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# BOOKS *and* WRITERS - - - *by* Grace Norman Tuttle

**MANTRAP.**

THE spectacular success which Sinclair Lewis made with "Main Street" and "Babbitt" gave him a reputation which he will have difficulty in retaining with books like "Mantrap." Not that he departs from his custom of creating something unusual. He does give you a surprise in the denouement and leaves you guessing too. But you will quarrel with the publisher's blurb that the "principal characters, a trader, a tenderfoot and a girl, are as real and poignant as George F. Babbitt and Carol Kennicott." You will admit that they are real, but a strange assertment, and "the girl," Alverna, is a cheap, worldly creature.

A trader, a tenderfoot and girl. That tells you that the situation is another one brought about by triangular complications. The tenderfoot, Ralph Prescott, a bachelor-lawyer of New York City, has been petted and spoiled all his life by an adoring mother. At the age of 40 he prefers the memory of his mother to fascinating romance incident to affairs with eligible young women, and avoids association with them. He is the conservative, well-dressed, eye-glassed professional type of man with whom nearly everyone is familiar. He is the sort with whom the elemental forces of nature play havoc when once they are given half a chance.

In the 1920's his nerves get to jangling. The occasion has arrived for sardonic nature to get in her work. At the golf club one day in early spring he meets E. Wesson Woodbury. Woodbury is salesmanager of the Twinkletoe Stocking Company. He is an insufferable egotist, but succeeds in enveloping himself with a buffer cordality that deceives Ralph Prescott, sharp though he is said to be. Prescott and Woodbury start off for a few weeks of fishing in the woods of northern Canada.

Before the journey, made by rail, canoe and portage, is completed, Prescott discovers Woodbury's real, disagreeable disposition. Prescott retains his courteous New York manner, but when they meet Joe Baxter, Prescott knows that he cannot endure Woodbury longer. So he goes home with Joe.

Joe is a fur trader from the Lac Qui Reve country. He "fell" for a manicurist when on a sojourn in Minneapolis. Middle-aged though he was he had persuaded Alverna of the fair, bobbed head to marry him and accompany him to the cabin in the woods.

Alverna is a girl of strange antithetical characteristics. She is polygamous by nature, she is also domestic-minded. Though she flirts outrageously with all the men who come near her she keeps her house neat, makes her own dresses and out of tin cans serves meals that are the marvel of the small settlement. But she would betray any man. It is her nature.

That she should leave her Joe is only to be expected. He leaves and John Prescott, therefore irreproachable, but whose previous upright life becomes as naught. They are overtaken by a pursuing husband, who comes for the purpose of saving Prescott, his new friend, not Alverna. There is a friendly colloquy, and the men decide to wash their hands of the woman.

Now, what happens to Woodbury? Sinclair Lewis does not tell you. What happens to Joe? Does he go to Alverna again after he sees that Prescott is safely on his way to New York? Has Prescott any regrets? These are questions which you must answer for yourself. The ending is inconclusive.

Someone has asked whether or not Sinclair Lewis is not writing too many books. On the face of things, the majority would no doubt make an affirmative reply. A superficial reading of "Mantrap" reveals nothing beyond a few unarresting descriptions of scenery, a cheap manicurist, who was bad besides, a few coarse men of the frontier, several greasy Indian guides, a fur trader who is a failure, a salesmanager who is a bluff, and a conservative, highly respectable professional man of New York City. But how did the man from the center of civilization differ in conduct and morals from the men and women from other environments?

"Mantrap" is a Harcourt, Brace & Company publication.

**HALIDE EDIB.**

THE personal importance of Halide Edib makes her autobiography one of extraordinary interest. The overturning of thrones has been of no mere consequence than the revolt of Halide Edib against the barbarism of certain Turkish customs.

Halide Edib, being the daughter of a famous and politically powerful family, was partly educated by English governesses. Her contact with social liberties of the West, together with the forces of an inquiring mind, made her a Liberal of influence. She was the first woman to discard the veil. It is now historic that under Kemal Pasha she organized the first Turkish department of education and served as its first minister. During Kemal's warfare against the Greeks she enlisted as a sergeant in the army, and fought many desperate battles. She fought in the battle of Sakaria, in which there were 22 days of unremittent fighting.

Halide Edib's father was one of the palace secretaries to Abdul Hamid II, the tyrant. In later years, Halide and her husband were identified with the political party which overthrew Hamid, and Halide and her two small sons were obliged to flee to Egypt. When it was possible she returned to Turkey to teach the Turkish people.

Halide Edib's memoirs, published by the Century Company, is told with the narrative skill of a novelist. In fact, Halide is a novelist. She is also a thinker and a politician. Her autobiography is the story of her childhood and womanhood and likewise a story of modern Turkey from the days of Abdul through the revolution of 1908 and the Great War. The personal part of the narrative is a charming picture of Turkish home life. Life in her father's house, where there was more than one wife, was difficult.

The works of Shakespeare exerted a strong influence on Halide Edib. She speaks of the wild harmony in his Anglo-Saxon diction. Of him she says:

"He made me feel clearly that there is such a thing as a difference between man and woman in art, in religion, and in all forms of culture. I cannot say that one is higher than the other. It depends on the quality of the soule."

As a book, the story told by Halide Edib is fine. In her liberalism, however, she is loyal to her native land. She does not complain of oppression. It was neglect from which she suffered. Despite her (in her) neglect her filial regard is strong. Though Turks are said to be no longer polygamous, for economic reasons and because polygamy has been abolished legally, Halide Edib's father had two wives. Her husband took a second wife and Halide Edib could not prevent it. Her education should be the means to aid her to accomplish much for her country. She has not broken with her war-like countrymen. Why should she? It is Turkey that she wishes to liberate and she knows the Turkish point of view. With the support of hundreds of Turkish women educated as she has been perhaps she may do something to help her country now left to itself.

**MY NEW YORK.**

"MY NEW YORK" could have been called "My Mother," so often does the author, Mabel Osgood Wright, refer to her mother in her story of New York. Mrs. Osgood's story of New York is full of amusing incidents of her youth, when New York was but a friendly village. She remembers the old town as it was in the sixties, the seventies and the eighties. She describes the fashions, the theaters, the city geography and its schools. She tells about its oyster houses and beer; of her first ride on the elevated, a queer, scaresome looking contrivance then.

Mrs. Wright's father was a clergyman. She says that the undertaker furnished the black gloves for both the clergyman and the family physician to wear at funerals. She recalls the "funeral linen," a scarf carefully pleated which was worn over one shoulder and below the other arm, the ends falling from a rosette of black ribbon which held them together. The linen was unpleated and made into pillow slips.

New York was very young in the sixties, she says, as was all America, along lines of artistic staging. So the city was greatly stirred when a play, "The Black Crook," came to town. It had been but a little more than a century since a law forbade all acting in New England.

Mrs. Wright acquired her early schooling in a Knickerbocker school at 1 Fifth avenue. She tells how in the spring young girls of good breeding used to sit on their brownstone front steps in the evening while visiting went on back and forth and their beaux brought them sweets in silver paper bulkets or ice cream from a place opposite Jefferson market. She tells how one was allowed to "walk home with people, male people" sometimes.

This is the real story of a real woman's New York life. Mrs. Wright was born in one of the Rhinelander houses on West Eleventh street. She writes an intimate record of the manners and customs of the metropolis 54 years ago. She knew men of note. Among them were Edwin Arnold, General Custer, the Indian fighter, John Hay, Cyrus Field of Atlantic cable fame, William Cullen Bryant, Edwin Booth and George William Curtis.

A surprising incident of the author's later life, when she met John Masefield at tea, was her recognition of him as the unusual-looking young man whom she had sometimes noticed as he cleaned the brasses and the walk outside a saloon on Greenwich avenue.

"My New York" is a MacMillan publication.

**GUEDALLA DARES TO LAUGH.**

ONE handicraft which is man's peculiar secret, proves his claim to superiority and shows brute creation into respectful silence, is his ability to make gods. Man alone makes gods, says Philip Guedalla, and he makes them on the oddest occasions and from the most unpromising material. But of all the gods which man has ever made, continues Guedalla, the most sinister are those which he makes out of other men. The ironical Philip Guedalla, therefore, gives his new book the title of "Fathers of the Revolution," but sticks his tongue in his cheek as he does it.

Laughing in his sleeve, he opportunely gives us 12 portraits of men of whom some have made gods. Some of them were great men; and some were not. It is principally a matter of geography. The men who made two nations are "fathers" one nation grew before are "fathers of Revolution," though that paternity is farthest from the minds of more than one.

The first father of American Revolution pictured by Guedalla is H. M. King George III. But, how could that be, you ask.

"George's nerve was unimpaired by sagacity; and he succeeded," writes Guedalla. "A more intelligent man would have discarded the attempt." The first "father" was a young, friendless king who set out to govern England and lost America."

The Revolution had a French "father," too, in the person of the dull King Louis XVI. "Undeniably, the king was a little dull. He was never sprightly." He lost the French monarchy.

Lieut. Gen. John Burgoyne has not been numbered with the "Fathers of the Revolution" heretofore, but the brilliant Guedalla makes a god of him also. His defeat when he moved down from Canada toward Albany was one of the decisive battles of the world. An unsuccessful general, yet he fathered the new nation. Lord Cornwallis was another "father." The surrender of Burgoyne [illegible] to lost the war and found the United States.

And after presenting those European "fathers" the biographer proceeds to draw remarkably clear pictures of the American "fathers," Washington, Franklin, Samuel Adams, Alexander Hamilton. Alexander Hamilton was a "sublime clerk." One can almost say that the United States were the product of his bookkeeping. Yet even clerks may sometimes preface the way for futurity. Such outstanding qualities as Hamilton's ability as an accountant are seized upon with glee by Guedalla. With Samuel Adams it is a "quaver" in his voice. Lord North, a "father" too, speaks in jerks. He left the war to the soldiers; the soldiers failed.

Strictly speaking, Mr. Guedalla is not writing history. He gives no statistics. He does write biographical essays that have a great appeal to readers who are curious about personalities, and who do not care much for ideas in the abstract. He makes the past real because he has the ability to eliminate time. He is an excellent craftsman. Mr. Guedalla's book is published by Putnam's.

**THE SILVER FOREST.**

A MYSTERY story, "The Silver Forest," which ran as a serial in The Saturday Evening Post, appears in book form now. The author, Ben Ames Williams, chose a hunting lodge in the silvery Maine woods as his setting.

Seven New Yorkers snowed in for several days began to get on each other's nerves. They began quarrelling. Then in the middle of the night a murder was committed. The murdered man was Wardle, a self-invited, tactless, disagreeable guest. No one liked him. But which one of the other six fired the shot that silenced him? The mystery is solved by one of the six, Coxon, hunter and guide.

**WINNOWED WISDOM.**

"WINNOWED WISDOM" is Stephen Leacock's new book of humor. In this volume he considers the foibles and follies of 1925-1926. European tourists, English visitors to our shores, the modern steam laundry versus the old-fashioned washerwoman, a daring recipe for dandelion wine, a new set of popular proverbs. It is his vein of caustic irony which has gained for him the title of the Canadian Mark Twain. The New York Times submits that Stephen Leacock is the Charlie Chaplin of letters. So if you laugh with Charlie Chaplin on the films you will laugh with Leacock as you read the printed page of "Winnowed Wisdom."

**JAZZ.**

"JAZZ," is Paul Whiteman's autobiography. He tells the complete, fascinating story of jazz and describes his early struggles to master the new music. He tells how he was discharged from one orchestra as incompetent, how he was put out of one boarding house after another as a disturber of the peace for practicing jazz on a saxophone.

Whiteman is convinced that in jazz America had the beginnings of its own national movement in music. He says also that it is a relief to be able to prove that he did not invent jazz. He took it where he found it, and he expresses the wish that "preachers and club lady uplifters" wouldn't concentrate on him. He declares: "All I did was to orchestrate jazz. If I had not done it somebody else would have. The time was ripe for that. Conditions produce men, not men the conditions."

**BOOK FORECAST.**

"THE SILVER SPOON," by John Galsworth, July 5. Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

"Porella," by William J. Locke.

**AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER FICTION.**

"Labela," by A. Hamilton Gibbs, Little Brown & Company, publishers.

"Portia Marries," by Jeanette Phillips Gibbs.

"Walls of Glass," by Larry Barretto.

"Into the Void," by Florence Converse.

"Oklahoma," by Courtney Ryley Cooper.

"Ways of Escape," by Noel Ferrest.

"Saviors of Society," by Stephen McKenna.

"The Bright Face of Danger," by Clifford M. Sublette.

"Highroads of Peril," by Alfred H. Hill.

**NON-FICTION FOR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER.**

"Beyond the Bosphorus," by Lady Dorothy Mills.

"A Primitive Arcadia," by Ella Silas.

"Rambles in North Africa," by Albert Wilson.

**BOOKS RECEIVED.**

"Spanish Faith," by Francis R. Bellamy; Harper & Brothers, publishers.

"The Wondering Moon," by George Weston; Dodd, Mead & Company, publishers.

"The Cartwright Gardens Murder," by J. Jefferson Farjeon; Alfred A. Knopf, publisher.

"Best Love Stories of 1925," edited by Muriel Miller Humphrey; Small, Maynard & Company, publishers.

"The Silver Stallion," by James Branch Cabell; Robert M. McBride Company, publishers.

"Torrents of Spring," by Ernest Hemingway; Scribners, publishers.

"Rancling With Roosevelt," by L. A. Lang; J. B. Lippincott, publisher.

**BEST SELLERS.**

Cromer-Cassel's reports the following as the best sellers of the week:

"Afternoon"—Susan Ertz.

"Gentlemen Prefer Blondes"—Anita Loos.

"The Blue Window"—Temple Bailey.

"The Prodigals of Monte Carlo"—E. Phillips Oppenheim.

"Pig Iron"—Charles D. Norris.

"The Red Ledger"—Frank L. Packard.

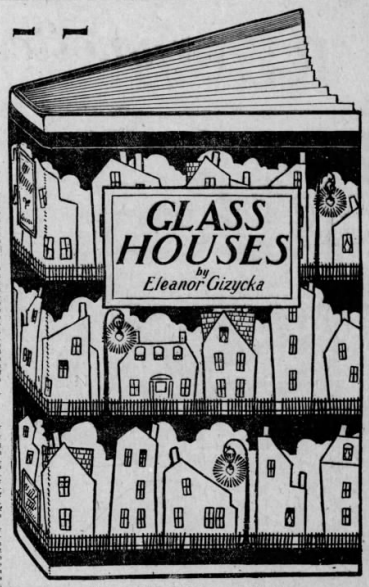
"Mantrap"—Sinclair Lewis.

"The Man Nobody Knows"—Bruce Barton.

George A. Dorsey, author of "Why We Behave Like Human Beings," as he looks to the famous artist, Joseph Cummings Chase. Mr. Chase recently completed this portrait.

Magdalen King-Hall under the pen name of Cleone Knox has written, "The Diary of a Young Lady of Fashion." D. Appleton & Company of New York, publisher.

Francis Bellamy, whose latest novel, "Spanish Faith," has just been published by Harper & Brothers.

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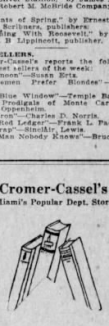

"Mantrap"
$2. 'A trader, a tenderfoot, a girl'—A cracking story—read it! by Sinclair Lewis.

"The Man Nobody Knows"
$2.50. A new story of the Christ, by Bruce Barton.

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