

COULD A GHOST KEEP TWO LOVERS FOREVER APART?

A MUMMER'S TALE. By Anatole France. John Lane Company.

EARLY in the notes that combine to make that thoughtful and most charming book his Literary Life, Anatole France admits that he took for his province the whole beautiful romance of man, a boundless territory diversified by all kinds of scenery and enlivened by various types of humanity but where everything is imperfect and nothing is finished. Wandering there in "the light step of a stroll" he has stopped where he pleased and followed his taste, his fancy and even his caprice, but ever aware that he could not arrive with all his labor at knowing everything, and therefore he could not explain everything. Gracefully he owns that what he knows least about is the beginnings of humanity. But in not endeavoring to disentangle links of the chain by which all things in the universe are inextricably entwined he has given himself more time to study the spaces where they run most freely. And in speaking of these in his lightest or most philosophical manner he has sought to be always veracious, sincere and kind.

One would look in vain for a title in the original which would correspond as well as the two languages permitted with that used by the publishers of this excellent example of book making because it is merely an episode in that amazing series that Anatole France published for several years and called "Histoire Comique de France." In these volumes he has spread a feast that will appeal, and does appeal, to most appetites, while for a few—the benighted ones who are unwilling to admit the fatal and universal uncertainty of things—it offers nothing they can digest. In a more marked degree than is usual even with France this book is imperfect in a way that lesser artists would not have permitted. It is in truth a simple tale of passions defeated by their fruit by the vulgar superstition, and it lacks psychological basis. The ordinary novelist who knows his trade—and in the hands of the ordinary novel writer is nothing higher—stress would have been placed on the affair between a pretty actress, a "gem of voluptuousness" and a comedian. Yet this light contact, for so Anatole describes the liaison, leads to the tragedy. And without making Robert de Ligny a decadent, a thing the author avoids even by implication, no "ghost" or ghostly influence would have been powerful enough to keep the lovers apart.

"Flimsy as the fiction is it serves France for another of the delightful combinations of delicacy and severity, his admirers expect and in which he never disappoints them. He is there in person, as he is in "Thais," in "Reine Pedagogue" in a hundred times, the philosopher, the historian, the antiquary, the poet. And more than these he is there as the kindly observer who does not waste his time trying to explain the unexplainable, as the humane physician for the soul who believes in the irremediable diversity of things, opinions and feeling and as the moralist who observes the antics of his creatures in a detached and kindly spirit as if he were curiously watching the antics of ants.

Love and hate are called kin

THE HEART OF THE RANGE. By William Patterson White. Doubleday, Page & Co.

HE had saved her life, he had succeeded in saving the family ranch, he had put her under eternal obligation, but he had called her thought for him foolishness. It was too much. Yet all the time she was ashamed of herself. She knew that she was small and mean and narrow and deserved a spanking if any girl did. She wanted to cuff Racey, cuff him till his ears turned red and his head rang.

Thus cogitates the heroine of this book, twenty-one pages from "The End," and the solicitous author hastens to explain that this "is the way that a woman feels when she loves a man and he has hurt her feelings. But she feels almost precisely the same way when she hates one who has. Truth is it that Love and Hate are close kin."

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REVIEWS OF NEW FICTION

Amenhotep figures in romance

HAVEN'T THE ENCHANTRESS: A ROMANCE OF ANCIENT EGYPT. By Gurness Chatfield Pier. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Reviewed by JOSEPH GOULD. MR. PIER is a man who has fallen under the spell of ancient Egypt, and he writes of a civilization that has long been buried as though he had been buried with it. Or it might be said that he



Gurness Chatfield Pier.

has peered into the mystic book of truth and has learned a power of making the dead live again. He seems to possess the same faith in his creations that Algernon Blackwood has in his stories of uncanny forces. He has delved in the new science of archaeology, which has made many passages of Egyptian history better known than portions of our own Middle Ages, and like his hero, he believes in the fearful "hekan" spells and the magic incantations of the ancients. For this reason he has achieved more of a success than Bulwer Lytton in his "Last Days of Pompeii" or Lew Wallace in "Ben Hur." The period with which he deals is one that has absorbed so much of his thought and study that he is familiar with it as a living movement and makes it live.

Among the many Pharaohs of Egypt the most remarkable was Amenhotep

the Fourth. He was of a line of mighty warriors and conquerors, but his interests were of a different order. He was a visionary, who believed he had found a better religion than that of his ancestors. It was his purpose to supplant the old creed with the wordings of Atm, the semi-god. In order to do this he had to fight the inertia of an inherently conservative people, led by a priesthood who had held power for over two thousand years. Defeat was inevitable. The Pharaoh was so occupied with theology that the Asiatic empire crumbled before the onslaughts of the Hittites. Although Amenhotep failed in all that he attempted, his figure is one of the most appealing in history. His hymns to the new god are among the most beautiful expressions of the eternal quest.

Within the last twenty years we have gained much information about this vital figure of the past. Mr. Pier has utilized these researches to tell his story. He uses a very clever method of linking the present with the past. His hero occurs in two epochs. It is something like the device by which Mark Twain transferred his Connecticut Yankee to the Court of King Arthur. However, it is more convincing. Prof. Renny has become excited by the possibility that he may discover the book of truth. He goes for a ramble among his excavations and stumbles into a chasm. When he sees the light again he is Renny the Syrian. He is a servant of Menna, son of Menna, and carves masterpieces for which the latter takes all the credit. He falls in love with the Princess Sessen, but his love is hopeless. He becomes involved in the intrigue of two conflicting factions—the Syrians, followers of the foreign queen who had displaced Hanit, and those who upheld the old order in Egypt. Amenhotep was like Henry III. of England in the hands of the Bolingbroke, the victim of his own uxoriousness. The splendors of the Egyptian court are described and the manner in which the Prince of the Hittites defied the unwelcome Emperor in his own palace. It is told as though it happened yesterday, and it is a tribute to the vitality of that Egyptian civilization which was the cornerstone upon which Greeks and Romans build.

Prof. Renny finally emerged from his life in the shadowy past to find himself convalescent after an attack of delirium. However, his brief acquaintance with that bygone age impressed him so vividly that he could hardly be certain that it was merely a dream, and the reader of his experiences as chronicled by Mr. Pier nurses the same shadow of doubt.

The Book Factory

By EDWARD ANTHONY.

BALLADE OF A POETESS-SLEUTH. (Provoked by Carolyn Wells's new detective story, "The Comeback").

When Carrie pens a lay As light as birds a wing, I shout a glad "Hooraay!" And rapturously sing. Why must she take a fling At slouching tales? She's worse Each time she does the thing. Oh, Carrie, stick to verse!

I love her lyric play, Her songs that men's eyes bring Of Quaker, Dobson, nie, Of Calverley, the King. And that is why I bring My hands and softly curse When she goes scolding. Oh, Carrie, stick to verse!

This sad ambition slay, This crude detecting, Designed to please the lay. Her latest "Fierce, by jingo! An oze I'd like to swing Upon it, to be terse. Of words, a hopeless string, Oh, Carrie, stick to verse!

LE'NVOL. Please leave the Sherlocking To others; don't disperse Your washippers; we'll cling If you'll but stick to verse!

EMBARRASSING THE READER.

When the boy orator at public school graduation exercises forgets a few lines of his speech and stammers all over the place we feel so sorry that we almost cry out. Our embarrassment is as great as his. It is an odd feeling. An unanalytical way of describing it would be to call it the universal dislike of one mortal to see a fellow mortal make a fool of himself. This would make the feeling a noble one. We think this is wrong. The correct definition, we believe, would emphasize not so much that we hate to see a person make a fool of himself as that we hate to see him do it in public. It is disconcerting; it destroys one's comfort.

The last time we experienced this feeling was when we read "The Comeback," a psychical detective yarn by Carolyn Wells. This is the story of Peter Crane, who is lost in a snowstorm in Labrador. It is a book with a message, several of them, in fact—spiritualistic messages from Peter to his parents. He is a thoughtful son. Even when he is dead he writes home regularly. This he does through Mme. Parlatto, the medium-priced medium. (This is not publicity for the madame. Even if she offered to give us free seances we wouldn't give her any press notices.)

All sorts of things happen after Peter's death. As if the seances aren't enough to startle the family, Peter's sweetheart, Carlotta, fresh from ouija boarding-school, makes some startling revelations. These have to do with the murder (of course there is a murder, though not a very exciting one) of a friend of Peter's. Add more revelations, more seances and more ouija-boredom, and you have a pretty good

writing, anyway—a book of statistical verse?"

"What a question, Mr. Buckel!" "Too bad it isn't a book of statistical poems. I was going to offer you, free, a bit of verse that you could have used in a work of this kind. I wrote it in the days when I did feature stories for The Sunday Blade. It begins like this:

The pickles made in Pittsburgh, were they laid out in a line, Would reach—and I can prove it—seven times across the Rhine.

"In the past you have accused me of flippancy, Mr. Buckel," says Mr. Flick, plainly hurt, "yet you are not above it yourself."

"Oh, don't be offended, Mr. Flick. Come, tell me why it was necessary for you to do research work in order to write your poems."

"Well, you see, it's like this. I thought it would be appropriate to include in a book called 'Mother Nature' some poems comparing famous writers to flowers. Being in the book business, I naturally do not know anything about books, and it was necessary for me to dig into the works of a number of authors to familiarize myself with their work. How did I know whether to call Whitman a tulip or a geranium unless I read his work?"

"That's so," says Mr. Buckel with the air of a man who has just learned a great truth, "that's so."

"Here is the first poem," says Mr. Flick, handing his employers some verses entitled "The Flowers of Literature."

"Great stuff," says Mr. Buckel, reading it. "You have a future."

"And you have a present," beams Mr. Flick. "You may keep it."

"May I really?"

"Certainly."

"Won't you autograph it for me?"

"By all means."

And he did.

Here is the poem that pleased Mr. Buckel so much:

THE FLOWERS OF LITERATURE. A Shakespearean Sonnet in Fourteen Lines.

By FERDINAND K. FLICK.

A bookshop is a garden where I see The flowers of literature. That lily white

Is Wordsworth. Yonder dancing daisy Is Bobbie Burns. That purple aster Drunkenly swaying in the summer breeze,

Is Wilde upon a spree. (I fear he drank Too many buttercups.) Those peonies—Pale pink, innocuous beauties, rank on rank,

Longfellow, Phoebe Cary and their clan Of hardihood represent. That poppy droops with its own opium. I can assume to be Sam Coleridge. It is said

That dogwood wild is Byron. Hear him bark An angry "woof!" at frightened, Southey. Hark!

A Wall street man is quoted at par

THE PROFITEERS. By E. Phillips Oppenheim. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

TWO million copies of Oppenheim's numerous books have been sold in America, which is only 3,000,000 under the sales of Henry Ford's autos. It is probably in deference to these 2,000,000 Americans that the English novelist has selected an American for the hero of his latest thriller, "The Profiteers."

This American hero, John Wingate by name, is a great credit to his country. He ought to do more than Admiral Sims to cement friendly relations between English speaking peoples, for he appears in England just in time to do battle with a gang of greedy speculators—English speculators—who have plotted to corral the world's supply of wheat and keep it out of the mouths of the widows and orphans long enough to send the price sky high.

But they reckon without the sharp witted, courageous, public spirited visitor from Wall Street, U. S. A. In a sentence, John Wingate brings down the price of English bread to a point where the working classes don't have to work to get it.

America doesn't capture all the honors in "The Profiteers." There's Lady Josephine Dredford, the unloved wife of one of the speculators. "If I were a man I wouldn't let Josephine live out these best days of her life in sorrow," says Josephine's dearest friend to Wingate. "I wouldn't have her insulted and peered at every hour of her life. I wouldn't see her living in torture, when all the time she has such a wonderful capacity for life and love."

"What would you do?" asks the man from Wall Street, as if he needed the advice. "I'd take her away," says the friend. "I wouldn't care about anybody else or anything. If the world didn't approve I'd make a little world of my own and put her into it. You're quite strong enough. What has she in her present life to lose, compared with what she gains from you—what she wants more than anything else in the world—love?"

But Wingate upholds the finest traditions of our famously moral nation by not being that kind of a man. With the help of an act of God and the kind indulgence of Scotland Yard he makes it come out all right in the end.

In common with other Oppenheim tales "The Profiteers" is a book you'll look at just once—the length of the book being the time you require to read it through from cover to cover.

A sequel to "Moon Calf" with the title "The Briary-Bush" by Floyd Dell, is on the fall list of Alfred A. Knopf.

America is full of Marys

BEAUTY AND MARY BLAIR. By Ethel M. Kelley. Houghton, Mifflin Company.

Reviewed by SUSAN STEELL. JUDGING by the way we have treasured certain old books not remarkable for anything but truthful detail of the life of a bygone generation, rare novels like "Dodo," young Mr. Benson's masterpiece, and the new book by Ethel M. Kelley will constitute real treasuries to the

reader. Miss Kelley would probably say the same thing of her own generation and am happy to endorse them as documents. But I can't say as much for Mother and Father Blair—they seem to have been caught in a mist. They belong to a novel; Mary and her set belong to life.

It is said that Dodo instantly recognized herself in the book, and she was identified by London society. The maker of the "Dodo" of the book tells a different account of how she sprang into life from a composite view of several women. Miss Kelley would probably say the same thing of her own generation and am happy to endorse them as documents. But I can't say as much for Mother and Father Blair—they seem to have been caught in a mist. They belong to a novel; Mary and her set belong to life.

Light as the book is—fluffy in places—it is written with a fine purpose. Ideals abound in it, somewhat reduced in stature to conform to little Mary's own, but how courageously the quaint nineteen-year-old fights for them. There is genuine humor of the young, unconscious, irresistible kind, fixed in the spontaneous amber of the author's style, which exactly suits her characters and in the medium—the pale translucent yellow—youth's disappointments, youth's hopes, ambitions and desires—is preserved. The smoke of life may tarken the ends, but the centre will keep these golden gleams. The book tells an old story, but what of that? It tells it all over in a new way. In the end Mary finds beauty in her man, who is the "only one for her." How true to the life of the minute is her cry: "He's—he's beautiful!"

A good many novels have started their cruise this spring; several are bravely floating, a few perhaps will sweep the Seven Seas and back again. Others with soaked leaves and print all smudged are lying on the bottom. "Beauty and Mary Blair" may not voyage so terribly far, but it floats!



Ethel M. Kelley.

writer of the year 2000 seeking to reconstruct us of to-day. Mary Blair and her young man and her sister and her little brother are living persons of

Modern philosophy of marriage

HALF LOAVES. By Margaret Culkin Banning. George H. Doran Company.

IT is a rare pleasure to come upon a novel dealing with marriage and sociological problems without hysterics, without exaggeration, and especially without the leer, the salacious undercurrent that soils so much of the fiction of the day. Mrs. Banning also writes with full maturity of thought and from an adequate knowledge and observation of fact. There is nothing of the modern Maido Aunt attitude in her work. The result of her study is an appraisal of certain modern tendencies in American life, as exemplified in a prosperous middle Western city, that deserves serious consideration. Moreover, regarded simply as a story the book is successful and quite out of the ordinary. It is well constructed and the texture of its style is good.

The problem stated concerns the apparent decay, at least in certain strata of society, of the finer ideals of domestic life, of marriage as something more than an amusement, even something more than an institution for the production and rearing of children. Is the "jazz spirit" cheapening and debasing education, society, even religion? The answer of the book is somewhat indeterminate at best, and is scarcely optimistic, the general conclusion being that there is a good deal of wrongness and that perhaps only the "half loaf" remains available, though it is, of course, better than no bread.

Diagnosing the situation as a whole, including politics and business as well as individual social relations, Matthew Allenby, one of the four chief persons in the story, remarks that the country is "absolutely unfitted nervously to stand any strain or excitement. So long as things go well with us we are full of enthusiasm, but the suggestion of trouble upsets everything—frightens every one. We are unconsciously proceeding on the basis that there is no need of including trouble in our national philosophy. . . . Life has been made too easy for us as a nation—for us as individuals. . . . We are the strongest nation in the world and in imminent danger of a lazy and fun-loving philosophy making us the most corrupt." And when Dick Harrison, the mine owner and husband of the serious-minded heroine, Cecily, goes to investigate conditions at his mines he finds that "nearly every man he met had some idea that changes were needed, in mind, State or nation," but also he found "no common basis for all the comments—no standard which they all would follow."

More narrowly, the theme of the story is the contrasting ideals of marriage held by Cecily, who is convent bred, noble in ideals but intolerant, and rather lacking in humor and a sense of proportion, of the relative value of things, and by "Fliss," who is volatile, intelligent, by no means vicious, but in many ways the incarnation of the flippant "jazz spirit," making almost a religion of "having fun." Of course Matthew, who is fundamentally sedate and verging on middle age, marries the effervescent "Fliss," and Dick, who is younger and humanly in need of "relaxation," marries the sombre Cecily. Matthew and his light-minded wife manage to get on very well, but Cecily and Dick come to a break over the incompatibility of their ideals, although really deeply in love and the parents really children. Eventually the break is healed and Cecily realizes the need of some compromise, the acceptance of her "half loaf," and one is left with the impression that each pair is after all going to make the best of an unsatisfactory situation. There is too

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