

SANINE. By MICHAEL ARTZIBASHEF. B. W. Huebsch.

SANINE is not a supreme novel in the full flower of a period, like *La Cousine Bette*. It is too lyric. It is like the timid song of a young thrush in the morning of life. For this novel is much more than a great novel. It is the first novel of an epoch. It is the first attempt to depict a man who is living by the Law of Thelema, whose outlook on the world is based upon the magical formulæ of the Æon of Horus: "Every man and every woman is a star"; "There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt." Sanine absolutely refuses to be obfuscated by the fog of false morality. He judges actions by their real, not by their imaginary consequences.

Bernard Shaw attempted this very feebly in his portrait of John Tanner; but Tanner, like Shaw himself, is a blustering and wordy weakling, who is entirely the slave of the morality which he condemns.

Sanine actually lives up to the truth which he sees, and it makes him free, and it makes free those who follow him. This is a great book to shed light upon the greybeard slobbering of Shaw. Violet's baby is only tolerable because Violet is Mrs. Malone. Shaw has not the strength of character to avow (even in a fictitious work) that a woman can assert what is evidently her first right without undergoing phantastic penalties, although there are to-day thousands of women in every country who have told morality to go to its father, the devil, as Shaw so bombastically tells it to do. The phantoms which confront the free man are really just hollow turnips in churchyards. Take poor Ambrose, for example. He occupies one of the most important positions in New York City. He lives his own life for 15 years or so. Nobody is offended. Nobody is injured. Nothing whatever happens. A pleasant time is had by all. Then, suddenly some one discovers this appalling state of circumstances, and there is Ambrose in peril of Sing-Sing and Matteawan, and all those pretty places on the Hudson. He loses his

job. He is an outcast from society. He vanishes like morning mist. And there is not a single shadow of reason for all this, except an ecclesiastical nefas, based principally upon a comic Turkish superstition.

The stupidity of governments is unthinkable. People reclaim a little obvious freedom, and the authorities will not let them have it without all this cutting of throats, and robbing of churches! The Gods seem to send imbeciles like Louis XVI. and Nicholas Romanoff, and certain other persons whom I will not mention, at the moment when free men decide that it is time to strike for freedom. Hear the word of the Lord: In the next few years Sanine and his like are going to hang a lot of people to a lot of lamp-posts.