

The Book Factory

By EDWARD ANTHONY.

AN IRRITATING BUNCH.

(A list of the principal bores in Stephen Vincent Benet's dull—we almost said stupid—"Young People's Pride.")

I. Oliver Crowe.

This proud young man's the hero, though
Just why he is I do not know.
I think he is a silly ass,
And when he's jilted by his lass
I offer up a loud "Hooray!"
She should have drowned the foolish jay,
For any one as proud as Ollie
Deserves an early grave, by golly!
The author takes his hero's side;
He says, "Forgive his foolish pride."
But as for unforgiving me,
I'd like to toss him in the sea.
Too bad the girl, who at the start
Rejects the ninny, changes heart
And takes him back. Why, even I
Am preferable to such a guy.

II. Nancy Ellicott.

At first she cans dear Ollie; then
Decides he's perfectest of men.
I'd like to tell you more about
The maiden, but I can't, old scout.
The author's picture is so poor
Mine can't be very real, I'm sure.
All I can say is that she's pretty
And has a job in New York City.

III. Ted Billett.

A sort of secondary hero,
Whose thinking powers rate a zero.
It's his New England conscience that
Prompts me to ease an arrow at
The simpleton. When Elinor
Accepts the prig she makes me sore.
Her early razzing of the lad
Is an event that makes me glad.
But when she takes the bonehead back
I shake my head and sigh, "Alack!"

IV. Elinor Piper.

Like Nancy, she is poorly drawn.
All I can tell you (while you yawn)
Is that, as I have said before,
After she shows Ted B. the door
She takes him back. . . . What else, you ask?
Dear reader, it's an awful task
To do a portrait of the maid.
All I remember, I'm afraid—
(In fact, that's all the author states)—
Is that she's blessed with Pleasant Traits.
God bless her and her foppish spouse—
And keep me from their stupid house!

V. Mr. Piper.

The father of dear Elinor—
It follows that the man's a bore;
A naughty bore who seeks romance
With vampy Mrs. Sev-er-ance.

VI. Mrs. Severance.

She's almost shot by Mr. Piper.
Oh, how I wish I were a sniper!
That wouldn't be an "almost," no!
I'd shoot until I laid her low,
And killed the other puppets, too.
This story riles me through and through.

OUR OWN LONDON CORRESPONDENT.

Two doubting Thomases—Thomas Moulton and Thomas Burke—dropped in at the Century Tea Rooms to-day, and the conversation was something between an issue of the Lit'ry Review and the dialogues of Soc the hemlock drinker. The convention agreed—in theory—that authors should not marry; that they should live in hotels, and that they should write strictly to please themselves. There was one demurring vote. It was on the question of hotels. Tommie Burke, by the way, says he is through with the Limehouse nights stuff for keeps. But he's going to take your correspondent on a lit'ry pilgrimage to Limehouse. The tour will be reported exclusively in THE BOOK FACTORY.

Your correspondent has just bumped into H. L. Mencken—appropriately enough at the Savage Club. He made us homesick by bestowing upon C. S. Evans, the English publisher, who is going to the States next month, a ticket entitling him to fourteen cocktails on demand from Stanley Rine-

hart, business manager and barkeep of the Bookmans. There are fourteen neat checks on the card, each to be punched as the ration is served. Gosh, it's a year since we enjoyed all that delicious secrecy about having a drink—'twas in a Forty-fourth street feedery with Doc Smyth and Alexander Black—and there ain't no fun in a stodgy and permissible tankard. But shush! Mencken is visiting the Tea Rooms this afternoon, and his eagle eye has already discerned the Essex Head Bar, just opposite. And trusty Mrs. Finnigan comes apace with tea and cakes.

Your correspondent saw a very bad movie the other day. Nothing extraordinary about that, you say? Well, it was a very bad movie—sob stuff, and suppressed gurgles and weeps from the orchestra and glycerine tears. Still you refuse to be surprised? Well, perhaps we'd better tell you, mournfully and low, that it was in the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, at Stratford on Avon. We could tell you more about the deplorable decline of culture

in literary England, but Mrs. Finnigan is bringing the tea. JOE.

CENTURY TEA ROOMS, London.

HUTCHINSON'S SLANG.

In "This Freedom" we again find A. S. M. Hutchinson using an occasional merry bit of English slang. The term we like best is "pooper," which, according to the author, means "half a poop and half a pauper."

In "If Winter Comes" we enjoyed the frequent use of "shirty," meaning huffy.

A QUESTION OF FAIRNESS.

Every once in a while we run across a novel that makes us want to toss a bomb on the author's doorstep. Such a book is Stephen Vincent Benet's "Young People's Pride," about which we have versified above. It is a cleverly concocted nothing. Because it is cleverly concocted it will be favorably reviewed—but it is a nothing just the same.

Mr. Benet goes about his business pretty seriously and for a while you think he is going to give you some whole wheat bread to eat. As a matter of fact, he hands the reader a dish of whipped cream for supper. It is well whipped and good to look at, but it isn't satisfying, especially after you've been led to expect something substantial. You eat and you eat—and you get no sustenance.

There is material in "Young People's

Pride" for an editorial on the subject of fairness to the reader. Twice Benet, to pep up a poorly motivated story, whispers "Sic 'im!" in the ear of the nearest character. The character thus commanded sinks his teeth in the leg of the person the author points out—and thus we have what is known as "action." The story would stop somewhere around page 50 if the author didn't resort to this.

How far should an author be permitted to go in creating conflict? Is it fair to use a silly misunderstanding to estrange the two principal characters (a device of the movies) and then bring them together by as silly an explanation?

Is this realism? Or reelism?

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