

nerves are ten in number. The directions for demonstrations are hardly adequate except for a skilled teacher well able to make extensive modifications.

Literature.

MALTA.

A History of Malta, During the Period of the French and British Occupations, 1798-1815. By William Hardman. Edited with Introduction and Notes by J. Holland Rose. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. \$6.50 net.

Mr. Hardman, who for fifty years made Malta his second home, brought together from the archives of Malta, Naples, Paris, and London a valuable collection of documents referring to events in the history of the island from 1792 to 1815. He wished to gather material which would enable students of history to form a correct appreciation of Great Britain's actions toward Malta during these years. He had woven the documents together with a good connecting narrative, but death overtook him before the manuscript was quite ready for the press. His executors gave his material into the hands of perhaps the ablest English interpreter of Napoleonic statesmanship, J. H. Rose. This was fortunate. For Mr. Rose has added many explanatory notes and written an admirable introduction, and thus made clearer some of the larger questions of the period.

If this volume were merely the history of a little island of a hundred square miles, with a population of only a hundred thousand souls, during a score of ordinary years, we should not deem it worth an extended review. But it so happened that Malta was a most important pawn in the greatest game of war the world has ever seen. Like Copenhagen, Gibraltar, Egypt, and Panama, it came to be regarded as one of those vantage-points of world-empire importance, whose fate it is to be bandied about in strifes in which they have no prime concern. A whole year before the Egyptian Expedition actually set sail, the keen eye of Bonaparte had seen and considered the strategic importance of Malta. With his usual foresight he sent a secret agent, named Poussielgue, to establish relations with disaffected persons there, and to report on possible means of seizing the fortress of Valetta. Poussielgue's interesting report, here reproduced, like many of the other documents in the original French, reached Paris early in 1798, and was considered by Bonaparte and the Directors a few days before they decided to abandon the expedition against England in favor of one against Egypt. Bonaparte's intention to seize Malta on the way to Egypt must have been confirmed by Poussielgue's report and his state-

ment that "celui qui possède Malte est le maître absolu du commerce de la Méditerranée. C'est un autre Gibraltar." The truth of this has been made evident enough by the events of the nineteenth century, but the English had not appreciated it until the French made it clear. Even Nelson at first thought "the possession of Malta by England would be a useless and enormous expense" (April 6, 1799); but after maturer consideration he later correctly pronounced Malta to be "a most important outwork to India" (June 28, 1803). So the fate of Malta depended, not on the Maltese, not on the Knights of St. John, but on the mighty forces that were set in motion by the will of Bonaparte, and were ultimately thwarted by England's sea power.

Yet the history of the Order of Knights and of the Maltese population is also not without an interest of its own. The island had been given to the Order by Charles V in 1530, to protect Europe against the Mohammedan advance. A statement of the revenues of the Order just before the French Revolution, drawn up by Bosredon Ransijat, the treasurer, shows tolerably well the cosmopolitan character of the Order and the relative influence in it enjoyed by each of the European countries. In 1788 France contributed 1,392,974 livres, Spain 651,492, Italy 564,802, Portugal 220,503, Germany 103,396, and Poland 15,880. From these sums, together with a small revenue extracted from Malta itself, the Knights had lived in comfort. But their finances became hopeless after 1792, when all their possessions in France were confiscated, and the outbreak of European wars entailed further losses. Incredible as it may seem, their income shrunk from £136,417 in 1788 to £34,663 in 1798. For this reason alone the collapse of the Order was merely a question of time. The Knights were further weakened by their own degeneracy; when the Mohammedans were no longer a menace, their *raison d'être* was gone. Yet they continued to exist as an arrogant oppressive aristocracy, who stirred discontent and hatred in the hearts of the Maltese people. The Maltese were never allowed to become Knights. They could not walk on certain promenades; they could never sit in the first dozen rows at the theatre, even if the seats were vacant. They had no share in the government. At the same time every Knight insisted on having some Maltese wife or daughter as his mistress; husbands and fathers dared not object. Coleridge the poet, who was private secretary to the first English Governor of Malta, summed up the state of affairs by saying that "the Knights were little better than a perpetual influenza, relaxing and diseasing the hearts of all the families within their sphere of influence."

On June 12, 1798, when the Egyptian

Expedition anchored off Malta, the Knights were compelled to surrender in quick order. Mr. Hardman shows that this was not due altogether to the pusillanimous behavior of the grand master and the cowardice of the Knights. It was due in good part to traitors within the Order with whom Bonaparte had been in communication, and also to the fact that the Maltese population hailed the French as liberators. The islanders thought they would prefer the rule of the French to that of the Knights. They were soon disillusioned. They found themselves pestered by a host of fussy officials who were determined to force upon them the blessings of the French Revolution. They were ordered to wear tri-color cockades. They were heavily taxed and their churches were plundered to help pay the costs of the Egyptian Expedition. Their joy in June turned to anger in August, as they began to realize that their last state was worse than their first. The Arabic strain in their blood and their remoteness from the main current of European thought made them subject to superstition and fanaticism. It needed only a spark to set them aflame. They were encouraged by the news of the total defeat of the French fleet by Nelson at Aboukir. On September 2 the confiscation and sale of some monastic property led to a riot, and the riot grew into a revolt. Just eighty-two days after their arrival these same French were murdered in the open country or driven into the fortress at Valetta. Here, for two years, they sustained a gallant siege under Vaubois, whose detailed diary is published in an appendix. The Maltese shut the French in on the land side, and the English blockaded the port. Within the fortress rats were soon worth 40 sous apiece. On September 5, 1800, the French surrendered the fortress and the island into the hands of the English, who have retained it ever since.

At the peace of Amiens England promised to restore Malta to the Order of St. John within three months under certain conditions, one of which was that Russia should agree to the terms of the peace. But before this the exiled Knights had sought refuge in Russia and flattered the fancy of the crazy Paul I by making him grand master. If he had not "died of apoplexy," to use a Russian euphemism, it is altogether probable that the English would have handed over Malta to Russia after the peace of Amiens. The Maltese were in despair at the prospect of the restoration of the Order, and sent deputations to England to prevent such a disaster. But the English could do nothing for them except insert in the treaty a clause which made it possible in the future for Maltese to become Knights and have a share in the government of the Order. Russia steadily refused to accept this clause, as well as other parts of the

treaty. The three months passed by, and it became clear to the English that Bonaparte did not intend to respect the treaty; so the English did not keep their part of the agreement to restore Malta to the Knights. Malta thus became one of the chief occasions for the renewal of the great war. Mr. Hardman's documents allow the student to follow and understand all the intricacies of these negotiations of which Malta was the centre.

Maltese histories in the past and Maltese politicians to-day are inclined to assert that the Maltese were the principals and the English only auxiliaries in the expulsion of the French, and to complain that the English deprived them of their right of self-government. Mr. Hardman shows conclusively the absurdity of both of these points. Except for Nelson's victory at Aboukir and his blockade of Valetta, the French would have received provisions which would have enabled them to hold out any length of time against the handful of Maltese on the land-side. Nor did the English deprive the Maltese of self-government, since the Maltese had never enjoyed it. The *Consiglio Popolare* was never in any sense a representative or a legislative assembly. Statistical tables in an appendix leave no doubt as to the material prosperity of Malta under British rule.

CURRENT FICTION.

The Thief of Virtue. By Eden Phillpotts. New York: John Lane Co.

In "The Haven," Mr. Phillpotts departed, though by a hair's-breadth, from his familiar field, of the Devon moor-country. His fisher-people were not very different humanly from his people of the tors; but something of atmosphere was lacking; one missed the pictorial quality, which gives a characteristic charm to the moor tales. "The Thief of Virtue" is upon much the same plane as "The Three Brothers"—built upon a tragic motive, and yet less sombre than certain of the earlier stories—for example, "The Whirlwind." Retribution is the familiar theme, but it is a retribution altogether clear from the punishment of man by man. Philip Ouldsbroom is a sort of rustic Lear, a big nature and a little brain, who comes to ruin through excess of the qualities which make him admirable and lovable. In the full of his youthful pride and strength, he steals away the promised wife of a poorer and less assertive man. She herself is by no means a weak woman, and she loves the weaker man; but there are ruthless elements in her composition. She covets what Philip can give her, and admires the force of his character. He really loves her with all his strength, but marriage means children first of all to both of them. He is one of the rare men in whom paternity

is a veritable passion. But the years pass, and they have no children. Then comes the turn of the injured lover. His vengeance upon Philip takes the form of a son whom Philip brings up as his own. The supreme irony of the subsequent action lies in the fact that never to the very last does Philip suspect that his wife has been unfaithful to him, or that Martin is not his son. Retribution takes the subtler form of the development in the son of his real father's narrow and ungenerous nature, and in the disappointment of all the supposed father's hopes. Philip Ouldsbroom becomes a drunkard, but dies of a broken heart. Martin, ignorant of his real parentage (since nobody but his real parents have ever known the fact), grows up the perfect opposite of the man whose name he bears. As always with Mr. Phillpotts, the mood of the tale is stern, without bitterness. A kindlier light shines upon his Devon than upon Mr. Hardy's Wessex.

The Green Mouse. By Robert W. Chambers. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

We realize that the theme of the maiden in distress, with the opportune arrival of the knight-errant, is a perfectly legitimate one for the story-teller to choose. It may date back to the palæozoic era, but its possibilities are eternal, provided it is treated in the proper fashion. Whatever that fashion may be, it is not the one employed by Mr. Chambers in the present volume. His first episode, which presents this theme in its entirety, is a masterpiece of banality. The stage machinery groans with the piteous ills of old age. Dust lies thick on every page, in spite of the breezes of a rapid-fire style. We almost shrink from outlining it: The tall, clean-cut, young man, once rich, now poor, ever well-bred and fashionable; the beautiful young woman, also well-bred and fashionable, with bluish-violet eyes, and many millions of dollars; her runaway horse in the park; the gallant rescue; the ensuing *entente*—financial, as well as matrimonial. Farther into the details we dare not go. Yet Mr. Chambers is so charmed with his little idyl of the idle, as he cleverly calls it, that he proceeds to repeat it, not once but six times. It seems incredible, but between the cryptic dedicatory poem and the publisher's notices seven unusually beautiful young women fall on seven unusually manly breasts, after listening to seven sets of phrases expressing love and eternal devotion. Seven times we learn that "radiant, yet sweetly shamed, confident yet fearful, she lifted her adorable head from his shoulder." The details vary a little; in one case, instead of a runaway horse we have a runaway elevator, again a runaway cat, and so forth; but the result in each case is identical.

The connection between this series of

sentimental episodes is obligingly supplied by the hero of the first. He invents a wireless apparatus for bringing affinities together by means of their particular individual psychic waves. So the love affairs are machine-made in more senses than one. A company is formed to exploit the invention, and the book then describes the numerous instances in which its operations are successful. A green mouse—he was white once, but somebody dyed him—happens along and is made to furnish the title. Having accomplished his task, he is heard of no more. Financial backing for the Green Mouse, Limited, is furnished by the heroine's father, an explosive old gentleman addressed by his daughters as *Papah*. He wears a monocle and from time to time, we are told, he emits a mellow bellow. Comment upon him we do not feel able to make.

The Fir and the Palm. By Olive Briggs. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

The Fir is a New York surgeon, grave, preoccupied, wonderfully skilful with his professional hands, indifferent to women apart from the operating table. He is a true woman's hero, stern, silent, abrupt, a worshipful person in the eyes of his creatrix. The boys in the clinic, the nurses in the hospital, all adore him:

"Bi-chloride!"

They flew.

"Sterile gauze!"

"Here, Doctor."

"Rubber plaster! . . . A probe!"

They were there by his side. . . .

"The thermometer. . . . See what it registers."

Instantly it was placed and recorded.

Not even the thermometer dares delay. No wonder the Palm is unable to resist him. The Palm is a little Italian dancer, daughter of a famous lion-tamer who has finally lost her life in the arena. The daughter plans to take her mother's place among the lions, but the surgeon will not have it. The girl has been virtually committed to his care by the dying mother, and, besides, he loves her madly. How he marries her, how and why she escapes him, how he pursues her for a long time in vain, how he at last finds her and they are reunited, forms the substance of a narrative in which the author herself takes an intense interest.

The Fulfillment. By Alice P. Raphael. New York: Sturgis & Walton Co.

In some ways, this novel seems a little old-fashioned. The New Woman, sacrificing things domestic to a Career and Self-development—how frequent and familiar she was, some fifteen or twenty years ago! The radicals have pretty well thrown her over by this time; for them "the individual withers and the world is more and more." The reader soon finds, however, that the author