

The struggle of men and women against temperament makes strong tragedy. Comedy, on the contrary, is oftenest made by placing men and women in whimsical situations and watching the curious complications that result from their following their natural bent of character under abnormal conditions. Such, for example, is the essence

of the humour in *Jerry Junior*, by Jean Webster, a book as airy-light, as iridescent, as inconsequential as a soap-

bubble. In plot it is just a piece of amiable nonsense; the story of a young American temporarily stranded in an out-of-the-way corner of the Italian Lake district, who discovers in the near vicinity another American with a pretty daughter, tries to make their acquaintance, and is severely snubbed for his pains by the pretty daughter. She has no use for the moment for any sort of man, young or old, excepting a guide to show her the way up the neighbouring mountains—a picturesque guide, like a Venetian gondolier, with sash and broad-brimmed hat, and gold hoops in his ears. But Jerry Junior is of the kind not easily daunted where a young woman is concerned; so he audaciously undertakes to masquerade as the picturesque guide she has ordered, oblivious of the difficulties into which his double ignorance of Italian roads and language is sure to bring him. The chronicle of Jerry Junior's frequent discomfiture, his tempestuous wooing and his ultimate success is really the whole sum and substance of a tale whose whole charm lies in the blythe spirit it diffuses of youthful joyousness and hope and love amid the golden atmosphere of Italian hills.