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BOOKS GRAVE AND GAY

BROTHERS CLASH IN TEMPERAMENT

Alfred Olivant's "Two Men" a Keen Study in Fraternal and Social Psychology

Even in a study of psychology, where one would look for paragraphs measurable by a yardstick, and sentences as labyrinthine as an African jungle, Alfred Olivant keeps his paragraphs short and his sentences crisp, and this, though it may seem curious, contributes somehow to the interest of his newest book, "Two Men."

Described as a study in psychology, the novel may assume a formidable aspect to the person who does not care to take his reading too seriously. But there is nothing formidable about "Two Men." It is simply an intensely interesting, straightforward narrative of the clashing lives of two brothers, all written with Mr. Olivant's characteristic use of sharp, clear-cut sentences, and short, incisive words.

The brothers are Ernest and Alfred Caspar. They are the sons of a scholarly Englishman, who married much beneath him and whose small income is insufficient to rear his sons as he was reared. So, though not brought up in London, Ernest, nevertheless, develops the habit of mind and the habit of speech of the Cockney. But to this extent only are the boys alike.

Ernie, inheriting his father's amiable weaknesses, his father's high traits of character, all bodily misshapen, a physical defective since birth, is twisted also in mind and soul. Thus the story shames Ernest with his good intentions, Alfred with his abnormal and evil mind, always plotting to trip and thwart and crush his brother to the very last. Ernest, when Ernest, with a wonderful and unselfish love, seeks to make Ruth Boam his wife.

TWO MEN. By Alfred Olivant. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co., Inc., 1919. Pp. 288.

LORD DUNSANY

Whose dramatic art is discussed by Edward Bierstadt

ESTIMATE OF DUNSANY

Biography and Analysis Blended in Mr. Bierstadt's Book

When a book combines biography and critical analysis as well as "Dunsany the Dramatist," it can get primarily nothing but high and responsive praise. Mr. Bierstadt has, indeed, accomplished that almost miracle of making a detailed study of a living author interesting, informative, appreciative and not overblown. Plainly a confirmed Dunsany enthusiast, he has not permitted this passion to blunt his judgment. Ergo, his volume has value in its discriminating qualities, and the reference value of a catalogue.

In his division of the book into chapters, "The Man," "His Work," "His Philosophy" and "Letters," Mr. Bierstadt has struck a happy attitude. Pictorial personifications of the first chapter, "Lord Dunsany and his guest Bernard Shaw, sailing paper boats in the pond," will bring a smile to the most torpid lip, and when the author intimates that Dunsany unconsciously set for the portrait of the uproarious innocent Smith in Mr. Chesterton's immortal "Manalive," one feels that Edward John Maitland (that should start Edward John Maitland) has a genuine mystic, a "soaring human boy" and a multifarious, fascinating personality.

The chapter on the Dunsany philosophy is admirable in its clear-headedness and lack of "side," though not all will agree with it. We read of Dunsany's kinship with Lewis Carroll and Sir James M. Barrie (that should start correspondance to the papers, indeed) and of the innate esthetic quality of the man's mind and work—a beauty which, in addition to a certain old Egyptian quality.

If critical acrobats must be shot at this book the one first to fly would be the fact that Mr. Bierstadt rather scants consideration of the tales and that monumental medley, published, we think, as "Time and the Gods," which is pure poetry, undefiled by the need of theatrical monomaneia.

Anyhow, here is a book, not for the Dunsanybodies alone, but for all who love the theatre, poetry and a manly and vibrant personality that expresses itself superbly in terms of both.

DUNSANY, THE DRAMATIST, By Edward John Maitland. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1919. Pp. 348. \$5.00.

RED-BLOODED WEST

"Law of the Gun" a Dramatic Novel of This Locale

The red-blooded, virile West is the locale in which Ridgewell places his most dramatic and thrilling stories. Those whose pulses have been stirred by "The Night Riders" and "Walters of the Plains" will have the same sensation of roused interest and intensity of attention in "The Law of the Gun," the newest of the author's fictions.

This time he casts his scenes in a gold mining country, but one in which the dirt does not play a part. Sunrise is the name of the mining camp, and it is peopled by the usual run of denizens of such a place, largely fortune hunters, some of whom attain fortune. If the region is not rich in gold ore it is in copper, according to the current and local belief. Knowledge of the location of the deposits is in possession of a mysterious stranger, Williamson, whose daughter is the most beautiful woman of the countryside. Her father resents the love-making of Tough Narra, a gold miner and the leader of the camp. After a quarrel with Narra, Williamson is found dead. Then there is a young rancher who is making his fortune from the grain crop and who is coveting about gold. And a lad who has been framed up for cattle-stealing by some rogues. These are only a few of the interesting personages and plots that are so cleverly interlarded by Mr. Cullum into a story that is continuous in its suspense and constant in its thrills. Of course, Patricia, heiress to the maps and plans of the hidden copper, and Saurice's beautiful girl, marries Jack, the real hero of the novel, in the long run, but the course of their romance is by no means without twists. By Ridgewell Cullum. Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co., 1919.

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