

CRITICAL REVIEWS OF THIS SEASON'S NEWEST PUBLICATIONS

Many Entertaining American Stories Have Appeared: Mr. Chambers at His Lightest, Mr. Whitman's on Italian Impressions, C. G. D. Roberts's Animal Tales—Good Books on Interesting Topics.

Two vivid sketches of Italian life, combined with a tale of elemental passion, make up Stephen French Whitman's "The Isle of Life" (Charles Scribner's Sons), an unusually well written book. It opens with a description of the cosmopolitan society of Rome, with much stress on its frivolity and corruption. The hero is a rich American endowed with a strong will, which he gratifies preferably by rough methods and in defiance of conventions. He pushes overboard from a steamer the heroine, also a rich American, who has renounced his advances, and swims with her to an islet off the coast of Sicily. Whether his actions are due to the present fashion in fiction for violently primitive emotion, or whether they represent the author's observations of the habits of the unduly rich, we cannot tell; at any rate he talks at the cave man method of clubbing his reluctant fair one into submission. Instead he fights the cholera in an ignorant and superstitious Sicilian community, is converted to human views of life and, of course, wins the heroine's affection. There is much discussion of the one man and one woman theory of love, but the description of the island and its people is poetic, the author has studied his Sicilians well, and he keeps his readers interested.

Though the little heroine is very good and her perpetual gladness may pall somewhat, "Polyanna," by Eleanor H. Porter (L. C. Page and Company), is a thoroughly enjoyable and shipshape book. A little girl who has been taught the game of finding something to be glad for in whatever happens, and to do at once what she thinks is right, is landed suddenly in a somewhat fossilized New England village. She applies her scheme of life to the people about her with startling results, as funny as they are pathetic. It is easy to overdo this sort of thing, but the author manages to keep it well in hand; the incidents are natural, the people are lifelike and pleasant, though the girl's sternness may be a little overdone, and the little girl is a child without it. It is a book for grownup people who will understand the criticism of conventions; it would be a disaster if many little girls should undertake to imitate the heroine.

An intimate and realistic picture of American family life as it was in New England thirty years ago is now offered by Olive Higgins Prouty in "Bobbie, General Manager" (Frederick A. Stokes Company). The narrator is an energetic girl, who must have been not altogether easy to get along with. She tells of family troubles, of little domestic tragedies, of the struggle between the old order and the new, and her trials will appeal to all middle-aged readers. The author has preserved the old-fashioned way of looking at things to a remarkable degree; it is the world of "Little Women" that she depicts. The story itself with its various love episodes is interesting.

It is a pleasing story of life in the woods that Herbert Kitchin tells in "Stephen March's Way" (Houghton Mifflin Company). It opens with a brutal fight in a lumber camp, a false accusation of murder and the flight of the accused man into the wilderness. There is little roughness after this, the story proceeding with the pursuit of the man by an accomplished young detective, who rescues the supposed criminal's attractive daughter and fetches the corpus delicti alive to civilization. The story is of far less importance, however, than the delightful accounts of the life in the woods. It is pretty cruel of the author to draw in the reader's innocent young man who had written a book of stories of the wilds without having visited them. If death were the penalty for that a wide swath would be cut in contemporary fiction.

The real inhabitants of the wilds are the actors in the short stories which Charles G. D. Roberts has gathered under the title "The Feet of the Puritive" (Macmillan). It is the tragedies of the creatures of the field that he tells of, and if he substitutes them for human beings in the adventures he relates Mr. Roberts differs from many nature writers in rarely attributing human motives or sentiments to his beasts. The illustrations are remarkably good and effective.

Those who like sentimentality will like Frank Waller Allen's "The Lovers of Skye" (the Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis), while more matter of fact readers may enjoy a sequence of pretty pictures which can convert a stalwart young Kentuckian into a faint and keep him in more than childlike ignorance till he is 29. Twice he is represented as bathing wholly unclad in the Ohio, in almost identical words, like a refrain; once he invites the heroine to do likewise, but she refuses. It may be because she is from Indiana. They sing one ingenious love song throughout the little book, interspersing much colloquial slang, and infect the whole village with it. It is rather jarring to find that the hero allows his older sister to support him by giving music lessons in a community where there are few children, but that work is not faultless. It is surprising also to find that running a ferry across the Ohio at irregular intervals between two villages that have little trade should be a source of wealth, but the author is not troubled about gross, practical matters; he is trying to attune the pipes of Pan to the reverberations from the Indiana to the Kentucky shore of the Ohio.

Woman, Eugenics and Mr. Chambers. With his usual bevy of pretty and fascinating young women, the kind that attracts crowds even to musical comedies, Robert Chambers in "The Gay Rebellion" (Appleton) starts in to make fun of the woman movement in

his lightest tone of farce. He is always bright and amusing with his ingeniously sudden and topsyturvy love making, when he has no serious purpose in mind, and he begins with a whimsical and daring idea to which he holds for some time. The plan of emancipated woman to kidnap physically perfect young men for the purpose of mating them properly, so as to improve the race, will interest the reader in the problem itself and still more arouse his curiosity as to how Mr. Chambers is going to handle it without impropriety. As a matter of course there is no trouble about the young women, for when he is in this vein Mr. Chambers's heroes are always perfect, not merely in bodily charm but in every other way. We may say at once that, apart from the ground idea, he manages to avoid offending the most fastidious delicacy, and when he is in difficulties saves himself by a stutter. Moreover, he disappoints those who are watching his skilful balancing by dropping the whole subject of eugenics after he has prepared the preliminaries and turning to the woman question by itself. There is where the artistic side of the book breaks down. That it should turn soon into a succession of distinct short stories, with the connecting plot rapidly fading away, is a process to which Mr. Chambers's readers are accustomed. It is no great fault, for the reader keeps amused all the same. The author, however, seems to tire of the woman's right theme, his touch becomes heavier toward the end and the farce becomes horse-play. He rather spoils a pretty, if not very original, ghost story by mixing up the woman business with it. The last story is a sentimental tragedy of the Great White Way. These two solid morsels have no proper place in the dish of sweetened froth that Mr. Chambers has served up.

The book will pretty surely be a "best seller," for Mr. Chambers by this time is a past master in playing on the sensibilities and the intellectual limitations of the "matinee girl." This time he appeals to her without the collaboration of Mr. C. D. Gibson, but the pictures, which have the character of decorative vignettes mainly, are in harmony with the text. Some day, perhaps, before he has wholly forgotten his early ideals, his long list of popular successes may enable Mr. Chambers to write as he pleases, and to remind his readers of the artist he once was.

It is in the tone of an entertainment that Weedon Grossmith recites his reminiscences in "From Studio to Stage" (John Lane Company), for every incident, however slight, reminds him of a more or less relevant story that is always mildly amusing. He is reticent in a curious way about himself, not that he holds facts back, for he describes every house he lived in, every school he attended, the pictures he

collected, and the people he met. It is in the tone of an entertainment that Weedon Grossmith recites his reminiscences in "From Studio to Stage" (John Lane Company), for every incident, however slight, reminds him of a more or less relevant story that is always mildly amusing. He is reticent in a curious way about himself, not that he holds facts back, for he describes every house he lived in, every school he attended, the pictures he

HUMORS AND TRAGEDIES OF NEW H. RIDER HAGGARD TALE

The humor that Mr. H. Rider Haggard supplies to his careful yet lively romances is strong rather than subtle. In the new and characteristically eventful tale, "Child of the Storm" (Longmans, Green and Company), we find the stout and frequently genial old Zulu chief, by name Umbezi, experimenting with the imperfect gun presented to him by Allan Quartermain—great white man's most ancient remembered. It would be painful to think upon the fact that this gift to the Zulu chief was a particularly bad gun with an unpleasant habit of going off at half cock, but Allan Quartermain explains that its peculiarities and deficiencies had been frankly made known to the beneficiary, who jumped notwithstanding at the opportunity to possess it. Old Umbezi took the gun into his hands with joy, and it went off promptly. The humor that is a part of all of Mr. Haggard's stories is at this point not restrained. The narrative runs, after recording Chief Umbezi's words of grateful and enthusiastic acceptance: "Now while he was speaking he handled the gun, that was loaded; observing which I moved behind him. It went off in due course, its recoil knocking him backward for that gun was a devil to kick, and its bullet cutting the top off the ear of one of his wives." The description here responds to the idea of the suddenness of the action, but it is good enough to afford detail, which is demanded by the curious. It says: "The body fell screaming, leaving a bit of her ear upon the ground."

We are not called upon to believe that the sentiments of Zulu husbands are extravagantly delicate. We read that Umbezi poked himself up, rubbed his nose and said: "What does it matter? Would that the evil spirit in the gun had cut off her tongue and not her ear! It is the Worn Out Old Cow's own fault; she is always peeping into everything like a monkey." The chief's taunt's reproach of his wife for being alone in years will be noticed. He was himself old and fat; he had small right call names; but it may well be believed that this rude and thoughtless habit of men extends even to Zululand.

Allan Quartermain went to attend the wounded lady in his quality of physician. He describes it plainly what he felt. "Entering a large hut, he related, 'I found the lady so impolitely named 'Old Cow' in a parlous state. There she lay upon the floor, an unpleasant object because of the blood that had escaped from her wound, surrounded by a crowd of other women and of children. At regular intervals she announced that she was dying and emitted a fearful yell, whereupon all the audience yelled also; in short, the place was a perfect pandemonium.' We must say that we were glad that this Zulu wife did not submit quietly to the great indignity that she had sustained. We are well satisfied that this was a proper occasion for protest.

Surgery in Zululand was not at this period in an advanced state. Allan Quartermain suppressed the activities of an assistant, a native practitioner, who was "trimming up the Old Cow's ear with a pair of blunt nail scissors." The native practitioner demurred at the interruption. "Oh!" he said in a hoarse whisper, "might it not perhaps be as well to leave her alone? If she bled

to death, at any rate she would be quieter." The humane Englishman rebuked his dark fellow-countryman, inquiring sharply if he was a hyena, and applied a strong solution of caustic to the wound. The native held the lady's head between his knees while this was being effected and received a fierce bite in the calf of his leg. The patient was far from being grateful for the scientific attentions paid to her. She seized an earthenware pot full of hot water and hurled it effectively at Quartermain as he was crawling out through the beehive of the hut. It caught him behind and caused him natural and humiliating pain. Old Umbezi was waiting outside. "What is the matter?" he inquired. "Nothing," smiled sweetly. "Your wife wishes you to go in and soothe her." Old Umbezi went in (this did not suggest itself to us as verisimilar), but immediately backed out again through the beehive with an iron pot on his head and the contents of the pot viciously besmearing his person. This old Zulu who shot off his wife's ear was the father of Mameena, the bronze Venus, the heroine of the tale.

Saduku was a remarkably good looking young Zulu. "He was tall and magnificently formed young man," of whom Allan Quartermain records: "His face struck me more even than his grace, strength and stature. Undoubtedly it was a very fine face, with little or nothing of the negro type about it; indeed he might have been a rather dark colored Arab, to which stock he probably traced his descent. His eyes were large and rather melancholy, and in his reserved, dignified air there was something that showed him to be no common fellow, but one of breeding and intellect." We hoped for a time that the breeding and intellect of Saduku would prevail with the lovely Mameena. Alas! it is doubtful if she was capable of anything like a monkey. There is a picture of her about as I write it. Allan Quartermain; this was just before she took poison. Perhaps she loved the Englishman. He is too modest to leave us quite sure upon the point. She was the ruin of many men. Judging by the picture (it is very handsomely presented on the paper cover) she was much superior to Quartermain in looks. He has a dreadful scowl, whereas she has a smile that is as bright as the sun.

There are many points of sharp interest in the tale. Zkhal, the dwarf and wizard, could "smell out" of fenders and pour moonshine. When Umbezi was tossed by the buffalo the horns missed him and he was merely smudged by the nose of the animal, though he was elevated to the distance of many feet. So, the servant of Quartermain, was plucked fearfully by the beak of the alert female bird when he sought refuge in the nest of an eagle. At page 158 Mameena says to Quartermain, "I am very pleased," and we thought how readily in that far land she had caught on to the current English conversational style. Terrible things happen in the tale; it is a great deal more than merely playful. "I weep as I write it," says Quartermain in relating the death of Prince Umbezi. He was one of the victims of the Zulu Venus. There were enough of them, and their fate was dreadful enough to satisfy even the very exacting person.

Recent British Novels. A queer and interesting essay in clayonism will be found in Dion Clayton Calhoun's "St. Quin" (John Lane Company). A rich young Englishman of good family, brought up in the approved conventional manner, finds on attaining his majority that he must use a legacy in seeing the world for five years. He does this in an eccentric manner, returns to his conventional marriage suitably and then begins to hunt for romance in London. This enables the author to discourse on the possibilities of that city. The hero finds a Georgian house, furnishes it artistically, places in it several picturesque details and retires to it to dream whenever he needs a rest. His wife, fortunately, has a romantic streak also; she escapes some matrimonial perils, stumbles on her husband's shelter and wins his love. Several subsidiary characters are far more lifelike than the principals. It is an entertaining fantasy.

"Guinea Gold" (Moffat, Yard and Company) the impressions formed during a visit to British New Guinea, are used by Beatrice Grimshaw to give color to a tale of love and adventure. The hardships that the hero and his comrades endure in their quest for the gold ledge, indicated by a manuscript that comes into their hands with unusual speed, are such as to deter other prospective settlers, though the fact that they were followed by an spy with no great trouble, may be some encouragement. The picturesque beachcombers, male and female, belong to all South Sea fiction. The tropical passion which overthrows the principles

of the conscientious Ulsterman is to be found in every clime. The author has blended her materials with a skilled hand and has turned out an exciting story. It is a remarkably unsophisticated gentleman of middle age who relates his experiences in Edward Burke's "Bachelor's Buttons" (Moffat, Yard and Company) and it requires his marvelous instinct for character to save him from disaster. He describes humorously his conflicts with the many females who try to oppress him, but the reader will be relieved when he falls into the hands of the right girl at last. It is a pleasant, gentle tale of lovable people with the humor rather long drawn out, as is the English fashion. The reader will regret the killing off of the sharp witted little girl to whom the bachelor owes so much.

There is much sprightly satire of London society and fashionable fads in "The Unbearable Bassington," by H. H. Munro, whose pen name is Saki (John Lane and Company). The tragedy of the hero's mother would appeal more to the reader's sympathy if the author had shown the young man in any light that was not unpleasant. He seems to be an exaggerated type of the "boudoir." He not only upsets his mother's plans, but in every case does it in an unpardonably ungentlemanly manner. The reader must feel that his extinction in Africa is a loss to nobody, save to the unfortunate mother whose affection has awakened too late. He is no better than the equally disagreeable and selfish young man who picks up the plums that he misses. It is a type that is by no means peculiar to England, but that hardly exists in the unmitigated form Mr. Munro gives to it.

The War in the Balkan Countries. The armistice in the war against the Ottoman empire, which is still going on, is the cause of the large first crop of books on the operations in the field, as the correspondents of the great newspapers were called back and thus enabled to put their articles in shape for publication. It is the first rough material on the military history, for the books are made up substantially of the articles that were sent as events occurred, with the hastiest of revisions. They serve the purpose of informing readers of what they wish to know for the moment and have the merit of being impressions formed at the time and place where things happened.

The volumes that came together cover the opposite sides of the fighting. On the one hand, Lieut. Hermsenig Wagner, correspondent of the Vienna Reichspost and the London Daily Mail, advances "With the Victorious Bulgarians" (Houghton Mifflin Company). More than half of his volume is taken up with a survey of recent history, of the events leading to the war, with accounts of the Bulgarian army and of the organization of the Bulgarian army; the rest of the book describes the operations the author followed down to the armistice. The book is illustrated with useful maps and with many portraits and other pictures. The other side is reported by Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, correspondent of the London Daily Telegraph, and his brother, Seabury Ashmead-Bartlett, in "With the Turks in Thrace" (George H. Doran Company). The introductory matter in this is much briefer, the authors have a good deal to say about the difficulties that beset war correspondents in these days, their story is one of defeats and their surmises as to the future are naturally colored by that fact. This book also is illustrated with good photographs.

Book of Travel. Though Hungary with its dependencies and Bosnia are purposely omitted, James Baker gives a vivid picture of the great variety of peoples that are combined under one name in "Austria, Her People and Their Home" (John Lane Company). It is a descriptive book, the guide book touch in which is pardonable because the author goes into places that few travellers visit, and is adorned with pretty colored vignettes by Donald Maxwell. The author starts in the north with Bohemia, Moravia, Galicia and Bukovina, then hastens to Vienna. His next excursion is south through the south Slav and Italian provinces to the Dalmatian coast. Next he travels along the Danube through the German lands and ends up the mountains in Tyrol and the Salzburgerland. The volume opens up interesting possibilities for travellers who dare to leave the beaten track. A chatty book of impressions of the country around Khartoum and of the natives has been written by E. S. Stevens in "My Sudan Year" (George H. Doran Company). The most interesting part is the account of a trip into the sudd district and the description of the efforts to keep the Nile clear. The attempts to convey some idea of the natives' ways of thinking are frequently amusing; the author has tried to understand them and to consider their manners with some sympathy. The book is illustrated with good photographs. The story of an official trip made seven years ago by Ellhu Stewart is told in "Down the Mackenzie and Up the Yukon" (John Lane Company). The narrative has the directness and some of

the dryness of a Government report; the journey on the two rivers mentioned in the title seems to have been pretty commonplace, as the author travelled by steamer; he happened to go down with Mr. Stefansson and to see white Eskimos from Herschel Island. The most interesting part of his trip was that across country from Fort McPherson to the Porcupine River and the journey by boat down that stream. At the end are remarks on the resources of the district traversed. Seven years are a long time in the development of the Northwest, so that this book seems rather belated. It is illustrated.

An amazing amount of ground was covered by John U. Higginbotham in his "Three Weeks in France" (The Reilly and Britton Company, Chicago). From Havre through Normandy, the Chateaux country, to the Pyrenees, across the south of France, to Mont Blanc and back to Paris, all by train. The account of his travels may entertain his friends, what interest it can have to others, save as a demonstration of how many places in Baedeker may be reached in the shortest time, we fail to see. There are good illustrations.

Other Books. A young woman with no special talent and no training, who feels obliged to earn a living, writes to her friends who have gone out into the world for advice. Their replies, with those of some volunteers, make up Isabel Woodman Wyatt's "The Small I Do Girl" (L. C. Page and Company, Boston). The first inevitably is a woman reporter; she relates her experiences, weighing the advantages and the disadvantages; milliners, shop helpers, teachers, telegraph girls, social girls, chorus girls and others follow. There is little that is helpful in any of the letters and the reader will not be surprised that the questioner gives up the problem and prefers to marry the young man who has asked her.

A pretty interesting book has been put together by J. Bernard Masson under the title "Mines and Their Story" (Sidgwick and Jackson; J. B. Lippincott Company). The author treats of the three principal objects with which British investors are concerned—gold, diamonds and silver, keeping their stories separate. For each he tells the history of discovery, explains where the chief fields lie and describes the processes of extraction, old and new. Then he takes up, much more briefly, the staples of the foundation of British industry, coal and iron. The book is intended for popular use and is illustrated. An authoritative scientific treatise on an interesting topic, Dr. T. G. Bonney's "Volcanoes, Their Structure and Significance," appears in a third, revised and enlarged edition (G. P. Putnam's Sons). The author here takes into consideration the theories on the eruption of Mount Pelee, an event that happened too soon before the second edition was published for him to give it due attention. His style is eminently readable, his presentation of the subject is attractive and the illustrations are appropriate. The author's knowledge sustains another blow in Prof. William B. Herms' little handbook, "Malaria, Cause and Control" (Macmillan). The author sums up the history of malaria correctly, explains the iniquity of the mosquito and suggests means for his extermination. His fight against malaria has been made in California, which is the reason that the detailed accounts of specific campaigns are drawn from that State. It is interesting to note that the superstitious Italian peasants a hundred years ago ascribed malaria to insects, just as they believed that consumption was infectious; modern science has ceased to jeer at their ignorance.

The rapid spread of a simple card game arouses the hope in optimists that the day of bridge and auction is passing and is the reason for the appearance of two manuals of instruction, "Coocean, Also Known as Rum," by R. F. Foster (Frederick A. Stokes Company) and "Coo-Coo," by W. Dalton (J. B. Lippincott Company). Mr. Foster's little book is scientific and comprehensive; Mr. Dalton's is briefer and simpler. Both authors seem to be under the impression that if the Bath Club had not taken up the game in England it would not have been fashionable and both agree in giving a Mexican etymology to the name. Into a slim volume of only sixteen pages that fits the pocket Harold Whittington has condensed "Car Troubles, Their Symptoms and Their Cure" (Harpers). It is intended to give instant relief to the motorist in difficulties. The troubles, which are nearly all with the motive power, are classified methodically so that the victim who has familiarized himself with the book can turn at once to the right place for the remedy.

An antiquarian volume that can only interest the specialist in genealogy is sent to us by Arthur Meredith Burke, "Indexes to the Ancient Testimentary Records of Westminster" (Eyre and Spottiswoode, London). The few pages describing the records are of some interest. The wills recorded range between the years 1594 and 1700. The lists of names take up the greater part of the volume; they are in two categories, the wills registered in the court of peculiars and those kept in the consistory court. It seems to be a patient and careful piece of work.

Seventh Printing of the Season's Great Success The Happy Warrior By A. S. M. HUTCHINSON UNQUESTIONABLY the great success of the season here, 'as it is in England, where it has reached a third edition, 'To quote a few late reviews: 'A volume of such unalloyed delight.'—Frederic Taber Cooper in February Bookman. 'A. S. M. Hutchinson has scored his second big success with 'The Happy Warrior.'—New York Times. 'A Romance of great strength and originality.'—Chicago Tribune. 'In a word, it is a great book.'—Boston Herald. With frontispiece, 448 pages, \$1.35 net; postpaid \$1.46.

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