

is one of the justly recognized masters of the world of mysticism. Whatever we think of him as a dramatist, he carries weight and distinction as an investigator of the occult, as an experimenter with the subconscious, as an interpreter of what, to most of us, is the magical side of natural phenomena. But ideas of reincarnation, even of the reincarnation of a love-life, do not constitute a play. And if he called on Miss Pearn to supply "a story told in action," he failed to get what alone could have rescued him. Even an unusual theme, an analysis of our past existences, which has on occasion puzzled even the most materialistic, needs a sound foundation. Given as a skeleton for that mental state the eternal conflict between mated love and civic duty, as omnipresent as it is vital, given a feeling for style uncommon in even "literary" playwrighting, it is unfortunate that no better a drama than this could have been constructed. Its inception is original; its development labored; its finality unimportant. And as a matter of structural fact, Mr. Blackwood ought to realize that labeling as "prolog" and "epilog" material as relevant to the main action as are the beginning and the end of "Karma," does not for a moment keep the reader from sensing that it forms, actually, acts one and five. Perhaps, in the field of dramatic art, two heads are no better than one.

KARMA. By Algernon Blackwood and Violet Pearn. Dutton; \$1.50.

One must recognize the limitations of any art form used as a medium for propaganda. And it is equally certain that in "Karma: A Reincarnation Play," either Algernon Blackwood or Violet Pearn, or both, have neglected this fundamental. In "Milestones"—in "The Phantom Rival" more particularly, to which this play bears a not too striking resemblance—we were impressed with the absence of dramatic power which almost inevitably accompanies the episodic play, especially the play where, in each of the acts, the situations are so paralleled that all suspense ordinarily aroused by the unfolding action vanishes. As "The Phantom Rival" dealt with the vagaries of a hero in a dream world, so does "Karma" concern itself with the psychological wonderings and abnormalities of its heroine. But the great advantage it has over the former, and similar dream plays, is that Algernon Blackwood