

# THE ATHEIST

BY CALE YOUNG RICE

OVER a scuff of rocks the tide  
Wanders inward far and wide,  
Lifting the sea-weed's sloven hair,  
Filling the pools and foaming there,  
Sighing, sighing everywhere.

Merged are the marshes, merged the sands,  
Save the dunes with pine-tree hands  
Stretching upward toward the sky  
Where the sun, their god, moves high:  
Would I, too, had a god—e'en I!

For the sea is to me but sea,  
And the sky but infinity.  
Tides and times are but some chance  
Born of a primal atom-dance.  
All is but linked Circumstance.

In it there is no Heart—no Soul—  
No illimitable Goal—  
Only wild happenings that wont  
Makes into laws no might can shunt  
From the deep grooves in which they hunt.

Wings of the gull I watch or claws  
Of the cold crab whose strangeness awes;  
Faces of men that feel the force  
Of a hid thing they call life's course:  
It is their hoping or remorse.

Yet it may be that I have missed  
Something that only they who tryst,  
Not with the sequence of events  
But with their viewless Immanence,  
Find and acclaim with spirit-sense.

# SUMMER-TIME FICTION

THE JUNE INSTALMENT

BY FREDERIC TABER COOPER

ALONG with the advent of the straw hat and fluffy parasol, the renewal of interest in bathing-suits and golf sticks, the opening-up of cottages and bungalows, comes the annual revival of the old, vexed question, Is there any distinctive type of summer-time fiction, and if so, what are its characteristics? There is a sort of popular superstition to the effect that there is such a type, and that it differs from other types chiefly in the slightness of its tax upon the brain. Hot-weather reading, it is argued, should demand a minimum of intellectual effort; it should be as light and unsubstantial as a charlotte russe or an ice-cream soda, a mere *soufflé* of words and thoughts, to trick the mental palate into momentary oblivion of breezeless air and baking heat. Indeed, in several recent seasons the publishers themselves have taken this line of reasoning so seriously that the market has been quite flooded with gaudily bound samples of inanity, resplendent with cover designs of gay butterflies of fashion, clad in summer finery of all the blatant hues that modern colour printing makes possible. Hammock Novel was the term coined not many seasons ago to describe this special type of fiction; and many a

popular magazine displayed for its mid-summer fiction number a girl reclining in a hammock, day-dreaming, with eyes half-closed, while the novel she had been reading was usually depicted, with unconscious irony, lying open, cover upwards, in her lap. Its fluffiness had failed to hold her vagrant fancies.

It would be interesting to know whether there really is any ground at all for this idea that an intelligent human brain will respond more readily to an inferior sort of stimulus at a time when all nature conspires to render it difficult for it to respond at all. Ask yourself, ask your friends and acquaintances, whether a book that you or they would scorn as trivial on a rainy evening in December suddenly becomes by some strange alchemy potent to drive off the insomnia of a sultry August afternoon. Of course, you will not find anything of the kind. There are some perverted mental palates which demand the sweetmeats of fiction all the year around, and naturally they demand an intensification of sugar in the days when the woods and the fields and the skies all call out together, "Throw aside your book and come and play!" But most of us look upon summer reading, so far as there is to be any reading at all during vacation days, as an opportunity to run through the books that have been crying out to be read all winter long, and for which there has been no time. Perhaps the book that we enjoyed most of all last July was an autobiography or an art monograph or a volume of literary essays; perhaps a vivid account of Antarctic exploration sent little sympathetic shivers down our back, despite the fact that the thermometer was at that moment registering ninety odd degrees; perhaps, again, we welcomed the chance to read for the tenth,—or was it the eleventh?—time some old, old fa-

\*What Will People Say? By Rupert Hughes. New York: Harper and Brothers. Keeping up Appearances. By Maximilian Foster. New York: D. Appleton and Company.

Idle Wives. By James Oppenheim. New York: The Century Company.

Vandover and the Brute. By Frank Norris. New York: Doubleday, Page and Company.

Carmen and Mr. Dryasdust. By Humfrey Jordan. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The Milky Way. By F. Tennyson Jesse. New York: George H. Doran Company.

Once to Every Man. By Larry Evans. New York: H. K. Fly Company.

The Titan. By Theodore Dreiser. New York: John Lane Company.