

# ... With ... BOOK and VERSE

By "John O'Dreams"

MRS. VIRGINIA WOOLF, in a recent series of articles, told the world how impossible it is for a woman to achieve memorable literary work and do justice to her imaginative faculty, unless she has a settled income, and, if not a house, at least a room of her own, which can be locked at will, and the insistent, clamouring world left on the other side. Many of us would be disposed to think she is right, including the male as well as female of the species, remembering how cars and cares bear heavily on artistic temperament, which is easily thrown off its pivot and quickly disturbed and distressed by ugliness and stridency of the world we live in. Yet one remembers that Charlotte Brontë wrote great novels within the shadow of the sad, restricted and unhappy atmosphere in which her sister Emily achieved the immortal "Wuthering Heights"; while Mrs. Gaskell, amid the everyday cares of a country vicarage, proved herself admirable wife and mother, open-hearted hostess and unfailing friend, and yet found time to lay us under a debt of gratitude by writing the lovely literary cameo "Cranford," and other keenly observed, though less well known, studies of life in those days. The writer remembers Frank Morton, one of New Zealand's ablest journalists, dashing off brilliant and scholarly criticisms of the drama

## PRIZE POEM COMPETITION

THE prize of half a guinea in the current competition is awarded to "Oh Mack" for her poem entitled "The Wisdom of the Roads," and we feel sure its loving observation and human sympathy, coupled with lilting expression thereof, will find many admirers. The general level of work sent in during the past fortnight has been of a high average of quality, and we select for special commendation "Rain After Drought," by "Ginger," which runs the prize-winner very close but is not quite so strong in imaginative insight. (The winning poem appears on the opposite page.)

"Ocean and Air Mails": An attractive effort anent lack of unison of Nature's moods with those of poor humanity.

U.C. sends an outstanding poem in which echoes something of the music of the spheres. Unfortunately our contributor has neglected to comply with the condition, which sets a limit of 25 lines to any poem accepted for publication in this column.

"Thur's" small ode to friendship is skilfully composed with a true touch of sentiment.

"Cantor" contributes melodious requiem of Nature for one who in life cultivated his garden:

*In the Chapel, dimly lit,  
One lay in state who planted it,  
Who saw in bird and flower and tree  
The favour of Divinity.*

D.A.S.: Your versification of ancient Maori legend catches something of the spirit of romance, but the workmanship is not above reproach.

"Mother": We admire your versatility, but perhaps the "Baby" poem would have better luck with an exclusively feminine publication.

H.R.S.: Your pagan poem, with its insistence that beauty is truth, truth beauty, is attractive; as also the two brief verses voicing respective lure of swallow and cuckoo, clematis and rata. But neither is up to prize-winning form.

"Oxford": Your "Dreaming spires" are very mundane in architecture.

amid babel of reporters' room and general din of a newspaper office at midnight. Gissing starved in a garret. Balzac strove long and painfully before achieving fame. Thomas Burke evolved his poignant dramas of the underworld amid sordid and poverty-stricken surroundings of his youth. Mrs. Woolf, profound student of the ways of men, and wife of a poet, insists upon solitude and economic security for creative achievement; but the fact remains that many works of genius have been brought to birth under the lash of circumstance.

his tempestuous heart found that peace which was denied him in life. Now at this late date come some intimate details of those last few years. According to the "Sunday Times," in the spring of 1897 there arrived at the Hotel d'Alsace, in the Rue des Beaux Arts, a tall, stout Englishman, who gave his name as Sebastian Melmoth, took a bedroom and sitting-room, and lived there for 3½ years. His real name was Oscar Wilde. "When he wanted anything," said the proprietor, M. Dupolrier (now retired), "he always asked for me. 'Go and get me some brandy in the Avenue de l'Opera,' he would say. It was magnificent brandy, very expensive at that time, and in the early days of his sojourn Mr. Melmoth consumed four or five bottles of it a week.

MORE than three decades ago, in Paris, a brilliant English novelist, poet and playwright, passed to where beyond these voices, it may be,

"Every day I served his breakfast," proceeded his former landlord and friend, "and about two o'clock a mutton cutlet and two hard-boiled eggs. He never varied his menu. In the afternoon he read or wrote, in the evening he went out, and did not return before two or three in the morning. He was very patient during his last illness, when injections of morphia were necessary to give him relief. Two nurses were in attendance, and before he died he was converted to the Roman Catholic faith. Some days before the end his sight went, and he asked the nurses to read poetry to him. He died one morning at about nine o'clock, after heaving two or three sighs. On his coffin were but two wreaths of the flowers he loved, one from a friend, the other from the proprietor and staff of the hotel." One wonders what poets were chosen to solace the last hours on earth of that unhappy genius.



## O Sole Mio

—is a wonderful song when the dishes have been cleared away and you are sitting by a cosy fireside—but it isn't much of a help to the housewife preparing scones and cakes for the evening meal.

## ANCHOR SKIM MILK POWDER

Now—there is something useful. Makes scones and cakes much lighter, gives them richer flavour, increases food value. Keeps them fresh for days longer.

From Your Grocer.

Price 1/2 Per Tin

The "Anchor" Folder contains a number of excellent tested recipes. Write for Free Copy to-day to "Anchor," Box 344, Auckland.

Sold direct  
at £5/5/-  
Saving

No retail  
profits or  
salesmen's  
commissions.



£10/10/- Complete  
with 7 clip-on parts.  
Post Free

Buy this full-sized, efficient, fully-guaranteed Vacuum Cleaner direct from the sole importers. The heart of a cleaner is the motor. The SUNSHINE has the world-famous Westinghouse Motor, and 16 other distinct superiorities. Write for illustrated folder—Sole N.Z. Distributors:

HAROLD LIGHTBAND, LTD.,  
79a Lichfield Street, Christchurch.  
Or 386 Queen Street, Auckland.