

Esther Gould's Book Corner

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THE ROMANTIC BEATRICE "BEATRICE CENCI"

Boni & Liveright
By Corrado Ricci

It seems almost presumptuous for a reviewer in the small space at his command even to attempt to give an adequate idea of Corrado Ricci's stupendous work on "Beatrice Cenci" and the days of the late Renaissance. It is one of those works which immediately stands forth on its own merits and claims a permanent place in literature. For the authentic and intimate picture of this time it is inevitably and justly compared with the famous life of Cellini.

Signor Ricci, former minister of Fine Arts in Italy, was led quite incidentally into the study of the Cenci which eventually occupied five years with exhaustive work, by the question of the authenticity of the Guido Reni portrait alleged to be a portrait of the romance-encumbered Beatrice. The tracing of the evidence led Signor Ricci into such a maze of falsehood and misrepresentation, as well as showing him the great fascination of the subject, that he was persuaded to go on and on until not one stone was left unturned which might uncover a shred of truth.

The result is a startlingly vivid and intimate story of the life of the day and the powerful and dissolute Cenci family, and the final murder of the father by his children which led to their exhaustive trial and final execution.

It is Beatrice who most fires our imagination as she has fired the imagination of the world since the day of the crime. She does so no less now that we see her for the first time, as she was, instead of the much white-washed "saintly virgin" of her adorers or of those who for political reasons wished to show that she had been unjustly executed. Obstinate, indomitable, clever, human, pitiful in the very pitting of her small will against the entire world we can follow Beatrice through all the tragic days of her imprisonment by her cruel father, the indignities borne, the plotting for his death, the clumsy execution of the plot, and the final heart-breaking trial.

The other characters in the tragedy for us as for the people of their own day, fade into the background. The servants who were the actual per-

petrators of the crime, the worthless profligate brothers, and the utterly stupid stepmother whose only line of defense was that she "did not remember" anything. Behind them all we see the personality of Beatrice towering, and her young voice say to her stepmother, "Have you not the courage to bear the rack a little? I can bear it."

CAVIARE FOR THE FEW

"THE VENETIAN GLASS NEPHEW"

By Elinor Wylie
George H. Doran

Elinor Wylie is not a writer for the many but for the few. The first paragraph of "The Venetian Glass Nephew" establishes this as did the exquisite "Jennifer Born." Cardinal Peter Innocent Bon is about to return to his native Venice. "His heart was lighter than a flower; indeed it danced so high and airily, and teased the tenuous cord of his mortality with such persistent malice, that he conceived of it as a toy balloon, an azure plaything in a pantomime, caught by a thread of gold to stable earth and germane to the sky."

It is in this vein, as light and delicate as the toy balloon, that the entire story is written. The Cardinal has only one real desire in his life, and that is for a nephew. The other Cardinals all have them but prayers have never availed to bring him such a blessing. So, in Venice, his old friend Luma, the glass blower, a man versed in magic lore, makes him a nephew of Venetian glass. "The boy's skin was so fair as to seem almost translucent and the luminous flux of his abundant hair had the fragility of spun glass."

And so has this tale in its decorative cover, the charm and fragility of spun glass.

Just Published
the first novel in three
years by the author of
IF WINTER COMES

ONE
INCREASING
PURPOSE

by A.S.M. HUTCHINSON

LITTLE, BROWN & COMPANY
Publishers, Boston

BANK OF BRUSSELS LOCATED IN PALACE

IS PROBABLY ONLY ONE

After War Institution Bought
Former Royal Residence;
King of Belgium
Born There

The Bank of Brussels is probably the only banking institution in the world doing business in a real palace, according to the Nation's Business. After the war, the bank bought the Royal palace of the Counts of Flanders, one of the noble mansions of Europe. Its president, M. Maurice Despret, a recognized authority on eighteenth century art, has solved the apparently hopeless problem of preserving intact its regal magnificence while at the same time housing the modern equipment of what is in many ways the most up-to-date bank on the continent.

King Born There

King Albert, who was born in the present Bank of Brussels—as were all the children of the old Count of Flanders, the brother of Leopold II—inherited the building from his father and for years after his accession it remained unoccupied within a stone's throw of the royal palace. Its enormous dimensions made it unsuitable as a residence for the young crown Prince of Belgium, so when M. Despret offered to buy it outright with all the wonderful tapestries, furniture and works of art it contained, the king named a price—a big price—and after negotiations and expert valuations that took some weeks the deed was signed.

When M. Despret finally got the palace there was a string to it. Under no circumstances must the outward aspect be changed.

Remodelled Palace

M. Despret left the residential wing of the palace untouched, but pulled down everything else, digging down to more than sixty feet along the Rue Royale. Here he built underground four floors of safe deposit vaults entirely surrounded beneath and on the sides with a wall of steel and reinforced concrete seven feet thick. The two upper stories of these vaults contain more than twenty thousand safes and safe-deposit boxes for the bank's clients and the two lower floors contain the bank's gold reserve and securities belonging to it or held as collateral. On this foundation M. Despret rebuilt the outer wall of this part of the palace as it had originally stood, fitting it up inside as the most-up-to-date bank.

Geologically the soils in "Egypt" as the southern tier of counties in Illinois is called, range from the oldest to the youngest, from igneous rock to glacial formation.

About Your Health

Things You Should Know



by John Joseph Gaines, M.D.

DOUGHY FOODS

Our people as a rule, are quick to resent what is termed "An old fogy notion." One of the oldest that I know of, is the maxim that we should avoid warm bread, and many otherwise intelligent folks are still sticking tight by that ancient dictum. I have tried faithfully, for many years, to discover harm in a nicely-browned hot roll or graham muffin, or a comfortably warm slice of corn-bread with milk,—or even in the breakfast of hot griddle-cakes; and I have yet to treat any form of indigestion that could be traced to such causes. I have naught but praise too, for the old-fashioned buttermilk biscuit! So there!

On the other hand, if there is anything that appears more indifferent to digestion, or is less nourishing than a slab of cold, tough, tasteless, stringy, "light-bread" of commercial ancestry, I have failed to find it.

The sick man demands diet suitable to his condition of course, and a tough, woolly, asbestos-like piece of white bread is about the last thing I would prescribe for him, and even then, when there is nothing else in the house to eat.

It is human weakness that we indulge too freely in things that entice the appetite and right there lies the objection to warm, nourishing, digestible breads. It is the quantity eaten, and not the temperature that does harm. If two biscuits are all we need, why eat six? Overeating is to be condemned, no matter what the article of diet.

A natural appetite is a pretty good guide to what the system needs. A depraved appetite is a dangerous possession. The natural appetite may be satiated,—the depraved never! A careful study of our appetites might be better recreation than writing manifestos opposed to good nourishment.

GREATEST PEST IS MEDIocre EMPLOYEE

Ernest Hopkins, president of Dartmouth college, recently remarked that the greatest pest in any institution, whether a business office or college classroom, is the fellow who is not quite bad enough to fire but who just barely gets by.

Which reminds me that one of the most famous employers in the United States—owner of a string of successful newspapers—has for a long time

made it a rule to discharge any employee who, at the end of five years, is not good enough to be promoted.

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