

THE BOOK TABLE: DEVOTED TO BOOKS AND THEIR MAKERS

THE ISLAND OF SHEEP¹

ANY writer who can provoke a smile of comfortable contentment over a discussion of the League of Nations controversy, the labor chaos in Great Britain, the Irish imbroglio, and the confusion of American public opinion with regard to its European responsibilities, is a public benefactor. This, however, is just what the authors of "The Island of Sheep" succeed in doing. The little book appears to be the work of collaboration, for it is written by "Cadmus and Harmonia," pen names of perhaps a husband and wife. The publishers inform us that "Cadmus" is a well-known British man of letters, and affairs. We take it that his colleague, "Harmonia," is a woman, both because of the feminine termination and because of certain touches in the book which we think could be given only by a woman's hand. The mechanics of this modest volume are very simple.

A group of ladies and gentlemen, both British and American, meet at a house party as the guests of Colonel Arthur Lamont and his wife at their country home on an island in the Scotch Highlands. It is a curious company of both democrats and aristocrats, including a Scotch clergyman who is both a devout Christian and a devoted fisherman. The host and hostess are described by the playwrights—for the book is really a dialogic play rather than a fictional narrative—as "two retired gentlefolk who are distressed by the future of their country."

These diverse *dramatis personae*, who under ordinary conditions would perhaps be repelled by their varying social distinctions and their divergent views of politics, are really drawn together by their common experiences of the war and their common anxieties about post-war problems. Two labor leaders, one of whom drops his l's with perfect abandon, are in the party, and are not the least attractive and successful members of it. The general atmosphere of this interesting house is intimated by the following exchange of ideas between the host and hostess, which takes place just before their guests arrive:

Colonel Lamont rose, revealing six feet of lean manhood clad in the most ancient of tweeds. He stared for some minutes at the delectable landscape beneath him. A shallow glen, seamed by a shining river, wound to a pale-blue ocean. It was bright with the young grass of May, and patched with snowdrifts of blossoming hawthorn. There was no sound in the valley except the ripple of the stream and the faint calling of curlews from the hill.

"I've been looking forward to this for four years," he said. "Peace, you know—the real peace in one's own place among one's own people. And now that I have got it I don't seem properly to enjoy it. There are too many empty houses in the glens. Too many good fellows who will never gillie for me more. And this old world has got such a twist that I can't see it settling down in our time. I wish to Heaven I knew where we all stood. Kathie, my dear, I am feeling very much older, and I am losing my nerve."

The lady looked at him with troubled eyes. "Do you think we ought to be entertaining on such a big scale, Arthur, if we are so much poorer?"

"Confound it, my dear, it is not the money. Jennings went through my position with me yesterday, and we are still pretty well off. I

wouldn't mind paying fifteen shillings in the pound in taxes for the rest of my days. No. It is the country I am worrying about. Here we have gone and sacrificed the better part of a million of our picked men, and crippled hundreds of thousands more for life. And for what? We have won, of course, but we don't seem to know what we've won. Those damned politicians are at the job again. I thought we had washed all that out."

"And Bolshevism, dear!" said his wife.

"And every little faction on the globe wanting to turn itself into a state!"

"And our own Labor people so discontented!"

"And all this business of the League of Nations! How on earth are we going to give up our navy and trust the fortunes of Britain to a collection of Kilkenny cats?"

"It's very puzzling, dear. And Agatha writes me such miserable letters about Reginald. He's simply wretched at being out of Parliament, and she has had to change her cook twice since Christmas."

The book has a real flavor which can be obtained only by actually tasting it. It contains the elements of criticism without being cantankerous and the suggestions of remedies without dealing in panaceas. For example, here is a passage that might apply with very slight verbal changes to the disturbed state of mind of many Americans:

"I wish," said Lady Sevenoaks—"I wish that some of our politicians could be deified. It would be such a dignified way of getting rid of them. They won't be satisfied with ordinary peerages, so we might make them *Divi*. It would be a very complete way of kicking them upstairs, for of course it would be *sacrilege* if they came back to politics. Mr. Hepplewhite, for example—I simply cannot tell you the mess that man made of things in Paris. George says they imported hundreds of clerks, and took hotels and stuffed them with experts on every kind of irrelevant question like the origin of the Kurds and the land system of Nebuchadnezzar, and the whole shepherded by nosy young men in big spectacles, which is the new Foreign Office type. George says the French began by giggling at us and then grew very cross."

"It seems," said Colonel Lamont dolefully, "that we have won the war and are doing our best to lose all the fruits of it. Nothing has gone right since that infernal armistice."

The tone was so dejected that Christopher Normand's sense of comedy was stirred. "Cheer up, old man," he said. "In time we'll get used to the horrors of this Peace to end peace. . . . We're all getting too pessimistic. After all, none of our troubles are new. Read the memoirs of a hundred years ago and see the fools our people made of themselves at European congresses—hordes of smart women and flimsy bureaucrats cumbering the busy men. Even our Labor troubles—every one of them—have a long ancestry. I am prone to the dumps myself, and the best cure is to read a little history."

Mr. Normand had raised his voice, as his habit was when he was in earnest, and three newcomers had approached the table ere the diners were aware of their presence. Two were tall young men; one was small and middle-aged, with a thin face, fiery red hair, and restless brown eyes. This last caught the concluding words of Mr. Normand, for he signalized his advent with loud approval.

"Ear! Ear!" he said. "That's well spoken. What we all want is to learn a bit of 'ist'ry."

We need hardly add that the guest who says "Ear! Ear!" and recommends as a sedative for the present feverish condition of politics and labor "a bit of 'ist'ry" is one of the two members of the new British

Labor Board, who, for reasons that will appear perfectly natural to any one who reads the book, are included among the guests. The reader cannot help feeling that if these two men are fair samples of present British labor leaders then the industrial crisis in Great Britain is not quite as alarming as it is sometimes painted.

In another conversation with Lady Sevenoaks and Mr. Jonas, the labor leader, appears this interesting and significant passage:

"I'm not speaking about classes," said Lady Sevenoaks. "I am speaking about creeds. Do you mean to deny that Bolshevism is rampant in British labor to-day?"

"Of course I do. It's a bad 'abit to call a thing names when you don't understand it: Of course the workers are restless, same as everybody else; and since they've won the war they want a square deal with the fruits of peace. But they ain't Bolsheviks—barring a few dozen miscreants who should be in jail. What's Bolshevism anyhow? Judging by the Russian specimens, apart from their liking for 'olesale 'omicide, it seems to mean a general desire to pull things up by the roots. Well, that ain't the line of the British workingman. He is the soundest conservative on the globe, and what he wants is to get his roots down deeper. In other countries the poor man has a grip on the soil. In this country he 'asn't 'ad that for two hundred years. We are over-industrialized, as the saying is; but a root's got to be found somewhere, and he finds it in his unions. That's why he's so jealous about them, and quite right too. He wants to find security and continuity somewhere. Now that's the opposite of Bolshevism."

The ideas of Mr. Jonas with regard to British labor are quite as applicable, we are inclined to think, to American labor.

The little book ends with a word from Mr. Macmillan, the Scotch minister, who apparently thinks more of neighborly and unselfish human relationships than he does of dogmatic theology. He does not talk in the pious formalism of the conventional pulpit, but it is quite clear that he believes that the present state of world quarrelsomeness, which has succeeded the actual fighting of the war, can be alleviated only by a genuine and profound spiritual revival.

We do not wish to give the impression that the book is in the slightest degree didactic or "goody goody." It is quite the opposite. It has a real literary quality. When the reader finishes it, he may be inclined to think first, that although done by a master hand, it is a rather slight contribution to the great post-war discussion. But the more he thinks about it the more the reader begins to perceive that "The Island of Sheep" is a microcosm of the present mental and physical state of the world, certainly of the English-speaking world. If "Cadmus" and "Harmonia" can talk as intelligently and at the same time as lightly and vivaciously as they have written, we should like to know them very much indeed.

THE NEW BOOKS

ART

Book of Marionettes (A). By Helen Haiman Joseph. B. W. Huebsch, New York.

"There's nothing any person has ever said which isn't amusing, honestly and truly amusing, when transferred to the mouth of a marionette. . . . It is simply funny, a sort of unconscious, undeniable

¹ The Island of Sheep. By Cadmus and Harmonia. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.



CINGALESE PUPPETS—KING AND QUEEN

PIERROT GUITARISTE
(FRENCH)

OLD ENGLISH PUPPETS

From "A Book of Marionettes" (Courtesy of B. W. Huebsch, publisher).

criticism of the manners of men." So says the author of this amusing and whimsical book, which reflects admirably the character of its subject. Not that marionettes are exclusively used for comedy. They have been employed as instrumentalities for the portrayal of tragedy for ages in Japan, where, we are told, as many as two hundred epic poets have written for the puppets, and over a thousand dramas have been composed for them. Italian audiences have been thrilled (while sophisticated aliens have been entertained) by realistic historical plays such as "St. Helena, or the Death of Napoleon," a puppet show of which a characteristically humorous description by Charles Dickens is quoted in this book.

The recent use of the marionettes in America, where the puppet show has in many places surprisingly held its own against the attractions of the movies, is described interestingly by the author, with comments on the shows given in New York, Cleveland, and Chicago.

The puppet show has flourished among many races and in different ages; it is primarily an outgrowth of the taste of the common people, though it has also entranced courts and kings. The range of interest that it has evoked is well set forth in this book, which also goes into the methods of constructing the puppets and the manner of operating them. Something of the extent of the popular appeal of these "little people" of the stage is indicated in the pictures reproduced above, showing as they do French, English, and Cingalese marionettes.

FICTION

Allegra. By L. Allen Harker. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

A study of the theatrical and dramatic experiences of Allegra, a young actress "in stock," and Paul, a young writer.

Contemporary Drama of France (The). By Frank Wadleigh Chandler. (The Contemporary Drama Series.) Little, Brown & Co., Boston.

Man for the Ages (A). By Irving Bacheller. Illustrated by John Wolcott Adams. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis.

A capital book for boys and for men who have not lost the boy's heart, and for women who understand and appreciate boys. (N. B.—Most mothers understand

and appreciate their boys better than the fathers do.) Mr. Bacheller has either lived in the Middle West or made a careful study of it; he has the right kind of humor to appreciate and to portray the humor of Abraham Lincoln; his portrait may be a trifle idealized, but in such a book that is not a fault, and the realism of the story is such that the reader wonders whether the author has not had some access to materials unknown to previous historians. The fiction is so ingeniously woven into the fabric of history that it is impossible for any one not an expert in the history of the period treated to separate the two. The drawings by Mr. Adams are a real addition to the narrative, which is more than can be said for most of the illustrations that accompany modern novels.

Marching Sands. By Harold Lamb. D. Appleton & Co., New York.

While rather slow in getting into action, this tale is thrilling in the extreme after it once gets its American explorer into the Gobi Desert of Central China. He is sent there by scientists to discover a concealed and guarded tribe, the existence of which is to prove an Aryan racial streak in the Chinese. He finds these strange people, and he also finds danger and love.

Skeleton Key (The). By Bernard Capes. The George H. Doran Company, New York.

The late Bernard Capes was one of the few writers of mystery and detective stories who make an honorable effort to combine plot with literary workmanship. This posthumous tale is one of his best. It has a decidedly original *dénouement* which will puzzle even practical mystery solvers.

BIOGRAPHY

Selections from the Writings of Jesse Harding Pomeroy. Privately printed, Boston.

Among the remarkable literary productions that have come out of prison experiences, this pamphlet by Jesse Pomeroy will take high rank. People with long memories will remember that he was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1874 and for what crime. That he could retain his mental faculties during forty-two years of solitary confinement is surprising; that he could during this imprisonment learn several languages, acquire a fair knowledge of history, and write numerous essays and poems that dis-

play no bitterness or rancor against fate, but, rather, a serene acceptance of what life has brought to him in the way of good, is one of the unexplained marvels of psychology. The pamphlet would be pathetic in the extreme if it were not surcharged with a cheerful optimism.

WAR BOOKS

Ireland an Enemy of the Allies? (*L'Irlande-Ennemie?*) Translated by R. C. Escoufflaire. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

"Talk about Ireland in any London drawing-room, even at a moment when the Irish are indulging in the most outrageous lawlessness and treason, you will never hear a word of hatred, but an indulgence is shown which amazes one." This clemency is scarcely shown by the author who writes the above-quoted words. He is a Frenchman who pillories the Irish with the enthusiasm of a new convert to the traditional British view. His book is well written, but without the wise judgment that comes through the sympathetic understanding that such men as Lloyd George bring to the problem.

Russian People. Revolutionary Recollections. By Princess Cantacuzène (Countess Spéransky, née Grant). Illustrated. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

Soldiers All. Portraits and Sketches of the Men of the A. E. F. By Joseph Cummings Chase. The George H. Doran Company, New York.

People who say they are "tired of war books" should beware of examining this one, for if they do they will want to own it. It presents the portraits and tells the stories of Americans who performed extraordinary feats in the war—from Sergeant Adams, who single-handedly captured 375 Germans, to General Pershing, who bossed the entire job. The portraits were made at the front, and they are spirited, varied, and alive with the characteristic traits of the American soldier. They constitute a fine and enduring achievement.

A CORRECTION

Three books by Christopher Morley—"The Rocking Horse," "Songs of a Little House," and "Mince Pie"—were erroneously credited in the Book Table of February 4. They are published by the George H. Doran Company.

THIS WEEK'S OUTLOOK

A WEEKLY OUTLINE STUDY OF CURRENT HISTORY¹

BY J. MADISON GATHANY

SCARBOROUGH SCHOOL, SCARBOROUGH-ON-HUDSON, N. Y.

Labor and the Open Shop

SENATOR POINDEXTER and The Outlook discuss labor and the open shop in this issue. Read the Poindexter article first.

Judging by what Senator Poindexter says in this article, what do you consider his attitude toward labor is? Do you think he is in sympathy with laboring people?

With what statements made by the Senator do you agree and with which ones do you disagree? What are your reasons?

Now read The Outlook editorial on "Labor and the Open Shop," found on another page. In your opinion, does The Outlook have a better attitude toward labor than does Senator Poindexter? Why, or why not?

What is meant by the "open shop"? Are you for it or against it? The Outlook says that we cannot go back to it. Is The Outlook right?

Discuss whether, in your opinion, the World War has helped or hindered the cause of labor.

Would you favor the enactment of a National law compelling individuals to stay at their jobs? Would such a law be Constitutional? Would it be democratic?

Does it seem to you that there is any real or permanent solution to labor troubles in this country? Has the present Congress done what it should toward the solution of our labor troubles?

Define: *Specious arguments, infinitesimal, "invisible government," paramount, inalienable rights, skilled artisans, palliate, inimical.*

Considerable material toward answering many of the questions in this study and other questions concerning labor and capital may be found in the following books: "Organized Labor in American History," by F. T. Carlton (Appleton); "Problems of Labor," edited by Daniel Bloomfield (The H. W. Wilson Company); "Trade Unionism in the United States," by R. F. Hoxie (Appleton).

The Menace of the Lusk Bills and "Sweetism"

Just what are the provisions of the so-called Lusk Bills?

Can you point out just what there is in them that justifies The Outlook and Senator Davenport in characterizing them as "drastic," "futile," "Russian," and "Prussian"?

Are you able to explain how the methods of remedy these bills propose might "arouse a hundredfold more unbalanced radicalism" than they would allay?

If the Lusk Bill dealing with education should become law and you were a teacher in a New York school affected by the provisions of the bill, would you resign your position and encourage other teachers to do likewise? Would such action in prin-

¹ These questions and comments are designed not only for the use of current events classes and clubs, debating societies, teachers of history and English, and the like, but also for discussion in the home and for suggestion to any reader who desires to study current affairs as well as to read about them.
—THE EDITORS.

ciple be following the method of the "outlaw" strikers?

The editors of The Outlook say that our country "had tragic and memorable experiences of the same kind [as those involved in the Lusk Bills] following the Civil War and the American Revolution." To what do they refer?

Discuss whether it would be well to have no supervision except by the teachers themselves over the things taught and discussed in our public and private schools.

What is "Sweetism"? Is there any of it in your local government?

Define the following terms: *Chaos, espionage, seditious activities, subvert, allege.*

Overalls

The Outlook in its editorial on "Overalls" seems to have little confidence in results from the overall propaganda. Why so?

Do you consider that those who joined the overall protest against the high price of clothes attached themselves to a foolish and valueless exhibition?

Do you consider the overall parade in New York City a typical American way of expressing opinion?

How do you account for the present high cost of clothing? What suggestions can you offer which you think would reduce the high cost of clothes?

Do you think the American people are wasteful in reference to clothes? Do you get every possible day of service out of the clothes you buy?

Formulate and discuss a proposition suggested by this editorial.

What About the Soldier's Bonus?

On different pages in this issue Mr. Blachly and The Outlook speak of the question of granting a bonus to soldiers.

Whence the name "bonus"? What kind of bonuses do you know about?

Does Mr. Blachly believe in a bonus for the soldier? What do you think of the arguments he uses?

Do you think the Government should give aid to the crippled and disabled soldiers? If so, what would you consider adequate provision for them?

Discuss whether the Government should aid able-bodied soldiers. What, in your opinion, would be accomplished by granting aid to them?

The writer knows of an able-bodied soldier who now has a better position than he had at the time he went overseas to fight the Hun. He wants the Government to grant him a cash bonus. What do you think of him? What are your reasons?

If you believe in granting a bonus to soldiers, how would you have the means to meet the expense involved raised? Should all or only well-to-do people be made to stand the cost?

Explain what Wisconsin has done for its ex-soldiers. Has your State done anything for its ex-soldiers? If not, why not?

Explain the following expressions: *Timorous, euphonious, aliases, pension, foist, sinister view-points.*



MARQUERAY'S DUEL

By Anthony Pryde

A forceful, dramatic romance of to-day and of the struggle between the best and worst elements in a man's nature. "It's the best I've read in a month of Sundays," says one reader. "You can't skip pages, for each has something you don't want to miss. The political background, Marqueray's character, even the melodramatic spots, are cocktails to a jaded appetite." And another writes: "Success to the best written and most entertaining novel in years!" \$2 net.

MAUREEN

By Patrick MacGill

A sombre but heroic story of Ireland of to-day and Sinn Fein, by the author of *The Ratpat* and *Children of the Dead End*. With a realism tempered by sympathy and understanding Mr. MacGill shows us his people working out their small fates, by turns despicable and heroic, but always real. The girl Maureen, struggling against her tragic destiny, is an especially appealing figure among a group of noteworthy characters. "It brings before our eyes the Ireland of to-day as no amount of pamphleteering could," says the *London Times*. "It has creative richness and the supreme quality of truth." \$2 net.

THE GOLDEN SCORPION

By Sax Rohmer

Author of "Dope" and the "Fu-Manchu" stories.

A galloping, breath-taking romance of midnight adventure in London's Chinatown, with a veiled mandarin, a band of Oriental criminals, a lovely Eurasian girl, and a host of enthralling incidents. Illustrated. \$2 net.

THE CREAM OF THE JEST

By James Branch Cabell

A new edition of this mocking novel, uniform with Mr. Cabell's other books: *Jurgen, The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck*, etc. \$2 net.

THE ANCHOR

By Michael Sadler

The story of an intellectual drifter and his adventures in love and self-discovery. "Has sparkle of conversation and epigram commingled with excellent characterization." —*Reedy's Mirror*. \$1.75 net.

USEFUL WILD PLANTS OF THE U. S. AND CANADA

By Charles Francis Saunders

A comprehensive study of the North American wild plants useful for food and other purposes. Illustrated. \$3 net.

At all bookstores: send for catalogue of spring publications

Robert M. McBride & Co., New York