News, Notes and Views About BOOKS

BY WINNIFRED REEVE
(Onoto Watanna)

Fashions change in books, even as they do in dress. Time was when we wept and thrilled over the loves of the painfully innocent heroine of "sweet 17." The villain that pursued her was anathema to us. She ran into hundreds of editions and her grandchildren still survive, but the "sweet 17" heroine of today is a sophisticated flapper, who knows more than her grandmother does.

We've been "fed up" on wild western stories; business stories, with the stenographer-boss theme worked overtime; pathological and psychological tales elbow their way in with the spooks and psychic literature. Canada has been exploited on screen and in story, and we learn through the medium of a certain popular type of alleged Canadian story, that Canada is a country whose main products are ice, snow, polar bears (especially cubs), sleigh dogs, igloos, noble mounted police and French Canucks, who address each other not in the French language, but in a pidgin English, a la habitant. The geography of our country is no less remarkable, and the airships have nothing on some of these heroes, who sprint lightly from Ontario to the vicinity of the North Pole in record dashes.

Glad Books came in on an uplift and healing wave. Of them we have had a surfeit. The Sunny Jims and Sunshine Marys are the bane of our lives in stories and in fact.

Contemporary with Pollyanna stories, oddly enough, (possibly as an antidote to the too sweet concoction), came an overwhelming plague of what is known as "sex stories." Some call it "realism". If such things are really real, we prefer illusion. Sex stories, of course, have been written from time immemorial, and when they are done by the master hands of the foreign authors, we have something worth while and truly great but the "sex" stories that are selling by the hundred thousands and are sprawled abroad in the popular magazines, do not belong to the same family. Though it is some years since "Three Weeks" set the world gasping, there has been no let up to this type of story and the epidemic reached its peak within the last year. "The Sheik" ran into edition after edition, and "Three Weeks" sells like a standard work still. Badly written a hodgepodge of pathos and slush, one ponders upon the type of mind that conceived them.

"Cytherea," by Joseph Hergesheimer, is diabolically clever, as are all the novels of this author. "Java Head," by the same author, was his best work. "Cytherea" is a study of a woman of 45, who, though the author does not name her so, is nevertheless apparently a nymphomaniac. The man in the case, a few years older, apparently normal, with a nice, commonplace, faithful wife and several charming children, is in reality a subtle sensualist, who has spent himself in dreams, while seemingly devoted to his wife, and well satisfied with his comfortable home. The two above characters come together with a bang, and at their first meeting abandon themselves to their strange love, if such it may be called. No alienist or mental specialist being at hand to control or confine them, they leave their respective wife and husband, children and homes, and fare forth

(Continued on Page Seventeen)

THE REFEREE

—By—
ALBERT APPLE

MARRIED

The ex-kaiser begins showing signs of being married. His new wife is "adjusting" the routine at Doorn castle. Bill had been keeping himself in the house and backyard, as secluded as a Greek oracle. Now he shows up daily in the village, and word leaks out that "the old lady" sends him for a walk. You can almost hear her, in highbrow phraseology, telling him to stir his stumps and go out and get some fresh air instead of sitting around moping and breathing tobacco smoke.

One of these days Bill will return from his walk to find the furniture changed about—including his pet chair.

Whether ex-kaiser or plain citizen, whether man or wife, the system soon tam most of us, makes us stand wit' out hitching.

MIRAGE

The circus giant, Captain George Auger, is buried—with a block and tackle. He stood 8 feet 6 inches in his bare feet and weighed 385 pounds.

It becomes known that he died just as he was about to enter the movies with Harold Lloyd at a salary of $350 a week. Most of the sideshow circus attractions get about $50 a week and board and lodging.

Auger died just as his fingers were closing on the top of the ladder. So do most of the rest of us.

EUGENICS

BOOKS

(Continued from Page Four)

to the inevitable rocks, where the woman perishes as a result of her abnormal passions, and the man is left to mourn her in baffled dreams and hectic phrases.

"The Beautiful and the Damned," another sex story, is a brilliant torrent of language expended upon a certain fast American type and set. It is extraordinary well written and succeeds in almost hypnotizing the reader into that wild, jazzy, whirling mob of booze fighters" and money slingers. Its author is hailed as one of the great coming novelists of the U. S. A.

So much for sex stories. I have not room to touch upon more in this article, and one or two of such a diet is surely enough.

Family "life stories," that dip into every detail and thought and event of the particular type portrayed, are quite in the vogue today. I should say that "Spoon River Anthology" was the forerunner and inspiration for this type of story. "Main Street," in a way, was a prose "Spoon River."

"The Forsythe Saga," by John Galsworthy, towers head and shoulders over all of the family stories published during the last year. Three or four generations of a single middle class family are portrayed in this remarkable book.

"His Children's Children," by Arthur Train, concerns the carryings on and the love affairs of a family of nouveau riche. It is a well written, glittering tale, that will probably have a big sale.

"Certain People of Importance," by Kathleen Norris, has been praised out of all proportion to its merits, and is being proclaimed by its publishers as an "epic." An epic it is not. An epic is an heroic narrative, a poem. "Certain People of Importance," though a meritorious production, is neither heroic nor poetic. It is a detailed chronicle of the life and works of three generations of a middle-class American family, possessed of the average amount of virtues and vices. It is, in a way, a composite of the "Forsythe Saga" and "Main Street," but it lacks the noble structure and technique of the former story, and it possesses not the grim, gripping power of the sordid story of "Main Street." Nevertheless, it is excellently written; its types are photographic. We learn in detail of the daily life and thoughts of the thirty or forty members of the Crabtree family, and even witness the pains and struggles of their birth.

A book that stands by itself is "The Key of Dreams," by L. Adam Beck. It is a prose poem, full of mystical charm and beauty. It is a song, for it vibrates with melody and fragrance. The author has, I understand, had only one other book published, "The Ninth Vibration," and he has had several short stories in the Atlantic Monthly. I learn that he is a Canadian, though he is cutting his way to sure fame in the United States. There is no Canadian writer who can touch him in sheer lyrical charm of expression. His work has been compared with Pierre Loti's, and there is something of the elusive, almost ghostly, charm of Lafcadio Hearn.

It is pleasant, it is refreshing, after reading a score of new novels, few of which left one with a satisfying sense to come upon a rare piece of literature like this. It is also highly gratifying to learn that its author is a Canadian.