

world" that is, in part, also a portion of the open, upper world, but the blend is not at all an impossibility and can be treated effectively. "I know a broker," says a movie editor, who is a minor character in the story, "who lives his social life among yeggs. . . . He bewails his love for the company of crooks. He says there is no variety in his life! The yeggs are so like stock-brokers." We are told that the "public hangout" of the modern crook "is in the great crowd on Broadway," and that "writers of fiction killed the old underworld," educating it up to the "Raffles" standard.

There is a mysterious flaming red flower, originally from South America, whence come most of the newest things in the way of crime and mystery, that makes no end of trouble. Mr. Prosper is fully up to date in his use of modern science—including some of the science of to-morrow or the day after, but doing it without any inherent impossibility. It does not jar the reader's sense of fitness. He has, one might almost say, something of Wells's trick in making use of scientific possibilities.

His character drawing is also distinctly above the usual level of such stories. His people are something more than mere automata going through the necessary motions, though they are given without any attempt at subtlety and do not pretend to be more than sketches. But they are pretty good sketches.

He is generous with his murders, which is in accordance with modern styles. No thriller writer nowadays need be content with merely one corpse. A wholesale supply is the thing, including a liberal slaughter at the finish. The end of this story is spectacular enough without being overdone. The book may be confidently recommended to devotees of this form of literary dissipation.

RAHAB. By Waldo Frank. Boni & Liveright.

A STERN warning is given reviewers that this novel "will be attacked by the critical descendants of those who attacked and reviled Walt Whitman, and by those who . . . heard nothing but dissonances in Wagner." To aid the reader to judge for himself, here is a descriptive passage, chosen at random, to sample the style of the book:

"She spoke. He peered into the form of her words. His eyes took the gloss of the subtle table, it was one with her words' accent. Futile words . . . grammatical, well ordered. A subtle table and beyond a virulent hugh sideboard. A faint quaint accent in her pointless words curling like heat of hidden flame above the table, against the sideboard; whispers in how she spoke, like these glowing poems in wood, of a day distant from his New York where there had been leisure and when from the dung of human misery America grew flowers. A quiet pain in the table and her words . . . a distant pain."

We are asked to compare that to Whitman. Its direct literary ancestor seems rather to be Gertrude Stein of the "Tender Buttons." It is possible to create dissonances that are not at all Wagnerian. The language of much of this book is not English. It may be the latest thing in neo-Hebraic-American, but it has only a remote resemblance to the tongue of Shakespeare or Stevenson, Mark Twain or Whitman.

If the comparison is to be the subject matter of the book it may be noted that Whitman was quite sane and clean, whereas this is purely pathological material, of more interest to the alienist and student of the psychology of the abnormal than to the general reader. As to that, it makes far too "hard reading" to hold any general attention.

Translated into English the story, merely as a story, is commonplace enough: A temperamental young woman marries a young degenerate who takes to drink and abandons her; during his absence she has a curious "affair" with a wandering Jew—to whom she remarks: "I kiss your feet. You are holy. Why are you holy?" (There is no answer to that conundrum.) Her vicious husband "gets religion" and becomes a missionary to college students! He returns to her, learns of the "holy" Jew and casts her off, taking her child away from her. She goes to New York and enters upon a hectic career of assorted degradations, which, we are led to infer, ends in some sort of mystic "salvation," but which will remain inscrutable to most readers.

Oddly enough, the men portrayed

are rather well done: figures of considerable solidity and life. But all the women are mere nightmares. The whole thing is a nightmarish performance. Where it is frankly so the erratic diction becomes genuinely effective. For example—Fanny is having a very bad dream: "The skies caught Dance, like fire. The stars moved very finely; they did not swing far from their orbits; rather they tremored, they shone in vibrance, they sang like high notes very fast. . . . In the clothes of the dancing Subway through there were bugs; they danced. In the roofs of the street there were stars; they danced. Fanny saw the bugs dancing and the dancing stars."

Perhaps that is as good a place as any to leave it; the dancing bugs appear adequately symbolic of the whole.

ELLA KEEPS HOUSE. By Jessie Champion. Dodd, Mead & Co.

JESSIE CHAMPION has written a story of present day England which shows how the old order changeth, giving place to new. Apart from its merits as a story it is a picture of present day turmoil in England. The heroine, Ella Danesford, is distinctly a product of this generation. Her adventures could occur at no other epoch. The author is also very much in accord with modern fashions of thought. Her book is a blend of the feminism of W. L. George, and the psycho-analytical tendencies of the newer writers. She has absorbed a great quantity of temporary material and digested it well.

People who are not abreast of their own time are always rather pathetic, and Jessie Champion introduces us to Mrs. Danesford, a Victorian lady of the old school, and shows how much awry the world seems to her. She was the widow of a physician who left her in reduced circumstances. She rather resented her daughter's working in an automobile factory during the war. She would have preferred a less profitable but more genteel life. Ella saw her mother drooping under the blow of living in an unaccustomed manner. She determined to spend all her earnings and Aunt Emily's legacy in giving her mother a year of life in the style to which she had been accustomed.

Ella secured a vicarage at Midlington, by the sea, and then her troubles began. Local gossip had credited her with being an heiress. She was welcomed into society, but found no young people to associate with. At first her life was much too dull. Suddenly she realized that her experience was costing her more than she had anticipated. She refused to borrow money or to curtail her mother's pleasures, and so she took two paying guests. Miss Aveling was mildly insane, and Miss Minchin was abnormally self-centered. Ella found them very trying, but the reader is not bored by them. The author uses the long arm of coincidence to make them necessary for her plot.

Jessie Champion has been very successful in her minor characters. One of the best is Mrs. Goosey, the wife of a profiteer. Her husband grew wealthy with no special shrewdness on his part, and she was as embarrassed by sudden wealth as the simple souled Mr. Kipps of H. G. Wells. Her struggles with grammar and etiquette are amusing, with a touch of pathos.

MR. PIM. By A. A. Milne. George H. Doran Company.

THE process of making a novel out of a play is only a shade less hazardous than the reverse transformation. It by no means follows that even a very successful comedy that holds the stage without effort will make a good story in expanded form. The more direct, mimetic element of the play is apt to be lost, with small compensating values in the written word. In short, a good play generally needs the living voice and personality of the actor to make it effective. If much is lost in transferring it to the moving picture screen, still more often evaporates in making a novel out of it. As a general thing the novelized drama is a poor affair.

Nevertheless it can be done, and this book is a good example of a very fair measure of success in doing it. It is not meant in disparagement of the result when we add that those who saw the play on the boards will continue to prefer it to the novel. For others the book remains a lively, entertaining, light comedy story. Mr.

Milne has made extremely good use of the situations and the central idea in the book.

George Marden, the conventional, conservative, not overbrilliant Englishman who hates anything irregular—anything that "isn't done, you know"—and who is suddenly threat-

ened with an extremely unpleasant upheaval in his family affairs, is especially well presented in the book. To George and his wife, Olivia, enters the eccentric Mr. Pim, the amiably absent minded trouble-maker, from whom they learn that Olivia's first husband, supposed dead, is still

living. It would be unkind to those who haven't seen the play to betray how the resultant problem is solved. Perhaps the eccentric quality of old Pim is not altogether satisfying in the book. He has a little too much

Continued on Page Ten.

An Architect, A Painter and A Sculptress Joined in Designing This Exquisite Lamp

The lines, proportions and coloring of most of the lamps you see in these days of commercialism are the work of designing departments of large factories. They are the fruits of a deep knowledge of what makes a "popular seller." But some people, the Decorative Arts League committee felt sure, would like a lamp designed purely with an eye to good taste, a lamp of artistic proportions and harmonious tones, a lamp embodying grace, symmetry and beauty rather than the long experience of the "salesman-designer" of what seems most in demand in retail stores.

Hence this exquisite little lamp you see pictured, "Aurora" as it has been named by an artist, because of the purity of its Greek lines and tones.

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For the delicate work of designing a lamp that should be a real work of art instead of a mere unit in a factory's production, and yet should be a practical and useful article of home-furnishing, the League enlisted the enthusiastic cooperation of a group of talented artists—one a famous architect skilled in the practical requirements of interior decorating, one a painter and genius in color-effects, and one a brilliant sculptress, a student of the great Rodin in Paris.

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One style of ornamentation after another was tried out, only to yield in the end to the perfect simplicity of the classic Greek lines. Even such a small detail as the exact contour of the base was worked over and over again until it should blend in one continuous "stream" with the lines of the slender shaft. The graceful curves of the shaft itself, simple as they seem in the finished model, were the results of dozens of trials. The shape, the exact size, and the soft coloring of the shade were the product of many experiments.

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AURORA \$3.50

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beautiful little lamp goes a "Corresponding Membership" in the League. This costs you nothing and entails no obligation of any kind. It simply means that your name is registered on the League's books as one interested in things of real beauty and art for home decoration, so that as Artists who work with the League create new ideas they can be offered to you direct without dependence on dealers.

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