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THE BOOKSHELF

MODERN ARCHITECTURE by HENRY RUSSELL HITCHCOCK

THE CITY OF TOMORROW AND ITS PLANNING by LE CORBUSIER

THE METROPOLIS OF TOMORROW by HUGH FERRIS

In these three new books on the city of the future are the thoughts and ideas of three different men. They differ from each other to a great extent although a few of their ideas are similar. Heretofore there have been practically no books that have covered this subject thoroughly and well, therefore a new book that is comprehensive would be welcomed. At first glance Mr. Hitchcock's book seems to be the one that has been long awaited but his ideas turn out to be entirely theoretical. He suggests starting back in the Middle Ages to form a definite scheme of architecture. He says that the scheme was started then but has not been followed. This may well be true but Mr. Hitchcock fails to give much of an idea as to what the scheme is.

Le Corbusier's *City of Tomorrow* not only attempts to solve the problem from an architect's viewpoint but also from the economic and sociological. His book is full of epigrammatic sayings which, it is assumed, were supposed to be philosophical but most of them do not even make sense. Nevertheless there are some fundamentally sound principles underlying all the unintelligible facts.

The best of the three books is Hugh Ferriss' *Metropolis of Tomorrow*. While it does not go extensively into detail it should furnish inspiration for the men who are working on the planning of future cities. The book is full of drawings which while not replete with detail are very good conceptions of what the future buildings might look like. Mr. Ferris proves himself to be a master draughtsman with a fine sense of three dimensions, and monumental imagination.—R. M. E.

ULTIMA THULE

By HENRY HANDEL RICHARDSON

A book that is hailed as a masterpiece is seldom one that is popular. Henry Handel Richardson's *Ultima Thule* has been unanimously hailed a masterpiece by all critics, yet it has had great success.

Richardson is a woman, an Australian by birth. She has been writing for twenty years but her works have not caught on until the publication of *Ultima Thule*, which is the third volume of a trilogy started some twelve years ago. The three novels relate the story of one Richard Mahoney, an Australian physician. The first tells of his early life and first efforts for success, and a youthful failure; the second develops his life almost through middle age, giving a vivid picture of a keen ambitious man, overcoming obstacles and amassing a fortune, only to lose it again. The third volume, the present one, pictures the last unsuccessful attempt of Dr. Mahoney to reestablish himself.

At the beginning of the story the doctor returns to Melbourne and attempts to take up his practice again. With characteristic flourish he goes terribly

in debt to have a showy home and office. His friends are only coolly condescending to a returned failure; people are afraid to trust a man who has been away from his work for so many years; the specialists have crowded out the general practitioner. After many disappointments he decides to take a post, far away from Melbourne, in the bush, against the advice of his patient wife, Mary. This also proves a disappointment for the new neighbors are a poor, low class of people, who dislike the doctor and his family. One of his children dies. To save the lives of the other two Mary takes them out of the terrible climate to the seashore and while she is gone the strain of loneliness begins to affect the doctor's mind. The rest of the book is a harrowing but gripping tale of the gradual disintegration of the once brilliant Richard, until his death in a far-away country crossroad where his wife has taken a position as postmistress that she may care for him.

Not only is this book a beautifully told story but a moving, psychological study of a group of human beings. The reader feels so intimately all the sufferings of Richard Mahoney that he is led to believe the author has developed his gradual loss of faculties through personal observation. Mary, the faithful wife, is as strongly drawn as the doctor himself. The slowly growing minds of the children seem so real—so much are they like our own early mental experiences. The minor characters stand out; vivid impressions in a many colored kaleidoscope of personalities.

Ultima Thule is not a pleasant book. It has no pretty story, but a gripping tale, at times a horrible one, in its telling of the hopelessness of human life. It is a great book, yet one which holds the reader as closely as an exciting mystery melodrama. The republication of the two earlier works in the trilogy is awaited with keen anticipation.

—E. S.

THE LASTINGHAM MURDER

By LOUIS TRACY

This is a pure mystery story and is said to be one of Tracy's most exciting and thrilling novels. The setting is in and around London, and the entire story covers a period of but one week.

Antony Blake, a young American in London, was told by a well-known surgeon that by careful living he might live six months. He was assured that he had a bad heart which was clogged during a gas attack in the World War. Blake received this startling bit of information calmly, and proceeded to plan ways in which to spend his last days. Little did he know that within twenty-four hours he would be plunged into a series of shocks, beginning with the discovery of a murdered man and ending with a startling climax of action and excitement. That very afternoon while walking in the park he met a runaway horse and two foreigners making suspicious haste. He also met a young lady who introduced herself as Iris Hamilton, and who said she wished to meet her uncle, Robert Lastingham. Blake connected these three facts, and the next day he was not surprised to see an

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article in the paper which told of the death of a certain Mr. Lastingham. He gave his information and services to Scotland Yard, and together with two detectives, Furneaux and Winters, started on the trail of the murderers.

The experiences and shocks he received would put to test a heart far stronger than his, but anything is possible in a story. An international gang is discovered which has a large and smoothly running organization behind it. Of course Blake falls in love with Iris Hamilton who in turn is suspected of being implicated in the murder. The plot thickens but it turns out that the gang made a mistake in the murder. They are trapped at Lastingham's funeral, but not until Blake is treacherously stabbed by an insane doctor. The doctor is immediately shot and does not know that he saved Blake's life, for the dagger thrust opened the clogged valves of his heart. Blake and Miss Hamilton get married and to climax it all she inherits the Lastingham millions.—J. S.
