

# ... With ... BOOK and VERSE

By "John O'Dreams"

## Jottings

ANOTHER book from the author of "Mother India" cannot fail to arouse interest, remembering Miss Katharine Mayo's courageous and terrible indictment of the hideous evils of the Hindu child-marriage system. Her revelations, burning with indignation, worded with the utmost frankness, and giving chapter and verse for her statements, shocked the Western world. Passionately partisan, her book was challenged by many writers and thinkers as hysterical and propagandist, but in its obvious sincerity of motive made a tremendous impression in three continents. Recently a special committee investigated the revelations contained in "Mother India." This committee consisted of prominent Indians and one British woman doctor. It toured India and took voluminous evidence, filling 4534 pages. "Volume Two," Miss Mayo's latest work, is a digest of the report and evidence of this "Age of Consent Committee," the conclusions of the committee being summarised and set before readers in concise and convincing fashion. Witnesses of all classes, ranging from members of the Indian intelligentsia and Brahmins, women behind the purdah and women with university degrees, to field labourers and untouchables, were examined, and their evidence brought to bear in throwing light on the great existing evil. Miss Mayo maintains that the evidence as a whole supports her main contentions: that early marriage is widely prevalent all over India, and that such marriages are not merely formal; that the movement against it is confined to a very small progressive minority; and that recent legislation has proved ineffective. Miss Mayo's courageous efforts to fight this diabolic practice are to be acclaimed, and no student of Indian affairs can afford to ignore the testimony epitomised in this enlightening volume.

THE award of the Goethe Prize for Literature to Ricarda Huch for her life's work has been acclaimed by the whole of the German literary world. Ricarda Huch is over seventy years old, and she is the only woman writer whose works claim equality with those of men on the bookshelves of German academicians and writers alike. Her latest work, "The Revolution of the Nineteenth Century in Germany," just published by the Deutsch-Schweizerische Verlagsanstalt, crowns her year-long labours in the historic field. The revolution is that of 1848. Ricarda Huch began her career as poetess and novelist, and her insight into the hidden springs that move the great figures of her country's history is such that many believe the present work will be the classic picture that will make Germany's later revolution of 1914 fully clear to posterity.

## PRIZE POEM COMPETITION

THE prize of half a guinea in the current competition is awarded to G.F. for "New Zealand: A Sonnet," which will appeal to discriminating readers by reason of its skill in composition, true touch on emotion, and rounded completeness. Selected for commendation is "A Song of Weariness," by "C," which has a fleeting, rhythmic beauty and some distinction; and "Eerie Nights," by M.L.G., who expresses her quaint conception with ingenuity and success.

"The Tumultuous Ether": A big subject, handled with clarity and vigour, but over-repetitive phrase weakens effect.

"Rose Marie" sends somewhat over-sentimental lines. The poetry of love must be very skilfully phrased to carry its effect.

"Thur" pays graceful and musical tribute to that which, among the virtues, is perhaps the greatest.

Flaneur: Unconvincing to the bad and bitter end.

"C.": Thanks indeed for graceful words of appreciation. We agree that in the Poet's Corner of the "Record" much interesting work has appeared; a proportion of the poems reaching high literary standard; your own prize-winning contribution being remembered as a fascinating and unusual poem.

"Novitius": Your two small poems are arresting, especially "De Rigueur," which with power and metrical music moves to artistic conclusion.

"Knowledge" is a wise and lovely poem, revealing its author as possessed of a sense of the beauty of words and a knowledge of man's dependence. S.E.F.-J. sends more of her easily-flowing rhymes. This contributor is obviously happy-hearted and alive to beauty, but somewhat over-prone to "tell the world" its duty, as she conceives it.

"Fly-by-night": Unconsciously ludicrous.

"Her Last Word": And a very good thing.

"Mackerel": Moonshine.

## New Zealand: A Sonnet

*I've been in England when glad April's there,  
And walked in chequered fields gold-pied with flowers,  
And gazed at dusty relics—castle towers  
That moulder in dead grandeur everywhere;  
I've seen Egyptian tombs, with treasures rare,  
Which in forgotten days had been the dowers  
Of poor dead queens. I've passed long, magic hours  
In distant lands, immeasurably fair;  
But though my feet have wandered, my heart stayed,  
Enchanted by each green New Zealand hill,  
And lingered there in every fern-bowered glade;  
For, in my youth, I heard a tui thrill,  
And watched the sunset on the mountains fade  
To silent evening, and the land grow still.*

—G.F.

M. ANDRE MAUROIS, versatile, vivid, and profound, has added another feather to his literary cap in "Chelsea Way." The milieu of the story is Chelsea, its protagonists the artists who live, move and have their being in the artists' quarter. M. Maurois is delightfully witty at their expense, and their eccentricities of speech and manner are aptly parodied. The pen of this ready writer flows on like a smoothly-moving river, and it is interesting to observe how he exploits the possibilities of the long sentence.

"WANDERER'S END" is an intriguing novel. The author, Dennis Cleugh, spent years in writing it, describing the life he led when one of a travelling company of players giving Shakespeare in the English provincial towns. It is sad to think he died suddenly before finishing the book. His wife, Sophia Cleugh, wrote the last two chapters; and there is a foreword by Christopher Morley, whose troupers Cleugh joined in the Hoboken Stock Company, and died suddenly just after rehearsal. The story relates to one Don Paradise, who, in trying to escape

from himself and from memories, faints outside the gates of Marcus Junius Pollen and his wife Miranda; one gate bearing the name "The Priory," the other "Belmont," to suit the tastes of both husband and wife. Paradise became secretary to the Pollens, and we are introduced to a strange household—Dame Trot, the kind-hearted; Sobit, the red-bearded hunchback; Robin, the quaint and lovable son of a bearded lady; the inhabitants of Wanderer's End; and a host of the most interesting characters, including Lady Sabrina Cuddy, Alonzo the long-lost, and a quite essential elephant. Interesting and charming, with a true touch of sadness in the wanderer's end of Pollen with his ambition to play Hamlet.

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"COPPER City," by Mr. Myron

Brinig, is written in rapier-like style that flashes and cuts in its narrative form. The author's keenness of phrase and observation are outstanding, and his sympathies singularly far-reaching. There are practically two heroes in this rather remarkable novel; an uncle and a nephew. But their interests do not clash, but rather run parallel in this vivid story of life in a gold-mining town. The contrast between John, the upright and naturally abstemious, and the woman Zola, with her practised knowledge of the seamiest side of human nature, whom he takes to live in his home, makes memorable impression.

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MR. BEVERLEY NICHOLS keeps up the pace. At 25 he gave his reminiscences to an astonished public. Two years later came his piquant, audacious, and oftentimes impertinent sketches of famous people whom he knew. Then "The Star-Spangled Manner" appeared, and excellent reading it made, with its revealing comments of American modes and manners. Now these volumes are combined in an omnibus book of nearly 900 pages. Mr. Nichols's years number thirty, and though there are some who disdain his literary methods, there are a great many more who delight in his frank and mordant comments on the passing show as it appears to his singularly gimlet-eyed and challenging regard.

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IN "Society at War," Miss Caroline Playne, who already has the admirable "The Neuroses of the Nations" to her credit, gives a vivid description of what civilians did in Britain during the war, a subject not often dealt with.