

"AN UNSPEAKABLE SIREN."

That very much up to date weekly *Town Topics*, New York, issues a small volume quarterly, entitled "Tales From Town Topics," made up of brisk and oftentimes decidedly *risque* sketches, told in such a clever manner that a good many people who do not exactly approve of the morale read them with interest. *Town Topics* and the "Tales" are the product of a society that demands rum in its tea, spice in its pudding.

In "Tales From Town Topics" No. 12, just issued there is a novellette, "An Unspeakable Siren," by John Gilliat. This story, if taken seriously, and it is possible that many readers will take it thus, would prompt the resurrection of that old query, "Whither are we drifting?" Its characters are a dozen or more "advanced" members of society, who live on scandal and champagne, make love to each others wives and husbands, and have a jolly good time. These characters are strung along on a thread of suggestive immorality in such a manner that sometimes an alarming crisis seems imminent. The thread is a kind of passion familiar to the reader of the modern erotic novel, and it strings the characters regardless of marriage ties. The unspeakable siren is a young girl who lures Paul Thorold into a depravity that is arrested in the nick of time by a tragedy; lures him, too, when he is about to marry her sister, a passive creature, who loses her hold on her husband, it would appear, because she wore loose wrappers. Nera, the siren, is so spirituelle that she is almost offensively skinny, but there is a mysterious something about her that attracts Paul, greatly against his will at first, and leads him to lie and do other shocking things—and that is the story.

As a satire on the trend of the smart society of today it is not without a certain degree of interest; though society and the public; everybody, save, perhaps, the author and the publishers, would be just as well off if no such books were published. The author is an apt pupil of the Oscar Wilde school and he rather overdoes, following the latter's example, the business of scattering, indiscriminately, cynicism with an epigrammatic dressing. A few selections may be interesting:

Mrs. Fairlie Esmonde tells Paul that the only thing to be considered in a wife is money—"love you must find in some other man's wife."
"Men are a race of barbarians without the excuse of being uncivilized."

There is a divorce case to be tried before a referee. "Why a referee?" "Because the court is afraid the evidence would contaminate the jury."

Mrs. Gatherley asks Chubby Sullivan, "what do you consider the most dangerous form of gambling?" "Marriage," he replied.

"Love is a religion—or a blasphemy."

"I am in deep mourning, my baby died only two months ago. It was dreadfully pathetic." "Poor friend" consoled Miss Vanscheldt, leaning over and touching her friend's hand, "Any how, you are not so unlucky as Dorothy Norris, who had triplets before she had been married a year—and all of them lived."

"All men and women are born actors. The worst of them enter the profession."

For Schiller's saying, "the best woman is she that no one talks about," a character remarks, "the best woman is she that talks about nobody."

"There are two kinds of people in the world, the righteous that believe themselves sinners, and the sinners that believe themselves righteous."

"No one loved women more than Mohammend, and yet he learned enough from his experience in life to create his heaven without them"

"A woman's gown is the barometer of her mood."

"A woman that wears a ravishingly suggestive high-necked frock when *decollette* is *de rigueur* simply puts into practice the coquettish idea of chastening her coquetry."

The literary critic of the *New York Sun* says of this book:

"Whatever the reader may think of the desirableness of Mr. John Gilliat's novel "An Unspeakable Siren" (*Town Topics* company), as a picture of state morals or as an illustration of a fashion of social conduct, it is not likely that he will make any questions regarding the skill of the workmanship displayed in it. The story is brilliantly told, and the emotional fever in it is at least made interesting.

Of course it is not nice at all than a newly married man should make love to his sister-in-law. It is not pleasant to contemplate a sister-in-law who is a siren in the fashion of Nera Mazarin. She is, indeed, unspeakable, with her her essences and her weak heart, her mixed regilious and animal enthusiasms, her evident bones, her digitalis, and her habit of looking like a crucifix. It is evidence of Mr. Gilliat's skill that he should be able to make a siren of her. But a siren she unmistakably is in her highly unhealthy fashion. As for the society which Mr. Gilliat pictures, we suppose there may be such a society in New York. We should think, however that it would be likely to perish speedily in the poison of its own atmosphere. "An Unspeakable Siren" cannot be called a novel of sweetness, and we are not quite sure that it is a novel of light. It is, however, a story ably told."



We can congratulate all patrons of the circus which means nearly everybody, upon the coming to Lincoln on June 28th, of Sells Bros. millionaire amusement confederation; as that means we are not only to have one really big show with us this season, but, in what goes to make up a rare variety and recreation for the masses, the biggest the best and oldest show on the road. The progress toward the stupendous made by the Sells Brothers in the past twenty-three years has been somewhat marvelous. The small show with which they made a timorous beginning has grown to be a genuine public institution of the first magnitude, well and favorably known in every section of the country, and everywhere patronized by the best people. It has even more than kept pace with the unparalleled general development, and ranks 1st among tented exhibitions. Its tremendous spread of canvas covers a regal Roman Hippodrome race track. Monster Fifty Cage Menagerie, Triple Circus, Huge Elevated Stages, Australian Aviary, Arabia Caravan, African Aquarium, Spectular Pageants and Trans-Pacific Wild West exhibit, and hundrede of exclusively exhibited features, brilliant performers, and startling and ludicrous races and acts. Several huge special trains are required to transport this melange of wonder and fun, and how so much can be exhibited for the one price of admission, 25 cents to all, is an enigma which can be solved by visiting the Greatest Show on Earth. Don't fail the grand street parade and judge for yourself as to its magnitude.

A BROKEN DREAM.

Within the tasseled hammock, gay
With threads of color bright,
A dainty, white-robed form, she lay,
While o'er her, soft and light,
Floated the clouds; a summer day
Was waning into night.

The paths were fringed with holly-hocks
Pure white, deep red, and pink,
The garden trim was full of phlox;
The lingering perfumes sink
Into her soul, she slowly rocks
And lists to a bobolink.

A world of lovely dreams is there,
The hammock gently sways,
A locust stirs the lifeless air,
The western sky's ablaze;
Life seems to her without a care,
O'er all a misty haze.

She seems to live in days of old,
Herself a princess tall;
To her comes a knight most bold,
Who loved her above all.

* * * * *
Just then her brother toward her stole;
"Tom Green has come to call!"

—M. F. NIXON.

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