

... With ... BOOK and VERSE

By "John O'Dreams"

The Mystery of the Moa

(By C. O. and E. Palmer.)

THE making of verse is a somewhat rare accomplishment in New Zealand. So that it was with a feeling of pleasurable anticipation I opened and read "The Mystery of the Moa," lately written and published in collaboration by Charles Oscar Palmer and Elsie Palmer. An interesting and poetic contribution to the literature of this Dominion, this little book of verse, written in the pauses of a strenuous life, shows acute consciousness of the beauty of our own and the Maori language, coupled with love and appreciation of ancient legends now in danger of falling into limbo of the forgotten. The story of the search for the Moa is recounted in dignified and arresting lines, Maori lore and legend are effectively used with decorative effect, and the poem moves on in fitting metre to its finale describing the last rites in honour of the vanished Moa. A unique publication, characteristic of our land and its origins, and instinct with poetic thought expressed with lucidity, originality and charm; the whole capturing something of the poetic quality inherent in the Maori race.

APPARENTLY the war book is still with us. Remarque, author of "All Quiet on the Western Front," which raised such a furore of criticism and dissension, has written a kind of sequel or continuation of that terrible book. His latest work tells the tale of the sometimes difficult and disastrous return of the soldier to civilised life. One wonders if the vividness of this author's narrative will retain its gripping power when shorn of the horrible details and circumstances of war which crowd his earlier novel.

Relieve
throat
soreness
quickly
with

Pulmonas
PASTILLES

Suck them slowly

at all chemists

OUR FORTNIGHTLY BOOK REVIEW

DIARY OF A PROVINCIAL LADY

(By E. M. Delafield)

MISS DELAFIELD is one of the most brilliant of the younger English novelists, and already has half a score of stimulating novels to her credit, despite the fact that she is still in the twenties. Penetrating characterisation and mordant wit are apparent in her work, and a somewhat cruel irony occasionally is uppermost. Abhorrent of humbug and social sham, Miss Delafield dissects with sharp-edged scalpel the follies and frailties of humanity, leaving it bereft of the smallest shred of smug self-satisfaction.

The "Diary" under review made its first appearance in the pages of that excellent and courageous publication, "Time and Tide," the series of articles now being collected in book form, and there is no doubt that it makes edifying and mirth-provoking reading. Purporting to be written by a lady of the provinces, discreet, gentle, well-bred, doing out the duty but finding it dull; her reflections and chronicle of everyday doings of her immediate circle are written with a pretty wit and an exploitation of human vagaries showing acute observation and appreciation of the irony of life.

With inimitable point and pungency, the social snob is satirised, the dullard, the humorless spinster who subsists on a diet of nuts, old Mrs. Blenkinsop, wrapped in shawls, who protests in and out of season that, though she is only a Useless Old Woman, her motto is: Look Out and Not In; Look Up and Not Down; Lend a Hand!

Various current events are touched upon with judgment and taste, and mention made en passant of modern books and plays. For instance: "Rose takes me to see St. John Ervine's play, and am much amused. Overhear one lady in stalls ask another: 'Why don't you write a play, dear?' 'Well,' said

the friend, 'it's difficult, what with one thing and another, to find time.' Am staggered. Could I write a play myself. Could we all write plays, if only we had the time?"

Again the acute comment: "Is not a common hate one of the strongest links in human nature? Answer, most regrettably, in the affirmative."

Concerning a distinguished novelist: "She says she can only write between twelve at night and four in the morning, and not always then. When she cannot write, she plays the organ. Should much like to ask whether she is married—but get no opportunity of saying that or anything else.

"She tells me about her sales. She tells me about her last book. She tells me about her new one. She says there are many people to whom she must speak, and pursues well-known poet—who does not, however, allow her to catch up with him. Can understand this."

The description of the Garden Fete has the true touch. Those who, in the arduous task of organising an entertainment for a good cause, have borne the burden and heat of the day, will sympathise with exasperation felt by warm and flustered committee on the arrival of the social butterfly, clad in sapphire blue and pearls, with an escort of fashionable creatures, male and female, apparently dressed for Ascot; who, after indiscriminate and patronising criticism, and the purchase of a ninepenny lavender bag, drive off again in a Rolls-Royce.

Robert, that kind but discouraging man of the house, is typical, and Robin and Vicki are full of charm, as is the Provincial Lady herself. We should like to know her.

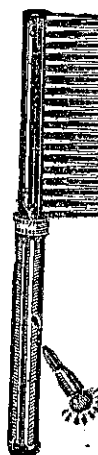
The illustrations by Mr. Arthur Watts are fascinating, and in line with the author's creations, a somewhat rare achievement. The clever presentations of Cook, Mademoiselle, the maddening Cousin Maud, the Rector and the rest, will go far toward augmenting the success which inevitably awaits this witty satire on men and manners.

MISS DOROTHY PARKER, in "Laments for the Living," has written a depressing, but a singularly arresting book. She etches a portrait in a few lines; a tragedy in a page or so; describes an everyday conversation on a telephone, and shows the heartbreak that lies under the rapid conversation. There is terrible realism in her studies, the stark nudity of truth. Who will readily forget the man Durant, elderly, concealed, smug seducer, odious and true to type? And every one of her studies is as cruelly exact, as mercilessly truthful.

UNDER the title "It Had Happened Otherwise," an entertaining series of glimpses into imaginary history is to be published by Longmans next month. Eleven authors have contributed to it, including Mr. Churchill, Mr. Belloc, Mr. Guedella, Emil Ludwig, and Mr. Maurois. The sort of thing it is illustrated by Mr. H. A. L. Fisher's picture of the world as it might have been if Napoleon had escaped to America. M. Maurois's biography of "Disraeli" is well known, Herr Ludwig's literary achievement needs no bush, and the writers of our own nationality are well represented in this publication, which should be of a unique and fascinating character.

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