

Mr. Dawson has Kipling's absolute certainty of touch; he has also a splendid vigour of description that is all his own; and he alternates with a perfect sense of what the theme requires, from the easy, yet effective colloquialism of a born story-teller, to the noble, fiery, splendid diction that so well befits the strange and gorgeous Orientalism that gives a background and an atmosphere to what he has revealed. To our mind this book is distinctly one of the most important volumes of the year. It is brilliant. It is fascinating. It is original. It ought to be read by every one who, amid the flood of books that come pouring from the presses of two continents, desires to find a single one that can create in even the most jaded mind a new sensation and an unforced admiration.

Harry Thurston Peck.

## II.

### ANTHONY HOPE'S "QUISANTÉ."\*

Anthony Hope's new novel, *Quisanté*, appropriately takes its title from the man whose character is the pervading and predominating force in the book. *Quisanté* weaves his own plot and causes the results. An author achieves much when he not only surprises but satisfies his public. Anthony Hope has been altogether associated in the reading mind with the clever evanescence of *Dolly Dialogues*, and with that other quality of authorship which is more obvious—the vividly dramatic, keenly active, trenchant depiction which denotes a perfect sense of proportion. This, like the artistic sense and that of humour, is inherent, however far training or scholarship may conduce to perfection. Some will lament that Anthony Hope has changed his style. *Quisanté* does not denote an actual change of style, but an intellectual maturity, a result of mental receptivity, and a growth of talent; all of which are far more indicative of great possibilities than would have been evinced by the further sustenance of a younger, if attractive, literary manner.

There are certain of Anthony Hope's

earlier stories which may be rather valueless; but a critic will mark the fluctuating line of development from his first work to this last novel, *Quisanté*, as psychologically significant of the working of possibilities toward their line of least resistance.

*The Prisoner of Zenda* showed an unconscious mastery of stage-craft, and was an unusual example of persuasive story telling; in that, while its colour and movement were cajoling the reason, its impossibilities were subtly convincing the imagination. The colour-loving, action-loving imagination finds so limited a playground in the many metaphysical and purposeful novels, that it revelled in *The Prisoner of Zenda*. But it could not be blinded by the theatrical sequel, *Rupert of Hentzau*, which was insincere at its basic point—that of the sending of a compromising letter from Queen Flavia to Rudolf.

The scene of *Quisanté* is laid in English social and political circles of to-day; but other than in a few allusions to local politics, it is quite as interesting to an American as to an English reader, for *Quisanté's* inordinate ambition and his methods are by no means indigenous to English soil. As impossible as *Quisanté* may appear at the outset, and as difficult of analysis as he really is, his is not the improbable character, but the one seldomest exposed in life. It is the nature which persuades the majority by personal force and magnetic enthusiasm in its dangerously inspired "moments." He moves and muzzles the finer-sighted minority by his sheer inexplicableness and by his propelling force which involves them in spite of themselves.

*Quisanté* baffles every one. He baffles the intellects nearest to him by rising in one of those inspired oratorical "moments" to that which they inwardly believe him not to be. He convinces them in mass and repels them individually. He insists his great results upon others as conclusive justification of the means which attained them. That which they feel to be a dishonourable basis invariably foils denouncement, either through lack of circumstantial evidence or—where the inner circle is concerned—because he is Lady May Gaston's husband.

\**Quisanté*. By Anthony Hope. New York: Frederick A. Stokes and Company. \$1.50.

This peculiar marriage, ill-assorted in

a worldly sense, and the attitudes of Quisanté and his wife to each other, make the story one of absorbing interest. Marchmont, the man whom Lady May might have loved and married, says of Quisanté: "He hasn't the mind of a gentleman." Dick Benyon, who has come under the thrall of that marvellous personality, says that Quisanté invariably rises to the occasion. Lady May herself declares that there is something inhuman in the way others regard him. Before she determines to marry Quisanté, she says to him: "Be yourself. It's worth while." But Quisanté's self-consciousness is of so overpowering a quality that he plays eternally to his audience, even though the audience be himself.

The deliberate revelation of the characters of Quisanté and his wife is very fine. The author employs no unnecessary effects, but develops the story in a direct line of sequence. Quisanté is a gigantic figure, requiring a large perspective. He is cast, therefore, upon a rather neutral background of personalities which are not sufficiently accentuated to foil any effect of his own. Without assertion from the author, and with little or no utterance from Quisanté himself, he looms, preponderates and absorbs. Certain obvious results of his influence go to make the interesting incident of political life; but the subtler question, that of the effect of Quisanté's character, is the profound and psychological point in the book. The results of active or predetermined evil are easy to deduce. But the unconfessed influence of that nature which is not based upon honour, which is unmoral rather than immoral, and how far the proximity of such a nature may affect those who do not partake of like parts, is a grave psychological question. In life every character attracts circumstances, to be controlled or misused according to his strength or weakness. Other beings, moving within that nature's orbit, are necessarily involved, and, in proportion to their powers of resistance, in turn are influenced along certain lines.

This is peculiarly noticeable in the character of Alexander Quisanté. However mistaken and disastrous his marriage may appear, it is, in a manner, fitting. Lady May's ambition is of a unique order. She endures no torture of

disillusion, because she has walked open-eyed into the web. Though agonised, she cannot be surprised on the night when Quisanté stands exposed through the contents of old Foster's note, which she, unknowing, reads aloud to her husband in the presence of their mutual friends.

A silence followed her reading. She knelt by him. . . . Fanny and Jimmy stood without moving, their eyes on her and Quisanté. . . . She walked to the mantelpiece . . . lit a candle and burnt the note in its flame. . . . Suddenly May broke into a laugh.

"Just as well to burn it; it might be misunderstood," said she. . . . And so, pale and smiling, she left her husband to their care.

Lady May Quisanté is not deceived by her husband; she hopes for him; she feels herself irremediably meshed by his less fine sense of honour; she is controlled by his powerful will, even to the point of declaring that she will be no man's if not his; though she has previously acknowledged the possibility of love for Marchmont.

Before her marriage Marchmont says to her: "I feel rather as though he were hurting you by being near you." Long afterward, the scene at dinner, when Lady May lies to defend her husband, is a fine and coherent fulfilment of this prediction.

The suspense of the story, the uncertainty of the reader whether to believe in Quisanté or not, the deliberate disclosure of the truth and the absorbing interest of expectancy are finely sustained. There is no thread in the book crudely left unknotted. The *dénouement* leaves the reader vividly impressed by the vampire-like quality of Quisanté's mind, and convinced that the one who knew him best, without effort or volition, is Aunt Maria Quisanté, who partakes of his own blood, and whose fate is ultimately and consistently allied to his.

Anthony Hope has risen to that careful literary narration which is, of itself, a style, and which gives promise of a reserve of strength and subtlety which should become wholly comparable to that of Henry James, and which may hereafter prove to hold an even finer sense of art's responsibility.

*Virginia Woodward Cloud.*

## III.

## EDEN PHILLPOTTS'S "SONS OF THE MORNING."\*

This book was written by an author whose interests are full-blooded. The substance of the novel, its images and discourse, had, first of all, a living existence in the writer's brain. It was none of it dimly fashioned for effect. A work of which this is true has an undeniable claim upon your time; it is not a mere product of the human machine, it is an expression of the human soul. *Sons of the Morning* has exactly as many faults as Mr. Phillpotts in his present state of development has limitations as an artist, yet the whole outpouring is delightful. It comes straight from the heart of a man.

The mistress of a Devonshire farm is a girl of two and twenty. "Her face betrayed some confusion of characteristics," says the author. "In repose the general effect suggested melancholy, but this expression vanished when her eyes were lighted with laughter or her lips parted in a smile." Then a beholder carried from Honour Endicott "not the impression of her more usual reserve, but the face with its rather untidy black hair, pale brown eyes and bright lips all smile lighted." She is utterly the creature of her moods. A light man loves her, and Honour, not very whole-heartedly, consents to marry Christopher Yeoland. This youth is one who, "succeeding upon several generations of shiftless and impractical ancestors, men of like metal with himself," stands the penniless possessor of exhausted Godleigh. "He lived an open-air life and spun courses of action, quite majestic in their proportions, for the succour and restoration of his property, but the taking of a definite step in any direction seemed beyond his power." Yeoland himself is a palace of brightness, his moods are all sparkling; but the infusion of Yeoland's very personality into the serious moment of the proposal causes faint vestiges of pain to appear in Honour's picture of her happiness. This child-man is not eager to marry her; on the contrary, once in the position of possessor he exhibits per-

fect equanimity before the prospect of an indefinite engagement, and here Chance, not backward, thrusts into the middle of the somewhat anæmic love episode a violently disturbing factor. Myles Stapledon, Honour Endicott's cousin, comes to live at Bear Down. He is a solid man, grave and unhumorous, as prosaically strict in the performance of his duty as Christopher is frisky in the sun. The natures of the two men so exactly complement each other that for Honour the perfect personal equation is therein attained. When she wearies of looking at the world from the outside, and laughing, with Christo, Myles will present a religion of necessity grim and terrible enough to satisfy her most considering mood; when Myles's abiding seriousness begins to bore her, there is the charming companionship of Christopher, a mental atmosphere as sprightly as the hill wind. Here is a pretty pass, in which only a readjustment of the circumstances is necessary to pop the secret out: Honour loves both men; remove the dancing-master from the scene (this is done) and she is wretched with the sober farmer; transport honest Myles and she becomes the unhappy wife of Christo. This is the whole situation first as well as last; mischief was in the bud the day Stapledon came to Bear Down, and the matter is simply developed epically in the form of a tale, until there is nothing more to be told.

The main weakness of the novel must be glaringly apparent. With all the means of an important character-study before himself and the reader, Mr. Phillpotts employs these materials to another end, and the effect of the confusion is loss of power to the result. A fine romance is partially spoiled by the introduction of a promise that sends the reader away on a false scent, for Mr. Phillpotts deceives himself in imagining that he understands his heroine sufficiently to see her through her most peculiar trial. The girl exists for him, but he does not know her well. The two men are better done, but a certain failure with Myles also is apparent. This is how appearances are kept up. There is a blind man in the story in whom the author finds a rarely handy tool—a blind senatorial sage, who thinks for Myles Stapledon and for Honour. Mark Endi-

\*Sons of the Morning. By Eden Phillpotts. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$1.50.