

# THE WHISPERING GALLERY

### In Which We Consider Certain Sartorial Matters in the Art of Fiction and Make an Important Discovery Concerning a Possible Great American Movie.

By DONALD ADAMS.  
ALTHOUGH we have read many novels in which the hero was described as "carelessly dressed," we have never yet turned a page to be told of such nonchalant attire as that in which Grant Overton first presents Walt Whitman in "The Answerer."

"Broad shoulders, well squared, proportioned his good height. A carelessly adjusted suit of homespun hung as if ready at a twitch to uncover the Greek symmetry of satin'd flesh and muscle." We have never read of heroines who dressed in this care free manner, although we have seen young ladies, and older ones, for that matter, with something about their shoulders which kept us in a state of—shall we say—trepidation? We feel it would never do for a novelist to introduce his heroine as Mr. Overton has introduced Walt. The consequences would be—but we shudder at the thought.

This matter of fictional tailoring is one which has never occurred to us before. It might repay further reflection, and we intend some day to return to it. Such trifling with clothes, we are certain, would draw down the dyspeptic wrath of Carlyle, for whom they were translatable into universal terms, the fabrics of philosophy.

For that matter, something resembling a pang of what some people would call conscience seizes us whenever we have been thus inconsequential, and we hasten to add that "The Answerer" is the first novel in which Whitman appears as a character, and that in spite of the difficulty presented by choosing as his central figure a man who made himself through his own work more real and understandable than anybody afterward could possibly make him, Mr. Overton admires will read with interest.

"The Answerer" communicates something of the same gusto, the same edged appetite for life that Whitman had. It throws the light of a romantic illumination about the period spent by the poet in the South before the civil war, that part of his life about which we knew the least from his own pen.

#### This Explains It.

FOR years we have been asking ourselves why the movies aren't better than they are. We never obtained a completely satisfactory answer, although we asked numerous other persons also. And then, just the other day, we read "Breaking Into the Movies," by John Emerson and Anita Loos. In the chapter headed "How Others Have Done It" the long awaited solution leaped at us when we least expected it.

"It is a curious fact," we read, "that many of the directors of to-day were once automobile mechanics. This is not because automobile mechanics are as a class better fitted for such work, but because in the old days of 1907 and 1908 and 1909, when everything started, they had a singular opportunity to apprentice themselves to the profession."

"In those days companies worked almost entirely out of doors, and the cameraman transported his paraphernalia in an automobile. The driver would usually assist the cameraman in 'setting up'; a friendship would spring up between them; presently the driver would be assistant cameraman, then chief cameraman and finally director."

What could be simpler? This interesting bit of, to us, information serves also to clear away our perplexity as to why movie directors wear leather puttees.

We have an unconquerable conviction that the directors of the German made and other imported films which are causing American producers to stir uneasily in their plum colored limousines are possibly gentlemen whose spark plugs function in their heads. . . . The disturbing thought occurs to us that perhaps we are all wrong and that Henry Ford may produce the Great American Movie.

A word about the book. It is written by persons who know the movie industry thoroughly, and it contains about everything that those who want to "break in" need to know, including a chapter on "Would You Film Well?" You wouldn't unless you can answer the following questions in the affirmative: "Are my eyes large?" "Is my skin fine and well kept?" "Is my mouth small and are my teeth good?" "Is my nose straight?" "Has my face character?" Even if you can say yes only to the

last you may be successful as a "type."

#### Pictorially Educated.

AS we watch the tremendous increase in the amount of pictorial news offered to the "reading" public we wonder sometimes if history is not perhaps skidding round the cycle again, to the end that we shall presently be scratching our designs on rock surfaces like our paleolithic forebears.

It isn't the movies alone. Every month brings new picture magazines to the news stands, and the tabloid newspaper, functioning chiefly through pictures, leaps into popularity. In our mind's eye we conceive a fleeting picture of an educated man of the future spelling out laboriously the words of a Sears-Roebuck catalogue, preserved, along with its pictures, as an exhibit in twentieth century culture.

But our glance falls back on the publishers' announcements, and we are reassured. Somebody must be mining this mountain of books.

#### 'Pioneers! O Pioneers!'

BEFORE we say anything about Hamlin Garland's "A Daughter of the Middle Border," we want to go back to "A Son of the Middle Border," published a few years ago, and repeat our conviction at the time that it was one of the best pieces of autobiographical writing we had ever read. It is a book for every American to read. The story it tells, of two typical pioneer families, the Garlands and the McClintocks, is one that other generations will prize when the last vestiges of pioneer America have passed from sight.

It was that part of Mr. Garland's book which dealt with his boyhood and early youth that we found so absorbing; its unforgettable pictures of his father singing "Over the Hills in Legions" whenever the impulse to strike still further West for a new home came to him; and those of his mother, reluctant to leave the home built on hardship and unflinching courage, yet understanding the vision that held her husband.

This is a book to read when you are fed upon sex and sophistication, when you have heard enough of the hip toting, corset parking proclivities of the new generation. Read it, and then go back to the Spoon River Anthology and turn to "Rutherford MacDouell," beginning, "They brought me ambrosia of the old pioneers to enlarge."

We think it inevitable that "A Daughter of the Middle Border," Mr. Garland's new book, should fall below its predecessor. As certainly as a man

begins printing recollections of his later life, his work becomes more self-conscious, more hampered by inhibitions. Yet Mr. Garland's book suffers less from this fault than most of its kind. He is wholly without affectation; his ingenious pride in authorship and association with authors has nothing of that about it.

The chapters dealing with his mother, settled in the Michigan village of her girlhood, her pioneering over, make one of the tenderest portraits we know.

#### When the Bison Roamed.

THERE is a fine bit in which Mr. Garland describes a glimpse he had of wild buffalo in the Flat Head country of Montana in 1897. "Towers of a tall dust, hot and white, lingering smokelike in the air, shielded us like a screen, and so, slowly riding, we drew near enough to perceive the calves and hear the mutter of the cows as they reneared for us the life of the vanished millions of their kind. A colossal chief, tall, glossy, black, and weighing 2,000 pounds, moved from group to group, restless and combative, wrinkling his ridiculously small nose and uttering a deep, menacing, mut-

tering roar. His rivals, though they slunk away, gave utterances to similar sinister snarls, as if voicing bitter resentment. They did not bellow; they growled, low down in their cavernous throats, like angry lions. Nothing that I had ever read or heard of buffaloes had given me the quality of this majestic clamor. "Occasionally one of them, tortured by flies, dropped to earth and rolled and tore the sod till a dome of dust arose and hid him. Out of this gray curtain he suddenly reappeared, dark and savage, like a dun rock emerging from mist."

#### The Fabulist.

TO those of our readers who take pleasure in beautiful typography we recommend acquaintance with the most nonchalant publication we know of—*The Fabulist*, issued by W. A. Dwiggin and L. B. Siegfried from 384A Rylston street, Boston. We say nonchalant because *The Fabulist* appears only at the whim of its publishers. The current issue, which is the third, contains twelve pages of letterpress, ten of which are given over to a remarkable poem by John French Wilson, a Cleveland law-

yer, whose name, we predict, will be better known than it is now. He is Coleridge come back—the Coleridge of "Kubla Khan" and "The Ancient Mariner."

#### Postscript.

JUST as we discovered that we had no more space we had our first real opportunity to look into Hendrik Van Loon's "The Story of Mankind." If there is anybody between the ages of 12 and 90 who does not find a copy on the Christmas table there is just one thing for him to do. Because—but we must leave that for another time.

#### He Had Never Seen Airplane or Taxicab

THREADS. By Frank Stayton. The Century Company.

THERE is one great difference between the work of British writers and that of Americans; even the average Englishman's book is primarily literary, whereas, the average American's is inclined to the journalistic. Despite our fondness for

domestic brands, we like the foreign sort of reasoning in our reading. "Threads" has just that element of the craft that makes the tale's fortune by the manner of telling.

The story opens with a promising situation. After fifteen years of imprisonment it is discovered that John Osborne Wynn is innocent of the crime for which he is being punished. The life sentence is of course revoked and he is released with the King's pardon—no one knows quite what for. He comes back in the third year of the war to England, a country grimly setting its teeth and getting into the routine of life under new conditions. The casualty lists are long, the profiteers are growing rich, America has come in at last. To a man who has never seen an airplane or a taxicab, the world seems quite made over.

His main interest is, of course, in his family. When he received a sentence of imprisonment for life he had made his wife promise to live as though he were dead. Thinking that it was best for her children she consented and carried out her promise faithfully. She dropped his name, gave the world to understand that she was a widow and did not even tell the children what had really happened. Therefore, when he reappears with only a few hours' warning it is extremely upsetting to every one con-

cerned. He is met by his elder son, a priggish young snob, the last person in the world a father would care to have greet him after fifteen years in prison. Wynn seems to approve of his other children, however—Oliver, a sketchy, young person of 18, and Jim, a schoolboy, whom he had never seen before. John has a good deal of a task ahead of him in tying up the cut threads of his life, in reestablishing himself as the head of his house and in winning again the love of his wife.

The best thing in the book is the characterization of Wynn and his wife, Amelia. He is a strong, clear minded man with firm principles and so much sense of humor that it gets him into trouble. Typically British in his grumbling over the right little, tight little island and in his unswerving loyalty to it, in his hatred of sentimentality and his love of fair play, he has a distinctly modern philosophy and he puts it to a severe test. Amelia is the sweet, clinging type of woman who always finds a man to do things for her. One good old Colonel has been making love to her for twelve years. He, of all, is the most displeased at John's reappearance and refuses to give up his position in the household without a struggle. Amelia has managed to remain amazingly young and she expects to find in John a lover. Her reactions to him and to the sudden change in her life are admirably shown with a deft pen and a real knowledge of women.

In England the book has been done over into a play, and there is material there to make a very delightful comedy, indeed. The author was a playwright before he was a novelist and traces of his dramatic training are frequent.

EDITH LEIGHTON.

# What's Wrong in This Picture?

It's so easy to make embarrassing mistakes in public—so easy to commit blunders that make people misjudge you. Can you find the mistake or mistakes that are being made in this picture? Can you point out what is wrong? If you are not sure, read the interesting article below, and perhaps you will be able to find out.



IT is a mark of extreme good breeding and culture to be able to do at all times exactly what is correct. This is especially true in public, where strangers judge us by what we do and say. The existence of fixed rules of etiquette makes it easy for people to know whether we are making mistakes or whether we are doing the thing that is absolutely correct and cultured. They are quick to judge and quick to condemn. It depends entirely upon our knowledge of the important little rules of etiquette whether they respect and admire us or receive an entirely wrong and prejudiced impression.

In public many little questions of good conduct arise. By public, we mean at the theatre, in the street, on the train, in the restaurant and hotel—wherever men and women who are strangers mingle together and judge one another by action and speech.

It is not enough to know that one is well-bred. One must see that the strangers one meets every day get no impression to the contrary. Do you know the little rules of good conduct that divide the cultured from the uncultured, that serve as a barrier to keep the ill-bred out of the circles where they would be awkward and embarrassed? Do you know the important rules of etiquette that men of good society must observe, that women of good society are expected to follow rigidly? Perhaps the following questions will help you find out just how much you know about etiquette:

#### Etiquette at the Theatre

When a man and woman walk down the theatre aisle together, should the man precede the woman? May they walk arm-in-arm? When the usher indicates their places, should the woman enter first or the man?

Many puzzling questions of conduct confront the members of a theatre party who occupy a box. Which seats should the women take and which the men? Should the women remove their hats—or don't they wear any? What should women wear to the theatre in the evening? What should men wear? Is it correct for a man to leave a woman alone during intermission?

At the theatre evidences of good conduct can be more strikingly portrayed than perhaps anywhere else. Here, with people surrounding us on all sides, we are admired as being cultured, well-poised and attractive, or we are looked upon as coarse and ill-bred. It depends entirely upon how well one knows and follows the rules of etiquette.

#### At the Dance

How should a man ask a woman to dance? What should he say to her when the music ceases and he must return to his original partner? Do you know the correct dancing positions?

How should a woman accept a dance and how should she refuse it? How can the embarrassment of being a wall-flower be avoided? How many times may a girl dance with the same partner without breaking the rules of etiquette? Is it considered

correct in social circles for a young woman to wander away from the ball-room with her partner?

Very often introductions must be made in the ball-room. Should a man be introduced to a woman, or a woman to a man? Is it correct to say: *Miss Brown, meet Mr. Smith, or Mr. Smith, meet Miss Brown?*

Which of these two forms is correct: *Bobby, this is Mrs. Smith, or Mrs. Smith, this is Bobby?* When introducing a married woman and a single woman should you say, *Mrs. Brown, allow me to present Miss Smith, or Miss Smith, allow me to present Mrs. Brown?*

When leaving the ball-room, is the guest expected to thank the hostess? What should the woman guest say when she leaves? What should the gentleman guest say? It is only by knowing exactly what is correct that one can avoid the embarrassment and humiliation of social blunders and win the respect and admiration of those whom one comes in contact with.

#### In the Street

There are countless tests of good manners that distinguish the well-bred in public. For instance, the man must know exactly what is correct when he is walking with a young woman. According to etiquette, is it ever permissible for a man to take a woman's arm? May a woman take a gentleman's arm? When walking with two women, should a man take his place between them or on the outside?

When is it permissible for a man to pay a woman's fare on the street-car or railroad?

Who enters the car first, the woman or the man? Who leaves the car first?

If a man and woman who have met only once before encounter each other in the street, who should make the first sign of recognition? Is the woman expected to smile and nod before the gentleman raises his hat? On what occasions should the hat be raised?

People of culture can be recognized at once. They know exactly what to do and say on every occasion, and because they know that they are doing absolutely what is correct they are calm, well poised, dignified. They are able to mingle with the most highly cultivated people, in the highest social circles, and yet be entirely at ease.

#### The Book of Etiquette

There have probably been times when you suffered embarrassment because you did not know exactly what to do or say. There have probably been times when you wished you had some definite information

regarding certain problems of conduct, when you wondered how you could have avoided a certain blunder.

The Book of Etiquette is recognized as one of the most dependable and reliable authorities on the conduct of good society. It has solved the problems of thousands of men and women. It has shown them how to be well-poised and at ease even among the most brilliant celebrities. It has shown them how to meet embarrassing moments with a calm dignity. It has made it possible for them to do and say and write and wear at all times only what is entirely correct.

In the Book of Etiquette, now published in two large volumes, you will find chapters on dinner etiquette and dance etiquette, chapters on the etiquette of engagements and weddings, chapters on teas and parties and entertainments of all kinds. You will find authoritative information regarding the wording of invitations, visiting cards and all social correspondence. The subject of introductions is covered exhaustively, and the etiquette of travel devolves into an interesting discussion of correct form in France, England and other foreign countries. From cover to cover each book is filled with interesting and extremely valuable information.

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