

## Literature

## A MEXICAN ON HIS COUNTRY.

*The Case of Mexico.* By Rafael de Zayas Enriquez. Translated from the Spanish by André Tridon. New York: Albert and Charles Boni. \$1.35.

The present work is interesting and typical only as an example of ordinary Latin-American political discussion; its value is that of an inspired campaign document. The author shows slight interest in literary style or structure. He opens with a long letter, covering twenty pages of the book, which he addressed from New York to Francisco I. Madero, on December 29, 1911. The inconsistency of his words to President Madero, compared with his expression of opinion in 1914, approaches closely to insincerity. Three years ago he wrote to the successful revolutionist: "You find yourself to-day at the head of the Government, to which position you were elected by a majority of the people to preside over their destinies." In this letter the author writes of Pino Suarez as a man "whom you first had elected Governor of the State of Yucatan." Later, indeed, while treating Madero's San Luis Manifesto, he asserts: "The Mexican nation never supported him personally at the polls nor during the revolution."

Mr. Zayas Enriquez then compares Madero and Porfirio Diaz. Very interesting are the charges which he repeats against the former: that his plans were mainly to stave off the ruin of his family, then heavily involved; and that by the activity of Zapata in the state of Morelos the Madero family were enabled to acquire valuable plantations at ridiculously low prices. In succeeding chapters he records the "bloody ten days," the decision taken by Gen. Huerta and the army, and the fall of Madero. He attempts to prove that the *de facto* government became a government *de jure* according to the Mexican Constitution. In chapter vi the execution of Gustavo Madero, the brother of the deposed President, is passed over without attention, and on the death of Madero and Pino Suarez he quotes Carlos Toro's "Fall of Madero" as saying: "Nobody cared to preserve the lives of those dangerous apostles of violence and anarchy, and their death was considered by their friends and enemies alike as a national necessity. The bitterness, the anger, the feuds so sedulously kept up by these two men ended with them; it was plain common-sense that demanded their extermination." Mr. Zayas Enriquez, however, agrees with the official account, on the ground that anonymous public opinion did not appear in court under a military dictator to support its charges!

In chapter vii the Mexican writer touches on President Wilson and the American point of view. He begins by saying that until recently he thought the President a pure idealist. His conclusions now are, however, that "Machia-velli would have been clay in Wilson's hands, and what is more, that Machia-velli would never have known it." The policy of Gen. Huerta and his *coup d'état* are next justified, and notwithstanding the testimony of history, Mr. Zayas Enriquez gravely affirms that "the Mexican people are not really revolutionary. Madero made them so, and they have remained so."

The characteristic prominence of the army in Latin-American politics, and the fondness of the dictators for invoking Napoleon Bonaparte are set forth in Gen. Huerta's address before his new Legislature, as here quoted, when he stated that "it will always be a high and noble duty, or at least a commendable attitude, to save a nation at the cost of all principles"; and that "the ultimate truth is to be found in that saying of Bonaparte's: 'In saving the country one does not violate any law.'"

Mr. Zayas Enriquez further characterizes President Wilson's attitude towards Huerta as a hostility which seems to be the consequence of a personal dislike rather than a political policy. He examines the various statements and acts of President Wilson in regard to Mexico, and decides that if his desires were carried out by the Mexican Government, "Mexico would have become virtually an American colony." Hasty composition, at least, appears in this work, for in direct contradiction to statements on certain pages, the author writes that the Mexican problem is "nothing more than a conflict between the Wilson Doctrine, successor to the Monroe Doctrine, and the indomitable attitude of Huerta, patterned after the attitude of our immortal patriot, Juarez." He agrees, in conclusion, with Col. George Harvey, who wrote that the sole alternative to a policy which leads only to war is the reversal of President Wilson's policy. The clearest statement of the whole work is that regarding "watchful waiting":

The Honorable Mr. Wilson has only one alternative; either order an armed intervention, a course which he pretends he does not contemplate and which I contend he has neither the right nor the power to resort to; or rely entirely upon diplomatic action. An attitude of watchful waiting does not constitute a solution. It constitutes a real danger; it is, in the last analysis, inaction due to ignorance of whatever action should be taken.

In spite of the attempted impartial treatment of the situation by Mr. Zayas Enriquez, and his advocacy of a reversal of President Wilson's policy, there is material provided in his own book for a

dissenting view. He condemns Madero thus: "Madero was not born to be a leader. Superficial in his judgments, stubborn in his capriciousness, fettered by many superstitions, he was not what is called a personality, he was merely an abnormal type." On the other hand, he acknowledges of Gen. Diaz, who was a "personality" in his sense of the word, that he "sacrificed many victims in order to establish and maintain a political system that would insure peace. A Warsovian peace it was called by many men of unbiassed mind; an educational peace, Diaz called it, for he acknowledged it as the only means of training his fellow-citizens for a life of order and labor." Nevertheless, the Mexicans were not so educated. Madero without result appealed to the ideals of democracy, peace, and harmony as enthusiastically as does Mr. Zayas Enriquez. There is no evidence which would lead one to suppose that, when these two personalities of opposite type have failed to govern the country successfully by either method, another "strong man" will be any more capable of it. Huerta at his best is not likely to approach the strength and efficiency of Porfirio Diaz.

## CURRENT FICTION.

*Garden Oats.* By Alice Herbert. New York: John Lane Co.

This is the second novel of a writer who is, consciously, very modern and clever and sophisticated. "Emancipated" is perhaps the best word available. The whole story is a concrete argument for the equal moral and emotional rights of men and women. Olive Latimer, who tells the story, is not hampered by old-fashioned delicacy in the telling of it. She loves a spade as an epicure loves an onion. "The most complex of us," she says, "may be also the most primitive—only we taste our own primitiveness, roll it, as it were, upon the tongue." And, she might have added, we are eager to share the morsel with others. What she chiefly complains of is the male code which sets women on "an intolerable pedestal of difference," exacts of the adored one a false modesty, a pretended continence.

Adolescence in Olive Latimer involves an awakening of the senses which must be concealed. There are false dawns of passion, and then the real thing comes. But it does not set her free, her lover has a dream of her which she dares not break. She longs to be his mate, and sees that, to be happy, he must worship her as a being above and apart. Marriage does not change their relation. She knows that she has the best part of love, but it does not satisfy her; nor does motherhood. It is "l'amour" she thirsts for, the opportunity to let go, to throw herself away for the sake of one

glorious hour of—the flesh. The opportunity presents itself, and she is saved from yielding fully to it by mere chance. Her eyes are opened, the danger is past; she has an impulse to confess, to expound herself, once for all, to her husband:

"It's no good. He must have his pretty lie!" I said to Mollie.

"Make it a lovely truth!" said Mollie. "Yes, you can."

"I'll try. I swear I'll try; my wild oats are all sown."

Mollie forestalled a twentieth-century wit:

"Be thankful they were only garden oats," she said.

The chief question is whether this kind of crop is worth exposing in the marketplace. The obsolescent male, with his clumsy ideals, turns a shamefaced eye upon it. And we believe that a good many women who are not fools or hypocrites honestly feel, in reading this sort of feminine confession, what Celia felt more lightly when Rosalind's wit carried her beyond bounds: "You have simply misused our sex in your love-prate."

*North of Fifty-three.* By Bertrand W. Sinclair. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

This is a tale of the Canadian wilds where strength and endurance are life's requirements, where man battles against nature, and nature generously repays by teaching him and providing for him. Here his success does not entail the crushing of weaker men, and his pleasures grow large, healthy, unspoiled by the pettiness of urban civilization. In Mr. Sinclair the cry of "Back to Nature" is distinctly more convincing than it usually sounds. His romance centres upon two people who have escaped to Canada from the wrongful slander of their neighbors. Hazel Weir is lost in the woods and comes to the camp-fire of "Roaring Bill" Wagstaff, notorious for miles around. He promises to take her home, but in the end determines to carry her away as his wife in modern cave-man style. Hazel must obey. Then begins the awakening of her nature in Bill's cabin in the woods filled with books and culture. She realizes the qualities of her cave-man's character, the true product of nature and the open. She loves him, yet she chafes for liberty. So Bill sets her free. But as she enters cities and civilization the woods and Bill call her back, and she returns to be his wife.

Up to this point, it is familiar romance. Mr. Sinclair removes it from that category by beginning his real story here. He compares the life of the woods and of civilization, by giving his couple one more full taste of the emptiness of conventional life before establishing them permanently in the wilds. Mr. Sinclair has a definite point

that he states clearly. His two characters are exceptionally well drawn and sympathetic. His style is robust and vigorous. His pictures of Canadian life are stimulating.

*Barnabette.* By Helen Martin. New York: The Century Co.

Back-country misses, daughters of illiterate tinsmiths whose brothers drive the country-stage and who have themselves been only drudges in the house, do not generally, upon being sent to college, win their way at once into the heart of the college president, particularly when he happens to be of Boston's bluest blood. Nor do they become paragons of learning and culture, with advanced ideas on Socialism and industrialism, in the brief space of little more than a year. Nor do such rustic damsels spurn an offer of marriage from their college president merely because his hesitation has indicated snobbery. Nor, in the end, do they receive a similar offer from the only other eligible man in the town, incidentally a millionaire. Yet *Barnabette*, daughter of Barnaby and Etta Dreardy, of a family of Reinhartz, Pa., "Dutchmen," disproves the general rule. Once her stepmother has sent her off to college, she develops the afore-mentioned attributes with extraordinary rapidity. It is not entirely the background of quaint characters that lends compensation to the story. These are picturesque enough, particularly the brusque, "close" father, who at fifty-five provides himself with a nosegay to win the fortune of an antiquated spinster. The appeal of the story lies in its straightforwardness. The style possesses a certain natural spontaneity, an innocence that gradually wins over the reader and makes the adventures of *Barnabette* seem pleasantly true.

*Monksbridge.* By John Ayscough. New York: Longmans, Green & Co.

This is a quiet picture of English rural scenes and the life of gentlefolk infused with a rare humor. The time is not long after the Oxford movement, and the central incident is the conversion of a public-school lad, Perkin Auberon, from the Church of England to Roman Catholicism. But it is far from constituting the whole story, which is of the ups and downs of the Auberon family—a widowed mother, Sylvia, Perkin, and the narrator, a second daughter, gifted with rare observation. The restrained characterization is admirable. Sylvia, who is beautiful, brilliant, and snobbish, rules domestic affairs with an iron hand and marries Lord Monksbridge, not for his new title and newer riches, but—as she carefully explains—in order that her own Norman lineage may give the needed lustre to it. The mother is a quiet, sensible person, and Perkin is drawn with the right ad-

mixture of youthful fire and hardheaded logic. The unnamed narrator, as we are given to understand, is plain and insignificant beside her sister, but develops wonderful charm. Part of it is certainly exhibited in her ability to detect a subtle basis for irony in all that goes on about her, and to see in satiric light the lovers of Sylvia, the tutors of Perkin, the doddering county families.

*Mrs. Brand.* By H. A. Mitchell Keays. Boston: Small, Maynard & Co.

"Mrs. Brand" is a clever novel full of the modern spirit. It has a sophisticated, rich, and rather flippant heroine, a glorious opportunity for the reformer. It has a doctor-hero who devotes his life to ministering to the wretchedest section of the city ("if your hero has the bad luck not to have been born in the slums, he must at least have the wit to take up his habitation there as soon as he comes of age," a critic has said). It has a "fallen woman," who is introduced to the heroine by the hero, and is regenerated by both of them. As a foil to the hero, there is another suitor, a worldly and selfish but brilliant minister, whom the heroine seems for a time to prefer. To classify the novel thus is not to condemn it. In spite of its occasional sentimentality, it is well planned and crisply written, and presents two or three characters drawn with unusual skill.

#### AN INFORMAL PICTURE OF BURROUGHS.

*Our Friend John Burroughs.* By Clara Barrus. Including Autobiographical Sketches by John Burroughs. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. \$2 net.

For twelve years the literary assistant of John Burroughs has, as she tells us, enjoyed "exceptional opportunities . . . of observing him." The record of her observations falls into three parts: first, two chapters in which she rambles at ease; secondly, several chapters in which Mr. Burroughs writes of himself in an equally informal style, and, thirdly, five more chapters by the author in her most nonchalant vein. The result of the plan of the book is that nothing has its proper place, and that many things are mentioned twice, with a limping "as has been said" by way of apology.

In substance, most of the book is pretty close to the ordinary magazine article on "My visit to Slabsides"; that is, it shows faithful rather than penetrating "observation," and is always likely to slip from triviality to fatuous profundity and back again. The triviality one is content to smile upon indulgently—any one, at least, who is accustomed to recent biographical writing; but the fatuous profundity is too much. Here is a fair specimen: