

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, WOMAN. By Max O'Rell
New York: The Abbey Press.

Max O'Rell's naïveté in setting before the world some three hundred pages concerning his appreciation of women would be amusing were not the specifications and generalisations so trite—not to say banal. Regarded as a Frenchman's unbiassed impressions of American women, of their freedom and of the effect of this freedom on the women of other nations, his remarks are not without interest. But the general tone of the book smacks too much of the cleverness of the sawdust ring, and brings vividly before our minds a tight frock-coated Frenchman, waving airy kisses to a simpering feminine public. He dwells on the effect which the different types of women have on him individually; and, looked at from a perfectly impartial point of view, we can't see what earthly interest this can be to any one but Mr. O'Rell. His "Maxims for Married Men and Married Women" certainly come under the head of cheap wit. We could be as funny as that ourselves. The most popular newspaper of the day has its "heart-to-heart talks with women," where "maxims" as profound as these are abundant. When he sinks to such commonplaces as his jeers at mothers-in-law, words fail us.

Don't marry women who have big bouquets of roses and orchids sent to them.

If you are bald, never make love to a woman taller than you. Looked at from below, you are all right.

Never put your hand near your lady's waist-band or round her neck. Place it about the middle of her back; there are no pins there.

Never let your lady-love see you without a collar; no, not even the wife of your bosom. A man's head without a collar is like a bouquet without a holder.

After several chapters of this sort of thing, interspersed with varied advice on the choice of a wife—valuable to any one lacking common-sense and inclined to listen—he goes on to assert that

A woman does not love a man because she feels it her duty to love him. Love has nothing to do with duty. You cannot help falling in love, any more than you can help becoming grey or bald; and you may fall in love against all the interests in life. The more you argue against love, the more you love. Love has nothing to do with arguing and reasoning, any more than it has with duty and gratitude.

That being the case so clearly put, we are

surprised that the author does not see the futility of "maxims."

He has the rooted dislike of his sex to the New Woman, and his remarks concerning her are very much to the point.

Where is that New Woman to be found? Put together a hundred women, intelligent and of good society; take out the beautiful ones; then take out the married ones who are loved by their husbands and children, and kindly seek the New Woman among what is left—ugly women, old maids and disappointed and neglected wives. . . . I pity from the bottom of my heart the good woman who is not to know the whispers of love of a good husband or the caresses of little children, but I am not prepared to see life become a burden for her sake. . . . Women, priests and poultry never have enough, but in wishing to extend her empire woman will destroy it.

He scores the British matron for her prudery.

Her ears are most easily shocked, but not her eyes. She objects to the word, not to the thing. In her way she is a realist. The thing speaks for itself; it is the truth, whereas the word suggests to her fantastic imagination the most objectionable ideas. . . . When I reflect that Eve, after eating an apple, discovered that she was naked, I cannot help thinking that a little bite at that fruit might be of service to many ladies before they leave their dressing-rooms to go to a ball.

Writing for an American public, he would not be a Frenchman if he did not express in glowing terms his admiration for its women. He admires their unconventionality, their unaffected ways, and he pays them a tribute after the manner of his country.

When women were born, a fairy attended the birth of every one of them. Each woman received a gift. The American woman, arriving late, the fairies gathered together and decided to make her a present of part of all the attributes conferred on all the other women. The result is that she has the smartness and the bright look of a Frenchwoman and the shapely, sculptural lines of an Englishwoman. Ah! but added to that she has a characteristic trait peculiarly her own, an utter absence of affectation, a naturalness of bearing, which makes her unique, a national type. There is not in the world a woman to match her in a drawing-room. There she stands among the women of all nationalities, a silhouette *bien découpée*, herself, a queen.

We can see him with his hat in his hand, his hand on his heart, bowing low to her whose intelligence he places above that of all other women. That being the case, it would be safe to predict that, in spite of,

possibly because of, the epigrammatic tendency of the book, she will find neither any fund of amusement nor food for deep thought in *Her Royal Highness, Woman*. But perhaps,

notwithstanding the preface, the book was meant for the special delectation of American men, for whom the author seems to have a good-natured contempt.

NOVEL NOTES



SALAMMBO. By Gustave Flaubert. Retold from the French by Zénaïde A. Ragozin. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

It was, perhaps, hardly necessary to publish another translation of Flaubert's Eastern masterpiece, since there was, at least, one in existence entirely satisfactory; but one welcomes any trustworthy reproduction of *Salammbô* which is likely to bring this epic of realism within the reach of English readers. Its subject is the revolt of the Carthaginian mercenaries in the third century B.C., and the book is distinguished by long passages of extraordinary force and brilliancy; indeed, it were worth obtaining the book to read the description of an African sunrise, and we cannot resist giving a passage, because it also affords an excellent illustration of the translator's work:

All at once a sheaf of light burst forth in the East. To the left, far below, the canals of Megara flashed through the verdure of the gardens with their silvery windings. The conical roofs of the temples, the stairs, the terraces, the ramparts, gradually cut out their sharp outlines against the pale amber dawn; and all around the peninsula on which the city stood a belt of white foam skirted the emerald-green sea, which seemed almost congealed in the coolness of the morning. As the rosy-hued sky went widening off into the distance, the tall houses seemed to rise up along the sloping streets, crowding one another like a flock of black goats scurrying down the hills. The empty streets seemed to grow longer and longer; only the palm-trees, which here and there grew out of the walls, appeared immovable; the well-filled cisterns looked like silver shields dropped in the centre of the courtyards; the beacon of the lighthouse on the promontory was beginning to pale. At the very summit of the Acropolis, in the cypress grove, the sacred steeds of Eshmûn, feeling the coming of the light, struck the marble

parapet with their forehoofs, and neighed their greeting to the sun.

Salammbô can never have the vogue of *Madame Bovary*, that merciless indictment of romanticism and dreary description of the banality of French provincial life, but in some ways it is a more amazing illustration of Flaubert's power, who added to the minute realism of Balzac a glow and splendour which were his own. It seems, indeed, impossible for any novelist to interest his readers in life long ago; for however much we appreciate the accuracy of the staging, we are always outside the characters. We are never in perfect sympathy with their motives or feelings, and turn with respect, but also with relief, to human life nearer our own time, and under the sway of those emotions which are forming our own minds. Yet it is open to argue that out of Flaubert's five volumes—three of which, *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, *Sentimental Education* and *The Tales*, are not well known in England—*Salammbô* was Flaubert's most magnificent achievement. An excellent translation of a work of perfect art.

Ian Maclaren.

J. DEVLIN—BOSS. By Francis Churchill Williams. Boston: D. Lothrop & Company. \$1.50.

When one considers the immense possibilities which politics in this country offer to the novelist, one wonders that more has not been made of them. Perhaps it is the fault of the women readers, who seem to get more than their share of the credit for the overworked swashbuckler. Be that as it may, *The Honourable Peter Stirling* has not had nearly so many imitators as have *The Prisoner of Zenda* and *Richard Carvel*. The author of *J. Devlin—Boss*, one can readily see, has been in close touch with