

Annotations of Annabel

DEAREST,—Alack the day, the Boxing Day, when, in Capital City pent, rain swished around silk-clad ankles, and cauld blast roared unfeelingly as it played havoc with treasured, spoon-fed, small and weak box-plants unwittingly left overnight on balcony or window ledge. Grey mists swept the land, while over loneliness of wind-blown harbour a few gulls cleaved a solitary way.

SO that most of us stayed indoors, and beamed upon varied loot of generous season of goodwill. Best beloved tokens, perchance, of happily chosen kindnesses are those of unexpected quality; a few cut-class Georgian tumblers, it may be, given by an apparently austere non-participant in revels of Bacchante, who with charming liberality of spirit and purse presents these flashing cups that cheer to the man or Woman Who Did, or doth, as a present-day Grant Allen might say.

MUCH to my taste is a present of parts, a stroke of imaginative comprehension that delights. Tribute I pay to open-mindedness of beautiful friend, whose white crown of immaculately waved hair makes fitting crown for seventy years, and the tenets of whose preachment and practice are those of the Victorian era. On Christmas morning this lovely lavender lady presented to your Annabel, whom darkly she doubts as being a devotee of the great god Nicotine, a de luxe and princely parcel of De Reszke cigarettes. A modern and delightful gift; and pleasant to find that tolerance and sympathy with other modes and manners are not the exclusive possession of a young and exclamatory generation.

FOR the moment dull and triste are the streets, the shops have lost Christmas dash, the youth and beauty betaken themselves to primrose path of the country, long trail of seashore, more or less idyllic calm of valley and high hill

in those lonely places
Where the old plain men have rosy faces
And the young fair maidens quiet eyes.

A drift of tourists occasionally is to be met on the Quay, viewing our ways and women, frivollings and faults. Sometimes 'twould seem as though visitors from overseas come to bury Caesar, not to praise him, so frequent and painful and free are their comments on this young land, which assuredly cannot and does not aspire to enter into competition with older civilisations. One such held forth in strident accents recently in

an art shop, whither through largesse of plutocratic relative I had gone to purchase long-coveted chain of jade. Our institutions, politics and commodities were held up to scorn with vivacity and audibility; the extreme chic of the gown worn somehow rendering bad manners more exasperating. Envious was that frock of silken, supple black velvet, with its "polka dots" of rose and purple and golden gorse, ineffable the sideways droop of pleats, perfect the moulding of short and tightish bodice that subtly clung to a really admirable figure. All of a simplicity sublime, including hat of tagel straw with band and rose of subtly blended colour; and creating a wonder, as I left the shop, clad in that dull but kind fail-me-never, a coat and skirt, why the same idea had not occurred to the unfertile brain of your Annabel.

NOW that there is leisure for books, wisely or unwisely chosen, as the case may be, by friends who dimly suspect one of highbrow tendencies, I commend "The Feet of the Young Men," an author who conceals his brilliant identity under non de plume of "The Janitor." These vignettes of literary and political personalities are right up to the minute, and worth much fine gold to the student of affairs.

Deal gently with thy brither man,
Still gentlier sister woman,

is not exactly a slogan, and from Lady Astor to Oswald Mosley, M.P., male and female berates he them, all going to make extremely entertaining reading. Mr. Philip Guedella, who would appear to be one of the brightest "literary gents" in this flashing constellation, is depicted with an excess of clarity and lack of charity that are most diverting; while the comprehending and comprehensive notes on Miss Bondfield, Miss Lawrence, and the rest that come under the lash of criticism give added interest to an outspoken and vivacious chronicle.

IN the closing days of a dying year we fall into retrospect and take cherishing thought of friends who are dear; those whose eyes still shed kindly light upon us, and those others between whom and ourselves yawns inexorable gulf of silence and farewell. We are told "Death is but crossing the world, as friends do the sea," and clinging to its prop of consolation, the wistful human heart till long last remembers

that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill.

Your
ANNABEL LEE.

Books.

THE PATHWAY.

(Henry Williamson.)

THE earlier books of the winner of the Hawthorndale Prize will be remembered for graceful and beautiful expression of love of the open road, a consummate knowledge of field and hedgerow, and the birds and beasts that haunt their remote loveliness. Moorhen, water-rat, tiny wounded creeping things that have no champion, are as friends of his heart; while in "The Beautiful Years" he wrote poignant and illuminating analysis of the ambition and outlook of a little lonely country lad.

The latest book of this sensitive and brilliant member of the younger literary school is the story of an ex-soldier, who, after mud, grime and cruelty of the war years, finds haven in an old Devonshire country home, and the gentle mate of his heart in the spiritually-endowed Mary Ogilvie, that charming heroine, who mothers and protects all that come within her ken.

The character drawing is quite excellent, we meet types of people we know and like; and incidentally, when necessary, in physical matters there is no mincing words, and a spade is to the author just plain spade.

Incidentally there is much lovely talk of the ways of nature on land and sea. Manifestly the inspiration of the novel is a love of all created things, a poignant sympathy with sorrow, and a passionate pity for the fate, "red in tooth and claw," that overtakes the helpless, while at times there are flashes of insight and description worthy of that great nature lover and magician of the written word, W. H. Hudson himself. For example:

"The dawn! The higher ground of the next field grew darker, and the sky above the hill-line glowed with pale yellow, making the distant trees of Windwhistle Spinney black and distinct. Above the primrose bar light

from under the earth's rim, flowed to the starry zenith, with a startling loveliness. The sun was remote; yonder was the light of the world, while he, an aspiring mortal, stood in the dusky field and looked at the Morning Star, raptured to the lips, Mother of Keats' spirit, of the world-free Shelley, the broken-winged bird that was Thompson, of Jeffries, who was a leaf and a feather and the sea."

The air of unrest that permeates a post-war world is not absent, and the book ends on a note of sorrow in the drowning of the visionary and dreamer, whose ideals had crashed around him. R.U.R.

The New Times

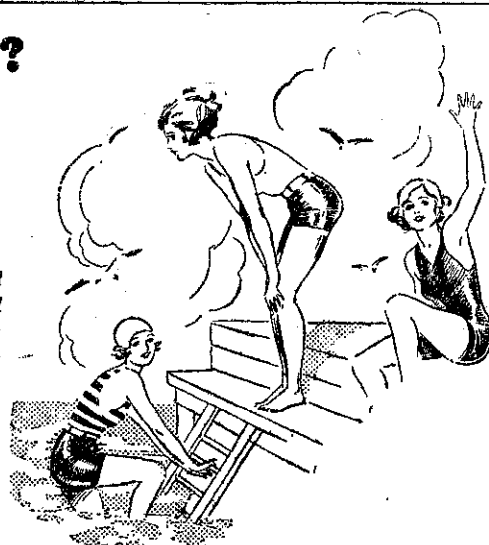
"MINTIE."

High on the tree-top
The aerial sways;
Now we have started
On listening days.
News from the city,
And music and song,
Shortening gaily
The nights that were long.
3LO Melbourne
And 3AR, too,
Both hold a budget
Of interest to you.
Gone are the evenings
Of old-fashioned style,
When, for enjoyment,
You drove many a mile.
You sit at home gaily,
Yes, surely it's true,
Since 3LO Melbourne
Came calling for you.
High on the tree-top
The aerial sways;
Now we have started
On listenings days.

—"Wireless Weekly."

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