

with the unsparing hand of satire? If "David Copperfield" could be rewritten, Little Em'ly would play the lead as a matter of course, since Tess made the "fallen woman" aesthetically popular. "The Green Hat", conceived in Victorian times, would undoubtedly have slated the "darling" Venice for heroine and Iris March for either a dire villainess, a Thackerayan demon, or a lost soul drowned in gushes of pity and fished out for repentance at the end. Alice Adams, a natural soubrette, is Booth Tarkington's only memorable heroine. The popular Leora Tozer of "Arrowsmith" is surely one of the old soubrettes — the touching Dora who held the pens — exalted, with the old

"womanly woman", in the person of Orchid Pickerbaugh, brought low.

Proof that the soubrettes deserve this partial, latter day consideration may be seen in the following list of some of the most interesting or eminent ones, not confined to the pages of fiction but culled hit or miss from the great body of literature:

Nausicaa, Julia Mannerling, Becky Sharp, Nydia the Blind Girl, Topsy, William Baxter's sister Jane, Dolly Varden, Vashti, the red haired girl in "The Light that Failed", Cigarette, all the friends of the Little Colonel, Rebecca the Jewess, Rose Red, Hebe, Lilith, Elaine, Arachne, Annie Ridd and Lizzie Ridd, Tinkerbell, Psyche.

## ADAM

By Edmund Vance Cooke

" . . . she gave me of the Tree and I did eat."  
Gen. III, 12.

"THE woman tempted me and I did eat."  
Aye, and the honest words I still repeat.  
The woman *tempted* me. 'Tis no pretense,  
Nor need I vindication, or defense;  
There is no guilt, Lord God, — nor innocence!

Lord God, I ask You! Why, these beasts can see  
She is a temptress and was meant to be!  
She is the Fruitful One, Lord God, and she  
The Knowledge I have taken from your Tree.

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I take your banishment without demur.  
A fig for Paradise! You but confer  
A hardier Paradise, henceforth, with her,  
My own sweet Temptress—and my comforter.  
And so I say again, for good or ill  
The Woman tempted me — and tempts me still!  
Lord God, I pray You that she ever will!

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DIALECT WRITING

By George Philip Krapp

WHETHER or not there is such a thing as a genuine American dialect, no one can doubt the interest which readers today take in literature written in dialect. A race of dialect enthusiasts has sprung up. Dialect fans cultivate all sorts of exotic lingos, sometimes as earnest philologists, sometimes as anecdotal humorists, and sometimes as professional literary artists. These latter have standardized a number of different dialect patterns by industrious repetition. The devices of language employed by Ring Lardner have acquired a kind of classic dialect quality; and definite Yiddish, Irish, Italian, Negro, and other dialect styles have established themselves so firmly in the public consciousness as to be immediately recognizable when they are seen. All these dialects appear to be immensely interesting to the readers of today. Certainly they lend a variety to writing in America which cannot be paralleled in England. Something in our American circumstances renders us peculiarly susceptible to the dialect character, to the wit, the pathos, even the poetry which is sometimes concealed beneath the garb of uncouth speech.

The first question that occurs to one looking at this exuberant dialect literature is whether it comes up from below, that is, whether it is a reflection and echo of an authentic folk interest in literary expression, or is imposed from above as an ingenious invention of sophisticated literary artists. Undoubtedly the second is the right ex-

planation of its origins. The sporting English of baseball, football, and the ring, the Irish English of Mr. Dooley, the cloak and suit brand of English in "Potash and Perlmutter", the chorus girl and movie English of "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes", the young-man-in-the-street English of Mr. Weaver's idyls, all these are no doubt based upon a certain degree of observation. They have some foundation in reality. But none of them is a reflection of a folk movement in literature. Nor has there ever been any such folk movement in the whole history of American letters. The poems of Burns were written in dialect because the Scottish folk from whom Burns sprang possessed a traditional literature of song and tale composed in an unconventionalized traditional vernacular. Burns did not merely put the dialect into his poems. The dialect impulse and the poetic impulse came to him together as two things already united. On the contrary, Burns's task was to put enough conventional English into his poems to secure their acceptance by a public accustomed to measure all literature by the established literary standards. Very often the conventional phrase strikes a jarring note, and one feels that Burns would have done better if he had avoided more completely the proprieties of eighteenth century diction.

Our modern American dialect writers are exposed to exactly the opposite danger. Their tendency is to season the dish too strongly, to put in the