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Katharine Soule's Book Corner

JUST PARAGRAPHS

In broadcasting over the radio a dramatic book review of Edna Ferber's "Show Boat" the other night, Doubleday Page & Co. had excellent material with which to work. A book of its spirited charm, with the river as a mysterious ever-present background, is easily projected dramatically. The music aided by one or two descriptions, took the place of the river, and the characters all spoke for themselves. If there could be many books of such radio possibilities as this best of Miss Ferber's books, the dramatic book review might become a very popular form of radio entertainment.

You're not even safe if you've been comfortably dead for centuries, as Mr. John Erskine is going to continue to tell the world in general and in particular Sir Galahad, who is the victim of his forthcoming book. After dealing so adequately with Helen of Troy what more could we ask than that he should tell us how Sir Galahad got that way?

A NOVEL OF DIVORCE

"Custody Children" by Everett Young
Henry Holt & Co.

"Custody Children" is a very brilliant novel. We choose the word brilliant perhaps partly because the book deals with glittering things, wealth, society, pomp, display. But Mr. Everett Young, its author, makes it very clear to us that these things have only outward glitter, that within they are a dark hollow sham. Like the kind of macaroon — we believe it is — alluring on the outside which, when you bite into it falls into a few miserably crumbling flakes of beaten egg. For seldom has an author painted society as darkly as Mr. Young does, yet he does it entirely convincingly. But we can comfort ourselves that he has taken only one layer of society, the "ultra smart" set, the "perpetual motion addicts" as he aptly characterizes them.

As the title indicates "Custody Children" is a novel of divorce, tho it is one of those novels which starts out to be a book with a theme and surprises itself by ending up a work of art. Yet divorce is, of course, but one of the evil outcroppings of this heartless strata of society. In the midst of this merry-go-round of sham put Clodi Dillon, slim, pale, with hyacinth blue eyes, and a deep sense of loyalty. But her weak father and worthless mother betray that loyalty and Clodi begins to see that affection doesn't pay. She begins to pride herself on being "alone," free of all the ordinary bonds of loyalty.

Then comes Matt Wishart and for a time there is a chance that her marriage with Matt may bring her thru unscathed. But she fails him in many ways and he fails her in a few, and habit—the sort of machine-like ease with which it's done—makes Clodi divorce him. Then begins the buffeting by the world with which Clodi is both too fine and too weak to deal.

It reminds me, and such a comparison means much to me, of Edith Wharton's "House of Mirth." In both there is the character of the woman who grips your emotions yet whom you must see trodden on, defeated, by a world which she can neither renounce or subdue.

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"The Dancing Floor" by John Buchan
Houghton Mifflin Co.

Do you love mystery? Not the kind that has to do with the spot of blood on the floor, but the kind that deals with the Greek Islands, with the mysterious religious rites of forgotten centuries, with the doomed house of Plakes and its lovely daughters.

Kore Arabin, outwardly a flapper of the too well-known after-the-war type, in England, does not attract Vernon Milburne at all. But seen under rather different conditions, as the lonely, courageous upholder of her family's house amid hostile natives of the remote island of Plakos, he is very differently impressed.

Vernon Milburne has had for many years a dream, recurring on a certain night of spring, a dream about which he only knows that each year something comes nearer him. So strong is the hold of the dream that Vernon consecrates himself to its cause and only holds himself in readiness for its fulfillment whatever it may be.

Now in life, such a course would end in a "flop" of one's hopes, but not so under Mr. John Buchan's skillful pen. There it blossoms into a breathlessly thrilling tale of remote islands, surly peasants and an old pagan rite consecrated in the Valley of the "Dancing Floor."

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"A Masterpiece"—Wm. Lyon Phelps
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CUSTODY CHILDREN

Where there are Children—
Dare there be Divorce?
by Everett Young

Not the ordinary "brilliant society novel." It catches your emotions and you find yourself caring supremely what happens to Clodi Dillon.

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PIONEER FLORIST DIES IN WINNETKA

Frank Otto, Aged 67, Passes on
Last Week; Well Known on
North Shore

Frank Otto, 67 years old, the first florist in Winnetka, died at his home there last week following a severe illness of a week. He had been in ill health for several months.

Mr. Otto never married, and lived alone at his florist shop located at 917 Willow road. He loved dogs and always kept two or three. The last of his dogs, an old fellow eighteen years old, is now mourning his death, and cannot be consoled.

Mr. Otto was born in Germany, and moved to Winnetka about 1890. When Winnetka was but a small village he built his florist shop and supplied the village with flowers. He finally sold the shop to Sandy Clifford, who in turn sold it. Mr. Otto has done garden work for many residents in Winnetka, and at one time he worked for the village.

Funeral services were held at the Hebblethwaite chapel in Evanston, Saturday, Oct. 9, at 1:30 o'clock. Rev. J. W. F. Davies conducted the services. Burial was at Memorial Park cemetery. Mr. Otto is survived by a nephew, Mr. Berger, of Evanston.

A Harvard professor explains earthquakes by saying that Mother Earth shakes to gain symmetry. Sort of dancing for exercise as it were.

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RADIO WAVES MELT METAL, SAYS REPORT

Wise folks who predict that the gas man will eventually lose his job because power will be secured for automobiles from radio, may not be after all. Recent experiments at the United States bureau of standards were successful in using radio waves to melt platinum, gold and other precious metals. A specially devised furnace was used for the purpose and radio waves of high frequency were utilized in heating the furnace in which the metal was melted.

A movement has been started for a five-day week of work, and it's going to be hard on some of the boys if they are compelled to put in that much time.



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