

THE BOOKMAN



January, 1920

**LITERATURE FROM THE LECTURE
PLATFORM**

Richard Burton

PERSONAL DETAILS

P. G. Wodehouse

**CURRENT TASTE IN FICTION:
A QUARTERLY SURVEY**

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THE ART OF THE NOVEL

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MR. VANITY FAIR

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Archie Austin Coates—The Londoner; A Shelf of New
Books; Bookman's Monthly Score; Gossip Shop*

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ending variety are a source of enjoyment to the artistic eye, Mr. Robinson's photographs offer a stimulus which, as the toastmaster says, needs no introduction.

Old New England Doorways. By Albert G. Robinson. Charles Scribner's Sons.

"IT IS OF LINDA"

By James Brach Cabell

TO make a clean breast of it, Mr. Hergesheimer's latest novel, "Linda Condon", is to be valued less as the life-history of a woman than as the depiction—curt, incisive, and yet pitying—of a shrine which, however transiently, was hallowed. At the exacting workaday pursuit of being a human being, this Linda fails, fails chilled and wistful. For she has, like more of us than dare proclaim the defect, no talent whatever for heart-felt living, so that most persons seem but to pass grayly upon the horizon of her consciousness, like unintelligible wraiths gesticulating,—and always remaining, somehow, disjunct and not gravely important,—the while that all the needs and obligations of one's corporal life must be discharged with an ever-present sense of their queer triviality. And toward nobody, neither toward Linda Condon's mother nor lover nor husband nor children, may she, the real Linda, quite entertain any sense of actual attachment, far less of intimacy. . . .

Meanwhile she has her loveliness, not of character or mind, but a loan of surpassing physical beauty. And to Linda Condon her own bright, moving carcass becomes a thing to be tended and preserved religiously, because beauty is divine, and she herself is estimable, if at all, as the fane

which beauty briefly inhabits. . . . And by and by, under time's handling, her comeliness is shriveled, and her lovers are turned to valueless dust: but first, has Linda's lost young beauty been the buried sculptor's inspiration, and it has been perpetuated in everlasting bronze. The perfection of Linda Condon's youth is never to perish, and is not ever to be dulled by old age or corrupted in death. She comprehends this as she passes out of the story, a faded, desolate and insignificant bit of rubbish, contented to know that the one thing which really meant much to her is, as if by a miracle, preserved inviolate. . . .

Beauty is divine; a power superior and even elfinly inimical to all human moralities and rules of thumb, and a divinity which must unflinchingly be served: that, in this book as always, is Mr. Hergesheimer's text. For this is the divinity which he, too, serves unflinchingly, and with consummate evocations, in striving to write perfectly of beautiful happenings.

It is an ideal here approached even more nobly than in the preceding Hergesheimer books. Nowhere has Joseph Hergesheimer found an arena more nicely suited to the exercise of his most exquisite powers than in this modern tale of *domnei*—of the worship of woman's beauty as, upon the whole, Heaven's finest sample of artistic self-expression, and as, in consequence, the most adequate revelation of God; and as such a symbol, therefore, a thing to be revered above all else that visibly exists, even by its temporary possessor. That last is Mr. Hergesheimer's especial refinement upon a tenet sufficiently venerable to have been nodded over by Troy's gray-bearded councilors when Helen's skirts were rustling by,—and a refinement, too, which would have been re-

pudiated by Helen herself, who, as you may remember, was inclined less elevatedly to regard her own personal appearance as a disaster-provoking nuisance.

Well, and to Linda Condon, also, was beauty a nuisance—"a bitter and luxurious god", that implacably required to be honored with sacrifices of common joys and ties and ruddy interests, but was none the less divine. Sustained by this sole knowledge, she passes out of the story, when youth is over, regarding not very seriously that which is human and ephemeral, even as embodied in her lovers and her children, nor in herself, but rather always turning grave blue eyes toward that which is divine; passes, at once the abandoned sanctuary, the priestess, the postulant and the martyr of that beauty to which fools had once referred as "hers"; passes not as the wreckage of a toy but as an outworn instrument which has helped to further the proud labor of a god; and passes, as all must pass, without any sure comprehension of achievement, but with content. That, really, is "The Happy End."

Linda Condon. By Joseph Hergeshelmer.
Alfred A. Knopf.

A NEW ENGLISH POET

By John Bunker

SEVERAL years ago the present reviewer read in an English magazine, with pleasure to his mind and profit to his soul, a poem entitled "The World's Miser". It was signed "Theodore Maynard" and later was the subject of eulogistic comment by one G. K. Chesterton, who it seems is an English critic of weight. We needed no external witness to its ex-

cellence, however, and thought the poem fine on our own account. The opening lines ran as follows:

A Miser with an eager face
Sees that each roseleaf is in place.

He keeps beneath strong bolts and bars
The piercing beauty of the stars.

The colours of the dying day
He hoards as treasure—well He may!—

And saves with care (lest they be lost)
The dainty diagrams of frost.

And the piece concluded:

He fixes on each wayside stone
A mark to shew it as His Own.

And knows when raindrops fall through air
Whether each single one be there.

That gathered into ponds and brooks
They may become His picture-books.

To shew in every spot and place
The living glory of His face.

Well, of course when a man writes like that it is a fair presumption that he is a poet; and everything that we have since seen of Mr. Maynard's has amply confirmed our original judgment. It was with real pleasure therefore, that we took up the present collection of "Poems", for which as his first American appearance the author has made a thorough winnowing of his previous volumes of English publication—"Laughs and Whiffs of Song" "Drums of Defeat" and "Folly". . . .

One of the things we like about Mr. Maynard is that he is not hysterical about himself or the universe, with the result that one gets from him a sense of ease and quiet mastery and a certain high quality of serenity which is in the best tradition of his art. There is in his work a welcome absence of that feminine, or—which is a far different thing—rather that effeminate note which especially before the war seemed to characterize most of our singers and made the average healthy male at sight of a