

about which opinions may quite honestly differ. To the reader who appreciates a pleasant style, a keen observance of the little things of life, and an indulgent understanding of plain, simple souls, her portraiture of the daily, plodding routine of a Methodist minister's family in a remote Colorado town will bring a few hours of quiet but very genuine enjoyment. On the other hand, any one who demands action, a strong, well-knit plot carefully worked out with an ever-watchful eye for the greatest economy of means, will feel a growing irritation at the placid, casual manner in which things happen, the patient acceptance of life that characterises her people, the phlegmatic temperament of the Swedes, who play a dominant part in the story. Reduced to its simplest elements, this is the history of Thea Kronborg, from her early childhood in the town of Moonstone, until in ripe young womanhood she returns from her musical studies abroad, achieves fame in Wagnerian rôles, and marries a Chicago millionaire, who has the wisdom not to interfere with her professional career. Stated in this form, this story has a rather familiar ring: the poor but worthy young woman with a latent artistic talent, which some man, more or less disinterested, helps to develop, recurs at fairly regular intervals. In the present case a slight novelty is introduced by making the benefactor a wealthy benefactor, a wealthy engineer, who secretly loved her, abiding his time until she should be old enough for marriage, and died leaving a life insurance policy in her name. But, as already intimated, the interest of Miss Cather's story is only secondarily in the plot. She has created a group of real persons; she takes us into their home and makes us share in their joys and sorrows, with a quickening sympathy such as we give to our friends in the real world. And that is a gift that is perhaps quite as rare as a genius for plot-building.

"THE SONG OF THE LARK"

The Song of the Lark, by Willa Sibert Cather, is one of those volumes