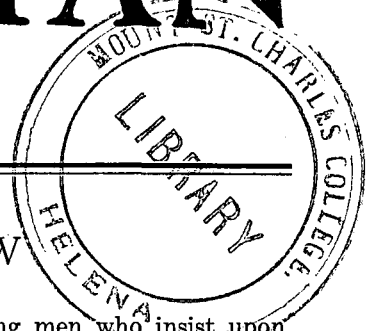


THE BOOKMAN

JOHN FARRAR, *Editor*



THE POINT OF VIEW

PADLOCKING FICTION

There are no books of fiction which a conscientious, law-abiding woman can read in which the characters are not drinking cocktails and smoking cigarettes. And the authors take every opportunity to make fun of prohibition. Prohibition is not funny; it is serious.

THUS a kindly old lady from Dubuque laments current fiction in a recent letter to the New York "Herald-Tribune". She goes on to suggest that it is about time "that the literary minds who believe in the Eighteenth Amendment should undertake the production of decent fiction that a Christian woman can read, instead of the kind in which young girls smoke cigarettes and so-called gentlemen drink whisky and soda". There surely must be, she feels, certain ministers who, "for the good of a great cause, might resign from the ministry and devote their talent to the regeneration of fiction".

What, pray, has she been reading? Perhaps "The Sun Also Rises", "The Red Pavilion", and "Hot Saturday". In these and a growing host of novels she will find all that she complains about, for there arise in our land a

group of young men who insist upon chronicling our epoch, with all its inebriation and iniquity, and they do not hesitate to say that Hettie smoked if it was altogether probable that such a girl as Hettie would smoke. They have found rebellion against prohibition and they have put it down. There is just cause for complaint; the novels of our day are not tracts for prohibition. Neither are they designed to subvert the law. They could, in fact, be viewed as documents revealing the true state of affairs. Whatever the case, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union will have no succor from Isa Glenn or John Gunther.

Of chief importance, however, are the innumerable books which fulfil the requirements of decent fiction. The naughty books are only now appearing; the nice ones have had the stage for years and have, indeed, produced the naughty ones. Is it possible that the lady has never read Harold Bell Wright or Albert Payson Terhune or Ralph Connor or Ethel M. Dell or Horatio Alger, Jr. or Gene Stratton-Porter or Thomas Dixon or Dan Poling? She

has access to countless books which any Christian lady can read with impunity — books in which the violation of the Eighteenth Amendment is not condoned or else does not occur. Among magazines she has an equally extensive gamut to run before she lands among lewd writers. She cites "Harper's" and "Scribner's" as journals which are betraying the faith. But both these magazines are quite exceptional — the former is more or less an innovation in magazine publishing. There is much that is clean today, and there are many who want to read clean fiction. No two people, however, can write precisely alike and there is a growing race of novelists who are tired of water lilies and law enforcement. They write with more or less sincerity, and they find that large audiences await their words. All of which proves nothing save the old fact of difference in taste among writers and readers: The venturesome novelists are not bent upon subverting the Constitution any more than the more sedate novelists are primarily bent upon ushering in the millennium.

DISCOURAGING THE BACHELOR

NEW YORK CITY has more bachelors than any other city in the world. The Y. M. C. A. prepares to remedy this evil. Young men must be driven somehow into the blessed state of matrimony. So, synchronously with the drive of Anne Morgan and her coworkers to erect the world's largest clubhouse for women, the Y. M. C. A. decides that no single man can live within its walls for more than a year. Cynics might claim that the young women were preparing to flee to the National Woman's Association in order

to escape the overflowing young men from the Y. M. C. A.

As a matter of sober fact, the Y. M. C. A. is pioneering in its recognition that modern city life is doing everything in its power to segregate the sexes, to make less likely the normal bringing together of young men and women. Every development of life seems to be further and further away from an encouragement of matrimony. Most business men will now admit that women are excellent in business; but most big employers prefer single women to married ones. It is practically impossible for a young man of no income except that which he earns to support a wife before he has reached the age of thirty; and what, meanwhile, are to be his associations with the fair sex?

Although the Y. M. C. A. may have brought public attention to a deplorable fact, it is of doubtful value to turn the young men out into cheap rooming houses and other clubs; for granted that the young men will want someone to make a home for them when Mother Y. M. C. A. fails them, where will they find the lonely ladies? Where will they find the money to make the home?

The old fashioned marriage bureau would be an excellent undertaking for the Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C. A., and kindred organizations to establish along with employment bureaus. If the Y. M. C. A. is really interested in the problem of our army of bachelors, why not now attempt to solve it instead of kicking the poor bachelor out the front door and, ten to one, into the arms of a mistress rather than a wife?

INTEGRITY OF PURPOSE

WHAT is a critic — of books — of life? Does a man who poses in such a rôle find at birth or at his major-