

it from the jurisdiction of the reviewer of fiction.

The heroes of the novel are twins, separated in youth, and each, in manhood, called to fight for his country, one attaching the idea of patriotism to the North and the other to the South. These twins, known in the army as Junior Morgan and Sergeant Morgan, are unknown to each other, and are always riding across country, bearing important dispatches. It is in describing these rides that the author shows off his astronomical lore:

"The country was open," he says. "The stars were out—in front of Junior shone Arcturus and at his right rear Capella. Seney could see the Pleiades hanging over Frederick, and southward the Bowman, while in the zenith over all the three was Vega, shining peacefully—in the zenith for Jackson and Miles at Harper's Ferry, in Longstreet's zenith at Hagerstown, and overhead of Franklin at Crampton's Pass—shining peacefully on every enemy; peacefully for McClellan back behind Frederick, for Lincoln sleepless in Washington, and for Davis far away from tidings of the Southern army. Men must strive and the impartial stars must shine."

Capella shining at Junior's "right rear" is a fine touch; the fact gives a sort of *cachet* of exact study, and the phrase has a military ring. Though we may not impugn Mr. Benson's knowledge, we may dissent from his wisdom as expressed in aphorism. Possibly the stars must shine, (though nobody can tell what they are doing on cloudy nights), but it is not always true that man must strive, especially without reference to his chance of success in the striving. Mr. Benson, for instance, should not have striven to write a novel—he has no natural gift for novel-writing and no acquired skill. Of course he might have been all right if he had striven to write a history or geography or astronomy.

There are some good things in the tale of Aladdin O'Brien, odd bits of character and scene taken from life, well observed, and imaginatively described. The chapters concerning Aladdin's early relations with the family of Senator St. John, his residence with the excellent Widow Brackett, and his determination to become a writer (preferably a poet), promise an interesting development of character. But Mr. Morris apparently cannot write long from the inside out; and here, as in his first story, 'Tom Beaulieu,' his characterization goes to pieces, and Aladdin sinks to the conventional hero of fast-following adventures. Mr. Morris appears to have "got up" the civil war, especially the battle of Gettysburg, with exemplary thoroughness, but the moment chosen to unload his information is not opportune. What his readers want is a thorough representation of the heart and soul of Aladdin O'Brien, and the most thrilling adventure offered in place of that is but dust and ashes. Yet, in spite of obvious defects, Mr. Morris's work is very interesting. It has sincerity and aspiration, and unmistakable though uneven literary quality. The language is occasionally too independent of precedent. Is it good American to write, "Mr. Bispham absurbed," "self-contraction," "Claire was a little party"? Is it likely that an eminent Senator's daughter, even at a tender age, would say, "I oughtn't to of come," "I know you done your best"?

'Wanted, a Chaperon,' by the late Paul Leicester Ford, is an elaborately decorated

work. There are several illustrations drawn by Mr. Christy and others, and colored by process. Both drawing and coloring celebrate the mighty dressmaker of the young lady who needed, rather than wanted, a chaperon. Besides these full-page splendors, there are marginal decorations which enclose the text like a frame, and these decorations include many devices—bottles and ribbons and unnatural flowers and monograms. The story is trivial, and does not distract attention from the revelation of the possibilities of printing.

The last volume to appear with Bret Harte's name on the title-page contains half a dozen burlesques of contemporary authors. They are not inferior to a volume of the same sort of stuff written by him many years ago; therefore they will be acceptable to persons whose sense of humor is gratified by exaggeration and frolicsome distortion of names and epithets. A few of the sketches are very funny—funny enough to make Mr. Kipling or Mr. Hope laugh, but not Mr. Hall Caine.

We cannot but fear that Mrs. Atherton's dream of the splendor (if not the idleness) of California in the forties is too comprehensively *couleur de rose*. Even fifty or sixty years ago the earth was aging and a little weary, and we find it difficult to believe that between the Sierras and the sea there lay a happy valley where life was all passion and costume and scenic effect. Nevertheless, there was enough of a now vanished picturesqueness to excite the fancy of a story-teller, and Mrs. Atherton's fancy is exuberant. Moreover, she has an instinct for melodrama and heroics, so her action and people admirably fit the scene. All the stories are romantic, and a certain monotony of impression may be escaped by reading only one every week or month.

One-half of Mr. Roberts's 'Barbara Ladd' is given to her childhood, and most of that half to her attempt to evade the guardianship of her uncongenial maiden aunt. The sorrows of childhood are always touching, but, set forth at length in print, they come to bore maturity, and even to defeat the chronicler's object by forcing the conclusion that the child under discussion was responsible for the sorrows—was, indeed, a bad child. Barbara, however, is never a real child, never a real woman, but always a conventional heroine of the impulsive, emotional type. The whole romance is most correctly of a literary convention. The principal characters, who are of Southern extraction, live in a small Connecticut village during the period of the Revolution. Their minds, their manners, their habits, and speech differentiate them from real people of any country or time, most conspicuously from any conceivable New Englanders of the later eighteenth century. They are all figments of the romancer, who industriously strives to undermine American common-sense, to persuade the nation that its ancestors were persons of the highest distinction, and that they preserved in the wilderness and through generations of common and rude conditions the customs of an aristocracy and the speech and manners of a needy playwright's prince. Mr. Roberts's tale is not any worse than the majority of Revolutionary romances. It is indeed somewhat better than most, for it has passages that breathe the freshness and fragrance of the woods and waters, and, except for the pompous, ridiculous dia-

logue, is written in good, unaffected English.

Sir Walter Besant was familiar (fluently, almost fatally familiar) with the history of his country, and with the strange things that might be done under the protection of her laws. In his last book, 'No Other Way,' he describes the pathological situation of a young widow of the eighteenth century, who could not pay her honest debts, and who therefore went to prison and married a negro, of gigantic stature and awful aspect, under sentence of death. Legally, the husband assumed the lady's debts, and so she cheated her creditors and would henceforth have been free as a bird, and happy, if the negro had not cheated the hangman and lived to seek his bride. Every conceivable inconvenience resulting from the negro's selfish behavior is set forth, and an ingenious way out at last discovered. One telling of the tale would be really interesting, but it is all told several times by different people in slightly changed phrases. Perhaps the author did not revise his work, and should not be held responsible for such repetition, though he numbered among those worthy gentleman too frequently intoxicated with their own verbosity. The novel on the whole does not discredit his reputation, which, except when associated with Mr. Rice, was never a reputation to be injured by a book that expresses a genial temper and an otherwise harmless mediocrity.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS—II.

Happy the boy or girl who shall receive as Christmas gift 'The Book of Romance,' of Andrew Lang's editing, always provided such recipient can keep the book from predestined parental monopoly. The Tales of the Round Table, the Stories of Roland, of Robin Hood, of Diarmid, and other racial fairy-tales are given in the best way, keeping close to original sources. Mrs. Lang has written all but one of them, and H. J. Ford has most understandingly illustrated them with full-page drawings, in colors, and in black and white; the whole a beautiful volume from the house of Longmans, Green & Co. Pleasant, also, for both young and old is Paul du Chaillu's account of his journey to King Mombo's African kingdom, and of his adventures with his friendly band of native huntsmen, among forest creatures, gorillas, elephants, and lesser jungle folk. The illustrations, by Victor Perard, help to bring the ways of African man and beast vividly to view. Charles Scribner's Sons are the publishers. From the Macmillan Company comes another good story for youth, 'Pickett's Gap,' by Homer Greene, with illustrations of a most agreeable sort by J. Rosenmeyer. The story deals with the staking out of a railroad by two rival companies, and the part played in connection with it by a boy over whose grandfather's acres the railroad is to go. D. Appleton & Co. publish 'Jacks of All Trades,' by Katharine Newbold Birdsall, with attractively drawn illustrations in colors (i.e., black and white with occasional red spots) by Walter Russell, and with many expressive little outline sketches by E. S. Truman scattered through the text. The story is about a family of children who turned to account their various abilities for practical work, in order to help the family finances. The note of the small child is a little forced

here and there, and the love interest of the book is too large for its age. But on the whole the story is pleasing and sound, will hold the youthful interest, and, perhaps, suggest sources of usefulness.

'The Other Boy,' by Evelyn Sharp, with illustrations by Henry Sandham (Macmillan), tells how a delicate, clever lad came to live in a family of such boisterously bumptious children that we rub our eyes, asking: "Can this be England?" Having accustomed ourselves, however, to their squabbles, to their calling Miss Nibbins, their favorite governess, "Nibs," and to their father's having much their own style of manners, we perceive that their hearts are meant to be and mainly are in the right places, and we decide that the story will undoubtedly interest young readers, while it will prove harmless if accompanied by a judicious amount of corrective commentary. 'Miss Lochinvar,' by Marion Ames Taggart, illustrated by W. L. Jacobs and Bayard F. Jones (Appletons), is a story for girls, and makes good if rather protracted reading, though with a trend toward the fault of causing all the graces and virtues to centre in one girl. An attractive girl she undeniably is, bringing out of the West heavy batteries of charm and unselfishness to the conversion and regeneration of an unruly family of New York cousins. She makes the baby behave well at table, she brings together the father and the incommunicative son; reconstructs the mammon-loving daughter, wins the tennis match, rescues the ill-treated street dog, and is, indeed, in continual evidence as a saving angel of grace. The story is not exaggerated as such stories go, and it is fitted to attract and interest girls; but we look askance at books where one young person is wiser and better than all other persons of all ages. The chorus of her praises is too deafening.

From A. C. McClurg & Co. comes 'Little Mistress Good Hope,' by Mary Imlay Taylor, with a tasteful frontispiece in colors, and prettily designed illustrations in black and white, touched with greenish blue, all by Jessie Willcox Smith. This is a book of pixy stories, the little creatures being helpful to good children and properly malicious and spiteful toward abbots and tax-gatherers. In the interest of perfect taste and appropriateness, it might have been well to omit the scene of the abbot's frivolous conduct under the influence of a pixy swallowed alive. Incidental pictures of England in her old and merrie times accompany the more serious business of fairy tricks.

R. H. Russell publishes in a handsome volume Richard Le Gallienne's 'Mr. Sun and Mrs. Moon,' a set of so-called children's verses with large full-page illustrations, made in a quaint, interesting fashion. A few of the verses will catch the ear of childhood, a few the understanding. Others are of childhood as contemplated by a grown-up imagination, charmingly tender here, but freakish there, and not above reproach in the matter of rhythm.

'Miss Muffet's Christmas Party,' by Samuel McChord Crothers, with illustrations by Olive M. Long (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.), may worthily stand on the bookshelf that holds 'Alice in Wonderland.' Here is nonsense with distinction, full of nourishment for the children who know their classics in fairy lore, moral tale, and fable. We should

say that it would be a favorite proportionately to the young reader's previous bringing up in the way he should go. As to parents, uncles and aunts, a rare flavor of delicate wit shall be their happy portion over and above the children's delight in this choice little book, with its illustrations near of kin to the story in attractiveness. 'The Outlook Story-Book for Little People,' edited by Laura Winnington and published by the Outlook Company, is cheerfully bound, handsomely printed, and illustrated with drawings and photographs of a high order of merit. It is much to say of fifty-seven contributions in prose and rhyme that the greater number are really suitable for "Little People." If here and there a story may be too complex in idea or expression, it is almost invidious to say it when so many are what they should be—short, natural, or naturally impossible, ranging from fairyland to the homes of squirrels and tree-toads. The book is one to be welcomed and desired.

'The Making of a Girl,' by Eva Lovett (J. F. Taylor & Co.), a series of informal chats between an aunt and a Mollie, contains good counsel for girls in their teens as to motives and standards. The attitude is one of sympathy and good sense, and the advice given is both high-minded and practical. It may seem to the reader that a few of the maxims are open to misinterpretation. For instance, in a chapter on Reticence, the dictum, "Never tell the whole of the story you are telling, nor speak out your entire thought on any matter," might prove misleading to the youthful intelligence, which is apt to fall upon the rule and miss the principle. The book may be classed with the season's helpful literature.

Cross Country with Horse and Hounds. By Frank Sherman Peer. Scribners. 1902.

The author submits an apology, if one be required, in presenting his book as the only one ever published in America on the subject. Strictly speaking, he may be right; but in 1852 there appeared from the pen of that thorough sportsman, the late Henry William Herbert ("Frank Forrester"), a charming little volume entitled 'The Quorndon Hounds.' In the days when shotguns and fine dogs were rarely found in the possession of any but those who went afield because of the sportsman's instinct, and to whom the mere making of big bags was a secondary consideration, Frank Forrester was an authority on all kinds of hunting and shooting. Meantime, the erection of barbed-wire fences has become so general that only here and there can an ideal country now be found. It is true, however, that in near proximity to some very excellent packs which habitually follow the drag, there are counties in Maryland which were regularly hunted in antebellum days, and which are now overrun with foxes. The author takes the reader over the course traversed by one unfamiliar with the hunting field. First, a glossary of hunting words and phrases is followed by dissertations on the conformation, breeding, schooling, and purchase of hunters. The author naively remarks that he now rejects many theories which a few years ago were considered true gospel, and suspects that in as many years hence he may repudiate some things which

he now asserts with much assurance. This frank admission may make it pardonable to take issue with the author now without waiting for the lapse of time and the mellowing influence of years to bring about a modification of his views.

In several instances he attacks generally accepted views; he may be right, but his reasoning is not conclusive. In fixing upon a standard of conformation, the author opposes the demand for "sloping shoulders," and does not seem to appreciate the reasons for requiring that a saddle-horse or hunter shall not have an upright shoulder. Technical reasons based upon scientific principles may be readily found for this. Elevated withers, not too high and thin, are usually accompanied by sloping shoulders and a rather deep chest; the parts are not absolutely dependent upon each other, and therefore exceptions may be found to this rule. Horses with such conformation are better adapted to saddle purposes than the horse with upright shoulders. If the shoulder-blade is long, broad, and well-sloped, the saddle will rest properly in its place; while if it be short and upright, the saddle will have a tendency to work forward on the withers. Horses with upright shoulders are usually rough under the saddle. The author's difficulty in placing himself in the ranks of those who advocate the "slanting shoulder" seems to be that he has rather ill-defined ideas as to what constitutes a sloping shoulder. He presents an illustration of upright shoulders in Barrett, sired by Bonnie Scotland, the premier stallion of the Belle Meade stud for many years. Judged with the French measuring machine, or by the eye alone, the illustration does not sustain the charge of upright shoulders, nor is the statement borne out by the many descendants of Bonnie Scotland, recently dispersed at the closing-out sale of the Belle Meade horses. The objection to drawn illustrations is that one may distort them and thus become convinced through an erroneous hypothesis. The selection of a hunter or any other class of saddle-horse for one's self is a difficult matter; to select one for a friend is doubly so. Having to all appearances a perfect conformation, a horse may not fit a rider, and there may be some disagreeable feature in his movements which will make him otherwise undesirable.

The author has evidently found much enjoyment in the breeding of horses, but here again he has established some theories from individual experience which are not borne out by the accumulated experience of others. The praise lavished on the balance seat, and the sweeping condemnation of gripping the horse with the legs, puts the author in the light of being bent more on change than improvement. Balance is the most important element of a good seat, but the perfect seat is that derived from a combination of balance, friction, or grip and the use of stirrups. Balance will do as long as everything goes smoothly, but a swerve or plunge must find the legs properly placed to close the thighs and knees quickly, else the rider may get an unnecessary fall. The author makes a strange mistake in writing of "the forked or military seat" as if the terms are synonymous. Again, he says: "The military seat with long stirrup leathers has no place in the hunting-field where there is