

ters aloud, improvising a somewhat livelier and more colloquial dialogue. After that, the book may safely be trusted to make its own way with intelligent youngsters. For mere movie-fed children, it will doubtless never have much appeal. A movie-fed child cannot long remain intelligent.

Our Humble Helpers: The Domestic Animals. By Jean-Henri Fabre, translated by Florence Constable Bicknell. The Century Co.

### WHO BUYS ABANDONED FARMS?

*By Martha Plaisted*

Not the rich, certainly. The very quality of brain which enables the millionaire to get and to hold makes an inhibition against such a leaky investment of time and money. He prefers to limit himself to the economies of his marble mansion.

Nor the poor either. This is due not so much to the slum-dweller's lack of capital—the need for which, the prospectuses assure him, is negligible at the start and can always be realized immediately on the profits of the farm—as to the activities of the philanthropists, who have accustomed him to the pleasant luxuries of the model tenement, where he always has a porcelain bathtub ready in which to keep his winter's supply of coal.

Who, then, buys abandoned farms? I had already suspected the answer before I read Mr. Albert Bigelow Paine's book. It is the author. The first inkling of this truth dawned on me when I myself was seized by the lure of possessing such a place. If Mr. Fogarty had illustrated the catalogue which I so radiantly studied, as he did the "Dwellers in Arcady", I should have capitulated without the formality of a personal investigation.

Unprejudiced by the magic of his fancy, however, I made the tedious journey to Abandoned Land. But after I had glanced at the gat-toothed shoring of the house, at the leprous walls and the oozing well, I knew that the person whose trickle of sustenance depends on juxtaposition to an office desk cannot make common cause with the spit and the crane.

The confirmation of my suspicion about authors came when I accumulated two friends who owned abandoned farms. Both were of the writing guild. I took a few days off to visit them in the halcyon summer season. But something was wrong. Neither of my friends was obviously glad to see me. Jaded and uncommunicative, they allowed me to pick beans in the garden and rake hay in the meadow. I became very hot. They were hot, too. There was no ice to make a cooling drink; there was no hot water for refreshing ablutions. The task of preparing supper after the day's fag went spiritlessly; the subsequent "redding up" more so; and the shadow of tomorrow's canning loomed.

I felt depressed. I wasn't sure then what was the matter, but I see now that these two friends didn't know exactly how to go about things. I shall take pleasure in sending them each a copy of Mr. Paine's book to explain away their difficulties.

Things never went wrong with the author-dweller in Arcady. He moved in a mist of pink and green, purple, gold, and white—according to the season. His wife never became tired or cross or unreasonable. When she needed "help" in the kitchen, he retired to the little study he had fitted up for himself behind the chimney and "wrote"—which produced a maid. When he himself got the "callithumps"

from weeding the asparagus bed in the hot sun, he went behind the chimney—and hired a man. When he needed seeds and more seeds to satisfy his springtime intoxication, when he wanted a furnace, or an automobile, or a trip abroad, or an education for his children, the Monte Cristo cavern always proved adequate.

Perhaps my two friends had neglected to provide themselves with this necessity to success in their life work. In that case I hope with all my heart that they will profit by the simple formula set forth in “Dwellers in Arcady”.

If Mr. Paine is to be accused of applying an inverse method of air-castle architecture in this tale of abandoned bucolic joy, it must be said in fairness that Mr. Fogarty is entirely convincing. Out of the many Americans who put pen to paper for line sketches, Mr. Fogarty emerges for his vigorous, nervous stroke—the stroke of a creative and individual artist. His touch is unmistakable.

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*Dwellers in Arcady.* By Albert Bigelow Paine. Harper and Bros.

## STEPHEN LEACOCK PROPOSES VARIOUS IMPOSSIBILITIES

*By Constance Murray Greene*

Like the sudden thoughts of clever things you might have said but didn't, Stephen Leacock's clevernesses always leave you with a dazed and regretful feeling that if you weren't terribly stupid, you might at least have had a go at them yourself. We have in mind such of his masterpieces as the character study of A, B, and C, which is, so far as we know, the only excursion that those famous arithmetical creations have made into literature. And yet we have all, or most of us, mar-

veled at A's magnificence, remained cold in the face of B's good, plodding ways, and wept for C's general delapidation. We have hated A for the diplomacy with which he invariably secured the cistern without leaks, the bicycle which made innumerable revolutions a second; and sorrowed with C over the sieve-like affairs that served him as cisterns, and the utter depravity of his bicycles; but somehow in the scheme of things it has been left for a professor of political economy to discover the rare fun to be had over this and a thousand other subjects.

“The Hohenzollerns in America and Other Impossibilities” is so timely a volume of humor as to leave us marveling at the good chance which has led less skilful humorists to leave the subject-matter untouched for Mr. Leacock's expert hand. Nothing could be more gratifyingly amusing at this time than that the Kaiser, the Crown Prince, Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, and the rest of the Hohenzollerns should be discovered as immigrants staggering up the steerage gang-plank, their backs bowed down with trunks and boxes and their hands full of bundles. And nothing more fitting than that the once imperial demand, “Let wine be brought; I am faint”, should be met with shouts of laughter and jeers of “Yes, let it” from the crowd.

The immigrant experiences of the German royal family are given in the form of a diary written by the Princess Frederica, niece to the Kaiser, and they follow the moulding of their characters under the hand of fate. Uncle Henry, brother to Wilhelm, finds work on board ship as a common sailor, while Cousin Ferdinand develops a taste for fine clothes and a business career through association