

The Sunday Call

Conducted by Una H. Cool

BOOKS REVIEWED

- "Lewis Rand," by Mary Johnston.
- "The Spitfire," by Edward Peple.
- "The Immortal Moment," by May Sinclair.
- "My Auto Book," by Walter Pulitzer.
- "Tables of Stone," by Harold Bigbee.
- "The Mills of the Gods," by Elizabeth Robins.
- "The Broken Snare," by Ludwig Lewisohn.

Lewis Rand

By Mary Johnston, author of "To Have and Have Not," "Prisoners of Hope," etc. Published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston. Price \$1.50.

The people who have been looking for the great American novel may well consider the latest work of Miss Mary Johnston, kept in grateful memory for her "To Have and Have Not."

In "Lewis Rand" many of the qualities that go to make the perfect novel are found. It is historical, the author having taken those exciting years marking the close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century as her time.

America as her place, and among her characters such figures as Jefferson and Burr, who appear in their own proper persons, and others with partly fictitious names representing many well known characters.

The plot of the story centers around the character of Lewis Rand, introduced in the very first line of the story. He is the son of a Virginia tobacco roller, and though a mere lad he rebels at his life already. A famous hunter and Indian scout, Adam Gaudylock, is an old friend of the Rand's, and he and Lewis have a prophetic and illuminating conversation in the first chapter. The boy shows the seeds of his overmastering ambition when he says to Adam:

"I want to be a man! But I don't want to be a tobacco roller, like my father, nor—"

And the wise hunter, who has studied him since his infancy, finishes his sentences for him quite precisely:

"Nor a hunter like me?"

It is in the next few words of Adam's, spoken with no thought of consequences, that the boy's ambitions receive a hint at definite form.

"The governor of Virginia," says Adam, "or come with me and make yourself king of the Mississippi!"

The boy saves his pennies, and when he has \$2 he goes to a book shop at Richmond to invest it in law books. Fate that day leads Thomas Jefferson, not yet the president, to the same shop, and he is wonderfully interested in the boy and adds two books to the two he has bought, together with much good advice and an invitation to come and see him. This friendship continues to grow for many years, until Rand's fatal ambition alienates him from almost everybody.

In the Carrys and the Churchills two typical pictures of the old southern families are given. They are both federalists, while Lewis Rand is a follower of Jefferson, in those days called a republican-democrat. When Lewis is a successful candidate for the hand of Jacqueline Churchill there is a tremendous upheaval in the two families. The Churchills are very proud of their ancestry, and while giving a grudging admiration to the successful self-made man, they can't make up their minds to the alliance between the families. Added to their pride of birth is their political difference, which in those days was no inconsiderable thing.

However, Jacqueline marries Lewis and though her family never quite forgives her and never forgives Rand, they are always solicitous for her welfare.

Rand falls into the spell of fascination, cast upon all who knew him, of Aaron Burr and becomes involved in his plots. It is then that the fine spirit of the Churchills is shown; how noble they are and what a fine patriotism they show. Through some very interesting and well told personal complications Rand is prevented from publicly disgracing himself, but his wife learns the story and she is prostrated by the knowledge, but though her ideal is shattered her love stands the test.

During the exciting days of the secret plotting with Burr, Rand never dreams that Jefferson, now president, knows anything of his private schemes. Jefferson asks Rand to come out to his home, Monticello, and have a talk. A portion of this talk with Jefferson is quoted:

"Where does it lie, and who are your fellow travelers? John Randolph of Roanoke and the new republicans? Or monarchism and the federalists? Or have I the honor tonight to entertain a Virginian Caesar?—perhaps even a Bonaparte?" His voice changed. "Have you reflected, sir, that there is some danger in so free an expression of your mind?"

"I have reflected," answered Rand, "that there is no danger so intolerable as the chafing of a half acknowledged bond. The clock is striking again. I owe you much, sir. I thank you for it. While I served you, I served faithfully. It is over now. I look you in the face and tell you this, and so I give you warning that I am free. Henceforth I act as my free will directs."

Through many exciting pages here the story grips so that it is difficult to have a quoting.

The trial of Aaron Burr is a brilliant piece of work and that alone would make the book interesting and much new light is thrown both on the political and historical condition of the time.

The character of Lewis Rand is drawn with great power. Slowly but surely he is drawn into the black whirlpool by his uncontrollable ambition. The progress of his ambition is handled with much artistry—first the reader's sympathy is all with him and he wins one's respect and admiration; but it is inevitable that the pity he next rouses in us slowly turns into contempt and positive dislike at the last.

The story is a fine finished piece of work of exciting interest from a historical point of view, and containing as it does two beautiful love stories, an interest and consideration from all classes of readers. The book is an addition to literature, but whether or not it will be considered the great American novel the reading public will decide.

"The Broken Snare" By Ludwig Lewisohn. Published by B. W. Dodge & Co., New York.

If a humble book reviewer might add a prayer to the litany it would read: "From all sex and problem novels, good Lord, deliver us!" And still they pour in. The latest one is entitled "The Broken Snare," by Ludwig Lewisohn. It is the author's first book, but the publishers tell us that he has had a considerable reputation as a scholar and lecturer and that several short bits of fiction have appeared in New York magazines.

The story is horrible, morbid and gloomy and suggestive through every page, with no light touches to relieve its somberness. It is also unconvincing, and one never escapes the atmosphere of unreality to the very end.

A young girl of 23, the daughter of respectable parents, is the heroine. She is lonely and unhappy because they are too poor to mix with their social equals and too proud to associate with any below them. As a consequence the girl becomes deeply introspective. She reads everything published and talks over all sorts of questions with her father, questions not usually discussed by fathers with their daughters.

One night her father brings home a man to dine with them. He knows how intelligent his daughter is and has seen enough of the man to think they will be congenial. They scarcely say a word to each other and do not see each other for a week or 10 days. When they meet accidentally and walk along the street together, she asks him why he has not been to see the family again and he abruptly tells her that it is because "Oh, Frances, I love you!"

A plain case of physical attraction, which she has felt also.

Her mother frequently and at last comes out the reason. He thinks marriage is degrading. His reasons may seem a little overdrawn and obscure, but for him they sufficed.

His mother had died when he was quite a child, and when he was 16 his father married again. The stepmother was a good woman, but destroyed the happiness of the home by nagging his father to death. He could not escape from her, for he was legally tied to her, and her cruelty to him was too subtle to be handled by a court of law. She worried him to death. At his father's grave the son swore that he would never give any woman the right to wreck his life. "Not the best, not the noblest, never I know moment of relenting I see that grave and I remember that hour when I saw my dear father—whom I knew in his vigor—shrink with fear and a horror of repulsion in his eyes at the coming of a footfall and the sound of a voice!"

The two young people love each other so desperately that they can not live apart and the man will not sacrifice his conviction about marriage, so they go off together to Queenshaven, a fiction name for Charleston, S. C. country road with bleating sheep and farmer folk, all going to markets dull as death! I've swindled and sweated for you on that road. Now I'll tread my own, though I come at last to the gates of Tartarus! My service is done, sir; I'm out.

"Your road!" exclaimed the other.

"The Spitfire" By Edward Peple, author of "Semiramis," etc. Published by Moffat, Yard & Co., New York. Price \$1.50.

It is a great temptation to begin this review by commenting again upon the versatility of Edward Peple. "The Prince Chap" and "Semiramis" were about as unlike as two books well could be, but here comes along another in quite a different style.

The Spitfire is a steam yacht belonging to a mysterious American who is as rich as all fiction Americans are and has all the other American traits, including a hot and ungovernable temper. When the story opens the daughter of the mysterious American (who seems to have a controlling interest in the money markets of the world) and an aunt and a cousin are ordered to leave him in London and take the yacht to Catalina and wait there for instructions from him. How they fly off to America at a moment's notice with three unexpected passengers, the terrible complications which arise and the absolutely unavoidable climax which follows are described in a very quiet and consistent manner.

The author who is capable of doing so much more serious work devotes himself to an airy nothing like this, but when he does he receives the thanks of a grateful reading public. This story, like "The Prince Chap" and other work by this author, lends itself to an easy and successful dramatization. The book is charmingly illustrated by Howard Chandler Christy and J. V. McFall.

"The Immortal Moment" By May Sinclair, author of "The Divine Fire," etc. Published by Doubleday, Page & Co., New York.

Miss May Sinclair has the gift of endowing her characters with life developed to a marked degree. She has created a character in Kitty Taillefer, that, while not new to fiction, will stand in a niche by herself in the gallery of heroines of the day. The story is of one poor woman who was half forced and half drifted into the life of the underworld, but who rebelled at heart all the time.

At a seaside resort she meets the one man of her life, and after a brief and romantic courtship of 10 days they become engaged. He is a widower with two small children and an adoring sister who has kept house for him and mothered his children since his wife's death. The tragedy of the story is developed through the appearance at the resort of Kitty's last lover, a cold man of the world, who tells her that she is treating this good man unfairly, especially on account of the children. The situation there is hackneyed and the conversation is not clever enough to add anything to the author's reputation, but the story moves rapidly.

Kitty's immortal moment comes when she is lifted to the pinnacle of self-sacrifice through her real love for the man who has asked her to marry him. She tells him her story so brutally that she hopes he will loathe her, but she only hurts him deeply and breaks her own heart. The climax is not unexpected, but is rather inartistically handled. The book, while full of real people, as this author's books always are, bears marks of hurried construction and is not equal to her previous work.

The book is beautifully printed and bound and contains four indifferent illustrations by C. Coles Phillips.

"My Auto Book" By Walter Pulitzer. Published by the Outing company, New York. Price \$1.

Mrs. A.—How was it, my dear, you came to meet your second husband?

Mrs. B.—Oh, it was delightfully romantic. I was taking a stroll with my first husband when my second came along in an automobile and ran him down. That was the beginning of our courtship.

That, one thinks, is a fair sample of the "notes" in "My Auto Book," by Walter Pulitzer. Readers will remember his "Cynic's Meditations" and "Cupid's Pack of Cards" of a few seasons ago. This book has every other page reserved for notes about the owner's trips. Lines are labeled: "Date of run," "Those in the

party," "Places visited," "Distance covered," "Special incidents" and lastly, in small print and red ink, "Killings can be omitted. It is a gay little book and the illustrations, by Hy S. Watson, add much to its attractiveness.

"Tables of Stone" By Harold Bigbee. Published by Doubleday, Page & Co., New York. Price \$1.50.

Harold Bigbee has written a story of remarkable power in "Tables of Stone." It is a character study and most conscientiously and consistently done.

A clergyman living in a very quiet suburban town in England has brought up his son in absolute ignorance of the world. His education has been classical and very thorough, but he does not feel conscious of a call to the ministry, so he goes to London to seek his fortune.

Almost at once he plunges into the world of fashion through the whimsical interest in him of a fashionable woman who thinks she will find him amusing. The young man takes a very serious interest in everything, but he is not a laughingstock for the society dandies very long. He is ignorant of what is known as "society lying," the polite little white fibs which are necessary to make the conventional road easy to travel. His frank opinions shock his hearers and he finds it difficult to learn this easy art.

Religion is the great thing which John Dyer, this clergyman's son, finds difficult to settle in his mind. He has heard his father preach all his life and had no doubts whatever, but when he got out into the world he began to read things which his father had never had in his library—books on science by Huxley—and they made so profound an impression upon him that he felt he had been on the wrong road. The scientific explanation of life destroyed his beliefs and at first made him unhappy. Then he was inspired to write articles and books himself.

His love affair is treated with the same uncompromising honesty that every other affair in his life receives, and the shadow of tragedy hangs over it from the very first. There is no swerving from the standard he sets for himself and those about him, but though he has all sorts of misery come to him, the author succeeds in rousing one's pity only for his wife and child, and not for himself.

When all the unhappiness that can come to a man has finally come to him, the loss of all those most dear to him, he is comfortless in his remorse: "There was nothing of consolation in his creed. The God he worshiped held in his hands not mercy and forgiveness, but tables of stone." It is after several years of hopeless and despairing misery that he at last realizes that his God can not help him. His hard heart is softened by penitence and remorse and he finds comfort again in the church of his father. It is a tremendously harrowing book, but has extraordinary power and is written in excellent style.

"The Mills of the Gods" By Elizabeth Robins, author of "Come and Find Me," etc. Published by Moffat, Yard & Co., New York. Price \$1.

When one has grown to depend upon an author it is a distinct shock to find a book so disappointing as this one signed by Miss Elizabeth Robins.

During the last few years she has given us "The Magnetic North," "Come and Find Me" and "The Convert," any one of which would make a place for her in literature. Now she has not lost her facility in finding attractive titles and gives us "The Mills of the Gods."

The real heroine of the little tale (its only merit is that it is short) is a middle aged woman of the world. Years before the story opens she has had a short and shocking love affair with a man who treated her so badly that she has embittered her whole life. She has married an Italian with a daughter, the most rarely beautiful young woman ever seen, and when the story opens they are traveling about Europe aimlessly.

At a little watering place the pair come upon a man who has left so tragic an impress upon the stepmother. His interest is at once aroused by the beauty of the daughter, for he has not changed his methods of life in all the years.

The story from this point on is too full of horror to give any synopsis. Miss Robins' beautiful style and graceful language are all that excuses it. The publishers call the theme medieval, and it is well described. The climax is dreadful and almost satisfying, but not quite. It is an uncanny story and painful to a degree.

Gossip of Books and People Who Make Them

When the English say of a voice, "How dreadfully American!" the usual indignant owner would be wiser to repair the defect than to resent the criticism. Those who recall the friendly crusade of Henry James and others

against our vocal depravity, and those who have noticed it for themselves, should observe that one practical woman has set about finding a remedy. Katherine Jewell Everts has written a book that the Harpers are about to publish which is said to be filled with arguments to remember, and exercises the practice of which will definitely help to make musical the voice. The book will bear the simple title, "The Speaking Voice."

Robert Herrick's "Together" has been barred from the shelves of the public library in a New England town. The same library has banished the works of George Meredith. No one but the autocrat of a New England library could conceive so subtle a compliment to Mr. Herrick.

Justus Miles Forman is among the authors returning from abroad who have come home in good time to begin the New York literary season. Mr. Forman, who was a passenger on the Cedric last week, has been on the other side since May, chiefly in England and France, in regions where he is an accustomed visitor and guest.

The J. B. Bond Lyceum bureau has One of those people who concern themselves with such things wrote the other day to Charles Rann Kennedy, the author of "The Servant in the House," asking for some story of his childhood. Evidently much success—the book has exhausted many editions, and the plan is touring the country—has not been the Englishman's ambition, for he replied promptly by a story of childhood recorded by his mother. One whole day I cried—literally—for fear of losing the story, which offers Mr. Kennedy a new book to be crying for it ever since. And I'll get it yet."

Books Received

"The Housekeeper's Week," by Marion Harland. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Indianapolis.

"The Call of the City," by Charles W. Robinson. The E. P. Dutton Co., New York.

"The Christmas Maker's Church," by Edith A. Sawyer. L. C. Page & Co., Boston.

"The Immortal Moment," by May Sinclair. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York.

"The Palace of Danger," by Mabel Wagnalls. Funk & Wagnalls, New York.

to learn that the reports about the condition of his eyes were exaggerated. After the hunting accident the author was taken to a hospital in Seattle, where he remained for several weeks. He is now finishing his interrupted hunting trip in Alaska and Canada, but will return to the States before winter.

Dr. William Elliot Griffiths has been honored by the emperor of Japan with the decoration of the Order of the Rising Sun, which is given only to distinguished foreigners who have aided in the modern civilization of Japan.

Who hears now or who recalls now the name of the author of that splendid poem, "The Bivouac of the Dead"? Probably no one in a thousand ever heard of Theodore O'Hara, and yet the poem he wrote is perhaps the finest of its kind in the English language. O'Hara was the son of an Irish refugee, who fled to America after taking part in the Fitzgerald uprising in 1788. He was born in Danville, Ky., in 1820, and after graduating from St. Joseph's college, entered the law office of John C. Breckenridge. He served later in the civil war and also in the Mexican war. It was from his experiences in the Mexican war that O'Hara got his inspiration for his poem. Kentucky erected a monument in memory of her sons who had fallen in battle, and it was at the dedication of this monument that O'Hara read his poem. Here is a magnificent verse from this masterpiece of elegiac composition:

The unfurled drum's sad roll has beat
The soldiers' last tattoo;
No more of life's parade shall meet
That brave and fallen foe.
On time's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And glory guards with solemn tread
The bivouac of the dead."

Mrs. Warren's novel "The Land of the Living" insists that sensational reform is a kind of first cousin to knavery and arrogance, and drives the point with a sure Irish aim. "The trouble with reformers is," she says, "they don't take any light. There ain't any new light. They've got it all." "I distrust a man," the old fellow says again, "who pats himself on the back because he's honest. He ought to take it as a matter of course."

Mary E. Waller, author of "The Wood Carver of Lympus," has taken a cottage at Newport for the winter.

Frank Chapman, curator of birds at the American Museum of Natural History, who has been teaching Kermit Roosevelt in the use of the camera, has written a new book showing the results of his last eight years of field explorations, in which he covered 60,000 miles. The book, entitled "The Camps and Cruises of an Ornithologist," will have over 250 illustrations taken from photographs selected from thousands.

Senator Beveridge, whose "The Young Man and the World" is published by D. Appleton Co., is rejoicing in a new possession. A son, a poet, a senator and author, has come to bless his home.

The rumor, which was never confirmed, that the late Paul L. Ford based the character of his Peter Stirling on that of Grover Cleveland, probably is helping to keep up interest in that most popular of American political novels, "The Honorable Peter Stirling," which Messrs. Henry Holt & Co. are having to print for the fifty-second time, and for which the demand has been more constant and steady, now 14 years after publication, than for, perhaps, any other work of fiction on their entire list.

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