

He was not only a poet but a citizen. His civic pride was heroic, his friendships as loyal as they were inclusive and special, his kindness limitless whether expressed toward hopeless, helpless, spiritless age or to a toddling baby. He was optimistic from his cradle to his grave, believing that the happiest way is the best one and that the path to Heaven leads from happiness oftener than through suffering or wrong. In a sermon he wrote while a lad there is expressed an oddly arranged opinion that is felt upon almost every page of Wilson's account of his ways: "O, it is indeed hard for sinners to go down to perdition over all the obstacles God has placed in their way." His drollery has had few rivals and his humor none, because none is comparable to it. This volume relates the processes and progress of his literary and glimpses of his social life; but the greatest amazement and admiration of the reader falls about his versatility of expression and emotion. That his life ended so early the reading world grieves; in that it will never end as long as children are with us and tenderness and laughter enriches, he will live on and on.

Stockton has taken a new path. It was thought by the most hopeful of his many admirers that he had trodden all the droll ways there were; but *The Girl at Colhurst* is an original one and one that is delightfully domestic. Its conspiracies are formulated in the kitchen, though not by ignorant housemaids; they originate in those who were in and out of the range of the spit and the bake-oven. To say this might turn readers away from most storytellers, but not from Stockton. His elderly managing maiden heroine is a curiosity. She may be a trifle craven in her methods but not in her purposes. But the plans of mice and men, as everybody knows, miscarry now and then, and why not the intriguing of a spinster whose diplomacy is met and parried by several cooks? And how nobly the spinster planned and hoped.

T. R. Sullivan has few equals as a storyteller. There are seven tales in *Ars et Vita*, and some of them allure one to a second reading—the highest possible praise. Here and there their atmosphere is unreal, but it is sanely ideal. The stories are, however, possible and even probable. They are unconventional and remind their readers of nothing before set down in types, and on this account their originality is delightfully fresh. Their pivotal turns surprise, but they are not displeasing—a quality that brings rare satisfaction to satiated novel-readers. A clean and sweet simplicity pervades the life of *The Phantom Governess* and the heroic dreams of the lad hero in *The Madonna That Is Childless*. This Madonna is a heroic unfinished or rather an unglazed figure, by Andrea della Robbia, built into the court yard wall of the little church of *Fratt*, at Barga. A lightning-stroke destroyed the child that was once in her arms. Other stories are equally worthy of the reader's sympathy and admiration.

Interesting in material, delightful in ways of narrating has been each of Mémie Muriel Dowie's books, whether or not their sentiments were approved. Her latest, *The Crook of the Bough*, is worthy of the most comprehensive analysis of all women who study themselves by the search-lights of to-day. Whether to be friends, comrades and helpers of men or hold the sceptres of destruction over them is left for women to choose. The heroine of this story tried both rôles and how she "arrived," to use a convenient modern expression, readers will learn by this witty social and political account of all the psychological changes possible. The condition of Turkey, why it is, what it is and what its young men secretly hope for it is told with a brilliancy, a verve and a knowledge that is illuminating and enlightening. Its author is really Mrs. Henry Norman—still keeping her maiden name for her pen.

From D. Appleton and Company, New York:

*The Standard Bearer*, by S. R. Crockett.

*The Incidental Bishop*, by Grant Allen.

*The Lake of Wine*, by Bernard Capes.

*Torn Sails*, by Allen Raine.

To understand how liberal and gentle are present religious beliefs and how intelligent is modern dogma one should read Crockett's last story, *The Standard Bearer*. Cameronians and Covenanters were alike believers, each in his own way, even to death by slaughter, by hunger, by cruel anxieties and by other horrible processes. Sincerity in all things, from words to conduct, made life simple but not too agreeable in the times, when both Hill folk and the Lowlanders shed martyr's blood. The story is ingenious and easily believed to be historic. Its love romance is fascinating, and its romances of heroism under King James and his son-in-law William of Orange equally so. The dialect is not difficult; indeed, it lends a piquant charm to the

stern speech of men and women who under stress of persecutions appeared not to know laughter in their own lives but who, as Crockett tells their stories, provide it for readers; the quaintness make the pathos tolerable. Ecclesiastic vituperation in those days was held to be testimony for truth and zeal and evidence of a definite knowledge of Scriptural language. Our nerves are too tender to endure it to-day, except it be cooled by types and printer's ink.

One of the most absorbing of Appleton's Town and Country Library publications is *The Incidental Bishop*. The plot is a simple one, with complicated issues reaching from South Sea slave-capturing to a Dorchester cathedral. An inordinate veneration for church ceremonials nagged by an over-morbid and active conscience is material which no one could handle more skillfully than Grant Allen. Its elements for tragedy have many uncommon accessories, and its drolleries, while not unchurchly except when depicted by the Bishop's daughter—the most winsome person in the story—are delightfully possible. Allen hints in a broad manner that the way of conscience, when it holds both whip and spur, leads on to foolishness and misery. His indirect suggestion is, to humans, to use a check-rein and keep the eyes of commonsense wide open.

*The Lake of Wine*, by Bernard Capes, is a strange story. It is placed a hundred years ago, and its stirring events upon Hampshire Downs are so out of sympathy with the fine civilization of England to-day, even in its loneliest swales, that the tale, with its bogies, its mysteries and stilted speech, its easy life-taking and its loyal life-giving is a fanciful romance—doubleless with threads of historic fact to tie it together. It is obviously a work wrought out by a sturdy and lively imagination, but all the more enthralling because of its seeming impossibilities. It grips its readers with a powerful clutch and lets them go only when "*The Lake of Wine*," a superb ruby, is recovered. The psychological phases of its hero's love affairs are ruled sometimes by natural and sensible impulses and intelligence and sometimes by traditional demands for fine manners and delicate setting. While discovering which rules in the end, the reader will be held in thrilled bondage.

Love is a tragedy to Welsh folk, even if it be not crossed. Its intensity is born of its speechlessness and a wordless imagination. *Torn Sails*, by Allen Raine, is a tale of a Welsh village, where simplicity, honesty and industry, with what another people would call poverty, includes dramatic elements of the fiercest sort. Its seclusion upon the fretted projections of the cliffs tend to those intermarriages which prolong ailments in families; and such tendencies, of course, increase capacities for physical and mental sufferings that are as silent as its loves and hates. It is an interesting, sombre story that Raine, evidently a Welshman himself, tells with many Welsh terms and sentences that are explained by foot notes. Wales is growing in interest and this tale will add to it.

From J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia:

*A Desert Drama*, by A. Conan Doyle.

*My Pretty Jane*, by Ellie Adelaide Rowlands.

Those who are devoted to Conan Doyle, and thousands are, will enjoy his last story, which he explains as *The Tragedy of the Korosko*. It may be an interesting story to such, but it has no reasonableness. To read of the "awfulness" of the experiences of a small party of tourists from New England and Old England, from France and Italy upon the small steamer sailing the Nubian Nile and their sufferings afterward on the Libyan Desert, affects a reader as does the apparent swallowing of a sword by a fakir, when the on-looker knows that it disappeared behind the front folds of his robe. One can neither shudder at butcheries by the Dervishes nor feel reverent at the reading of Scriptural thanks because some of them were left alive. Doyle can do better than this, and may he do it shortly to compel his admirers to forget *A Desert Drama* and the woman from Boston who strove to reform every town she passed through.

A novel of love, ambition, hatred, social revenges, remorse and interludes of happiness is *My Pretty Jane*. It has no plot, but drifts on as evenly and naturally as such comments are apt to do when interlarded. It is, of course, rich in sentiment, not to say sentimentality, when its emotions become a rising and overflowing tide. How imaginative girls and young men who are in love, or imagine they are, will enjoy it! Other readers will be inclined to skip whole pages devoted to "feelings." *Pretty Jane* is a dear and, in a way, her two dogs are dears. They provide convenient opportunities for by-play and events, poetic and sweetly domestic. The story is clean and by no means unwholesome, albeit too introspective.