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CHILDREN CHARM IN QUIANT PAGES OF NEW VOLUMES

"Wonderdays and Wonderways Through Flowerland" Is One of the Instructive Sort

IN "SIMON'S GARDEN"
WONDERDAYS AND WONDERWAYS THROUGH FLOWERLAND, by Grace Tabor. Robert M. McBride & Co., New York.
Grace Tabor, in her latest book for children, "Wonderdays and Wonderways Through Flowerland," has succeeded in combining entertainment and profitable instruction in a way that will be appreciated by parents. The volume abounds in fascinating little whimsies and jingles, easily remembered, which will fix in the young mind facts about the nature of the soil, insect pests, tilling and care of plants and the marvels of plant life.

The Gays Move
THE THREE GAYS AT MERRITON, by Ethel C. Brown. Penn Publishing Company, Philadelphia.
The second of Ethel C. Brown's series of juvenile books, "The Three Gays at Merriton," takes the three Gay children from the city into the country for a summer visit. The unexpected things they find on the big farm will be a delight to any city child and their individual views of their new experiences will prove amusing for the child reader in the country. The book as a whole is a delightful juvenile story, with the chapters just long enough to sustain interest.

Fable and Pictures for Wee Ones
BILLY BEEMINDER AND SILVER FOX, by C. E. Kuhlmann. Illustrated by Harry Longford. Penn Publishing Company, Philadelphia.
The author and illustrator of this book have added another successful achievement to the series of nature stories with colored pictures which has won them many friends among the little ones and among mothers who are anxious to do the best for their children. The offering this year is well up to the standard in interest of story and attractiveness of pictures.

For Young Americans
MASTER SIMON'S GARDEN, by Cornelia Melis. Macmillan Company, New York.
Cornelia Melis has written another charming story for children. In "Master Simon's Garden" she traces the Puritan struggle for freedom of conscience through early New England days, and the fight for political freedom through the restless revolutionary times down to the great revolt from English power.

Letty Grows Up
LETTY'S SPRINGTIME, by Helen Sherman. G. B. Lippincott Publishing Company, Philadelphia.
The charm of Helen Sherman Griffith's series of "Letty" stories for girls is well maintained in her latest, "Letty's Springtime." Letty has gradually developed through the series of eight books until this time we find her in the real springtime of her girlhood, enjoying experiences any girl might envy. From the concluding pages we must expect that in the next of the series "Letty" will step forth into womanhood's full sphere.

MARK TWAIN'S MIRTH STILL CONCEALS OLD PESSIMISM

Posthumous Work, Blending Various Familiar Themes of His, Discloses a Gayety Not Free From Irony and Scorn

"THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER," by Mark Twain. Harper & Bros., New York.
"Laugh," says Figure, "for fear of being obliged to weep." There speaks the soul of great humorist. There speaks the soul of Mark Twain. Beaumarchais, however, seldom withdrew in print his veil of merriment. "The Lancelin of our literature"—as Howells called his lifelong friend—removed it so frequently, so boldly, that the surprise occasioned by the grim, fatalistic pessimism of Mark Twain's posthumous romance, "The Mysterious Stranger," is happily furnished by another example of popular faculty. Even beyond the grave has Samuel Langhorne Clemens paid "the penalty of humor."

With Mollere, with Cervantes, with those whose names, Mark Twain's—to those who actually know his works—seems fairly entitled to be linked, Huck Finn's creator saw life with tragic earnestness. In his driest pages this attitude can be discerned. It is persistent, unalterable, almost monotonous in iteration. Of course, it cannot dim the radiance of his fun-making. Nothing can do that. But it abides in the background of all his inspiration. Public misconception on this subject—startlingly exemplified in the reception accorded "The Mysterious Stranger"—almost stimulates the impression that, amid the chorus of the world's praise, Mr. Clemens is not perceived. It would seem, indeed, that his work, considered on bloc, may be described by his own definition of a classic—a book which "splee prairie and dont read." Persons who are, though diminishing yearly in numbers, who profess dislike of Mark Twain. But their game of censure is played with the wrong cards. Why have they abjured the triumph of humor? Let them say that no celebrated author ever wrote himself so often, and they will play a more virtuous game. It can never be done by greeting "The Mysterious Stranger" with astonishment.

In marked degree, this last published volume by Mark Twain is a microcosm of all his work. Within its pages can be found the motivation of "Huckleberry Finn," of "A Connecticut Yankee," of "Prince and Pauper" and particularly of that comparatively forgotten serio-comic fantasy, "The Late Carnival of Crime in Connecticut," and the still less familiar philosophical dialogue, "What is Man?" So accented is the note of repetition that one even encounters again that favorite Mark Twain joke about the orphan asylum annex to the nunnery and monastery, thus told at its best some years before by Hank Morgan in "A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court."

And now came also, and more again, and yet more, a built-up against the monastery on the one side of the vale, and added building to building, until midway the valley. And these were friendly into these, and they joined from their building together, and together they built a fair great founding asylum midway of the valley between.

The machinery of "The Mysterious Stranger" is that of the fable, ever well loved of Mark Twain, as of R. L. Stevenson. The former employed this literary apparatus with superb effect in "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg," generally regarded as his best short story, completed the same year this posthumous work was begun.

Ethical, theological, transcendental themes seem potentially to have engaged Mark's attention during that fruitful year of 1899, spent chiefly in the vicinity of Vienna. Other products of that period are "Christian Science and Mrs. Eddy," and "What is Man?" The last-named dialogue, which was privately and anonymously printed, and has never been included in the official Mark Twain library, has been characterized by Albert Bigelow Paine as "a clever and even brilliant expose of philosophies which were no longer startlingly new." "The supremacy of self-interest and 'man the irresponsible machine,'" says Mr. Clemens's admirable biographer, "are main features, and both of these and all the rest are compressed in the dialogue, which is a brilliant doctrine of the inevitable life-sequence which began with the first created spark." Something of this theory is voiced again in "The Mysterious Stranger."

To call "The Mysterious Stranger" a masterpiece is unjust to his greatest pages in other writings. There is indisputable crudity in this posthumous volume and not a little confusion of thought, particularly in the final chapter, wherein existence itself is characterized as negation.

CHRISTMAS BRINGS MANY NOVEL BOOKS FOR LITTLE FOLKS

Here Are a Number of Volumes Each With Some New Angle of Attraction

COLOR PICTURES AROUND
THE WAY TO THE HOUSE OF SANTA CLAUS, by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Harper Bros., New York.
Here we have a book which, by a turn of the pen, becomes "a Christmas story for very small boys in which every little reader is the hero of a big adventure." The author of "Little Lord Fauntleroy"—how many Christmas ago it was that that best seller of the nursery first was issued—gives us a wide, jolly book full of wide, jolly adventures and leaves plenty of wide, jolly space in the text for father and mother to write in "Edward" or "Robert" or "Bob" whenever the hero does or says anything. This amusing and original feature ought to make the story much more attractive than even its clear and simple text.

"The Way to the House of Santa Claus" is illustrated with an equally novel sort of wide, jolly picture—all big, bright, flat stretches of color which should attract even the smallest child. The publisher doesn't say who made them, and so we are free to welcome Frances Hodgson Burnett to the fellowship of artists.

Color, Color Everywhere
RHYMES FOR KINDLY CHILDREN, by Fairmount Press. Illustrated by John B. Grullis. Fairmount Press, New York.
The Kate Greenaway period was a charming period, to which we seem returning in the garb of our children and the illustrations of these picture books. At any rate here is a set of pictures which illustrates every bit of color that the gay little breeches and aprons of the eighteenth century so plentifully possessed. Every page shows us some little girl or little boy, even grown-up, looking extraordinarily picturesque against just as picturesque a background.

Literary Dolls
MAMMY'S CHICKEN BREAST and other poems, by Theodore H. Shackelford. I. W. Knapp Company, Philadelphia.
First off, it is the illustrations of "Mammy's Literary Dolls" which appeal. They are from photographs of dolls—lady dolls and gentlemen dolls—most cleverly posed against dolls' furniture, doing all sorts of human things. As the publisher says on the wrapper: "Dolls are very real to children and this is the first book that has dolls for its characters—real living, breathing human dolls." One glance at the book will make you smile. You can't help it. George A. Wilson, the doll hero, is unique; he is a writer, a doll who is a professional author. In one of the pictures he has just received a very big check for his first accepted book and is coming home in triumph to Mrs. Wolcott.

Negro Dialect Poems
MAMMY'S CHICKEN BREAST and other poems, by Theodore H. Shackelford. I. W. Knapp Company, Philadelphia.
Ever since Booker T. Washington paved the way, publishers have been increasingly friendly toward negro authors, and as a result present-day literature has been enriched by the new addition. The latest volume to appear is a small book of poems by Theodore H. Shackelford, which stamps the author as one of the finest poets his race has produced. Mr. Shackelford writes the rhymed narratives that are peculiar to the negro, and which are heard wherever they gather. He is a real bard of his people. Mr. Shackelford is not so successful, however, when he breaks away from the dialect.

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MAGAZINES VIE WITH SOME NEW VOLUMES

Publishers Announce Reprintings of Favorite Books, as Well as Others Quite Fresh

George B. Davis's "Elements of International Law," which has been issued in a new edition revised by Gordon E. Sherman, has caught the attention of readers in the Orient. An order for a number of copies has just come from Japan.
Other books ordered at the same time are: "The Principles of Money and Banking," by Charles A. Conant; "Every-Day Words and Their Uses," by Robert F. Utter; "History of Our Own Times," by Justin McCarthy; "Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings," by Edward S. Morse, and "Ten Tales," by Francis Coppée.

With its thirteenth number, January, March, 1917, the quarterly "Empire" (Holt) starts about December 15, 1916, its seventh volume. It retains among its features the publication of all new fiction anonymously, to be followed by the author in the following issue of as many of the authors as will "own up." The author's "unmasking a fraud" in the October number is the only one in that issue who still insists on retaining his anonymity. "On the Difficulty of Being a Hero," "Nature, Nurture and Novel Writing," "Matter With the Theatre," "Cynicism and Job," "The Two Opposing Railroad Stations," "As to Parsons," "German Law and Courts," "A Double Entry Edition," "The Modest Modernist," "Patience Worthy Baby," "Correspondence and the usual 'In Casorelo'."

Before the day of publication of the second edition was placed on the press, the publishers, Doubleday, Page & Co., had made every book of fiction on the list, including "A Circuit Rider's Wife," "Norris's 'The Heart of Rachel,'" a second edition; "The Bird-House Man," by Walter Pritchard Eaton, in a third edition; "House of Fear," by Wadsworth Camp, in a second edition; a third edition of "The Grizzly King," by James Oliver Curwood; "Old Tales From the Old, Old Book," retold by Nora Archibald Smith, in a second edition, and a second edition of "The Emperor of Portugal," by Hans Lagerlof, is now being prepared for a third printing.

Can you think of a more appropriate Christmas Gift than KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN'S The Romance of a Christmas Card. A STORY full of the spirit of an old-fashioned home Christmas, with a message of optimism and good cheer that will go straight to every reader's heart and especially to those who are in the habit of giving and receiving Christmas cards. The book is embellished with many charming illustrations and decorations in color and black and white by Alice Erle Hunt and with an actual Christmas card. \$1.00 net, at all bookstores. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY BOSTON and NEW YORK

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