

pursuers, through an exciting series of adventures which take him from North Carolina to Tennessee, stumbles upon a cabin in the woods, where he is sheltered by the Judge—a rather preposterous drunken individual of magnificent language, loud deeds and heroic possibilities. Yet before the fact that he is the boy's grandfather is disclosed, and the Judge, recalled from prodigality, the various protectors of the boy pass through adventures of the most stirring sort which result in solving a mystery very cleverly contrived at the beginning. But the humour and pathos of the old prodigal's life lifts it out of a mere melodramatic story and gives it a quality and tone of rare merit. What is most encouraging is that Mr. Kester has written a "best seller" which really deserves the wide success it will without doubt continue to have, and we should not be surprised if its dramatic possibilities were translated into play form even at the expense of its genuine literary charm.

Griffin Mace.

VII

LEONARD MERRICK'S "CONRAD IN QUEST OF HIS YOUTH"*

You have reached the age of seven and thirty, in the life of the cultivated man the second and perhaps the most vital period of his romance. Youth is still there, and with it the memory of another and remote youth. With Béranger you muse on "Les braves jours qu'on est bien à vingt ans;" with Thackeray you say, "To drain all life's quintessence in an hour, give me the days when I was twenty-one;" with Longfellow you recall "The wharves and the slips, and the sea tides tossing free; and the Spanish sailors with bearded lips, and the beauty and mystery of the ships, and the magic of the sea." It is all so distinct, that earlier youth, and the years have passed so swiftly. In memory it is so easy to recall the old thrills, the old aspirations, the old loves, the old pangs of pleasure and pain. But to seek out those ghosts of the past, and to try to reanimate them—may not that be the mistake? That,

**Conrad in Quest of His Youth.* By Leonard Merrick. New York: Mitchell Kennerley.

in brief, is the story of Conrad Warri-ner in Mr. Leonard Merrick's whimsical and clever book. The Fates have taken him out of England and brought him back at the age of thirty-seven in a position of comfortable affluence. Old recollections thrill within him. He will find again the scenes of his days as an art student on the left bank of the Seine; revivify the old loves of his boyhood; in a word he will go in the quest of his youth.

Now with a beginning like this the rest of the narrative is, in a general way, obvious. The search will bring much disillusion and some compensation. The cousins with whom he romped in his infancy on the shores of Sweetbay, have become conventional Londoners, and having rashly accepted Conrad's invitation to visit him for a time at that watering place, soon find excuses to carry them back to town. Never mind, thinks Warri-ner, there was Mary, that slip of a girl whom I adored when I was twelve years old; I shall find her. After a series of Quixotic adventures he does so; to be confronted with a heavy, simpering, and intolerably vain woman, wearing a vivid silk blouse, and a string of sham pearls, and answering to the name of Mrs. Barchester-Bailey. Then comes to Conrad another memory, a memory of an adventure in Rouen, when he was seventeen, that is curiously and innocently suggestive of an episode in Maupassant's *Notre Cœur*, a memory of Chypre, and of a woman named Joan Adaile. Again he starts in pursuit, this time to find disillusionment in a manner that is somewhat less humiliating. Finally Conrad learns the lesson that the past is irrevocable, that there "is no way back to Rouen," and finds a new life and inspiration in his adventures with a company of stranded strolling players, and in the companionship of a kindred spirit. He makes the great discovery—that a man is young as often as he falls in love. There is charm and much good writing in *Conrad in Quest of his Youth*, which is worth while reading if only for the vivid and whimsically humorous and pathetic picture of the tribulations of the players at Blithepont Pier.

Allen Pratt Savage.

VIII

UPTON SINCLAIR'S "LOVE'S PILGRIMAGE"*

We have no quarrel with Mr. Sinclair for wishing frankness upon all the facts of life and quite agree with him on the mock morality of some silences, but when his method of presenting those facts makes them relatively abnormal and unnatural, we feel a decided objection to his particular use of them. *Love's Pilgrimage* purports to be a page out of life and, no doubt, from strong internal evidence, and recalling his introduction to *Springtime and Harvest*, it has *l'air vécu*; hence as a specialised study of two egos working toward adjustment it may justly claim attention as rather an astonishing study of physical and emotional nakedness written with all the author's well-known fervour. But as an interpretation of the greater problem of living it fails; for though it deals with certain functional disturbances more or less common to all human beings the author unfortunately has asked the reader to look at those facts through the eyes of two hyper-sensitised individuals. In their resultant emotional reactions, consequently, which the author portrays with vividness, the reader is made to feel hideous and repulsive the very things with which Mr. Sinclair most wishes him to be on speaking terms. While a dyspeptic's attitude toward food may be true to life one would not expect him to look at edibles with the same eye as one in good health. Had either Thyrsis or Corydon approached normal healthy manhood and womanhood, the events of their life together, treated no matter how intimately, might have lifted the novel above the level it at present attains; for, on the whole, their series of adventures, however deep-rooted they may be in actuality, as art, makes considerable demands upon the reader's credulity. Mr. Sinclair has never veiled his personal struggles from publicity and hence it is difficult not to believe that the attitude of Thyrsis is his own. Unable to free himself from his hatred of classes, his socialism and his tractarian propensities,

**Love's Pilgrimage*. By Upton Sinclair. New York: Mitchell Kennerley.

Mr. Sinclair does not seem to realise the husband and wife of his novel are punished for their crass stupidity and temperamental limitations: it is not the world which is at fault, as he would have us believe, for even in its smug complacency it merely asks genius to make good its claim of superiority.

Thyrsis possesses all the ear-marks of a genius: his selfish egotism, his mystical moments, his insistence on recognition, his lack of proportion and consciousness of his relentless destiny. Mr. Sinclair throughout has drawn this character with a skill which rivals May Sinclair's *Divine Fire*—a somewhat similar study. The novel deals with the struggle of Thyrsis, a writer precocious in emotion but ignorant in fact—to adapt his life with Corydon, his wife, a morbid, temperamental young woman by all means exceptional. There is nothing normal in their wooing nor in their relations: they face the ordinary facts of their life in a manner as sensational as it is unusual. Their intense imaginations distort the simple facts of sex. Indeed, they begin their married life as brother and sister and proceed to achieve parenthood after a series of most intimate revelations which Mr. Sinclair, in his splendid hatred of sham silence on such subjects, lays bare without the slightest reserve. But if he considers the average person's attitude wrong toward this silence, he has taken means to frighten a sensitive temperament into further reserve, not through his brutal realism alone, but, as has been said, because the events are exposed to us in an abnormal and at times perverted light. After the coming of the child in a scene which recalls quite naturally *La Joie de Vivre*, *Anna Karénina*, and *Esther Waters*, even the further unwashed details of babyhood's hygiene are also put before us.

But it would be unfair, however, to intimate that emphasis alone is placed upon these phases, for the vicissitudes of the literary life, so poignantly presented in George Gissing's *New Grub Street*, are written in Mr. Sinclair's best provocative manner. The incidents of Thyrsis's struggle between what he feels is his inspiration and commercial literary standards, the call of personal freedom