly of the work of the medical officers in the field and of the cheerful stoicism of the British soldier when wounded, is now familiar. But what gives his text distinction is his descriptions of the personal hardships of the officers in the mere routine of living and trying to keep clean.

For example, here is his description of his method of shaving when the weather was so cold that the only things he took off when he went to bed were his boots: "I adopted a system of shaving in bed, which all of them [his brother officers] laughed at at first but adopted later on. I must have looked funny, for I wore a khaki knitted helmet over my head and face and wrapped a plaid Irish shawl around my shoulders which I kept in place with a horse blanket safety pin. The officers called me Peary because I looked like the north pole. I would lift my helmet off my face and in a semi-sitting position get out my shaving soap, razor and brush. My tin cup held the hot water—pretty cold by the time I got at it. I'd lather my face, place my mirror between my knees and, balancing myself with one hand behind me, screw my face tight and run the razor over it. In a few days everybody was doing it."

The narrator's induction into tea drinking came very hard to him, but he "gradually fell into the tea habit and became such an *habitué* that my stomach rang for its tea at 4 o'clock every afternoon. I even took a cup before I got out of bed in the morning." His descriptions of trying to keep clean up to the British standard, which he says is higher than ours, are quite Elizabethan in their frankness. He has a profound admiration for the courtesy and kindness of the British officers, and he tells with gusto how he called down a bumptious American for rudeness to his commanding officer. Par-

For the article mentioned we are indebted to Miss Rita Richmond, via "Jean Roy's" American publishers. "Active in housework," Miss Richmond writes, "she yet finds time to type all her writings and one hears her often like some fairy cobbling leprechaun at work on his fairy shoon, rapidly tapping her dreams into shape." Something in her face, despite difference of features, suggested Charlotte Bronte to Miss Richmond.

particularly enjoyable is his description of a New Year's Eve dinner with champagne at the famous Josephine's in Amiens, departing from which one of the officers exclaimed:

"Ain't this an awful war! Our loved ones at home, no doubt, are worrying themselves sick about us—poor self-sacrificing men who are spending a dreary New Year's Eve in this cold, cruel country, trying to keep warm in the campfire's soothing glow, trying to bear the awful hunger with a heart full of courage, trying to smile in the face of war's grim reality. I'll bet my missus is so full of tears she can't even swallow a glass of champagne. And we—?"

CHEERIO! BY MAJOR HAROLD M. HAYS,
M. C., U. S. A. Alfred A. Knopf.

Prof. Jastrow's Critique.

(Continued from Preceding Page.)

encouraging Zionist aspirations. Reports of protests from the Mohammedan natives of Palestine and from the Christians of Syria against any plans for the organization of their country as a "Jewish State," together with rumors of the rise of a wave of more active opposition on the part of the natives to the endeavors of political Zionists to buy up large domains, justify the belief that the Peace Conference will place Palestine under a mandatory Power—probably Great Britain and possibly the United States—and so far as Zionism is concerned will content itself with some innocuous resolutions favoring the establishment of Jewish agricultural and industrial colonies and promising protection to those colonies, with perhaps local autonomy.

Political Zionists imbued with the optimism and the propagandist zeal of Mr. Sokolow will no doubt look upon such action as the triumph of the Zionist cause and will probably organize jubilee celebrations, but the more sober spirits among them will recognize—as will the world in general—that political Zionism after two and a half decades will have run its natural course. The political aspects of Zionism, which are now in the ascendant, will recede into the background and will give way to purely economic efforts to promote the welfare of the Jewish colonies in Palestine and thereby advance also the general prosperity of that land.

VII.

Despite big volumes on the "History of Zionism" the phantasy of a "Jewish State" will become a phantom, the ghostly outlines of which will gradually fade from

A Serious Cloak and Suit Novel

"MEET Mr. Furinski, Mr. Slavon-ski, Mr. Freund, Mr. Mayer and Mr. Rubenstein"—in Corinne Lowe's story of *Saul*. Saul is Mr. Furinski. The story is Potash and Perlmutter treated dead seriously—a whole book full of serge and suede and exclusive models without a laugh in it. The result is not exhilarating. Everything that is true, unfortunately, is not exhilarating. A women's wear catalogue might be written in story form, and it would not be interesting, although it might be fiction.

Saul rises from the Rivington street tenement by the way of Winotzky's shop, where as a boy he picks rags, to be master of his own machine and make his own exclusive designs and have his own exclusive models. How far Saul goes may be realized when he is seen on the deck of the Paris bound steamer conversing elegantly with Faith Severance, the beautiful "bayer." Miss Severance tells Saul, "there is something quattrociento about you—early Italian, you know." In fact, he suggests "a little portrait of Botticelli's I always remember." She asks Saul if he does not think that fun is dynamic. She is also reminded of something or other about Benvenuto Cellini. Is it to be wondered that "something inside Saul wheeled pleasantly"?

But this is the nearest that the story approaches to any dynamic fun. Saul marries Channah, through the marriage broker. He works hard and is honest, and honesty even in the women's wear trade, although it has its temporary setbacks, proves in the end to be sound policy. Channah is a great help to Saul. It is Channah who hits upon the strange idea of "correlation" in women's wear. The idea is that if it is known, for example, that skirts are to be short, shoe manufacturers should shrewdly infer that shoes will be long or high, and accordingly. Whereas it had generally been supposed that what gave piquancy to women's styles in shoes and skirts was the uncertainty as to whether the twain would ever meet!

Miss Lowe's training for her novel has evidently been adequate, since the information is self-provided that at one time she was on the advertising staff of a department store and at another time edited a woman's page. But the homely proverb springs to mind upon reading *Saul* that you can't make a bead bag out of pretzels.

SAUL. BY CORINNE LOWE. The James A. McCann Company.

"Had O. Henry not been America's greatest short story writer, the chances are that he would have been one of our most humorous newspaper cartoonists," confide his publishers, under heavy seal. The opinion exists that he was neither.

our vision. Political Zionism, which, through the fortuitous circumstance that the future of Palestine is involved in the problems arising out of the war, looms up at present as one of the questions of the day, will hardly be a question of tomorrow. There will remain, however, the incrustated doctrine of orthodox Judaism looking to a restoration of Israel as a religious nation, "a kingdom of priests and a holy people," through Divine intervention—not through a Peace Conference—just as orthodox Christians will look forward to such a miraculous restoration as the precursor of the second coming of Christ whom the Jews once rejected and whom they will then accept. Such dreams will not be affected by the collapse of political Zionism.

HISTORY OF ZIONISM (1600-1918). BY NAHUM SOKOLOV. With an introduction by the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour. Volume I. Longmans, Green & Co.

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