

might have been painted by the most painstaking and methodical of artists. Several possible clues are given: his habit of working from memory rather than from nature, his oft-repeated sigh, "If I could only paint it without paint!" and his insatiable desire to repaint his finished pictures; but the problem remains practically intact for some future investigator.

The book is not only the most important contribution to the literature that has grown up around George Inness, but is one of the most interesting and most valuable biographies yet inspired by an American artist.

Carl H. P. Thurston.

IV

GULD, THE CAVERN KING*

A happy experience for all children—and again we have to say "of whatever age"—lies in Mary L. B. Branch's *Guld, the Cavern King*. This lovely bit of imaginative writing is dedicated to the author's daughter, Anna Hempstead Branch. And one is certain that it was on such beautiful fare, so phrased, so fancied, that Miss Branch's poetry, and her nature, were first fed.

The story of Guld is laid in the land of the kobalds, in deep caverns and misty ways. But the ways lead out, and all through the book come the intimations of it—the "noon-spot," where the cavern people came to see whether it was noon, because this spot before the king's door glowed a little when noon came; the high windows in the rooms of the kings, because kings must have the light near; the cave "with a sky,"

**Guld, the Cavern King*. By Mary L. B. Branch. Boston: Sherman, French and Company.

where Uncle Bonn crept away in secret; the long stair, leading to another stair, and another, up which the foster-mother went to part the vines and see outside, and from which she brought back the two fresh red roses; the replies of the hill people, on market-day, when Little King Guld questions them and after long thought, says:

I should like to step out.

And last, the renouncing of the kingdom to go forth, half the people following. In all this the imagery, and the sheer art of the handling, and the quaint, lovely phrasing give their bestowals not less than the really exciting adventures of little Guld. In all the literature of childhood, there is nothing of greater charm than the three pages of the little chapter "Choose Your Ruler." Here the long threads are drawn into a shining fassel of a minute, and art, and adventure, and the symbolising of eternal verities combine to make a moving climax.

The gentle atmosphere of certain bits, given as faint, little repetends mark the story as the children's own. "Very well, since you have thought of it"—comes with the power of some loved family phrase, grown dear through covering with it many a moment of minds not quite one, but instantly fused when those words fall. The cave that was "room-shaped," making once-for-all an entity of the word "room," and no longer a generic. And the serpents' dens. And the hair that went up, not in curls, but in the beginnings of curls. And Hippa, who never smiled, because "she was of a very serious disposition,"—making a lady of a phrase. All the words of the

author come with gentle authority, even "Some writers have made the mistake of stating that kobold cows are blue, but this is not so."

It is a joyous and memorable little book, with its chapters all hung upon texts of William Morris and

Philip Bourke Marston and Lewis Carroll and John Davidson and Herrick. Every child will be happier and will love beautiful things a little more if Guld comes to live where he lives.

Zona Gale.