

... With ... BOOK and VERSE

By "John O'Dreams"

THE name of Mr. J. C. Squire, poet, parodist and essayist, needs no panegyric. His fame is made, and the literary intelligentsia is ever ready to welcome a facet of his coruscating gift of expression. In "Sunday Mornings," a suggestive title, Mr. Squire republishes certain articles formerly acclaimed in the "Observer" by virtue of their literary quality, knowledge of the world's ways, and omniscient acquaintance with social activities. Of a catholic taste and tolerance, unbounded, Mr. Squire sets before us aspects of life as they appear to his seeing eye; youth and sport; age and achievement; beauty and zest of life; the striving and interest of the passing show. Those familiar with "Solomon Eagle's" reviews will need no urge to renew acquaintance with his delightful style and illuminating presentment. In Mr. Squire's criticism of "The Cambridge Shorter Bible" one agrees that it was lamentable judgment to exclude such a passage as "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest . . . I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong." Also heartily it is agreed that "Canst thou bind the cluster of the Pleiades" is but poor substitute for "Canst thou bind the sweet influence of the Pleiades," and that artistically it was wicked to delete "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out."

In the short space at disposal it is impossible to do justice to the essays of Mr. Squire. One can only commend them for richness of thought, variety of subject and beauty of diction. His tribute to Joseph Conrad it would be difficult to overpraise. "Steadfastness, honour, courage, pity, generosity: to the old abstractions he held firm." Of Thomas Hardy he says: "His heart to the last as young as his will: no faculties decayed save the purely physical, and even those preserved beyond the normal." My own delight in these essays leads me to linger, and I commend them to anyone with a sense of the universality of life, and appreciation of the cadence and beauty of ordered expression.

INTEREST in the relation of religion to the maintenance of health and the cure of disease is on the increase, and is the subject of a book entitled "Body, Mind and Spirit," by Elwood Worcester and Samuel McComb, which is said to be the outcome of thirty years' clinical experience in the application of psychology and religion to the whole needs of man.

PRIZE POEM COMPETITION

THE prize of half a guinea in the current competition is awarded to "At Night," by "D.P.," which we have been holding for further consideration. Its haunting charm and musically phrased impression of a phase of Nature's loveliness will, we are convinced, find countless admirers.

M.W.S.: We read your picturesque poem with considerable interest, but for our purpose it is far too long, our rule being that no verses submitted for this competition shall exceed 25 lines.

"Merrie": It's a dear little poem, though not yet up to prize-winning standard, faulty rhythm being occasionally present.

Karakia: Your poem appeals greatly, and is only second in merit to the prize-winner.

"Ignorance": We like the dexterity and grace with which you treat the old and beautiful motif of your verses.

"J.Y.": Your effort at verse libre is interesting in its originality and thoughtfulness, the last lines being better than the first.

"Infelice": Audacious to a degree, but lamentably bad verse.

"Mayfly": An excellent moral is the one good point in "Trifles Light as Air."

"Francesca": Alas, not this time.

"Ulysses": A brave theme, but unnecessary bluntness of phraseology.

"Pierrot" makes his bow to the Muse with a gay heart but faulty metre.

"Word-spinner": As bad as bad can be!

"Ginger": Thoughtful and attractive.

... At Night ...

Where the clear, swift river of day flows down
Over the dim white weirs of dreams
In the vast blue gulfs of the night to drown
A garden, pale as an opal, dreams.
Here, on the rim of the twilight world,
The Wind-God walks when his wings are furled,
Walks alone with his shrill sweet pipes,
Fluting clear as a mating bird,
And magic flowers by his step are stirred,
The moonflowers shimmer in mists of pearl,
The dusk-flowers dream in a purple haze,
Like a clear, pale jewel the dawn-flower sways,
The flame-flowers quiver like golden fires,
And the night-flowers tremble their jacinth spires,
And in gusts the perfumes come and go
As the Wind-God paces to and fro;
By pools of silver the mist-flower gleams
And in and out of the darkling trees
Flit the misty moon-pale wraiths of dreams,
As here on the rim of the dreaming world
The Wind-God walks when his wings are furled.

—D.P.

"RED Like Crimson" is the rather irritating title of a good first novel, which reads uncommonly like a detailed piece of autobiography. Miss Jane Paradine, the author, has either created or remembered her people and atmosphere with a most convincing sense of life. It is the story of some children growing up in a Victorian vicarage with a young, high-spirited, brilliant mother, and quieter, more sympathetic father; the nursemaids, gardeners, butcher-boys, cooks, 'tweenies, and the rest. The home is charming; the actions of vicarage to village everything that is delightful, right and Christian. Yet the inner atmosphere is poisoned by a prudery, sentimentality and sham, against which all children, and the heroine in particular, protest. The narrative touch is admirably clear and detached, and the whole book of unusual interest.

ADMIRERS of the literary work of M. Andre Maurois, and there are many, will find much to enthral them in his latest novel, "The Weigher of Souls." Using a careful economy of words, M. Maurois tells the tale of a doctor who believes he can isolate the soul-energy which leaves the human body shortly after death, and made visible by means of an ultra-violet ray apparatus. This is the motif of the story, into which a romantic thread is interwoven, and the versatile Frenchman tells his tale so skilfully that almost he persuades one to believe in the soundness and truth of the amazing tale.

A THRILLER to be recommended is "The Death of a Spinster," by Dorothy Johnson. Old Miss Tilden is found with her throat cut, and if murdered, there are quite a number who might possibly be the criminal. Also there is an amateur sleuth who makes more than one curious discovery before unveiling the strange and unguessed truth. Nothing, perhaps, very original in all this, but the book is written with a dash and a vim that hold attention.

SPAIN, being so much in the forefront at the moment, Mr. Jan Gordon's "Beans Split in Spain" has been published at quite the right time. Much about that distressful country is here contained, its customs and beauties, its ways and its works; while incidentally there is a charmingly-told love story between an English painter and the irresistible Concha, an alluring Spanish seductress.

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