

# ... With ... BOOK and VERSE

By "John O'Dreams"

**I**n spite of many enemies in the gate, not one of them can deny the grace of Mr. Bernard Shaw's oratory, the charm of his attractive voice, the grace of his gestures. Privileged at a recent picture theatre in the Capital City to hear him on the sound screen discourse on the remote and mighty Einstein, one was struck by expert handling of his theme, delicious drollery, and glancing wit. In his melodious voice, and with admirable poise, he treated the genius of Einstein with a lightness of touch and a comprehending geniality that delighted his listeners, who no doubt went home and looked up with renewed zest their "Candida," "Major Barbara," and "You Never Can Tell."

**M**R. SHAW, in spite of extraordinary vogue in England, does not appear to have been nearly so successful in conquering the French critics, where it is held in certain circles that his women are superficially observed. The French are keenly observant and intuitive concerning the springs of human action, and it is the opinion of many competent judges that Mr. Shaw does not dig deep enough into the mental processes of his female protagonists. Rightly or wrongly, this opinion is prevalent among certain literary factions. Yet one remembers how wonderfully vital and human a creation he makes of Ann in the Superman play; so full of feminine guile, not in the least loveable, but a mercilessly truthful impersonation. We of mature years can recognise the type of the fisher of man, be she charming, blatant, or subtle, always intent on landing her quarry, and very often succeeding.

**M**R. A. S. M. HUTCHINSON, apparently suffering from spiritual intoxication, induced by producing a best-seller, is also the author of a son, and has followed up "If Winter Comes" and various other innocuous and pleasant tales with a paean of praise and slightly maudlin meanderings—namely his first-born, entitled "The Book of Simon." Most of us love children, or some child or another, but everything in moderation, and let us at all costs cast aside the sickly slime of sentimentality and fight the good fight shorn of its clinging trappings. Listen: "I imagine his mind at three, I imagine that mind of his, as a little house, a little honeycomb, made up of pearly white cells—glistening, dewy, lustrous, and semi-transparent, pearly white cells, untouched and pure—oh, pure, beyond all conception of purity. . . . Imagine the little lustrous honeycomb of cells of pearly, pearly white that my son Simon's is." Well, well!

## Prize Poem Competition

**T**HE prize of half a guinea in the current competition is awarded to A.N.I.C. for her verses entitled "Conflict," which are poetic in thought and graceful and skilful in execution. Selected for special commendation is the poem entitled "Song of the Native Bush," by a youthful contributor, "Wild Rose," who lives in one of the Dominion's most romantic spots, and shows an alert perception of the loveliness of our land, and considerable skill in the expression thereof.

"Our Heritage"—Admirable sentiment with a word of warning for the grumblers, but no poetic fire.

"In Maoriland"—A catalogue of Maoriland's flora and geysers—"the ferns, the fruit, the flowers"—meritorious in its way, but without charm.

"U.C."—Your work, as always, is of originality and beauty, though we have liked better some of your other poems. We are with you in your delight in Sara Teasdale's achievement.

"Tantalization"—An attractive fragment, which unfortunately tails off into futility in the last two lines.

"Lucibel Lee"—Of your small sheaf we prefer "Rain," which, though slight in verbal texture, is attractive. In "Surfeit" we cannot reconcile ourselves to the use of the word "footling."

"Nada"—Quite unsuitable.

"Lillian"—Your verses are light and airy as your Tennysonian namesake.

"Bathsheba"—Too modern altogether. Tone it down!

"Pierrot"—A medley of strange sounds.

## ... Conflict ...

*Tram-tickets whirl on their joyous way  
In a dusty town, on a dusty day,  
Trees bend down in the wilting heat  
With tired limbs on the listless street.  
A North-west wind blows low, blows high,  
And over the chimney pots peeps the sky . . .  
Ever so blue . . . and ever so far . . .  
While the trams in the distance moan and jar . . .  
But standing here, how I long and long  
For the country skylark's endless song . . .  
I know how the blossoms will drift to-day,  
I know what the river will have to say,  
I know how the bees there drone . . . and drone . . .  
(And the lilac bush will be out alone).  
How the gorse will be reaching arms aglow  
To the setting sun . . . Oh I know! I know!*

*But here I am on this dusty day,  
While I long to be up and away . . . away,  
And though it is raining a dusty rain  
My heart is out in the fields again . . .*

—(A.N.I.C.)

**T**HE author of "Goodbye to All That" has followed up his thought-provoking and much discussed book with a literary olla podrida bearing the still more colloquial title of "But It Still Goes On." In this latest book, Mr. Robert Graves embodies personal opinions, short stories, and a three-act play, the whole providing excellent and varied entertainment. Though at times Mr. Graves exudes bitterness, and occasionally is extremely exasperating, however much one may disagree with his conclusions, his ability is unquestionable, his literary style compact of vim and vigour, and the courage of his opinions such as to compel admiration. In his present collection versatility is a keynote, the short tales are of absorbing interest, and a journal, which is incorporated, unique in its way. The drama, which concludes the volume, is likely to find adverse critics, dealing as it does with a problem which, in the opinion of many, is unfitted for general discussion. Possibly Mr. Graves's motive is an ethical one, but the play is unlikely to be produced in any English theatre, and it may be that this is all to the good.

**W**E learn from "The Sunday Times" that Mr. H. V. Morton's eagerly-awaited volume, "In Search of Ireland," is published by Methuen, who have sold over 86,000 copies of his "In Search of Scotland." From the same source we learn that keen and poignant curiosity is bound to be raised in a book, "Colossal Blunders of the War," by Mr. William S. Woods, published by Allen and Unwin. One of these blunders, it is understood, resulted in the slaughter of no fewer than 700,000 men without gain on either side.

**I**N these days of repertory societies, play-reading circles, and amateur acting, devotees of the drama will find scope for thought and effort in a volume entitled "Twelve One-act Plays" recently to hand. These playlets are catholic in subject, ranging from "Romance of the Willow Pattern" to a poignant scene before an execution, "The Grill." The average treatment of the diverse themes is admirable, one of the best things in the book, "A Woman of Character," being a quite excellent study of that rara avis, a reasonable wife who does not expect too much from men. Valuable advice to amateurs in the histrionic art is contained in the introduction by Walter Prichard Eaton, and the volume is to be commended to youthful students and those of maturer years, who will find in it a great deal to repay study and much of interest and entertainment.