

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

is not so sympathetic with her individualistic heroine as her minute description of Vera's exotic beauty had led him to expect—in fact that she is bent on using the poor girl to point a relentless moral. And here is where the book is really and rather refreshingly old-fashioned: the author actually has a point of view, a definite theory of life and morals. Therefore, apart from the merits of her particular theory and despite the frequent obviousness, sententiousness, and even banality of her reflections, her work stands distinctly, in unity, emphasis, and clear organization, above that of more modern novelists whose æsthetic as well as their moral creed seems to be that everything and everybody is as good as everything and everybody else.

Gwenda. By Mabel Barnes-Grundy. New York: The Baker & Taylor Co.

Reflecting on the innocently primitive character-drawing and the amiably slipshod style of this harmless work, one wonders how it ever got into print. The secret lies, one comes to suspect, in the supposedly realistic, certainly minute, vivid, and unpleasant account of a case of appendicitis, operation included, which as a crisis, and a substitute for the usual first baby, in the heroine's life, constitutes the novel's only claim to originality. Probably the countless numbers of the appendixless will enjoy comparing experiences with *Gwenda*, and make for the book a profitable audience.

GERMAN NATURALISM.

Die neue Form: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des deutschen Naturalismus. Von O. E. Lessing. Dresden: Carl Reissner.

To orthodox believers in old-fashioned literary standards and ideals, the author of this book offers a number of simple formulas (besides much learned but rather irrelevant matter), which will solve all their doubts as to the importance of the new phenomenon known as German naturalism: "Artists and learned art critics rarely understand each other"; "The creative instinct and the conventional æstheticism of the mere observer often conflict within the same individual"; "Lessing follows much too faithfully his infallible Aristotle"; "Goethe and Schiller struggle painfully and not always successfully against the subtle influence (Suggestion) of Winckelmann and Kant"; "If the subject matters nothing and the form is everything [the author is led to the deduction by a remark of Schiller's in the "Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung"], then the question as to what are legitimate motives is solved. Then the artist has the whole world at his disposal, anything and everything, whe-

ther 'beautiful' or 'ugly,' gruesome or attractive, sublime or lovely"; "Then whatever is real is true, in so far as it becomes æsthetically alive; then everything in which the form has conquered the subject is beautiful; then beauty is inherent and not transcendental; then beautiful is synonymous with artistic." To all of which skeptical followers of the old school will be tempted to reply, in the language of the *Fliegende Blätter*: "Nicht Alles was hässlich ist, ist schön—not everything that is ugly is beautiful."

Not thus is daunted Prof. O. E. Lessing. He holds up to our unbounded admiration every line of the writer to whom he devotes the bulk of his book, Herr Arno Holz, the ripest exponent of German naturalism. In him, we have the "new form" in its highest perfection. Take these simple lines, an imperfect, though literal, translation of which we venture to add:

Draussen die Düne.	Out there the dune.
Einsam das Haus, eintönig, ans Fenster, der Regen.	Lonely, the house, monotonous, 'gainst the window, the rain.
Hinter mir, tictac, eine Uhr, meine Stirn gegen die Schelbe.	Behind me, tick-tack, a clock, my forehead 'gainst the pane.
Nichts.	Nothing.
Alles vorbei. Grau der Himmel, grau die See, und grau das Herz.	Vanished the whole. Gray the heavens, gray the sea, and gray the heart.

Mr. Lessing's critical comment on this gem is as follows: "Expression, in its greatest simplicity, has here reached the highest degree of vividness, and, wonderful as it may seem, the rhythm no longer halts: it obtrudes neither by roughness nor smoothness; it is as such not noticeable at all. Contents and form are absolutely at one. There are few lyrics in German literature which accomplish so much with such simple means." Still, just as the artless simplicity of Heine's most exquisite songs was the result of incessant filing and polishing, so is the witchery of Arno Holz's rhythm often the crowning triumph of various changes in topography, including punctuation, leads, indenting of lines, and marking of "explanatory stops" (*Sinnpausen*), which make a world of difference to the initiated. Take, for instance, this stanza of four simple words, as first arranged, and as finally given to the world by Herr Arno Holz:

Vergeben?
Ich?
Dir?
Längst!

This form "werges on the poetical" (to speak with the elder Mr. Weller), but

Vergeben? Ich? Dir?
Längst.

is decidedly "more tenderer." As Mr. Lessing explains, "the dual oneness of the I and Thou, disturbed by the guilt of the one, becomes more pronounced

by the juxtaposition," etc., etc. And "what power of description, what magic insight, what splendor of coloring live in the Oriental phantasies of the modernist" who could pen lines like the following, descriptive of a Japanese dragon?—

Mit der Nase
stürzt er in den Baikalsee,
sein linker Hinterzeh zerquetscht den
Dhawalagiri.
(Nose foremost
he drops into Lake Baikal,
his left hind toe crushes Dhawalagiri.)

So much for the new form in lyric poetry. Of the dramatist Arno Holz we speak with more hesitation. Mr. Lessing devotes fifty pages to an analysis of "Sonnenfinsternis," a tragedy which, as its subject is unspeakably revolting to our uncultivated taste, we are bound to confess we shall not read, even after being assured that "at last Germany possesses a tragedy which did not spring from Greek, Roman, English, French, or Scandinavian soil, but is entirely German in its essence and form." We prefer to be classed with the public which "has no eyes" and "revels in the hollow rhetoric of a lying classicism" or "staggers once more in the fog of transcendental romanticism." Mr. Lessing would probably refer those who pass over in silence (because of its subject) the "profoundest tragedy of modern times," to the "Oedipus Tyrannus." Indeed, there is a slightly sneering allusion to the "miraculously accidental primal guilt" of the "Oedipus," which evidently means to imply that if the world has so long been able to stomach the unconscious guilt of Sophocles's tragedy, it ought to swallow without a murmur the tangible horror of the German modernist.

It is, indeed, a nauseous mess which the learned elucidator of Arno Holz places before us. Let us ask him, in all candor, whether he thinks it advisable in an American teacher (Mr. Lessing is professor in the University of Illinois) to set up literary standards which are in contravention of what the entire civilized world has cherished for thousands of years? Thirty years ago the great Hellenic scholar, Professor Gildersleeve, spoke in the *Nation*, after a performance of "Oedipus" at Harvard, of "the permanency of the ancient classics as an integral part of our civilization." Would Professor Lessing advocate the production of "Sonnenfinsternis," that "tragedy raised to the highest power" (*Tragödie in der Potenz*) by American college students?

Across Papua: Being an Account of a Voyage Round, and a March Across, the Territory of Papua, with the Royal Commission. By Col. Kenneth Mackay, C.B., M.L.C. With 40 plates from photographs, and a folding map.