

THE WORKS OF LEONARD MERRICK

· ONE · MAN'S
· VIEW ·



The Works of
LEONARD MERRICK

WHILE PARIS LAUGHED.

UNIFORM WITH THE ABOVE

CONRAD IN QUEST OF HIS YOUTH.

With an Introduction by SIR J. M. BARRIE.

WHEN LOVE FLIES OUT O' THE WINDOW. With an Introduction by SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON NICOLL.

THE QUIANT COMPANIONS. With an Introduction by H. G. WELLS.

THE POSITION OF PEGGY HARPER. With an Introduction by SIR ARTHUR PINERO.

THE MAN WHO UNDERSTOOD WOMEN and other Stories. With an Introduction by W. J. LOCKE.

THE WORLDLINGS. With an Introduction by NEIL MUNRO.

THE ACTOR-MANAGER. With an Introduction by W. D. HOWELLS.

CYNTHIA. With an Introduction by MAURICE HEWLETT.

ONE MAN'S VIEW. With an Introduction by GRANVILLE BARKER.

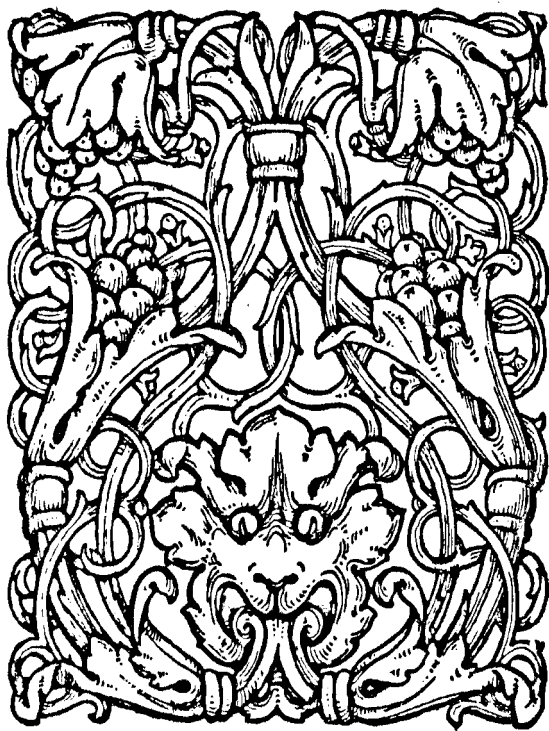
THE MAN WHO WAS GOOD. With an Introduction by J. K. PROTHERO.

A CHAIR ON THE BOULEVARD. With an Introduction by A. NEIL LYONS.

THE HOUSE OF LYNCH. With an Introduction by G. K. CHESTERTON.

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❖ ONE MAN'S ❖
❖ VIEW ❖ ❖
BY LEONARD MERRICK
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
❖ GRANVILLE BARKER ❖



❖ HODDER & STOUGHTON ❖
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INTRODUCTION

THIS story can be said to date, though quite in the sense that a story legitimately may. It is historic, though that is not to say old-fashioned. If one searches by internal evidence for the time of its writing, 1889 might be a safe guess. It was about then that many Londoners (besides the American girls in the story) were given their first glimpse of Niagara at the Panorama near Victoria Street. The building is a motor garage now; it lies beneath the cliffs of Queen Anne's Mansions; aeroplanes may rediscover its queer round roof. And it was in an ageing past too—for architectural ages veritably flash by in New York—that Broadway could be said to spread into the "brightness of Union Square." To-day there is but a chaos of dingy decay owing to that name. Soon it will be smart skyscrapers, no doubt; when the tide of business has covered it, as now the tide of fashion leaves it derelict. Duluth, too, with its "store-keepers spitting on wooden sidewalks"!

Duluth foresees a Lake Front that will rival Chicago.

But in such honest "dating," and in the inferences we may draw from it, lie perhaps some of the peculiar merits of Mr. Merrick's method—his straight telling of a tale. And digging to the heart of the book, the One Man's View of his faithless wife—more importantly too, the wife's view of herself—is, in a sense, an "historic" view. Not, of course, in its human essentials. Those must be true or false of this man and this woman whenever, however they lived and suffered. Such sufferings are dateless. And whether they are truly or falsely told, let the reader judge. No preface-writer need pre-judge for him. For in such things, the teller of the tale, from the heart of his subject, speaks straight to the heart and conscience of his audience, and will succeed or fail by no measurable virtue of style or wit, but by the truth that is in him, by how much of it they are open to receive.

Look besides with ever so slightly an historical eye at the circumstances in which the lives of these two were set to grow, and to flourish or perish, as it was easier or harder to tend them. See the girl with her simple passion for the theatre—so apt a channel for her happy ambition as it appears—and that balked, her

very life baulked. To-day, this war-day, and more surely for the immediate enfranchised to-morrow breaking so close, the same girl will turn her back light-heartedly on the glamour of that little tinselled world to many another prospect of self-fulfilment.

And the lawyer, lost in his law. If a Solicitor-Generalship is his aim, he will be worldly-wise enough, one hopes, to come home not too tired to make at least a passably attractive figure at his wife's well-chosen dinner-parties. Or is that phase of English government now also to pass? No; for probably a country will always be governed from its dinner-tables, while its well-being is finally determined by their quality! Mamie to-day, though, would be doing more than give dinners. It is a question if the Mamie of to-morrow will have time to.

And the literary flâneur—the half-hearted seducer of passionless ladies—is he out of date? Mr. Merrick implies the quite wholesome truth that he always was. Through books and bookish dreams—beautiful, wise dreams—lies the passage to life of many boys and girls. But the healthiest instincts in them are seeking still a real world in which it will be both sane and fine to live. Their dreams are mostly a hard test of it when it is found; and, oh, the pity if the finding it quite breaks their dream!

In sum, then, it was Mamie's tragedy to seek her realities during a phase of art and letters which, in their utter unreality, seemed to deny the very existence of any real world at all. Neither true art nor true letters then; they were so turning from reality with fear.

Are they still denying it to-day? If so this story does not date at all, and Mamie's tragedy is a tragedy of our time. For tragedy it is, even though in *One Man's View* she finds at last reposeful salvation of a sort. But our hope is better. And half our pleasure in the story and in its historical truth is the thought that, true author as he is, were he writing it to-day, and of to-day, Mr. Merrick would have written it just so much differently.

GRANVILLE BARKER.