

... With ... BOOK and VERSE

By "John O'Dreams"

Jottings

IN "The Road" Mr. Warwick Deeping develops his theme after his own well-known fashion. Very ingenious and convincing are the gardener with his sensitive spirit; the proud, shy girl who plays a large part in his life, her energetic mother who makes so gallant a stand to keep the Mill House tea gardens going, and her sister, the downright Rhoda. The great road that winds its way past their doors is an integral part of their lives, and finally the clattering cars that pass up and down spell tragedy for Rachel and the life she might have lived, for an accident leaves her maimed and helpless. Mr. Deeping paints the interwoven reactions of the spiritual and material factors of his tale, which will add to his already established literary reputation.

MR. ARTHUR LAMETON is a well-known collator of notable events in the history of crime, and his latest effort in this direction entitled "Causes Celebre" is an enthralling successor to "Thou Shalt Do No Murder," for those interested in that particular aspect of the psychology of the race. In the selection made by the chronicler, there is a wealth of detail and a convincing method of recounting the case for and against the protagonists that fascinate attention. The breaking of the moral code is not confined to what is known as the lower class, and in Mr. Lambton's little list figure historical personages who loomed large in the society of their day: the Marquise de Boinvilliers, Count Konigsmark, the Duc du Choiseul, and the Duchess of Kingston. Another section gives the history of many unsolvable crimes, among them the Great Coram Street and Burton Crescent mysteries. This is a book that will prove singularly appealing to those interested—and they are many—in the seamier side of life.

THE late Sir Hall Caine has left material for a Life of Christ. To this he devoted many years of his long life, and has left innumerable manuscripts and notes in relation to what he considered would be his magnum opus. Unfortunately his life ended before he put his collated data into book form, and this work has been undertaken by representatives of the late writer, who in his lifetime devoted a never-faltering industry to the great biography in which his heart was bound up. Study of Biblical history was the great enthusiasm of the mind and heart of the accomplished novelist, and it may be taken for granted that all classes of thinkers, be they inside or outside the pale of the church, will be keenly interested in the book when eventually it is published.

Prize Poem Competition

THE prize of half a guinea in the current competition is awarded to K.M.W. for the poem entitled "Age," which hymns triumphant faith in fitting metrical form. Selected for special mention is M.F.P.'s "Picture of a Dairy," a poem of distinction by reason of apparent simplicity of treatment and an impression of pellucid shadow and shine.

"Haughton Bay" is held for further consideration.

"Elegy": Good work, with admirable sureness of touch, indicating flair of its author for poetry of the elegaic variety. We thank our new contributor for pleasant accompanying note.

"Smilax": The spiritual conception and skilful treatment of "Courage" appeal, and we like the lifting song to happiness, and sensitive response to beauty apparent in paean to our lovely land. Thanks for suggestion regarding second sheaf; we will avail ourselves of this kind permission, and welcome so intelligent a newcomer.

"Anphidrite": Modern impressionistic treatment of a vampiric theme.

O.E.H.: Thanks for all you say—interesting in the extreme. We'd like to read the "Homeland" poem some day.

"Dreamer's Quest" is instinct with the charm one finds in the work of its author.

L.L. sends a bird song, and a sweet one. Sorry space limitations are so stringent.

"Wild Rose" sends gentle lay of the bushland, which breathes fragrance of untarnished youth.

S.E.F.J., an optimist, sends several high-spirited contributions, of which "Experience" is the worst.

"Tyro" records delight in study of poesy, with which we are at one with him.

"At Dusk" is somewhat faulty in composition, but reveals sensitive awareness to beauty.

"Lucibel Lee": We like best your Old Garden. Do you by chance know Swinburne's lovely Forsaken Garden?

Comments from correspondents:

"I liked the last winning poem extremely ('Fairy Tales'). It did not seem like the work of an amateur."

"In reading over the poems of the last two prize-winners, I noted how happily they kept breadth and humanness in their poetry, as well as music—a very hard thing to do."

Age

Lord, behold my candles three
Flaming with my love for Thee.
Now my race is nearly run
Bless Thee for Thy benison!
I am old who once was young,
Now my song is nearly sung.
I have reaped, who once did sow,
Now my feet unfaltering go.

Thou hast given guerdons three,
Praise Thee for their verity!
As my years have greater grown
These things have I surely known.

Broken dreams will stir again
When the birds sing after rain.
Broken souls will be reborn
In the blue of a new morn.
Broken hearts heal in the sun.
This know I, whose day is done.
Lord, behold my candles three,
Glory, glory be to Thee!

—K.M.W.

MISS AGATHA CHRISTIE continues her industrious and thrilling output of ingeniously concocted tales of terror. Her latest contribution to the literature of crime is entitled "The Sittaford Mystery," an absorbing account of a mysterious killing. In all the circle surrounding the unfortunate naval officer who is the victim the most unlikely person proves to be the criminal, and the extremely unexpected denouement is related in quite the best melodramatic manner of a practised sensationalist.

MR. PERCY BROEMEL, who is evidently a great reader of the penny papers, is a firm believer in the dictum of some editor that "woman is always news." He seems to have been dipping into accounts of woman in her various activities for a long time past, and the result is "Ageless Woman," which, with its index, would be excessively useful to the writers of half-column "woman stories" in the popular Press. If Mr. Broemel's book appears to have no particular plan, his aim at any rate is all-embracing. Starting with a dissertation on Eve, he wanders through the centuries, retelling a story here, an anecdote there, of some queen, great lady, noteworthy or notorious, of blue-stockings and singers, and the English actresses of the 17th and 18th centuries.

A DOMESTIC tyrant's decline and fall is the theme of a remarkably fine first novel, in which Dr. A. J. Cronin, who has just retired from practice, displays a mastery of English prose and an ease of narration which will surprise those who have met him only in the pages of his official report on first aid in coal mines. The novel is "Hatter's Castle."

James Brodie is the hatter, and the castle is the eccentric and pretentious house that he builds for himself in a Scottish provincial town in the 'seventies. He is a man of huge body and infinitesimal mind, having room in it for only one idea, his own importance. Consequently he becomes a domestic tyrant of terrifying brutality, sacrificing his wife, his mother, and his two daughters to his own vanity. The collapse, first financial and moral, of this colossal ego is unfolded by Dr. Cronin in a series of detail that calls for surprisingly wide observation of industrial Scotland and his experience of life. The fearful end, however, who committed the crime, tolerable slave-vanity, rather than that is his aim of the story.