

FICTION.

Stories of Adventure and Crime.

THE ADVENTURES OF GERARD. By A. Conan Doyle. Illustrated by W. B. Wollen. 12mo, pp. 267. McClure, Phillips & Co.

THE YELLOW CRAYON. By E. Phillips Oppenheim. Illustrated. 12mo, pp. 341. Dodd, Mead & Co.

COUNT ZARKA. A Romance. By Sir William Magnus. With a Frontispiece by Maurice Greiffenhagen. 12mo, pp. 318. Boston: L. C. Page & Co.

STAY-AT-HOMES. By A. R. Walford. 8vo, pp. 341. Longmans, Green & Co.

Sir A. Conan Doyle has one gift which is distinctly rare among writers of fiction working at the present time. He can tell a story of mere adventure and give it something like literary quality. He can make a tissue of incidents not simply exciting, but artistic. He proves this with special fulness and force in "The Adventures of Gerard." In a series of eight brief narratives he exhibits to us the exploits of a brigadier under Napoleon. The exploits themselves are entertaining. Though they smack of the camp and the battlefield, which have been written almost to death by the modern novelist, they are not hackneyed in motive. When we read of how Gerard lost his ear in a Venetian dungeon, how he captured Saragossa, how he cut a fox in twain before the astounded eyes of some English officers hunting in the Peninsula, and how he did several other extraordinary things, we are led to believe that he was quite right in regarding his career as unique. The author of his being has invented for him situations and adventures as novel as they are picturesque and thrilling. But there is more than adventure here to beguile the reader. There is the altogether life-like atmosphere in which the clever soldier is enveloped, and there is the soldier himself, a type portrayed with an underlying seriousness that transforms a figure of drama into a wholly credible human being. Gerard swaggers to a tremendous degree, but never is a false note struck in the speeches or asides attributed to him. Furthermore, while giving him all the traits of a properly boastful man-at-arms in a theatrical era, the author is at pains to preserve in this portrait the lines which bespeak the true hero and gentleman. Gerard may brag as much as he pleases, we never lose faith in him, he never strikes us as aught save a natural and captivating man. The forthcoming season may bring us some more important volume of fiction than this; it cannot bring us one more diverting.

"The Yellow Crayon" is an amazing tale. Mr. Oppenheim thinks nothing of asking us to believe wonders. The secret society whose doings form the substance of the book is represented as one established among the great families of Europe with a view to counteracting the rise of socialistic organizations. Its titular head is the present Emperor of Germany, and that shrewd potentate is credited with a good natured willingness to leave the actual carrying on of the society's affairs to a rascally prince who, of course, uses his power for his own ends. The action begins at Lenox, Mass., of all places in the world. There an elderly nobleman is discovered bewailing the kidnapping of his wife. She is a member of the society whose terrible edicts are always set forth in yellow crayon. He has been expelled from the order. When she is compelled to go to London and engage in a grave intrigue, every effort is made to keep her husband at a distance. Naturally the Duke of Sospennier does not hold with this sort of thing, and, as he is an extremely resourceful person, with much wealth at his disposal, he promptly sets about the recovery of his lost partner. Astonishing things occur at once. In New-York he is arrested on a trumped up charge with a celerity and a brutality worthy of the Middle Ages—our police being apparently as much at the beck and call of the Emperor's secret society as is the missing duchess—and he is only enabled to continue on his campaign through the interposition of the British Ambassador at Washington. But we must not expose any more of the details of Mr. Oppenheim's remarkable fabric. The tangle grows more tangled as the story continues, and we are kept absorbed until the last pages are reached. They are only fairly well written pages, and there are too many of them; but for the sake of the plot "The Yellow Crayon" is worth reading.

A similar judgment may be passed upon "Count Zarka," in which another kidnapping occurs. In this case it is Prince Roel of Rapsberg who disappears, and the Russian Government is supposed to be responsible. Behind his disappearance, says the minister who first makes us acquainted with the circumstance, "we have a strong, ruthless, political motive. And a motive springing from one of the strongest, most Napoleonic brains in Europe, and at the back of that policy the might of a Great Power." This Napoleonic person, like the Kaiser in "The Yellow Crayon," chooses as his chief instrument just the kind of man a Napoleon would not dream of employing. This is Count Zarka, a villain upon whom Sir William Magnus has lavished the crudest colors of the most lurid melodrama. The count is capable of any evil, including the worst treachery to those who pay him. Prince Roel is presently revealed as only a pawn in the count's own game, which has for its aim the hand of a

beautiful woman. Hence all manner of tragic surprises, including a duel between the two ladies who startle us in the frontispiece. "Count Zarka" is what the English call "a shilling shocker." As such it is not at all bad.

"Stay-at-Homes" is not one of Mrs. Walford's successes. It bears the marks of the pot-boiler, and only in style may it be recognized as indubitably the work of the author of that striking novel, "The Baby's Grandmother." The story turns on a situation that is as absurd as it is impossible. There is no plausible reason why the clever, prosperous old spinster Augusta Kenyon should enter her cousin's household in the disguise of a humble companion, and the novelist's treatment of her action and its consequences is merely silly. The love romance is flat and ineffective; the hero, soldier though he be, is an effeminate stick, in whose sudden dropping into sentiment the reader cannot believe. The heroine, on the other hand, is drawn with spirit—she is the one taking flesh-and-blood creature in the book. But she is no fresh creation—she is in most respects a repetition of the nice girls of Mrs. Walford's former novels. That lady has a gift for the representation of one particularly fine type of young femininity—a type frank, true and loving, superficially faulty, but genuinely

are her near relatives; while, on her mother's side, she is a great-granddaughter of the Hon. Peter Spearwater, who fought under Napoleon and represented Selborne in the Colonial Parliament at Halifax for twenty-five years. Her education was cosmopolitan, for her parents travelled about a great deal, and before she was sixteen she had a wide knowledge of Europe as well as of America, though it was probably Paris—to which the artistic temperament, perhaps, looks most for its inspiration and its satisfaction—that made the greatest impression on her.

Could educational forces conquer the human soul, Mrs. Craigie would probably have been a pianist. Her education was begun with that end in view, but the red tape of the Conservatoire in Paris, which insists that no pupil shall enter its doors without signing for a three years' course, stopped that project, as Mr. and Mrs. John Morgan Richards, Mrs. Craigie's parents, objected to the clause.

It is added, however, that literature had set her seal upon Mrs. Craigie when she was still in the nursery. "Before she was able to write, she used to dictate stories to her nurse. If she saw a picture she turned it into words, and thus at a very early age gave indication of her literary bent." A note on her method of composition follows:

While the actual production of her work is rapid rather than the reverse, years may elapse between the inception of an idea and its completion. The reason is that she often keeps four or five things in her mind at the same time,



THREE PHOTOGRAPHS OF "JOHN OLIVER HOBBS" AT HOME.
(The lad in the third picture is her son.)

noble at heart. It is a highly agreeable ideal, but one might without injustice remind the novelist that a slight variety in heroines would not be amiss—especially as in this case the course of the girl's fortunes is mixed up with so much chronicling of small beer—beer smaller than any Mrs. Walford has heretofore condescended to offer us.

"JOHN OLIVER HOBBS." An Illustrated Interview with Mrs. Craigie.

A writer in the London "Sketch" has been visiting Mrs. Craigie at her summer home, on the Isle of Wight. He took his camera with him, and the pictures accompanying his article, some of which we reproduce, give interesting glimpses of a notable personality. The interviewer has something to say, to begin with, about the earlier days in Mrs. Craigie's literary career. Her first novel, "Some Emotions and a Moral," pleased the first publisher to whom it was sent, but he did not bring it out because it was not so long as the books he usually issued, and Mrs. Craigie did not see her way toward making it any longer. The second publisher who received it had nothing to say as to the scale of the book, but he wanted the title changed, and he did not like the pen name chosen by the author, "John Oliver Hobbs." She was obdurate, and said, in effect: "I won't change the title and I won't change the pseudonym, and if you publish the book those two things will be published with it." Her insistence upon using a pseudonym at all is thus explained: "She was a very young woman at the time, and she not unnaturally felt that if the critics thought the book was written by a woman, and a very young woman at that, there would be, metaphorically, gnashing of teeth."

Mrs. Craigie is more than the novelist and dramatist she calls herself. She has written for "The Times," "The Fortnightly" and other reviews; she wrote the article on George Eliot for the "Encyclopaedia Britannica," and she has lectured on Balzac, Turner and Brahms. Some time ago she delivered an address before the Dante Society on Dante and Botticelli, and recently she has succeeded Lord Avebury as president of the Ruskin Society. Alluding to the personal history of "the Whistler of the Stage and the Bernard Shaw of the Boudoir," as it calls her, "The Sketch" says:

Bound up though her work has been with London, Mrs. Craigie, as most people are aware, is an American by birth, and, appropriately enough, she first saw the light in the cultured city of Boston. On her father's side, she comes of a stock associated with the law, the church, and banking; and David Dudley Field and Judge Field, of the Supreme Court, at Washington,

and works from one to the other until, at length, one thing takes possession of her mind to the exclusion of everything else, and she is compelled to sit down and finish it. Thus, though "The Ambassador," for instance, was in her mind for three years, the actual writing of the play occupied only about two months, though "The School for Saints" took six times as long in the production, in addition to the three years in which it was getting itself into shape. The early morning and late afternoon, from breakfast until shortly after noon, and from 5 until 7, are the hours Mrs. Craigie devotes to her work, though for a couple of hours before breakfast she is at her desk with her correspondence.

The stage naturally fascinates her. Curious as it may seem, seeing that her own success has been won in the face of the difficulty, she regards the actor-manager as one of the difficulties of the theatre. Still, Mrs. Craigie has been heard to say that under the actor-manager's regime one soon learns that the intrinsic quality of one's work is not important, its claim for consideration being that one part should dominate all the rest. At the present time, "Sketch" readers need no reminding, Mrs. Craigie is represented by "The Bishop's Move," in which she collaborated with Mr. Murray Carson. It is an open secret—if, indeed, it is a secret at all—that the story is practically Mr. Carson's, as the writing is entirely Mrs. Craigie's. Their collaboration was due to Mr. Frederick Harrison, of the Haymarket, to whom Mr. Carson told the story, and he at once suggested that Mrs. Craigie was the writer of all others to clothe it in words. A fact interesting to every theatregoer, and especially to those critics who declared, on the production of the play, that no Roman Catholic cardinal could by any possibility behave as does the Bishop of Rance in "The Bishop's Move," is that in many respects he represents the present Pope, who is a great musician. He frequently mended organs in Venice—in which city, by the way, Mrs. Craigie once admitted she saw the printing press introduced into the first act of her play—while the democratic utterances of the Bishop might have been drawn entirely from His Holiness.

More than novels, more than plays, more than articles, more than societies, more than anything else, Mrs. Craigie is interested in her son, John Churchill Craigie, who is on the eve of going to Eton, after having come through his novitiate at Mr. Churchill's school at Broadstairs.

A CONQUERING FAWN.

From The London Spectator.

A sambar fawn I possessed in India, of the age of four to six months, made a practice of chasing all dogs that came into the compound, and did so with every appearance of considering it the greatest possible fun. The dogs, on the other hand, fled with their tails between their legs. This fawn evidently imagined itself to be the guardian and protector of the establishment. I have a vivid picture in my recollection of the gentle little beast transformed into a perfect fury, its coat bristling on end to make it look twice its usual size, head and tail defiantly erect, stamping sharply on the threshold with its dainty forefeet, demonstrations intended to frighten away two pariah dogs who cringed before it on the veranda, yet showed a great desire to intrude into the house. The dogs finally sneaked off, depressed and defeated, and the conquering fawn swaggered back into the room to be praised by me, either for once disdaining to chase its foes or deterred therefrom by its strong dislike to the noontide sun.

LITERARY NOTES.

Mrs. W. K. Clifford's next book will not be a novel in her usual sombre and powerful vein, but a book for children. It will be one of the publications of the Christmas season.

There is to be a new edition, in two volumes, of Mr. Meredith's "Poems," uniform in style with the pocket edition of his novels published in this country by the Scribners. That edition, we may note, is a boon for convenience of form and reasonableness of cost.

The late Lord Salisbury, though he did a good deal of writing for publication in the course of his long career, would hardly rank as one of the literary statesmen if it were simply a question of bookmaking. It seems that only three pages of the British Museum catalogue are concerned with him. These are reported to contain half a dozen "lives," many speeches and pamphlets, and only one volume of any length. This last is "Evolution: A Retrospect; A Revised Address Delivered at the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Oxford, 1884."

A London bookseller names in his catalogue a copy of "The Silverado Squatters," in grass wrappers, for which he asks £50. He states that only ten copies of this pamphlet were printed. One of them belongs to Mr. C. K. Shorter, who reproduces in "The Sphere" the description which Stevenson himself wrote inside the front wrapper. It runs as follows:

"This Strange and Imperfect Publication, one

of an edition of ten copies only, issued for ulterior purposes on the 17th day of October in the year of grace 1883, is now in its character of a bibliographic rarity and candidate for the museums of the future and as a handy compendium of misreadings and errors of the press, in which it far excels the most extensive competitive collections. Offered by the author to Walter A. Powell, the celebrated Scotch-Welshman of Hyeres."

Mr. Kipling has written another "Just So" story. It is called "The Tabu Table," and opens in this manner:

"The most important thing about Tegumal Bopsuhl and his dear daughter, Tuffimal Metalumal, was the Tabus of Tegumal, which were all Bopsuhl."

"Listen and attend, and remember, O Best Beloved; because we know all about Tabus, you and I."

This is somewhat enigmatic, as "The Academy" says in quoting the thing from the "Wind-sor Magazine," but Mr. Kipling is clear enough, and, in fact, quite his best self, when he discourses in this wise:

"After that, what happened? Oh, Tuffy learned all the tabus just like some people we know. She learned the White Shark Tabu, which made her eat up her dinner instead of playing with it (and that goes with a green and white necklace, you know); she learned the Crown-Up Tabu, which prevented her from talking when Neolithic ladies came to call (and, you know, a blue and white necklace went with that); she learned the Owl Tabu, which prevented her staring at strangers (and a black and blue necklace went with that); she learned the Open Hand Tabu (and we know a white necklace went with that), which prevented her snapping and snarling when people borrowed things that belonged to her; and she learned five other tabus. But the chief thing she learned, and the one that she never broke, not even by accident, was the Still Tabu. That was why she was taken everywhere that her Daddy went."

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has completed seven new Sherlock Holmes stories. An eighth is to be added to the series, which he has written for the "Strand Magazine," but it is said that the series will very probably be extended to twelve stories.

There is to be, by the way, a collected edition of the novels of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It will consist of twelve volumes and the edition will be limited to one thousand sets. Each volume will contain two photogravure illustrations. The author has written a preface for the edition.

Not long ago an Englishwoman sent a manuscript to a publisher. He lost it. She sued for damages, and when the case came up for trial the publisher was ordered to pay the author £20 and to defray all the costs. This sort of thing must undoubtedly make the London publishers feel that a new terror has been added to life.

Mr. Charles Whibley has at last sent the manuscript of his long-promised book on Thackeray to the printers. It will be brought out within a short time in the "Modern English Writers" series. It ought to make an interesting book, for Mr. Whibley is one of the most accomplished of the disciples of the late William Ernest Henley—whose literary executor he is.