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The Birmingham Eccentric

PART THREE

FIFTY-FIRST YEAR—NO. 25

BIRMINGHAM, OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1928

\$1.50 PER YEAR—SINGLE COPIES 5c

BOOK REVIEWS

By RAYMOND GIRARDIN
Old Pybus. Warwick Deeping.
Alfred A. Knopf.

This must be dated for the movies. I have not heard that the scouts of Hollywood have been seeking a young man, an old man and a girl, with teary voices for the talkie version of this new novel by the young Englishman, but no doubt that is because I do not keep informed as to the happenings in the world of cinema.

It has all the attributes of a pleasing motion picture and the filming of it will enable Deeping to take his "message" to the thousands of persons who eat up this sort of thing, but who can not read.

It is a popular novel, a sickening sentimental conglomeration of quasi-wit and quasi reality. Deeping has trotted out the usual combination of father, son, grandfather and girl. He causes a couple of persons to die in the last chapter, for no reason at all other than that he probably was tired of the book by that time. He causes Old Pybus, a perfectly impossible character, to utter the silliest platitudes for no reason at all other than that no living person ever would say such things.

I suppose I should tell the story but I don't care to. In fact the sooner I can forget ever having spent a fair part of an evening reading it, the better off I shall be. Anyway, Warwick Deeping is well enough known by now that if you are one of those persons who like to read Old Pybus; if you do not like his writing, you won't care to read a summary of his latest atrocity; and if you have never heard of the fellow, let it not ever be said that I gave you a chance to read a longer account of his book than is absolutely necessary.

But remember, this will continue to be a popular novel, and maybe you will be called on to say something about it the next time you quote the publisher—"It (Old Pybus) contains perhaps in an even greater degree than do

Doomsday and Kitty those elements of understanding and sympathy which, in a day whose fiction is not notable for either characteristic, are its author's strength."

For the honor of your reputation though, make sure no one is listening when you quote.

By DOROTHY E. WILLIAMS
The Children. By Edith Wharton.
D. Appleton & Company.

The contention that only a book about real people in real situations can live may be true, but I think Edith Wharton has diverged from this long enough to give us a fascinating story. And I believe that this fascinating story will live for just what it is—a well written novel with a bit of clean-cut psychology behind it.

Mrs. Wharton has attacked the paramount divorce problem in a very ladylike manner and in just such a ladylike manner has retired before she has said anything definite about the situation. She merely presented situations and those in unbelievable quantities. Still, there is the possibility that in her portrayal of the lives led by these children, she has said more than she could ever convey in so many definite words.

She has portrayed the composition marriages and divorces of a too rich society which lives in the whirl of southern European gaiety, dragging the children of these marriages from Palace hotel to Palace hotel.

And as for the children, they make the book their mood and the reflection of their moods and antics in the life of Martin Boyne that engineer, who, while enjoying a holiday, found himself ensnared in the lives of the Wheeler children until his own world centered about his love for them.

Perhaps the reason why the young Wheatons at times seem unreal is because Edith Wharton has made them individuals, not just "adorable youngsters."

The entrances of these young persons in the book are characteristic of them—from the worldly but naive Judith, whose frailty is emphasized by the weight of her troubles that make her seem a sensitively cut cameo, to the exasperating Beechy and Bun with their handlings along the deck and shouts of, "N oranges, n oranges, n oranges."

There is a simplicity in her handling of the children's scenes which makes them most vivid. She has taken several children who have found themselves together for a time as a result of the intermarriages of their parents; she has set their wish to always remain together despite any subsequent intermarriage. In that case you may quote the publisher—"It (Old Pybus) contains perhaps in an even greater degree than do

Even Judy, with her moments of being a woman, shows this wish as dominant, when in reply to Martin's tactfully worded suggestion of marriage she replies, "Oh, Martin, do you really mean you're going to adopt us all, and we're all going to stay with you forever?"

The book is heavy with characters, but Mrs. Wharton in her complainant way has brought them unshuffled through situation after situation with her unending skill.

But one of these characters is true... that of Princess Buondelmonte, to whom life is the series of psychological projects which are digested in a role manner in her Texas college days. She is a burlesque, but I wonder if her presence does not injure some of the chapters of the book. She is such an obvious thrust at the tailored, opinionated American college woman. They are a type which can bear many thrusts but not at the expense of an otherwise harmonious book.

So smoothly are complications adjusted throughout the theme, that I found myself shuddering, expecting any minute to turn the pages to the conventional happy ending. Mrs. Wharton has handled the last chapter with a nicety that saves all that has returned after three years of absence during which he has grown to realize that Judy has played a far greater part in his life than he had dreamed possible. He has come back to see her innocent of his seduction, but she has come back fearing not to recognize her. He waits for one glimpse from the sidelines to be his Judith. "He had totally forgotten his fear that he might not recognize her. He knew now that if she had appeared to him as a bent old woman he would have known her."

Mrs. Wharton's delicate pathos tells its complete story.

Simply and as truthfully as the story has been told, Mrs. Wharton has merely contributed another nicely written American novel, far more than its share of local drawn characters. It will stand out as a best seller and an Edith Wharton at her near best. It is probably will live for its truthful handling, but so will many other books. At the most, the literary clubs will feel an urge to discuss it.

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The Modes of Autumn



FALL FROCKS

\$16

Others \$10 and up

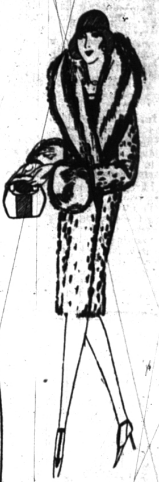


FALL COATS

\$49.75

Others \$29.75 & up

WHEN madame and mademoiselle step forth with fashion this fall, Coats very similar to the one sketched, will be worn. Every new autumn coat made is here! Every new fur trimming! Every new color!



FUR COATS

By Annis

\$145

Others \$95 and up

THE style details of the new fur coats are smart, original, we might even say unique. Sports coats of fur, use leather belts, interesting new buckles, patch pockets and new collar treatments. The coat sketched is but one of many smart styles.

L. E. Davidson
BIRMINGHAM DEPARTMENT STORE
Birmingham's Foremost Store

By MARGARET FULLEYLOVE

Cream of the Jug. Edited by Grant Overton. Harper & Bros.
Ready-made collections of short stories—as with seeds and stamps—are rarely satisfactory. It pays to exercise individual choice.

Cream of the Jug is a happy exception to the rule. Grant Overton has done the choosing and in his anthology of contemporary American fiction gives the benefit of his taste as a seasoned connoisseur. He has taken 10 jewels of varied coloring and strung them on one thread; the effect is sparkling.

In his foreword, Mr. Overton describes these stories as "humorous, but not all in the same sense, or in the same degree. And that is true. All preferences are served in this collection.

The story I liked most was "The Pusher-in-the-Face," by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

In its pitifulness, the tale has a Russian flavor. Charles Stuart, the pusher-in-the-face, is an unpaid night cashier in a small restaurant; a nondescript, who suggests pathetically "a very faded and shriveled elf, who had been caught poaching on a buttermilk in Central Park."

We share his rage against the lady behind him in the theater, who talks about her stomach and jiggles his chair; applaud his sudden retribution; sympathize with him as he cowers in the court room; and when he is acquitted, approve of the judicial mercy.

This first and stunning triumph of his life has an extraordinarily tonic effect upon him. Fashions which had been crushed through many generations of oppressed ancestors suddenly leap in his breast, and in his rush from one

exultation to another he reaches ultimate victory.

Here is artistry in which the saying that there can be no humor without tears is brilliantly exemplified. One aches with both pity and laughter at the very insignificance of this poor creature's sufferings.

Of the other stories, "La Bella Gina," by Eleanor Mercein Kelly, with whose delightful pictures of the Basque country everyone is familiar, is an Italian vignette of delicate charm and grace and in strong contrast with "T'm in a Hurry," a tractor story by William Hazlett Upson, frankly rolling and lots of fun.

For admirers of P. G. Wodehouse's mannered wit, "The Custody of the Pumpkin" is amusing. "Almost a Gentleman," by a little known writer, Edward Hope, is a skilful and engaging yarn about love entanglements at Yale.

The quality of the remainder may be judged by the names of the writers: Stewart Edward White, Witwer, Octavius Roy Coen, Montague Glass, and Ring Lardner.

BOOK NOTES

Primitive hearths in the Byrenes by Ruth Otis Sawtell and Ida Treat. Appleton, 1928.

Two scientifically trained young women explore the haunts of prehistoric man.

Soldier of the South: General Pickett's war letters to his wife, edited by Arthur Crew Houghton, 1928.

Intimate accounts of the Civil War by a distinguished Confederate, and in his rush from one

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