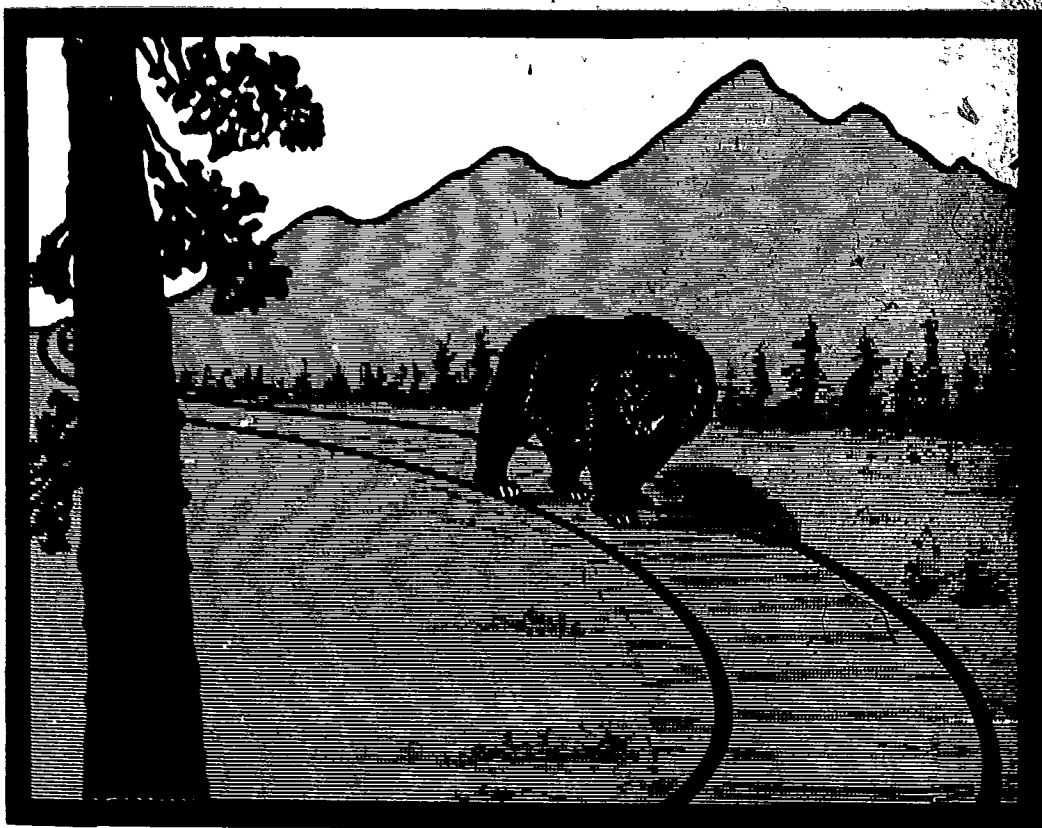


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CURRENT BOOKS

Reviewed by Florence Jackson.

A LONG time ago, a man who is said to have been the wisest man who ever lived, solemnly declared that, "Of making many books there is no end"; and ever since, every man and woman who could be industrious enough to go through the toil, has endeavored to make books—of course, for the express purpose of proving how very wise the wise man's solemn assertion was.

When a reviewer comes to look at the piles of volumes ranged upon his desk (alas! for a neuter pronoun!) he might be pardoned the wish that an end would be to the making of books, especially when an embarrassment of riches is offered, as is the case while the presses all over the country are turning out their contributions to spring's creative impulse. It would, did time and space permit, be interesting to note the chief points in each publication, but that being impossible, it remains for the reviewer to choose only what can be digested as the diner must do, when he has to select from a rich menu a few dishes to satisfy his appetite.

To review a book so widely read as the last work from the pen of Mrs. Humphrey Ward would be somewhat gratuitous, but that the impression made by it upon Western readers may show how extended can be the influence of an unusual handling of an unfortunately common incident in life. It is unnecessary to discuss the point of fairness or unfairness in the author's having chosen a "plot" from a parallel occurrence known to history; fiction must always have a basis of fact, of incident that was, or could have been real, and to weave such inci-

dents into story is not only the right, but the duty of authors who are conscientious in painting life as it is, with perhaps a hope of showing how wrongs that have been done or are allowed, could be righted. The author who is accused of plagiarizing in using such incidents is, therefore, the victim of unjust criticism.

That Mrs. Ward's latest heroine was also the victim of injustice, an injustice the world has ever meted out, when it could, to the offspring of an irregular alliance, is, it would seem, one of the points the writer of *Julie Le Breton's* sad experiences has wished to show. She draws no analogies between Julie's situation and that of many a natural son or daughter of noted persons whose children have become the founders of great houses. We dispute the statement made by Hamilton W. Mabie, that "No woman whose moral standards were primarily conventional could have understood the temperament of Julie Le Breton," as many women, whose standard of convention is most rigid, will declare with us when they read "*Lady Rose's Daughter*." If Mr. Mabie means that narrow, uncharitable natures will not understand Julie, we agree with him, and with Mr. Henry M. Alden's judgment that she is "the most appealing type of heroine in all fiction," that is, if these words mean that the helplessness of Julie's circumstances, her being thrown—with all inherited and trained inclinations for the social class of her parents—a nameless creature among people who were her own kith and kin, and being singularly alone and desolate, makes her "an appealing type." Mrs. Ward has herself pointed out the only natures that can show

sympathy for such a storm-tossed creature—those that belong to "children of feeling allied in this, however different in intelligence and philosophy." But, except for her misfortunes, Julie, like most of Mrs. Ward's heroines, makes no place in the reader's affections. The author's approval of a character is indicated, and though the character does not always seem to vindicate that judgment, one must accept the estimate if liking is to be felt. It is, in fact, for Mrs. Ward's minor characters that the warmest sense of comradeship is generally awakened, so that in this book we are glad to come face to face with the most pleasing masculine personalities yet drawn by the author, who excels in painting elderly literary men and diplomats rather than heroes. As usual with this writer's books, the element of mysticism, which holds a place among the influences upon nearly every life, is supplied, this time by a man who seems "too good for human nature's daily food," if not for Julie, whose strength in the end becomes her weakness. Rather it would seem that the author in order to make a happy ending to a strenuous tale, has sacrificed not only art but truth to human nature, and makes Julie again a victim of injustice by implying her forgetfulness of a profound and tragic love, in a sentimental regard for a man with a title; her struggle to resign the title showing how much it really weighed with her. It should have taken more than one chapter, however long, and more than a few weeks in time, to show the development, in so intense a nature, of an affection that could be sincere enough to succeed that first regard, misplaced though it was, and the figure drawn on histrionic if not heroic lines, it pitably foreshortened.

And this brings to mind the incongruousness of the illustrations, which, fine in themselves, are quite

out of focus for this book, since there is not a British nor even a French face or form among them.

Yet the figures in the story stand out in that positive way that compels attention to real things. We may be glad that Julie was modeled after a real being instead of a lay figure, such as must have posed for Lucy.

"*Lady Rose's Daughter*," by Mrs. Humphrey Ward. Harper & Bros., New York. Price, \$1.50.

In her very preface Mrs. Van Vorst shows that the great subject she has started out to handle is, with all her sympathy, not understood even by herself. For she writes:

"It is evident in order to render practical aid to this class, we must live among them, understand their needs, acquaint ourselves with their desires * * * put ourselves in their environments, etc.," and in the beginning she makes the inseparable barrier—We—They. We on the one side, they on the other, and while she admits the need of comprehending the class she sees needs help, she gives no hint of the need this class has of comprehending in their turn that which would help. It is another case of the relation of the citizen to the laborer. The searcher after light has not been one of those belonging to the life lived, and is therefore incapacitated from finding the real solution of the difficulty, and that solution will never be proved to be other than the absorption of one in the other, the interests of all being similar, until the poor can fully comprehend and sympathize with the joys of the rich (and with their perplexities), just as much as the rich do with the poor. This is plainly impossible. Two themes, two aims only, has human nature ever been capable of bestowing alike on all grades of intellect and of position, the love of family, the love of country. "A moment gone in the service of

the pickle company." This is a false and unfair way of regarding the time given to work. The moment is gone to each worker in fulfilling an obligation assumed which, at the same time, brings to that worker the return expected—the wherewithal to live, and better than that, if they will but see it, the opportunity to not only live themselves, but to help many others to an enjoyment in something, aye—grim humor, maybe—if only in sour pickles.

The book cannot be a guide for the "classes," for it is written with the morbid impression made on the inexperienced by the unusual; it does not even show the morbid feelings of the actual laborer. The despair the writer found in the life was that it seemed, to one not before confined to hours, so filled with work as to leave no time for play; yet the real working girl found time for diversion and is criticised therefore, because she would take half a loaf when she couldn't get a whole one.

The work will have the dramatic effect of things done in an unusual way, and while it takes more hold upon the reader than would an appeal made by real working girls, we may hope that it will accomplish its end by making many think of conditions that could be bettered and make an effort towards their betterment.

"The Woman Who Toils," by

Mrs. John Van Vorst and Marie Van Vorst. Doubleday, Page & Co. New York. Price \$1.50.

A good book for the Science of the hour of thought is Dr. the Spirit. Bradford's "The Ascent of the Soul." The author declares his work is in no way a new one, but is that of one "whose whole time is devoted to dealing with the inner life," that "while one class of scientists are seeking to explore the physical universe, another class, with equal care, are studying the human spirit, and already startling discoveries have been made." Under "The Austere," he asks: "What has made the average of human life so much longer than it was formerly?" And under "Hindrances," he questions, "What should be the attitude of the soul in view of the hindrances by which it is environed?" "The inseparable companion" of man—his own soul—must be a thing of freedom, although bound by a type of law, and perfectness is the aim reached for in all aspirations. The captions of the ten chapters indicate the trend of ideas in the following pages, and an introduction to each is an appropriate selection from English and American poets, the last being from "The Crystal" of Sidney Lanier.

"The Ascent of the Soul," by Armory H. Bradford, D. D. The Outlook Company, Publishers, New York. Price, \$1.25.

EDITORIAL DIGEST

What this Number Means.

WHILE this Magazine always aims to make prominent the interests of the West, the present number offers an unusual list of subjects bearing on Pacific Coast life, and the authors who have contributed to it have been especially happy in choosing topics on which to write from wide-

ly separated points of view. To the lover of nature and of sport, the Lake Region of the Northwest invites enthusiastic attention, and in these pages they will learn of the rich returns it gives to the tourist and angler of its wonderful history and enchanting legends. From the weird folk lore of the Indians, the