

## FICTION.

## Fantasy, Psychology and Mere Romance.

**THE COURT OF SACHARISSA.** A Midsummer Idyll. (Compiled out of the Traditions of the Irresponsible Club.) By Hugh Sheringham and Nevill Meakin. 12mo, pp. 311. The Macmillan Company.

**HIGH NOON.** By Alice Brown. 12mo, pp. 308. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

**A BACHELOR IN ARCADY.** By Halliwell Sutcliffe. 12mo, pp. 326. T. Y. Crowell & Co.

**SUSANNAH AND ONE OTHER.** By E. Maria Albanesi. 12mo, pp. 326. McClure, Phillips & Co.

The authors of "The Court of Sacharissa" have written a sincere and amusing book where they might easily have produced an affected and dull one. They ask us, in the first place, to believe that certain whimsical gentlemen, calling themselves respectively the Exotic, the Ambassador, the Poet, the Man of Truth, the Scribe and the Mime, go strolling in the country, come upon a beautiful garden, and proceed with every circumstance of the most courtly politeness and the quaintest humor to make friends with Sacharissa, its mistress. In actual life this sort of thing does not happen, and even if it were to happen the interlopers would never dream of sitting about talking dainty nonsense to their hostess. But in this book absurdity is made to seem entirely natural, and the reader soon forgets to question the credibility of what Mr. Sheringham and Mr. Meakin have put before him. This is the kind of tale that is told in these pages, the speaker being the Exotic, who is relating one of the romances of his life: "I saw her go past the window, and I loved her to distraction; but she had a green feather in her hat, and so I realized that it could not be." Sacharissa is, of course, immediately interested. "Is that all the story?" she asks. "Yes," the Exotic replies. He is charged with being very impressionable. "I am," he says; "a green feather has always had a disastrous effect on me." We are well aware of the fact that this episode is not precisely brilliant in itself. But it is very amusing as it is introduced in "The Court of Sacharissa." The book flows on in the most leisurely fashion, demurely droll, capricious, poetic and charming. It is a clever fantasy, executed well and with originality.

Miss Brown's twelve short stories, gathered together under the general title of "High Noon," are delicate studies in psychology, morbid, but with a certain fine quality in them that excuses their morbidity. The author has reflected with a kind of tender sympathy on the strange experiences which visit the human mind and soul, the spiritual incidents that do not always obviously trouble the surface of things, but invariably leave their mark. These tales are worked out with ingenuity and they are written with an artistic touch. Some of them, like "There and Here," are remarkably successful in giving vivid reality to eerie themes. The book could have been made depressing, yet Miss Brown manages to avoid too gloomy a seriousness, and we find genuine pleasure in her rather mystical narratives.

"A Bachelor in Arcady" is a book of genial musings, interspersed with episodes of rural life, and embracing also, inevitably, a love story. The hero tells us of the scenes and types of the English countryside, he has amusing anecdotes to recite, and while the love story aforesaid receives due attention, it remains, after all, only part of an extremely miscellaneous fabric. The book is sunny, with a sweet and beguiling savor, and makes a cheerful oasis in a waste of stupid fiction.

Problem: What will happen when an innocent, inexperienced, truthful girl is suddenly entangled without her own volition in an engagement with a total stranger in order to save the domestic peace of a base intriguer who is her own sister? In the solution of this problem Mrs. Albanesi takes poor Susannah through many sorrows; whether she leaves her drowned in this grief or in a haven of joy we leave the reader to find out for himself. Susannah is drawn with genuine power. The maidenly sweetness and honesty of her, her tenderness for all who are sad and helpless, her sturdy self-respect, are joined to a feminine unreason and foolish pride as winning as they are amusing. She is the most attractive character in the book. The wicked sister is the conventional little schemer of Vanity Fair without whom most modern novelists would be lost. The invalid mother with a mania for betting on races is not realistic. The hero just falls short of being manly. The minor characters are more or less probable. But pretty and gentle Susannah is quite engaging enough to blind the reader to whatever faults the story possesses.

## WHOM TO ABUSE?

## A Question for the "Popular" Novelist.

Andrew Lang, in Longman's Magazine. It is not easy to think of a good large irritable set of people, easily hurt, and, when hurt, noisy. Whom are we to abuse if we want them to advertise us? The clergy are used to it; long ago was written the book about overmuch blaming the clergy. Solicitors are used to it; barristers do not care; schoolmasters, if they cry out, wall in educational journals, and doctors have been resigned butts since the days of Molière. Butchers are sensitive, but do not use the pen in expressing just indignation, nor do plumbers. It is easy to get a rise out of booksellers, but their voices do not carry far. A general assault, with

many personalities, on literary people in general, as in "The Dunciad," is not bad, but then literary people are not so very numerous, and the world reeks not of their laments. Of course, it is not difficult to stir up the Americans; but "there is no money," for a British hack, in insulting Americans or any other aliens. The late Mr. Douglas Brown, to be sure, wrote in a way far from friendly about a section of his own countrymen, but he merely won their admiration, somehow. Obviously the modes of gaining notoriety by scurrility are few, which is a fortunate circumstance.

## THE MAME COLLECTION.

## Another Sale of Old and Modern Paintings in Paris.

Last Sunday we alluded to the sale in Paris of the Binant collection, scheduled to begin next Wednesday. Since then M. Durand-Ruel has sent us another catalogue, that of the Mame collection, which will be dispersed at the Petit Gallery on April 26, 27, 28 and 29. It includes old and modern paintings and drawings, a quantity of Italian and other faience, Oriental porcelains, sculptures, tapestries and articles of furniture. These works of art represent the taste of more than one member of the well

## LITERARY NOTES.

Mr. Maarten Maartens's forthcoming novel, "Dorothea," is mentioned as perhaps the most elaborate one he has ever written.

The biography of the late Emile Zola which Mr. Ernest Vizetelly will bring out during the coming summer will contain some hitherto unpublished details relating to the Dreyfus case.

The last two volumes of the reissue of the Arber "English Garner" are to be brought out immediately. They contain fifteen collections of Elizabethan sonnets and a long introduction by Mr. Sidney Lee, which is said to embody a large amount of original research. He deals with the dependence of the Elizabethan sonnet on foreign examples, which he touched on in his "Life of Shakespeare," and he shows that a mass of Elizabethan sonnets, hitherto regarded as original, are literal translations from French or Italian.

There is a vigorous article on the true greatness of Thackeray in "The Fortnightly Review" which may be commended to all whose ideas on the subject need chastening. The author, Mr. H. H. Statham, believes that Thackeray's countrymen have entirely failed to do him justice. In the novels of modern life, he declares, Thackeray has shown a "knowledge of human nature, a variety of invention of human character, an instinctive power of giving to each personage

other day, at which four hundred maddens attended in that charming costume walked in procession through the ancient theatre of Arles to the music of a cantata composed by the author of "Mireille." He presented to each young girl a bit of jewelry and a diploma designed by an Arlesian artist.

Sir Archibald Geikie has just published his Reminiscences—a volume full of stories about the Scots. Here are some of them:

"Weel, Tam, are ye gaun hame wi' your work?" was the invariable greeting of a doctor to a tailor of his acquaintance, when he met him carrying a bundle. Once the tailor saw the doctor walking in a funeral procession. "Weel, doctor, are ye gaun hame wi' your work?" he asked.

Descending on the changes in life and work brought about by time, a farmer said: "When I was young I used to think my father hadna muckle sense, but my sons look on myself as a born esdoot."

At a funeral in Glasgow, a stranger who had taken his seat in one of the mourning coaches, excited the curiosity of the three other occupants, one of whom at last asked him:

"Ye'll be a brither of the corp?"  
"No, I'm no brither of the corp?"  
"Weel, then, ye'll be his cousin?"  
"No, I'm no that!"  
"Then ye'll be at least a frien' of the corp?"  
"No that either. To tell the truth, I've no been weel myself, and as my doctor has ordered me some carriage exercise, I thought this wad be the cheapest way to tak it."

He tells, for instance, of the Highlander who had been to Glasgow and seen that wonderful invention, the telegraph.

"What is it like?" his neighbors asked him. "If I trod on ma collic dog's tail in Oban," said Jack, "and it squeaked in Tombermory, that wad be a telegraph."

Then there is the story of the blacksmith who said to his minister:

"Ah, sir, if ye was ance richt drunk, ye wadna want ever to be sober again."

It is said that Matthew Arnold in the character of school inspector never assumed the stereotyped manner and coldly critical air usually associated with such an official. Mr. G. W. E. Russell says of him that he was "sympathetic without being condescending, and he reconciled the humblest drudge in a London school to his or her drudgery for the next twelve months:

See the tall figure, at once graceful and stately; the benign air, as of an affable archangel; the critical brow and inquiring eyeglass bent on some very immature performance in penmanship or needlework; and the frightened children and the anxious teacher, gradually lapsing into smiles and peace, as the great man tested the proficiency in some such humble art as spelling. "Well, my little man, and how do you spell dog?" "Please, sir, d-o-g." "Capital; very good, indeed. I couldn't do it better myself. And now let us go a little further, and see if we can spell cat." Chorus (excitedly)—"C-a-t." "Now, this is really excellent. (To the teacher)—You have brought them on wonderfully in spelling since I was here last. You shall have a capital report. Goodby."

In the new edition of the Charles Lamb "Letters," prepared by Canon Ainger shortly before his death, there are, we are glad to say, a number of letters hitherto unpublished.

A volume of Canon Ainger's lectures on Chaucer, Shakespeare, Cowper and other literary subjects will soon be brought out.

Some of the treasures in the possession of the firm of A. & C. Black are the almost priceless letters and manuscripts of De Quincey. Another treasure sometimes shown to a visitor reposes in a large safe. The door opens upon a number of volumes set in two rows. "These forty-one volumes," says "Public Opinion," "constitute what the immortal Sir Walter Scott termed his magnum opus. They are the Waverley Novels, with manuscript interleavings, and additions and corrections in his own handwriting, together with the appendices and the dedication to the King. You may even note there his own signature specially written for purposes of reproduction; that appended to the original dedication he did not regard as good or clear enough. The famous tomes are bound in a kind of Russian leather, but of stronger texture, and are impressed with his crest, 'Vigilantia.' They were discovered at Cadell's bookshop, in St. Andrew's Square, Edinburgh, and were bought, together with Scott's books, in 1829."

This firm is about to bring out Mr. M. Menpes's book on Whistler, and have in preparation reproductions of the portrait of Lady Meux, of certain of the Venetian pictures and of the etching "Gold and Blue." The volume will be issued in this country by the Macmillan Company.

A recently published volume of Cheshire local history contains this bit of biography:

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, far better known as "Lewis Carroll," was born in the quiet parsonage here (at Daresbury). He lived among the meanest animals, and knew them as friends and playmates; "he numbered certain snails and toads among his intimate friends." So he learnt to see the creatures as others could not see them, and so he taught himself those delightful fancies which in later life he wrote about, and so became the author of some of the best children's books which have ever been written. Did the country of his birth suggest to him that delightful character, the Cheshire Cat, who discoursed so learnedly to Alice on the subject of babies and pigs, and who faded gracefully away till there was nothing left but the grin?

In another recent contribution to English local history mentioned by "The Athenaeum" are two records of a remarkable Puritan name. In 1621, there was buried "The-Lord-is-neere Priest," and in 1640 "The-Lord-is-neere, wife of John Kneil." In the same parish register which has these entries the parish clerk makes an amusing addition in setting down the burial of one Elizabeth Horwood, widow, in 1678: "And she made her will and gave me £5. I wish that all good peopell that are buried in Barnestaple would doe the like if the bee abell. John Sloier, clarke."

An eager world is to be offered soon a collection of the letters of Henrik Ibsen.

The Auld Brig o' Ayr has just been closed to the public on account of its dangerous condition. It was very old when Burns made it say in a poetical dialogue with the new Brig.

I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn.

Mr. W. H. Mallock's new novel, "Veil of the Temple," will soon be published. It has a religious atmosphere.

There are to be nine volumes in the complete edition of Ben Jonson's works which the Oxford University Press will issue. The scholars in charge of the work are Professor Herford and Mr. Percy Simpson. For the last ten years Mr. Simpson has been making a critical examination of Jonson's text.

"Enid" is the title of the novel of English life which is coming from the pen of Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall, the author of "Said the Fisherman."



IN THE FARMYARD.

(From the pastels by J. F. MILLET.)

known publishing house at Tours. So far as we may judge from the illustrated catalogue, they are of serious interest.

The list begins with a portrait by Antonello da Messina which was once in the Beurnonville collection, and it embraces examples of many other schools. There are two Bouchers, paintings of children, which look promising in the plates, and there are portraits by Clouet, Holbein and Dürer. One of the most attractive of the plates is from a portrait of the young Duc de Choiseul, by Drouais. Fragonard, Greuze, Nattier and Chardin are represented, but more interesting than any of their works is the portrait of a man which is attributed to Mantegna. The portrait of a woman in a cap by Perronneau seems a peculiarly admirable specimen. Among the modern pictures the Barbizon painters figure conspicuously, and in this part of the collection we find two evidently notable pastels by Millet, one of which we reproduce. In the group of sculptures there is a charming Bacchante, a statuette in terra cotta, by Clodion. The collection, in short, has every appearance of artistic importance.

## VERDI'S REGRET.

From M. A. P.

Mr. Le Queux tells a pretty story of Verdi's modesty. His father was an intimate friend of the great maestro, and the novelist in his youthful days used to visit him at his palace at Genoa. One evening they were alone in the great musician's private study, having dined together, when the servant entered with the post. Among the letters was a roll of music, which, on being opened, proved to be a new waltz by a Viennese composer, who had dedicated it to the great master of opera. Verdi first hummed it to himself, swaying his head the while, and afterward, seating himself at the piano, played it off. Then, having finished, the man whose works had charmed the world and brought in colossal royalties, turned to the young novelist, and, sighing, said: "Ah! How I wish I could write popular music like that!"

his appropriate and characteristic utterance, which, if we cannot call it equal to, is at least analogous to that possessed by Shakespeare. In this sense he has at all events come nearer to Shakespeare than any other writer in our language has attained."

That cry of cynicism against Thackeray, Mr. Statham truly says, is really too stupid for one's patience; "one cannot understand the nature of the perceptions of the people who raise it. There never was a writer whose love for humanity was more obvious, more genuine, more sincere. . . . I believe that this charge of cynicism is really a kind of revenge taken by the commonplace crowd against Thackeray for having told them the truth about themselves too plainly. In inditing his comedy of modern life, he was no doubt spurred to a great extent by a moral indignation, which had its groundwork in an intense love of truth and hatred of shams."

In his new book, "Heralds of Revolt," Dr. William Barry discusses the lives and works of various authors, among them Amiel, Nietzsche and George Eliot.

Another new book which will particularly interest students of literature is Professor Raleigh's "Shakespeare," which is coming out in the "English Men of Letters" series.

Among the new letters in the "Complete" Ruskin, now in process of publication, is a particularly interesting one, dated 1852:

I cannot write anything but what is in me and interests me. I never could write for the public—I never have written except under the conviction of a thing's being important, wholly irrespective of the public's thinking so; and all my power, such as it is, would be lost the moment I tried to catch people by fine writing. You know I promised them no Romance; I promised them stones. Not even bread. I do not feel any romance in Venice. It is simply a heap of ruins trodden under foot by such men as Ezekiel describes, xxi, 31, and this is the great fact which I want to teach.

Frédéric Mistral, the Provençal poet, is trying to organize at Arles a movement for the perpetuation of the beautiful feminine costume of the country—a dress which for countless generations has doubled the beauty of the dark-eyed Arlésiennes. He arranged a festival the