

In *The Man of the Hour*, Octave  
Thanet's first venture in the form of a  
full-fledged novel, there  
"The Man  
of the  
Hour" is no such subtle veiling  
of the author's purpose  
as in Robert Herrick's  
book. The errors and

the dangers of socialism are the subject  
of her sermon in fiction, and while the  
story is not lacking in strength, nor in  
that finer character-drawing that the  
writer's previous work has associated  
with her name, one feels more than once  
that the plot has been moulded to fit a  
preconceived thesis. The man of the  
title-rôle is the victim of clashing in-  
stincts, inherited partly from the Russian  
princess, his mother, whose socialistic  
doctrines banished her from the land of  
her birth; and partly from the methodi-  
cal, far-sighted man of business, his  
father, whose tolerance for the whims of  
the Russian princess became exhausted  
when she disturbed the peace of their  
home in a Western manufacturing town  
by harbouring a nest of Russian nihilists.  
Little Johnny-Ivan, his very name pro-  
claiming his mixed origin, grew up  
under a curious strain, his father and  
mother rivalling each other in filling his  
small brain with their opposing views.  
Consequently, when he arrived at man-  
hood, an orphan deprived by his father's  
will of the greater part of the latter's  
fortune, he finds that he is strangely at  
war with himself. On the one side is the  
shrewd business instinct, the hereditary  
love for the old mill his father built up  
and ran prosperously for so many years.

On the other is his inherited sympathy for his mother's protégé and friends, the socialists. For a time the latter instinct conquers, and he becomes a champion of labour and a fellow-labourer among the roughest classes that the Chicago machine shops boast. But finally, through practical lessons learned amid strikes and riots and bloodshed, he learns the useful lesson of the value of law and order, and through this eventually becomes the "Man of the Hour." Herein lies the artificiality of the plot. One feels that in real life Johnny-Ivan would never have learned his lesson, or else he would have died from the severity of it.