

# Esther Gould's Book Corner

## A LIVELY CHASE

### "TOLERANCE"

By Hendrik Willem VanLoon  
Boni & Liveright

Mr. VanLoon has turned from the broader aspects of history to take up the cudgel for that virtue much prized by those who have it, little prized by those who haven't. It is Tolerance.

With his extraordinarily agile mind Mr. VanLoon has pursued his subject as a dog pursues a squirrel. And as we pursue him we are led through many yards and over many fences which we have not scaled before. Sometimes we nearly lose sight of him in the underbrush of names but he emerges again and on we go.

We start in the first yard in which the squirrel ever made his appearance—that of the Greeks. Among this race of wise men a certain balance of the elements of civilization was struck, a balance so finely made and maintained that no one of its parts tried to exercise undue control over the others. This was tolerance. When a few years later the political element began to dominate the country pressure from one side was brought to bear, and Socrates was asked to drink of hemlock.

A few centuries later the early Christian lived in a spirit of humility and tolerance until they began to build up a great world power in their church. Then it was necessary to assert their authority, to burn and chop off heads and generally show their intolerance for anything which was not of themselves.

Mr. VanLoon has made the subject interesting. His point of view is original, he brings things into the vernacular in a way guaranteed to keep you if not actually gasping, certainly awake.

In speaking of the relation of man to his environment, for instance, he says, "Rembrandt would not have painted pictures, Bach would not have composed fugues, Praxiteles would not have made statues if they had been born in an ingloo near Upernivik and had been obliged to spend most of their waking hours watching a seal-hole in an ice-field." The picture of any one of these gentlemen watching a seal-hole in an ice-field is edifying.

The book ends on a note of high hope which is the voice of Mr. Van

Loon's naturally optimistic spirit, "The day will come when tolerance shall be the rule, when intolerance shall be a myth like the slaughter of innocent captives, the burning of widows, the blind worship of a printed page."

## MR. WILSON TOUCHES A NOTE

### "COUSIN JANE"

By Harry Leon Wilson  
The Cosmopolitan Book Corporation

The Harry Leon Wilson of "Cousin Jane" has ceased to believe that "the laugh's the thing"—or at least the whole thing. There are as many sighs as laughs between the gay covers of this very well written book. Mr. Wilson is drawing farther away from the humour of "Bunker Bean" into a much quieter understanding of life.

Little Jane Starbird is taken from the expensive school where she has been maintained by the Starbird-Tedmon millions when those millions have been unaccountably lost on the stock market by Cousin Wiley Tedmon. She is taken up into the mountains near San Francisco to the old family mansion which was built near the mine from which the gold was once dug in wheelbarrow loads. Here she is to live with her two old doddering cousins for whom life is a memory book, taken out sometimes and fingered regretfully, two old men

servants, and the only woman among them twenty-six year old Sarah Tedmon who resents fiercely her impoverished improvement. At the second spring Sarah escapes, taking the solid silver doorknobs of the mansion to be melted. Life closes over her disappearance as easily as quicksand over a body, and little Jane is put in her managerial position.

But there comes a day, when Jane is past thirty, when she knows that she, too, must go "up the grade," as it is called when one goes into the world. The contents of the wine cellar are her doorknobs. So she goes down to the city where her dreams lie waiting. But dreams she finds are unsubstantial things, and something finer even than those brings her back to the old dead house.

Mr. Wilson's remarkable gift for characterization is not new but he has used it as effectively as ever here in

this decidedly poignant story of thwarted yet gratified life.

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