

ality, and he knows very well that many of his readers will lick their lips over all this description of luxurious life—and

over the sensuality of some of the scenes as well.

R. D. TOWNSEND.

A Cure of Souls¹

RECENT fiction is so full of "ruthless revelations" and "pitiless portrayals," too often as pitiless toward the reader's sensibilities as toward any character depicted, that it needs all the reassurance of Miss May Sinclair's unfailing art to counteract a certain mild repulsion aroused by the use of both those adjectives in announcing her new novel, "A Cure of Souls." Its first pages banish the last qualm. The atmosphere of Queningford proves to be neither bleak nor thunderous; steeped in its English mellowness, the faults and weaknesses of Canon Chamberlain are revealed minutely, intimately, surely, with cumulative power and effect, but never in repellent starkness.

There are few surprises in the story, few and simple events, not many characters. The piteous devotee, Miss Lambert, given to piety and good works, unable to distinguish earthly emotion from spiritual, innocently misunderstanding her own tragedy to the last, is more fully presented than any of the other women; but the charming Daphne, the strenuous, slangy, clear-sighted Hilda, the pleasant Kitty, and the cozy Molly are all drawn with brilliance and precision. So, too, are the curates, set in bracing contrast with their rector; both good men and true, although one of them, whom another than Canon Chamberlain might have held within the fold of the Church, he allows to slip outside it. The loss does not really disturb him. Poor Jackson was as much too intense as young Cartwright was boisterous and inclined to stir things up; neither really suited his ideal for Queningford. Serenity, tranquillity, as little as might be of hustle and bustle, clubs and classes, of intrusive emotions, of the indecently intimate revelation of souls—that would indeed be the perfect parish of his dreams.

The book is delightful.

Perhaps the spectacle it presents of a clergyman who loves with equally sincere affection espalier peaches, stained-glass windows, deep armchairs, surreptitious French novels, hot buttered scones, gracious women, and conducting service admirably in an ancient and architecturally admirable village church should be, to a right-minded person, too depressing and distressing for pure enjoy-

ment. Perhaps it might be so if Miss Sinclair had been a little less, or more, ruthless; if she had endowed her reverend hero with some few fibers of moral strength, some gleams of honest spiritual aspiration; if she had shown him deteriorating gradually and painfully from finer possibilities. Her portrait of Canon Chamberlain is of a character achieved—finished. He could never in his spoiled boyhood have been more selfish; he could never in a pampered old age become less so; he is what he is so completely and inevitably that it seems natural to accept his characteristics equably, as one does the felinity of cats or the piscatorial quality of fishes. His one deep and genuine conviction is cat-like;

it is of the supreme importance of being comfortable; and no goldfish, nosing some inedible and perturbing object dropped inadvertently into its bowl, could glide away with a swifter and subtler turn of fin than the suave Canon Chamberlain's flexible mind displays in eluding a disagreeable duty. There is fascination in watching him do it.

That such a man should have it in his power selfishly, carelessly, or incompetently to mishandle souls and misdirect lives is of course horrifying; that we feel; that is made abundantly and tragically clear; but the book remains delightful. It is none the less so because, by a final quirk of art which seems almost mischievous, it is provided with a double "happy ending." Canon Chamberlain marries a cherubic widow of large fortune and comfort-loving temperament just matching his own, which is certainly happy for him; and his wise Molly persuades him to give up his living and retire—which assuredly is happy for Queningford. ETHEL PARTON.

The New Books

BIOGRAPHY

GARRULITIES OF AN OCTOGENARIAN EDITOR. By Henry Holt. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. \$4.

No more lively, amusing, impudent book has been published this season. It is autobiography and opinion, and the author talks about everything on earth, and nearly every prominent man of the past fifty years in America. He tells all about Yale, and what's the matter with it, and he speaks of the absolute necessity of wearing an abdominal bandage if you summer on Mount Desert Island. It is garrulous and good fun. Many of the professionally "young" writers sound rather senile in comparison. Listen to this: "In my day the girls went more with their parents' friends, and didn't smoke or swear or show their legs, or ride cross-saddle dressed like boys. But neither did they play tennis or golf, nor row, nor go to college, nor have as natural figures or as good health as they have now; nor did they earn their own living, or know nearly as much as they now do—of both good and evil."

SAYINGS OF QUEEN ELIZABETH (THE). By Frederick Chamberlain. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York. \$4.

A compilation of the sayings of the great Queen, by the author of "The Private Character of Queen Elizabeth." Here we have, briefly, what Elizabeth said about the Church, about war, about her rival, Mary, about other monarchs, about her friends and foes, about marriage in general and her own in particular. These brief *dicta* are classified by

subjects, and one has only to read a few pages to get a fine picture of the high-spirited, self-contradictory, lion-hearted woman. What would one not give to hear her scream out to the Dean of St. Paul's, when he wandered in his discourse: "Leave that alone! To your text, Mr. Dean!" Or to hear her shout to a councilor who had urged the dismissal of other councilors because of their religion, "God's death, villain, I will have thy head!" Or to hear her burst into a torrent of Latin, to rebuke impudence from the Polish Ambassador, drive him from her presence, and then turn with a laugh to her Lords, and say that she had been compelled to "scour up" her old Latin. A fascinating book.

MUSIC, PAINTING, AND OTHER ARTS

ART IN OUR COUNTRY. Handbook. The American Federation of Arts, Washington.

An alphabetical list of cities and towns of the United States, with a brief mention of the works of art in each. It ranges from the cities like Washington and New York, with their dozens of statues and great buildings, to small towns which have, perhaps, one fine old house. The book is not free from errors.

POETRY

PARSONS' PLEASURE. By Christopher Morley. The George H. Doran Company, New York. \$1.75.

Parsons' Pleasure is a bathing pool at Oxford, and its name is used by Mr. Morley as the title for a book of poems. The following poem is quoted, not only for its technique, but for another rea-

¹A Cure of Souls. By May Sinclair. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$2.50.

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son. There are two kinds of obscurity and mystery in poetry: one in which the poet thinks he is mystical when he is merely befuddled; and the other in which the meaning is not absolutely clear because the poem has some of that magic which is the essence of true poetry. This is of the second kind.

OF A PHANTOM

"It fell about the Martinmas," as well as I remember it—

I think it was November; it was after Hallowe'en—

And I sprang up from dreaming, and in my midnight solitude

I found these words: they spoke themselves, to say what I had seen.

She came, so small and shivering: I wondered what had frightened her!

I tightened her in circling arms, and, oh, but she was chill—

She climbed at once to my embrace: I felt her shaken, quivering.

I heard the loud November gust that scoured the window sill.

Blown, lost and maddened in the night—what gales had nearly perished her?

I cherished her, and soothed her close; I clasped her, flesh and bone;

And with a father's tenderness and no emotion carnaller

I held the sorry little corp to warm it at my own.

I saw her not, but somehow guessed the darkened little face of her—

The pitiful small grace of her, so stricken and so wild;

Undisciplined and desperate, a swept November flitterling—

So, in the bedstead of my arms, she slept, a frightened child.

Such was my dream. I have no care to set about debating it:

Translating it so often robs a dream of half its charms.

I just happen to be thinking of a lonely wet November

And a phantom of poor innocence that crept into my arms.

ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

COLLECTED ESSAYS AND PAPERS OF GEORGE SAINTSBURY (THE), 1875-1920. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York. 3 vols. \$12.50.

No critic is more respectable than Mr. Saintsbury. These three volumes discuss English literature from 1780 to 1860, the authors of the Victorian period, and, finally, include some miscellaneous essays upon politics, cookery, and the historical novel. They are all based on sound scholarship; they are all sober, honest, and often heavy. The author claims that he is one of the two surviving Tories; he seldom speaks of the present except with distaste. For him the Amer-

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