Book Page of The Sunday Call

Conducted by Una H. H. Cool

BOOKS REVIEWED

"The Post Girl," by Edward C. Booth.

"The Bohemian Jinks," by Porter Garnett.

"The Mystery of the Yellow Room," by Gaston Leroux.

"Fate's a Fiddler," by Edwin George Pinkham.

"Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge."

"The Cobbler," by Emma A. Travis, M. D.

"The Pauper of Park Lane," by William Le Queux.

"Work and Habits," by Albert J. Beveridge.

FRONTISPIECE TO "THE POST GIRL" BY EDWARD C. BOOTH

"JOSEPH ROULETABILLE" from "THE MYSTERY OF THE YELLOW ROOM" BY GASTON LEROUX

EDWARD C. BOOTH.

THE SIRE AND HIS ASSISTANTS - "THE HAMADRYADS" (1904) from "THE BOHEMIAN JINKS" by PORTER GARNETT.

"STARBRIGHT" from "FATE'S A FIDDLER" BY EDWIN GEORGE PINKHAM

"The Post Girl"

By Edward C. Booth. Published by the Century company, New York. Price $1.50.

READERS of fiction whose favorite heroine has been "Lady Babbie" of Barrie's "Little Minister" are warned against this book, for she may be supplanted in their affections by "Pam," the heroine of one of the best novels of the year, "The Post Girl," by Edward C. Booth. And another thing, she is almost a cousin of Babbie's, this adorable Pam; one is reminded constantly of Barrie in reading the book.

There is something of a mystery about Pam, but not too puzzling, and it is simply unraveled at the end. Her name is Pamela Searle. She is a girl letter carrier who for carrying the mail to "Cliff, Wrangham, an' Far Wrangham, an' round by Shippus" receives six shillings a week. That her calling has not in any way marred her charming femininity is proved by the description of her:

"'If the mere sound of her voice'—it had been previously described as having the rare mellow sweetness of blown pipes about it—'had aroused his wonder, the sight of the girl's face added doubly to his surprise. A face as little to be looked for in this place and at this time, and under these conditions, as to make quest for orchids down some pit mouth with pick and Davy lamp. He could not maintain the look long, for before satisfying his own inquiry he sought to establish the girl's confidence, but he noted the wide, generous forehead, the big consuming eyes, burning deep in sorrowing self-reproach and giving him a moment's gaze over the uplifted tumbler; the dispassionate narrow nose, sprinkled about its bridge and between the brows with a pepper caster helping of freckled candor; the small lips, parted submissively to the glass rim over two slips of milky teeth; the long, sleek cheeks; the slender, pear-shaped chin; the soft, supple neck of russet tan, spliced on to a gleaming shaft of ivory where it dipped through her dress collar to her bosom; the quick throbbing throat and the burning lobes of red, like live cinders in her hair.'"

Of course there is "the" man, though for a while his name is legion. Every man who crosses Pam's path falls in love with her, but the description of the only one is worth quoting in full. He is the "Spawer," which, too, needs an explanation. "The class of visitor which is lacking to Ullbrig is the pleasure-seeking variety which comes for a month, is charged unprotesting for lights and fire, never lends a hand to the washing of its own pots, and pays town price for country butter. Our local designation for such guests—when we get them—is 'spawers.'"

As for the spawer in question, his name is Maurice Ethelbert Wynne, and he, too, is interesting and human, like this:

"He was a tall, lithe figure of young manhood in snowy hollands, with the idle bearing of one whose activity is all in the upper story; eyes brown, steadfast and kindly, less for the faculty of seeing things than of thinking them; brows lying at ease apart, but with the tiny telltale couple crease between them for linked tussle—brows that might hitch on to thought with the tenacity of a steel hawser; a jaw fine, firm and resolute, closing strongly over determination, though void of the vicious set of obstinacy, with a little indulgent, smiling, V-shaped cleft in the chin for a mendicant to take advantage of; lips seemingly consecrate to the sober things of life, yet showing, too, a sunny corner for its mirth makings and laughters beneath the slight slant of mustache—scarcely more tawny than its owner's sun tanned cheeks where it touched them."

Two other characters furnish the most quaint and amusing episodes in the book. They are Father Mostyn, the vicar of the parish, a scholarly man who affects so much simplicity that he seems almost one of the country people among whom his lot is cast, and his old friend and chum, a cantankerous old Scotch doctor, Anderson by name, who disagrees with him on religion and most other things, barring eating and drinking. Father Mostyn is an admirable character who under his quaintly humorous manner is a man of broad Christian sympathies and a warm and genial nature.

It has been noted of late that no longer are the pleasures of the table exploited in novels. The old masters, Dickens especially, positively made one's mouth water with the descriptions of dinners. If any there be who would say it is out of fashion, let him read this description of the first "feed" which Father Mostyn and Pam gave to Wynne:

"But the crowning glory of the place and of all Pam's achievements—it was the table. Four candles lighted it and a brass lamp, and they were every one lighted to start with. There was a chicken pie in a Mother Hubbard frill, with its crust as brown as a hazel nut, and just nicely large enough to feed half a dozen, which is a capital size for three; and a noble sirloin of beef, fringed with a hoary lock of horseradish, and arching it back in lonely majesty on an oval arena of spode; and there was a salad, heaped high up under the white and yellow chequer of sliced eggs, and a rosy tomato comb, in a glorious old oaken bowl as big as a kettle drum, china lined, bound with three broad hoops of silver and standing on three massive silver claws; and there were some savory eggs, deliciously embowered in their greenery of mustard and cress, and a tinned tongue, tissue papered in white and red, and garnished with stars and discs and crescents as though it had never known what it was to sleep in darkness in an air tight tin under Fussitter's counter; and some beetroot, brimming in a blood red lake of vinegar; and whipped creams and a trifle pudding, all set out on snowy white damask amid an arctic glitter of glass and silver and cutlery. Except the cheese, which was a Camembert, and went by itself on the grained sideboard, where all the tumblers and wine glasses had been congregated before."

"The Bohemian Jinks"

By Porter Garnett. Published by the Bohemian club, San Francisco. Price $1.50.

The Bohemian club of San Francisco needs little explanation to San Francisco audiences or, for that matter, to the world at large, for its fame is now international. The club has sanctioned the publishing of a volume entitled "The Bohemian Jinks," written by Mr. Porter Garnett, a member of the club and connected with many of its entertainments in the forest.

This book he calls a treatise, but rather it is a series of essays, explaining to an interested public just exactly what the Bohemian jinks are. Mr. Garnett says in his preface: "The midsummer high jinks, as they are called, of the Bohemian club have carried the name of the organization over seas until, among a certain class of persons in every part of the world, it is as familiar as that of the city in which it has its home. Unfortunately the annual encampment of the Bohemians are associated in some persons' minds with the license of a Dionysiac revel, and the woodland performances with which they end have been given a factitious celebrity which militates against their serious consideration as works of art."

This last statement is only too true and for that reason this little book is written as much as any other. In it will be found a complete history of the midsummer jinks from the first one in 1878 up to and including the one to be produced next month. It is interesting to read what the author has to say of the jinks of 1878:

"It was on Saturday, June 20, 1878, that something less than a hundred members of the Bohemian club, which had been in existence for six years, conducted in the woods near Taylorville, Sonoma county, California, the first midsummer high jinks." * * *

The author goes on to say that it was little more than a nocturnal picnic and such entertainment as was given was impromptu and so successful was it that they planned to repeat it the following summer. The second jinks took place in the redwoods. "The extreme simplicity of this affair is interesting in view of the elaborate and complex productions of which it was the genesis. It consisted of an address of welcome by the sire, some casual singing, and two speeches."

The book is divided into five parts and an appendix. The first is devoted to "The Setting," in which is a faithful picture of the grove of redwoods now used by the club for the grove-plays, as they call them, and which they have owned for nearly ten years. The next chapter is devoted to the "History and Development" of the midsummer outings and the third to the "Origin and Analogies" of the plays as they are now given. From the simplest possible beginnings they have developed into the most remarkable productions of the age.

The fourth part of the book gives synopsis of the last seven years' grove-plays and after reading that one does not wonder at the rage which fills a true Bohemian when he finds the ignorant public under the impression that the outing is a bacchanalian orgy.

Much space is devoted to these synopses and a very clear idea of the story of each one of the plays is given.

The "Conclusion" gives bits of information about the acting, scenic effects, music, stage effects, etc., and in a section devoted to "Tendencies" the author notes some of the "near" mistakes and warns the club not to give way to them.

"For example," he says, "repetitions of the plays both in the grove and in the city have been urged; the admission of women to the club festivals has been discussed as has their participation in the performances. * * * The greatest danger, as before suggested, is that they will degenerate into more or less commonplace drama or opera."

The appendix is valuable as a book of reference, giving a list of the house jinks and midsummer jinks from 1872 to date, together with the sire's name, musical sire and subject of the evening's entertainment.

The book is gracefully written and contains some excellent illustrations reproduced from photographs taken in the grove at Guerneville. There is also a partial map of the grove inserted at the back of the book which shows the shape and size of this enormous grove. While the title page bears the name of the Bohemian club as publisher, it is to be distributed by A. M. Robertson.

"The Mystery of the Yellow Room"

By Gaston Leroux. Published by Brentano's, New York. Price $1.50.

Gaston Leroux, the author of "Le Mystere de la Chambre Jaune," has created a new character in fiction and one we are sure to meet again. His name is Joseph Rouletabille, a young cub of a reporter, 18 years of age, engaged upon the Paris "Epoque." Young Rouletabille has theories and makes deductions from them very much as Sherlock Holmes did, but his system is more complicated and interesting than that of the veteran detective, and his methods are more scientific.

Of course, the mystery is a murder mystery and the search for the murderer makes up the book.

A famous scientist, part French and part American, owns a beautiful estate near Paris. In the grounds of this estate is a pavilion where he has fitted up a laboratory for his chemical experiments. The pavilion contains a room, the yellow room, where the daughter of the scientist, Mathilde Stangerson, slept during the warm summer months. This daughter was devoted to her father and had refused all suitors in order to help her father in his work, and now was a woman of 35, with a scientific education far in advance of many of the men of the day.

The room in which she slept, "The Yellow Room," contained one window, heavily barred, and one door leading into her father's laboratory. On this particular night she had worked with her father until 11 o'clock and then retired. Her father and the old family servant with him hear sounds of a struggle soon and screams of "help," "murder," etc., but find her door is double locked and they are obliged to break it in.

When they finally succeed in getting in, they find Mlle. Stangerson lying on the floor, blood flowing from a wound in her forehead and marks of strangulation on her throat. There is no chimney in this room and no possible way the murderer could have escaped except by the door through which the father and servant had entered. No murderer is found, however, and he cannot be secreted in the room. So there is the problem.

There are half a dozen suspicions and many curious complications, and though the most famous detective in all the country, Frederic Larson, is sent for, nothing avails. The papers are of course interested and advance theory after theory, and the "Epoque" sends Joseph Rouletabille with carte blanche to investigate. The story, which gives his remarkable deduction in detail, is as interesting a detective story as has ever been written. The methods are slightly like those employed by Sherlock Holmes. Also he has a stupid friend—duller infinitely than Dr. Watson—who tells the story.

The denouement is a complete surprise, and yet when the explanation is forthcoming it is so simple that it seems curious it was not seen before. It is the most ingenious piece of work seen in many a long day.

More than this cannot be said; the reader must discover the murderer himself. The work of the translator is well done, though no name is given.

"Fate's a Fiddler"

By Edwin George Pinkham. Illustrated by Lester Ralph. Published by Small, Maynard & Co., Boston. Price $1.50.

"What if skies be wan and chill?
What if winds be harsh and stale?
Presently the east will thrill,
And the sad and shrunken sail,
Bellying with a kindly gale,
Bears you sunwards, while your chance
Sends you back the hopeful hail:—
'Fate's a Fiddler, life's a dance.'"

In that little verse of Henley's is found the inspiration for the title of an unusual story by Edwin George Pinkham.

The story is autobiographical in form, being told by Sumner Bibbus, and it begins with his very earliest recollections and continues to the time when life seems to offer him no more adventures, but calm, plain sailing.

There is much about the book to remind the reader of Dickens. The author says he prefers Dickens to other writers and his style, consciously or unconsciously, is much like the master. His father and mother are decidedly Dickensesque. The father is a particularly incapable person and he and his wife have such simple and beautiful faith in each other it is positively pathetic.

Bermondsey Bibbus, the father, had tried all sorts of things during his early married life to earn his living, but everything had been unsuccessful. An uncle of his wife's, and for whom the child Sumner had been named, was expected to leave them money when he died, but left her nothing but a neglected old library, which would have been a white elephant on their hands if it had not occurred to them to open a second hand book shop. There were many law books in the collection; the uncle had been a lawyer, and so Bermondsey kept up the fiction for years that he was about to "enter the law." The descriptions contained in the first chapters of the book of the early life of the narrator are extremely humorous, the meetings in the evening in the book shop of the friends of the book seller being particularly well done.

One day a man, who proves to be the guardian of the stepson—to whom Uncle Sumner had left his money—calls at the store and induces the Bibbuses to allow their boy to go out to the suburb where they live. The boy thinks it is a vacation, but later it becomes a permanent arrangement and the boys grow up—the best of chums, educated together, sharing everything.

The plot of the tale from this point on is clear enough in reading, but condensed it would sound complicated. Another will is discovered, leaving everything to Sumner, and he tears it up in a sudden burst of generosity. Then it is discovered that wills make no difference anyway, for the guardian has been deceived by a plausible villain who robs him of his money and his wife—so there is no property for the boys to struggle over.

Sumner and his cousin decide to go west where Sumner's father and mother have "located," but they do not speak of the decision to each other and leave three or four hours apart, and after a series of very exciting adventures meet in St. Louis. They have a very happy time working together in the same firm and later on the guardian is enabled to make good all his losses to the boys, who discover at the last moment another will which upsets all previous calculations. The love interest is small but natural and happy. The minor characters in the story are not minor at all—every one of them has an important bearing on the story and all is made clear in the last chapter. It is a good story well told and deserves more than the usual praise.

"Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge"

Published by Funk & Wagnalls company, New York.

The new Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge is a vast work. It is to be completed in 12 volumes, the first of which has arrived from the publishers. If the other volumes treat as many subjects as the first one does it will be readily seen that little can be asked for not found in these pages. The first volume has treated 892 topics; it contains 530 pages and 130 editors have been engaged in the work upon it. There are 600 specialist contributors to the edition and all of them have been actively engaged for the last six years. The trouble with most reference books so far available upon religious subjects is that none of them is up to date; then, too, most of them are sectarian, which makes their usefulness limited. This encyclopedia is of such immense scope that it is difficult to comprehend it all at once, but we are assured that any and every possible item on any subject relating in any way to the religion of every country on the globe is exhaustively treated in this encyclopedia, making the work of great value.

"The Cobbler"

By Elma A. Travis, M. D., author of "The Pang-Yanger." Published by The Outing company, New York. Price $1.25.

A rather clever and original story is found in "The Cobbler," a pleasing novel by Elma A. Travis, M. D. The hero is the son of the village cobbler, a man above the average in talent, emotional and a worshiper of the sensuous to a degree almost pagan. The first thing the hero does is to marry the daughter of a judge. She is totally unlike her husband in every way, well balanced and self-contained, while he is as variable as the wind.

These two foolish young people are unsuited to each other and drift apart. Much of the book is devoted to the story of the man's entanglement with three women at once. There is too much discussion of sex problems that seem dragged in. After many disagreeable and trying experiences hero and heroine are again brought together with what seems a guarantee of reasonable happiness.

The hero writes, and the literary and artistic talk is badly done, but he is a yachtsman in a small way on the Hudson and the best of the book is found in the scenes of outdoor and country life. The book is amateurish in style, but the author has ideas and is to be reckoned with.

"The Pauper of Park Lane"

By William Le Queux. Published by Cupples & Leon, New York.

There are fifty-two chapters in this book, none of them long, and the author attempts to give us a startling sensation at the end of each one of them. That in itself is a superhuman task and the author is not superhuman. He makes a total failure of it and the result is a tangled and hopeless mass of incidents which the very poor explanations do not justify. The author more than insinuates dreadful things against each and every character in the book and not one of them rouses the least sympathy.

The story is woven about a rich and powerful financier who has a great deal of business with the Servian government. Two blackmailers keep all the characters in the story in hot water until the weak and scarcely explained ending.

One cannot avoid speaking again of the mistaken custom of the publishers in printing the "characters in the story" on the paper wrapper of the book. In this particular case the characters are not correctly named or described. Samuel Statham is called Spencer Statham and the cover also says he is really a Jew named Isaac Philipstaal, but there is nothing to that effect in the book. Leonard Lyle is called John Lyle and his daughter Lorena is called Norena. Jean Adam is described as a secret agent in the employ of the Servian government, when in reality he is one of the blackmailers.

The cover also uncovers all the real mysteries of the book: the secret of the locked door is fully described; also the fact that Levi, who acts as Statham's butler, is in reality his brother, is revealed.

"Work and Habits"

By Albert J. Beveridge, author of "The Bible as Good Reading." Published by Henry Altemus company, Philadelphia. Price 50 cents.

"Work and Habits" is a book written especially for the young American. The thing that impresses one in the reading is that Senator Beveridge is not a theorist. He began life as a plowboy, toiled as a lumberman, tramped the countryside as a book agent, made a career as a lawyer, and now sits in the senate of the United States. The man who has done things has earned the right to advise; whether we follow his counsels or not one must respect them. The style is easy and conversational, not preachy in any sense. One can almost feel the magnetism of the man's voice and presence in the words. The chapter on "Work and Habits" is a general talk about getting on in the world—decently, successfully and manfully. The one on "Money" is important for every man who has his own way to make. Patriotism and manly adherence to right, just because it is right, are the main points in another chapter. A study of Washington life shows the senator to be an optimist. He sees more good in conditions there than any other writer and tells of it in a manner that is interesting and spirited.

Gossip of Books and People Who Make Them

An interesting sign of the times is the international moral education congress, which will be held in London in September. The vice president for the United States is Professor Earl Barnes, whose book "Where Knowledge Fails," in The Art of Life series, was published recently.

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Professor Thomas R. Lounsbury of Yale university, who said in a recent interview that the much disputed idiom "none are" was entirely correct, is a hearty defender of what is sometimes called "newspaper English." In his book, "The Standard of Usage in English," he maintains that the style of reputable journals is quite as good as the conditions allow, if not a little better. Indeed, Professor Lounsbury, whose very practical standard is the usage of great writers and cultivated speakers, seems inclined to permit more latitude of idiom than some editors. One characteristic pronouncement of this critic which many people are quoting is "Language not only does change, but should change."

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Margaret Potter is passing the summer in Italy, with Rome as her headquarters, making occasional jounts into the Italian country. With tireless energy Mrs. Potter is already planning to follow up with a similar tale the impression made by "The Golden Ladder," which one reflective critic called "an unvarnished story."

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Mr. A. E. W. Mason, the novelist, used to be an actor, and it is probable that his experiences on the boards may materially help him as a parliamentary speaker. A fellow actor of those far off days says of him: "Of course, we know he was a varsity man and all that, but he was quite a good sort all the same. We could not stand all those initials, though, and used to call him 'Alphabet Mason.'"

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Besides her literary activities, which are strenuous and constant, Gertrude Atherton will divert herself in Munich this summer with musical interests, of which that city is a pronounced center. Mrs. Atherton is a devoted student of opera, and has contributed some notable operatic criticisms to the foreign press.

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Meredith Nicholson, the author of "The House of a Thousand Candles," is announced as a candidate for state senator in Indiana. He is an out and out democrat and a Bryan man.

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David Belasco's and David Warfield's great dramatic success, "The Grand Army Man," has been put in novel form by Harvey J. O'Higgins, who has done his best work on the recasting.

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Miss Elizabeth Miller, author of "The Yoke," "The City of Delight," etc., was married on June 17. Her husband is a prominent Indianapolis attorney. It is understood that Miss Miller will continue her literary work.

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Clara Louise Burnham has placed the manuscript for a large part of her new novel with the publishers, who will bring it out next season. The new novel will be called "The Leaven of Love."

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Mrs. Ella W. Peattie's volume of short stories, entitled "The Shape of Fear," has been translated into Bohemian and is to be published in that language.

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Miss May Sinclair is at her home in Kensington, England, engaged on a new novel. She has also some short stories in hand.

Books Received

"Value, Price and Profit," by Carl Marx. Charles H. Kerr & Co., Chicago.
"Changes in the Theory and Tactics of the German Social Democracy," by Paul Kampfmeyer. Charles H. Kerr & Co., Chicago.
"Fate's a Fiddler," by Edwin G. Pinkham. Small, Maynard & Co., Boston.
"Good Citizenship," by Grover Cleveland. Henry Altemus & Co., Philadelphia.
"Sour Sonnets of a Sorehead," by James P. Haverson. H. M. Caldwell company, Boston.
"Together," by Robert Herrick. The Macmillan company, New York.
"Our Bird Friends," by George F. Burba. The Outing publishing company, New York.
"The Wayfarers," by Mary Stewart Cutting. The McClure company, New York.
"The Vegetable Garden," by Ida D. Bennett. The McClure company, New York.
"Gulliver's Travels," retold by James Baldwin. American book company, New York.
"Peggy at Spinster Farm," by Helen M. Winslow. L. C. Page & Co., Boston.
"In the World and On the Shore," by Richard D. Ware. L. C. Page & Co., Boston.
"The House on the Water," by Charles G. D. Roberts. L. C. Page & Co., Boston.
"In the Land of the Mosques and the Minarets," by Francis Miltoun and Blanche McManus. L. C. Page & Co., Boston.
"Captain Love," by Theodore Roberts. L. C. Page & Co., Boston.
"The Widow," by Helen Rowland. Dodge publishing company, New York.
"The Irresistible Current," by Mrs. Loweenberg. Broadway publishing company, New York.
"Chinese Fables and Folk Stories," by Mary H. Davis and Chow Ling; American book company, New York.
"Short Stories of the Heroes of the Early Church," by Emma A. Robinson; Jennings & Graham, Cincinnati.
"The Power Supreme," by Francis C. Nicholas; R. E. Lee company, Boston.
"Fads as Facts," by Rayon; M. S. publishing company, Chicago.
"Consumption," by Charles H. Taylor, M. D.; E. B. Treat & Co., New York.