

... With ... BOOK and VERSE

By "John O'Dreams"

Jottings

"HOTEL AND RESTAURANT CAREERS FOR WOMEN," by Ernest M. Porter, will be valuable to all those who are either already engaged in the business or who contemplate entering it. Most of us have no realisation of what a busy, complicated world lies in the working quarters of a large hotel. As Mr. Porter points out, the management of English hotels has altered so widely during the last few years that they offer pleasant, interesting and remunerative posts for women of energy and intelligence. Every position in a hotel is described, and there is an appendix showing how to obtain hotel employment.

STILL another added to the well-nigh interminable list of stories of life at a public school. In "Pyramid" is related the saga of a sensitive boy during his passage through the communistic scholastic routine, which is oftentimes a crucial ordeal. Tony is a natural, human lad, particularly when he is dodging authority or proving his prowess on the cricket field. Not quite so convincing, perhaps, in his more sentimental moments, but the book is written with sincerity and a penetrating knowledge of youth, which will ensure it an interested circle of readers, who will await with agreeable anticipation the next book of the author, Mr. Lionel Birch.

THE author of "The Romance and Realities of Mayfair and Piccadilly," Mr. Percy Rudolph Broemel, has written a book on the unsolvable problem of the ages in "Ageless Woman (Manners, Morals, Modes, and Merits)," in which he deals interestingly with the foibles and fashions of women in the eighteenth century and after. He has not solved, nor does he claim to have solved, the problem, as he shows in an early chapter, in which he says: "Externally, woman has adapted herself, as she always does, to the conditions of the period in which she moves and has her being, while sacrificing not an atom of her natural qualities." Many anecdotes about women who lived in the centuries covered by the book are given, and the author, after his survey, appears to admit that he, like his ancestors of all time, has come to the conclusion that woman is still mysterious as the Sphinx. It is a pleasantly interesting book, ranging from grave to gay, but with regard to the great problem: in the concluding words of the author: "Woman remains Woman, the most adorable, complex, and baffling enigma sent from Heaven for the Joy and Torment of Man."

Our Fortnightly Book Review

SON OF WOMAN

The Story of D. H. Lawrence

By JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY

THIS story of the life and achievement of the dark genius known to the world as D. H. Lawrence has been ably and sympathetically treated by Mr. Middleton Murry in his biography with the arresting title, "Son of Woman." A difficult task, the elucidation of the bewildered quest of an elusive goal by a brilliant intellect and tortured and tempestuous soul. The account of the life, and analysis of Lawrence's achievement and intention, are entirely unreticent. Nothing is glossed over, extenuated, or marred by undue partisanship. Obviously Mr. Murry has written a wholly unbiased impression of the wanderings and vain strivings of the poet-novelist's body, soul and spirit, and attempted to differentiate between strongly sexual physical nature and the soaring spirit in ever-recurring pursuit of the Grail. Writhing body coupled with vision of the sublime; contrast heaped upon contrast; bewildering inconsistencies; of these Mr. Murry takes firm hold and succeeds in presenting a coherent pen-portrait of one who, it is claimed, possessed unparalleled spiritual quality, and whose wallowings in sexuality were but the attempt of tormented soul to find oblivion.

We are shown the childhood of Lawrence in poverty-stricken and discordant home, where a mother, neglected and ill-treated, is loved passionately by the small son who was her devoted champion till the day of her death and after. The influence of this "mother-complex" is insisted upon as the keynote of many dire struggles in later life with the world of women. That his mother was the being in his life whom he most deeply loved there can be no doubt, and even after her death her memory kept him from fulfilling himself in the full, free and contented love-life of normality. His soul was in bondage. Perhaps his loveliest lines were written on her death:

*I kiss you good-bye, my darling,
It is finished between us here.
Oh, if I were as calm as you are,
Sweet and still on your bier!
Oh, God, if I had not to leave you
Alone, my dear!*

From 17 to 21 years old, Lawrence taught miners' children in a rough elementary school, but a few years afterwards made entrance into the literary world, some of his poems being accepted by Ford Madox Hueffer for "The English Review." Mr. Murry takes the novels, poems and psychological studies in chronological order and, speaking out of intimate knowledge and great love for the unhappy writer, strives to elucidate their bearing upon the life-story of the author of "Sons and Lovers," "Kangaroo," "Psycho-Analysis and the Unconscious," and the rest; claiming that each was a thinly-veiled description of the vagaries of Lawrence's own tortured soul and body. Women were sought as a means of escape from anguish of sensitive spirit, and the cleavage between flesh and sublimity of idealism is insisted upon with unnecessarily lengthy asseveration.

After his mother's death, freed from her overpowering claim, Lawrence met the woman destined to become his wife, his "brown bird" who hovered over his heart. For a time he found happiness in his marriage, but, fortunately or unfortunately, he was not of the stuff to find content in life's everyday. The golden time was soon over, the struggle renewed, and rebellion against his dependence upon woman was uppermost. The only thing, says Mr. Murry, that could be done was that Lawrence should cease to depend upon woman, should cease to find in her the sole refuge from the isolation which threatened him with intolerable horror; and this he could not do. It is the age-old battle between flesh and spirit, but intensified a thousand-fold in the personality of this dreamer of divine heights, egoist and sensualist, soaring idealist who repudiated his ideals.

FOR some years before the advent of broadcasting, public interest in the speaking voice had faded out. Now, it is stated, there has been a revival. Professor Pear's "Voice and Personality" may be regarded as a useful sign of the times. Broadcasting and the talking film have revived public interest in the speaking voice. In the days when oratory and fine speaking were popular, one heard frequent comments on the voices of orators and preachers. The voices of Mr. Gladstone and John Bright were priceless assets, and even unbelievers admired the Rev. Charles Spurgeon's bell-like tones and went to hear him just for the pleasure of listening to a perfect speaker. Lord Rosebery also possessed a beautiful speaking voice. What broadcasters all four would have made! The wonders of Mr. Gladstone's voice were discussed as if he had been a prima donna. Indeed, he shared the honours with Mme. Patti!

MR. DAVID GARNETT, author of "Lady Into Fox" and "A Man in the Zoo," winner of the Hawthornden prize and the James Thait Black Memorial prize in 1923, gives us another short example of his brilliant art in "The Grasshoppers Come." It is the story of an attempt to make a long-distance record by aeroplane, an over-land flight which begins in England and ends in a crash in the desert of Gobi. Mr. Garnett is as good as Defoe in convincing his readers of the actuality of the events he describes. The description of the flight over Europe is itself a triumph in this sort of writing; it has never been done so vividly, and one feels that it can never be better done. The endurance of the pilot alone in the desert, his joy when the locusts begin to arrive (they mean food and survival), his subsequent sickening horror of their incredible multitudes, and the relief of his escape, are all actually conveyed. Mr. Garnett uses a narrow art, but uses it to perfection.

There is, perhaps, over-much discussion of the ever-recurring chasm between dream and actuality, which no rainbow could bridge; but Mr. Murry's book is of extreme interest, not only because of his scholarly treatment of his subject, but also for the sidelights shed on the friendship of himself and his wife, Katherine Mansfield, for the distraught genius whom they loved. The book is transparently sincere, entirely honest; although there are those who may disagree with Mr. Murry's estimate of the inherent nobility of Lawrence's character and the overwhelming importance of his message to mankind.