

CANADANOVELIST FINDS ROMANCE IN SMALL TOWN

OUR LITTLE LIFE, By J. G. Sims. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

Reviewed by HILDEGARDE HAWTHORNE.

THIS is a second book by a writer new to us, a Canadian woman. Its pages reveal a keen, quiet understanding of humanity, warmed by humor and tenderness. In a way, this is a "Main Street" story, being placed in a small town of eastern Canada called Regalia. It concerns itself with the fortunes of a small group of persons living in a run-down, dismal row of buildings known as the Penelope Flats. And it looks out upon Canada through the eyes of one of these, a man of culture who has failed to find anything save want and struggle in the new land, and who passes judgment on the country and the people. But it is a better balanced book than "Main Street." For in the forlornness of the setting, in the drabness of the characters, lives something worth while, something fine indeed. The little seamstress who occupies the position of heroine is a common little creature, perhaps, with slight education and less breeding. But she is touching, she is lovable, she is admirable in her courage, in her kindness of heart, in her perception of good in others, in the unconscious giving of herself to any need that calls to her.

The book is written with an infinite attention to detail. There is too much of this, yet it remains interesting, for it is never meaningless. The least gesture, the condition of the weather, a yellow leaf falling from a tree, puddles in the sidewalk, the cracks in the wall of a Penelope room, the look of an untidy kitchen, the thoughts wandering through the minds of the characters, what they say, what they do, why they say and do these things, all these matters are set down carefully. Miss Katie McGee's talk is transcribed with all its peculiarities, its mingling of Irish and Canadian brogue, and this does not make easy reading. It might have been better to suggest it merely, and leave the reader to imagine its sound. Yet with all this the book remains extraordinarily readable. It evokes your sympathy, you warm to it. You are glad to know Katie, glad that she knows Robert Fulton, glad that he has found her and her unguessed love of him.

As you go on reading the many pages of this book you understand the truth of the old French saying that to comprehend entirely is to love. It is in this that "Our Little Life" is greater than "Main Street." In the latter novel there is no true comprehension. The town and its people are observed from an outside, from an unkind viewpoint. It is the picture given to you by an observer, who considers himself and his judgments as better, wiser and cleverer than the characters of his story. It is dislike and contempt that are the salient features of the work. Not so here. For though we are aware—through the quoted portions of Fulton's book as he reads them to his friend, the seamstress, who does not understand what he writes, but who does understand his need of human sympathy, and who gives him all she has of that as she listens—though we are aware of criticism of Canada that is certainly not flattering, that in its arraignments reaches many of the conclusions of "Main Street" in regard to the middle West, yet the final reactions are those of hope and affection. Take this passage:

"Canada's greatness lies to a very large extent in her absolute ignorance of what she lacks; that is the romantic side of her. She lacks nearly all the things that make life beautiful, and she is magnificently unaware of the fact. The immigrants see that she lacks them—see it dimly, feel it, cannot get it into words. They have come from the old lands hoping to be able to lay hold of just those things which they have looked at from afar all through their European lives. It is the vague longing for something that is not in Canada at all—a longing that often translates itself into mere grab and hold fast and loud talk—and the disappointment that underlies this life of theirs overseas, that gives the oddly romantic flavor which one is conscious of in so many of them. They miss the aristocratic view of life. They have never been sharers in it—only onlookers; they have grown, quite rightly, to resent it; yet all the same, once away from it, they miss it, and no amount of mere material prosperity can quite make up for it."

So Robert, reading from his unpublished manuscript. And Miss McGee, listening, dimly getting what he means nods her head. Yes, she remembers her mother, who came from Ireland; remembers her ways, her voice, her dignity, her reverence. But she loves Canada, though she cannot put the why of it into words. And meanwhile "Intro Miss McGee's little room and came the voices of the coming citizens of Canada. Robert sat reading—pouring forth his ideas, his theories of the New World, in which he was such an unwilling citizen; and there, outside, where one could almost reach it with an outstretched hand, was the real thing. The citizen who was going to mould Canada. The thing that was going to make the country—what it was and is and shall be. The children laughed and wept and shouted . . . but whatever they did, they did what a thousand Canada books and hundred thousand Roberts would never do. They created life."

But Robert goes on with his analysis, his arraignments. He pictures the workers coming to Canada, getting ease, getting money, taking command. Losing manners, not finding the fine things of life, growing loud and overbearing, pretending not to be working-men at all. But he realizes that this is only one of the steps upward to a workable conditions and persons. And that it behooves those who want to have sympathy for this workingman in his time of quick-found prosperity as in that of his pre-



Hildegard Hawthorne

ceding adversity. Only this is granted to be more difficult. The fault, then, is not with the workers. Blatant, unmannered anger after things of little worth. But with those who should see and do not, should comprehend and will not.

This is but one strain in the many that are twisted to make the story of "Our Little Life." It suffices to show the human quality of the book. It is so utterly human, so warm with life, page after page, and that is what makes it so attractive. It is also so self-conscious. Perhaps because it is so quick with consciousness of others. What is more, there is not a taint of sentimentality in the thing. No, not though Miss McGee takes the dying prostitute into her room, closes her eyes when she dies, prays for her in St. Patrick's Church. Not though the evil and the low come for help, come for

sympathy, and get it, get it untrinkly and without stint. Miss McGee knows them but knows them vile, indeed. What of it? She disapproves heartily enough of the badness, but it never enters her head that she should draw her skirts away when aid is needed.

"It's a queer world," she says, musing on what life brings and takes away. Queer indeed. And this unpretentious novel makes you see it, in its queerness, its bigness, its sadness, its struggle, makes you see its flashes of beauty, its wild grandeur. Like life, the book has a quality of heartbreak, and the tears will stand in your eyes as you follow the fortunes of the poor little sewing woman, and of Robert Fulton, the failure. Never mind. Read it, for it is worth reading. And though it is sad, it is not depressing, for the beauty of art is in it, the beauty of truth.

From valet to general

THE KINGDOM ROUND THE CORNER. By Coningsby Dawson. Cosmopolitan Book Company.

LOOK at all the men for whom the war was a social leg-up," says Terry, the leading lady (or one of them) of this story. "They were plumbers and bank clerks and dentists in 1914; by the end of 1918 they were Majors and Colonels and Brigadiers. They didn't know where the West End was till

specimen under consideration in this novel was once a valet in the service of Lord Taberley. Now he is a General. His lordship, known as "Tabs," is engaged to a very young girl, Terry, and returns expecting to marry her, but finds that his former valet has "cut him out." Obviously "Tabs" can't honorably tell his rival's secret, though he threatens to do so. And Terry imagines herself really in love with Gen. Braithwaite, although unobscurely suspicious of his past, and aware that he has, in fact, lied to her.

One expects spectacular results from this situation, but it rather fizzles. Braithwaite, although a General, remains something of a "blunder," and "Tabs" is a vaguely uneasy, futile person. He falls into the clutches of a peculiar war widow, who has already had three husbands in four years and is apparently ready for more. The valet-general drops out of the story, which follows the rather tenuous amatory experiments of "Tabs." The solution leaves the girl Terry high and dry, as "Tabs" is annexed by a quite group noble lady, who decides to marry him at their third meeting. Braithwaite also returns to his "class" and marries Ann, his former fiancée, who is Lord Taberley's maid servant. Thus everybody is happy. It is a seriously meant study of topsy-turvy social conditions and is interestingly analytical in spots, but not very impressive as a whole. Doubtless there is foundation for the implied indictment of British society in the process of readjustment after the war, but one feels that, possibly Mr. Dawson's people are exceptional rather than typical folk; at most passing accidents of the day.

Love and art did not mix

THE WINE OF LIFE. By Arthur Stringer. Alfred A. Knopf.

Reviewed by GEORGE KENT.

WHEN a man and woman stand locked in each other's arms in the last flickering of a motion picture reel, it behooves the onlookers to have a sigh, for this is the "fade out" blessed by custom and made symbolic of happiness by a long series of precedents.

Storrow and his wife are living side by side in apparent content when the "Wine of Life" flickers out, but it is an ending which weighs upon the heart. It is not significant of happiness. Rather does the reader hark back to that passionate and sorrowful episode in Storrow's career which was made up of jumbling discordances.

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Torrie, she of the earlier episode, was a woman of the city, pleasure loving, who as a member of the chorus has grown accustomed to a round of pleasure, to variety, and the dissolutions and philandering of stage life. It was her misfortune to fall in love with Owen Storrow, an austere "Canuck," a lover of freedom who yet preserved within his soul a tormenting and vigilant Puritanism. They loved each other, but the unceasing conflict between them proved that it is possible to love intensely and enduringly yet quarrel without intermission. Something was lacking in both, some middle ground, above and beyond love, upon which they could conduct the business of living together amicably.

The story bears one along breathlessly—a continuous succession of rapid. The acquaintance and love—they happened almost simultaneously—between Storrow and Torrie, commence with a fight. A great bulk of a man calls Torrie a —, and Storrow, aroused, leaps down a fire escape, steps into a magnificent fight. Torn and bleeding, he stumbled into Torrie's room, and love came, swift and devastating. They find each other again and marry.

Between them and their happiness, however, parade the skeletons of Torrie's past, old amours, admirers in the flesh, letters of love, trinkets, clandestine meetings. Storrow cannot overlook or forget them. Like some foul medicine, his wife's past will not down. Perhaps if he could have forgotten these bygone escapades they might have been happy in the passing hour, but with Storrow's upbringing and makeup it was impossible. The past had given his wife habits and freedoms which pricked his memory and Puritan conscience when he with jolting pains had ignored them into slumber.

The course of their wretched life twists in and out among many boulders. Storrow cruelly beats an overcast past admirer of his wife, and not many weeks later strikes Torrie herself into unconsciousness. There are separations and escapades, but love persists. They leave the city together, but the tedium of Storrow's Canadian farm wears upon the nerves of his wife.

Storrow is too stiff, Torrie is too flexible—they were never made to stand together.

Krassler, a theatrical manager, presents the solution of their problem. "Divorce Torrie and permit me to make a star of her," is the substance of his proposal. So Torrie forgets her love life and becomes a star. Storrow marries his housekeeper in Canada—a stolid, taciturn woman. They do not bother each other. The face of the lithe, animal bodied Torrie, as she is last seen, is a "thin face, a milky white face with wide set eyes and full lips slightly touched with revolt." Storrow settles down to his farm work "and as the months wore on he learned to think less often of the past." No mention is made of his art, and although we are not certain, it appears that the rupture with Torrie, temporarily at least, dried up the creative forces of life within.

Several of the descriptive passages are excellent, especially that which introduces Torrie to the reader. The author is an ingenious and resourceful technician. The story might perhaps have been told in fewer pages. It leaves one with a surfeit of fling, but the reader's concern with the figures of the story never wanes. The minor characters are not particularly well drawn. Fannie Atwell, the good-hearted chorus girl, is interesting at times, but the slang which flows from her lips and which is reported to be the argot of her kind, is that melange of slang which only a genuine hobo or literary man ever acquires.

Two for boys

THE GOLDEN WEST BOYS, "INJUN" AND "WHITEY" STRIKE OUT FOR THEMSELVES. By William S. Hart. Houghton, Mifflin Company.

OUR LITTLE CRUSADER COUSIN OF LONG AGO. By Evalene Stein. Page Company.

THIS is the second "episode" in the boys' "Golden West Series" that our screen idol, William S. Hart, or "Bill," as he is usually called, has written for boys. It is an attractive story of ranch life with cattle rustlers thrown in. It tells of the adventures of two boys, heroes of course, who go off on a hunting expedition into the mountains, where they stumble upon a gold mine, take part in an Indian war, meet with grizzlies and come in contact with a former enemy. They come through it all, nevertheless, without even the sign of a scratch. It is a lively story.

Evalene Stein's book, "Our Little Crusader Cousin of Long Ago," takes both boys and girls away from New York, the West, etc., and gives us the cover of some ancient and interesting material—that of the numberless crusades into the Holy Land, some of which were successful and others that were not. The two boy heroes of this story were pages, Hugh serving King Richard of the Lion Heart and Raymond attending Count William de Praterles of France. These boys have adventures that would make the boy of to-day envy them.

REVIEWS OF NEW FICTION



Stacy Aumonier

Nine short tales with a preface

THE GOLDEN WINDMILL AND OTHER STORIES. By Stacy Aumonier. The Macmillan Company.

Reviewed by XAVIER LYNDON.

O H, that mine enemy would write a book—of short stories," parodies Mr. Aumonier in an interesting preface to his volume. Addressing the reader of short stories he adds: "You are far more exacting than a reader of novels, or works of reference, or even histories, for the reason

created, the fault is more noticeable than it is in the work of the second raters whose carelessly sketched backgrounds do not lead one to expect anything big.

"The Little White Frock," the second best piece of work in the book, is the joyous story of a retired actor who lies beautifully and romantically about the good old days when he played opposite the adorable Sophie Wiles, who—but read it yourself. You'll like it.

"The Great Unimpressible" tells, with plenty of humor and a bit of con-

vincing pathos, the story of a Scotch lad who is unmoved when his girl fills him, when a German officer pokes a gun in his face and when other dire things happen to him, and who goes through life without shedding a tear until his dog is fattened by a steam roller.

There is more good stuff in The Golden Windmill than one finds in most books of short stories. Certainly Mr. Aumonier leaves one feeling that he does not write to make "copy," but rather because it is his function to spin yarns.

The Book Factory

By EDWARD ANTHONY.

SONNETS OF A BOOK REVIEWER.

IV.

"How to Develop Personality." By Tad Tobiaso, author of "Success," "Keep Smiling, Brother," "Be a Busy Bee."

And one or twenty others, more or less. A personality, the author tells, may be achieved by all. Despair not then.

Acquire a snappy handshake. That's what sells.

You're a man. Be breezy in your talk with men.

And always slap 'em on the back.

Keep your teeth clean and show 'em when you smile.

(Five minutes' practice daily gives he knock.)

Stand straight, walk gingerly and dress in style.

And in no time you'll be a sprightly lad, as trig as any in a collar ad.

V.

"Anthology of Modern Verse," compiled by Roger Canto. Roger, you are brave.

Your querson shall be this—by fifty wild unmentioned bards you shall be branded knave.

(Including me. You might have run a few.)

Of my pentameters, they're not so worse.

He who anthropologizes (job to rue), more trouble gathers than he gathers verse.

If ever I become an anthologist I'll mention everybody, good or bad. I shall not take the chance of being hissed.

Poets are dangerous persons when they're mad.

"All Conners' Manual of Verse" I'll dub it, and though you may, I'm sure the bards won't snub it.

VI.

Another small town novel showing that the burgher is a poor bewitched sort. Needless of reusing. His talk is fat.

The latest movie, how to cure a wart, or baseball is his topic. It is time.

We started a crusade to save his soul that wallows in these yevus-in loose-brogs stime.

You give him Einstein lessons, I'll cajole him into an appreciation of Good poetry. (I'll read him some of mine.)

All kinds of learning dull his throat we'll shove.

Until he is no longer dull, supine, until he knows as much as you or I and people take him for a City Guy!

IN WHICH WE STAND CORRECTED.

LONDON, April 30.

Have been reading "The Book Factory" with diligent regularity, but protest at the April 17 statement that "nut" isn't English as well as American slang. Nut, or rather "knut," means swell, high, muskammok, at least in the British Thesaurus.

Piccadilly knuts are world famous as the nuttiest of their species.

O. P. S.

Thanks for setting us right. O. P. S. Before we ever again refer to an expression as "typically American," which is what we called nut, we are going to consult the British Thesaurus, even if the expression be among those that most of us are wont to regard as native products, such as "poor fish," "snob," "till tell the world that way," the cop!" "How do you get that way?" Only in one instance are we sure that supposedly American term is American. We have reference to the colorful "rumbound." We know that this is American because when Mrs. Walter Sefton, the English satirical artist (better known as "Fish"), visited America recently she told us that this was the most delightfully original expression she had heard here. "It was worth coming all the way from England to hear it," she told us.

THE JOURNAL OF CARLO KNIGHT, FREE LANCE.

Monday. When I notice the headline "College Prof. Arrested for Making Boos," it occurred to me that one might call this profrangency. I send the observation to the editor of Mirth. It ought to be good for a dollar.

Tuesday. I make the most diplomatic remark of my career. Meeting Carson Newkirk, author of "Early Irish Sculpture," who asks me what I think of his book, I reply, "It is the best book I have never read."

"Sorry you haven't read it, young man," replied Newkirk, "but it's very gracious of you to put it that way. I'll send you an autographed copy."

Wednesday. Comes the autographed copy of "Early Irish Sculpture." I am more convinced than ever that Newkirk is a gentleman. I have reference to the fact that his inscription on the flyleaf, "To my friend, Carlo Knight," is pencil-written, making a neat erasure possible. You can always get a better price for a book when it looks new. If Andrew Peartree hadn't aprawled a heavy pen-and-ink signature over the flyleaf of that new novel of his that he gave me I could have realized at least 40c. more on it.

Thursday. I write an article called "Giants." It is a treatise on contemporary American writers. A few weeks after my piece appears the "giants" I mention will write articles calling me a mammoth. Everybody is doing it. Why not I? My thesaurus contains as many laudatory adjectives as the next fellow's. Moreover, my article is not as untruthful as you may think. What is the harm, for instance, in calling



Edward Anthony

250-pound Didston Lodestone, the well known realist, a giant? Friday. I have a conference with Mr. Fleck of Buckel's Bookshop in regard to the rhymed ads. I am writing for this well known concern. "I know you can give us what we want," Mr. Fleck tells me; "your OVERNIGHT hair tonic ads, were the best things of their kind I have ever seen. I used to think that the jingles used in advertising Longevity Breakfast Food, Thistle-down Mattresses and Resilient Rubber Heels were pretty good stuff, but they aren't in the same class with your work. Your copy has a literary touch that is unique in modern advertising. There must be a great demand for your work. I hope you will have sufficient time to devote to the campaign we have in mind."

"Of course, I'm a very busy man," I reply (for why diffusion him?). "and I may not be able to write as many ads, as you desire, but I'll let you have as many as I can. The cause is a worthy one and I will take this into consideration in plotting time to it."

Mr. Fleck thanks me profusely and we part with the understanding that, providing the work of my many other clients does not interfere, I will submit some sample copy to-morrow.

I return to my room on East Eleventh street, and finding none of my "many other clients" there to disturb me, I begin work on the ads, for Buckel's Bookshop.

Saturday. I call at Buckel's Bookshop with my first batch of copy. Needless to say, my work is enthusiastically received. Here is some of my work:

Sign for fiction section:

WHEN THE SUMMER SUNBEAMS SCORCH

IN A HAMMOCK ON YOUR PORCH,

READ IN IT BUCKEL'S FICTION BREEZY,

YOU CAN LAUGH AND TAKE LIFE EASY.

Sign for humorous department:

IF YOU DO NOT

FIND 'EM FUNNY,

BRING 'EM BACK

AND

GET YOUR MONEY.

Sign for farm and garden section:

BUY 'EM ERE YOU

PLANT YOUR SEEDS,

AND

YOU WON'T HAVE

ANY WEEDS.

Sign for show window:

IF THE BOOKS WE CARRY

BORE YOU,

WE'LL HAVE SOMETHING

WRITTEN FOR YOU.

William J. Locke is a man we'd like to meet. We want to ask him to lend us Paragot's velvet coat. Paragot, you will recall, is the gay old dog who traipsed through France with a fiddle and a pup in "The Beloved Vagabond." We've just bought a fiddle and a pup, and all we need before we pull a Paragot is the makeup. . . . By the way, the spirit of Paragot lives in Locke's new novel, "The Mountebank." That elegant portrait of him is from John O. London's Weekly.

There can be no sure peace in America while Europe is on the brink of war. Read BALKANIZED EUROPE

By Paul Scott Mower

N. Y. Times: "The best book yet printed on the most important European conditions."

N. Y. Herald: "A mine of understanding. . . invaluable."

25 at any bookstore or from

E. P. Dutton & Co., 581 6th Av., N. Y.

Green Apple Harvest

By SHEILA KAYE SMITH

Author of "Tamarisk Town," etc.

ROBERT J. COLE in the New York Herald says: "Green Apple Harvest is not a literary topic to be argued about. Read it, hear its music, breathe its air, live its life. . . . If this novel is not a work of genius it is hard to know where one may look for it in contemporary fiction."

The Literary Review comments on "the uncanny manner in which Miss Kaye-Smith analyzes the masculine mind, the vivid reality of her scenes about which women as a rule know nothing or little . . . displaying greater power, a more genuine maturity, than ever she has shown before."

\$2.00. This novel can be bought at any bookstore, or if not, direct from

E. P. DUTTON & CO., 681 Fifth Avenue, New York



William J. Locke

DETECTIVE CLEEK PROVES HIMSELF THE INFALLIBLE

THE RIDDLE OF THE MYSTERIOUS LIGHT. By Mary E. and Thomas W. Hanshaw. Doubleday, Page & Co.

TEN tales in which Cleek the detective appears as the solver of mysteries are grouped together in the volume taking its title from the opening story, "The Riddle of the Mysterious Light." The authors have nimble and varied imaginations, realizing the importance of horror and suspense, elements that are very marked in most of the tales incorporated in this, their latest book.

The riddle of the last degree in its opening picture of the village of Valehampton made tenacious by a visitation of some evil power that rings the church bells at night, although all the ropes have been cut to prevent such an act, the drying up of a neighboring river, the death of a child—all the result of a gypsy's curse. And all this dominated by the mysterious and ghostly light that appears on the church tower while the bells are ringing.

Cleek's immediate grasp of the situation, the causes leading up to the contemplated crime and the arrest of the band of criminals are the result of induction and such a wide range of knowledge as only the Dupins and Holmeses of criminal fiction possess. It must be confessed that it is not always easy to follow him in his inductions; but, of course, that does not interfere with the interest of the tale.

"The Stolen Formulas" is a war spy story that is very cleverly worked up and out, both by the German spy and by Cleek. "The Mystery of the Rope of Fear" is a literary relation to Doyle's "Speckled Band." We admit to being completely puzzled as to just how "The Priceless Statue That Vanished" was discovered, or, to be more exact, how Cleek reasoned out the posing of a model in its place, a defect of ours that would not interfere in the slightest with the enjoyment of the tale by other readers. The final episode, "The Passing of Cleek," is no all that its title implies, as the reader will discover with a genuine shock.

NEW BOOKS

Fiction.

SCARAMOUCHE—By Rafael Sabatini. Houghton-Mifflin.

A SON OF THE HIDALGOS—By Ricardo Leon. Translated by Catalina Paez. Doubleday-Page.

THE MARDI GRAS MYSTERY—By H. Bedford Jones. Doubleday-Page.

THE ALTERNATE—By M. Morgan Gibbon. Doubleday Page.

THE PASSIONATE PURITAN—By Jane Mander. John Lane.

THE ANNES—By Marlon Ames Taggart. Doubleday-Page.

History and Public Affairs.

THE BIRTH OF THE RUSSIAN DEMOCRACY—By A. J. Sack. New York: Russian Information Bureau.

THE RUSSIAN IN ITS ELECTRICAL REVOLUTION—By Edward Alsworth Ross. Century.

A HISTORY OF THE ADIRONDACKS—By Alfred L. Donaldson. Two volumes. Century.

Juvenile.

BIRD STORIES—By Edith M. Patch. Atlantic Monthly Press.

Science.

THE ORIGIN AND PROBLEM OF LIFE: A PSYCHO-PHYSIOLOGICAL STUDY—By A. E. Haines. Dutton.

GERMINATION IN ITS ELECTRICAL ASPECTS—By A. E. Haines. Dutton.

Biography.

A JACOBAN LETTER WRITER: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN CHAMBERLAIN—By Edward Phillips Statham. Dutton.

Essays.

NOTES AND REVIEWS—By Henry James. Cambridge, Mass.: Dunster House.

Health.

OUTWITTING OUR NERVES—By Josephine A. Jackson and Helen M. Salisbury. Century.

Miscellaneous.

YE OLDEN BLUE LAWS—By Gustavus Myers. Century.

LOADING DOWN LONG ISLAND—By Charles Hanson Towne. Century.