

# Heirs Apparent

"I'm fed up with Oxford. There's nothing in it—for me," announces *Julian Perryam* in Philip Gibbs' latest literary production, **HEIRS APPARENT** (Doran, \$2.00). Since Oxford holds nothing for him *Julian* and *Audrey Nye*, another bored young student, walk home together. Thereby hangs a tale.

Secure in the arrogance of their youth they feel that Scandal can not touch them with her smutty fingers, and strangely enough that vindictive lady does find it difficult to discompose them. Not only do these serene, old-youngsters refuse to submit to social conventions which seem to hamper them, but having attained "the years of discretion" since the fighting of the greatest war in history, they refuse to be held responsible for the "messy" condition of affairs which has resulted from "the late unmentionable."

From all of this comment it may be correctly inferred that Mr. Gibbs' latest literary production is very late indeed. *Life* (with a capital "L") seems to be one of the not too original topics of conversation among the younger characters in modern fiction. These particular ones go out to meet their individual experiences with some reluctance, and yet, paradoxically, with perfect assurance based upon a philosophy of self-control gradually built up in the unturbulent atmosphere of Baliol.

The story of how *Life* treats these hesitant adventurers is Mr. Gibbs', and should not be revealed in any mere review. The book is an attempt to analyze modern youth, and as such is no worse, and indeed considerably better, than most. The characters and the plot are patently instruments which the author manipulates

to accord with his own thought processes. His conclusion he puts into the mouth of *Miss Nye*, who is one of his most consistent characters, when she says, "The young idea is only the old idea in a different sort of slang." It is a great tribute to Mr. Gibbs that his reader can feel that he has made of this book as of the *Middle of the Road*, in spite of a transparent plot and characters which are more or less automata, a very convincing and not in the least boring treatise on his own reactions to the age in which he lives. He admits into the narrative a number of clever bits of conversation, and a few half articulate attempts of *Julian* to discover a truly workable philosophy by which to guide his future. Mr. Gibbs is not a literary artist, but he is a sane thinking individual who seems untouched by the monotonous pessimism of many of his contemporaries. It is with a certain very real pleasure that one reads his last sentence, "Here's to the Heirs Apparent . . . Youth's all right."

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