

THE APE, THE IDIOT, AND
OTHER PEOPLE.

BY W. C. MORROW.

Fourteen strong short stories or sketches with such titles as "The Inmate of the Dungeon," "The Permanent Stiletto," "Over an Absinthe Bottle," "An Original Revenge," &c. The first story tells how a convict, a man-slayer not otherwise a criminal, had for years been subjected to terrible treatment in gaol for insubordination and threatening to kill the governor. He had been falsely accused of trying to obtain two rations of tobacco, and the name of "thief" utterly demoralised him. His case is at length inquired into; and the governor, dismissed, and convinced of his long error, gives his prisoner the opportunity of carrying out his threat of murder. (Grant Richards. 330 pp. 6s.)

THE HERITAGE OF EVE.

By H. H. SPETTIGUE.

The Eve of this story is Tita Storck, the daughter of a German engineer, who came to Cornwall to develop a tin mine and study Shakespeare. The mine went to the bad, after an explosion; and Storck's Shakespearean studies resulted in little more than the bestowing on his four daughters the names Miranda, Bianca, Olivia, and Titania. Titania emerges quickly as the heroine, and like most modern heroines she begins to write. Her efforts in authorship, indeed, occupy many pages, and to literature succeeds philanthropy, and to philanthropy love. (Chatto & Windus. 372 pp. 6s.)

SIREN.

BY L. T. MEADE

This is a society story with a strong flavouring of the Russian secret police, and a tragic ending for the heroine. (L. T. Meade 296 pp. 6s.)

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.

BY EMMA MARSHALL.

A pure love-story, and an old-fashioned. Pamela Somers sings "Yes, love can last," and is chidden for her sentimentality. Of course, it does last—despite obstacles. (Griffith, Farran & Co 312 pp.)

THE SEA OF LOVE.

BY WALTER PHELPS DODGE

Ten short stories, not all pleasant. The first is concerned with the love of a boy of twelve for an actress, to whom he indites a childish love-letter. The actress contemplates a hoax : she will disguise her thirty years, dress as a young girl, and receive her juvenile lover for the amusement of her fellow actors and actresses. But she thinks better of it. The second story is horrible : it tells how a widower sells his first wife's grave to raise the wedding expenses of his second marriage. (John Long. 126 pp.)

REVIEWS.

The Standard Bearer. By S. R. Crockett.
(Methuen.)

THE great mass who are not purists in art, and who like a quickly moving story with a dash of love-making and a dash of swashing blows and a dash of picturesque scenery, might find very much worse mental fodder than Mr. Crockett's easy-going romances provide. The present specimen, for all its name and a bloodthirsty beginning, does not contain a very large proportion of actual fighting. The "Standard Bearer," Quintin MacClellan, bears a spiritual banner, the blue banner that is the sign of the Cameronian hill-folk. He has become a minister in the Established Kirk after the Revolution, but leads the protest of a small minority against the Erastian domination of the State, and is consequently expelled from his living. But Quintin's troubles with the Presbytery really play a lesser part in the book than his love affairs. There are two women in his story. One is haughty Mary Gordon, whom Quintin saved from the persecuting dragoons when both were children, and who, long wooed in vain, becomes in the end his bride. The other is Jean Gemmell, languishing and consumptive, whom Quintin, out of pity rather than love, marries on her death-bed. More attractive than either of these maidens is Alexander-Jonita Gemmell, the Amazonian breaker of horses, vigorous of speech and true of heart. Alexander-

Jonita falls to the lot of Quintin's brother, Hob, and this is an episode from the wooing :

“Will you let me be your friend?” I said, impulsively taking her hand.

'I do not know,' said Alexander-Jonita; 'I will tell you in the morning. It is over-dark to-night to see your eyes.'

'Can you not believe in me?' said I. 'Have you ever heard that I thus offered friendship to any other maid in all the parish?'

'You might have offered it to twenty, and they taken it every one, for aught I care. But Alexander-Jonita Gemmell accepts no man's friendship till she has tried him as a fighter tries a sword.'

'Then try me, Jonita! Try me and prove me?' I cried eagerly.

'I will,' said she promptly. 'Rise this instant from the place where you sit, look not upon me, touch me not, say neither good-e'en nor yet good-day, but take the straight road and the ready over the hill to the manse of Balmaghie.'

The words were scarce out of her mouth when, with a leap so quick that the collies had not even time to rise, I was over the dyke and striding across the moss and whinstone-crag towards the house by the water-side, where my brother's light had long been burning as he sat over his books.

I did not so much as look about me till I was on the heathery crest of the hill. Then for a single moment I stood looking back into the clear grey bath of night behind me, where the lass I loved was keeping her watch in the lonely sheepfold.

Yet I was pleased with myself too. For though my dismissal had been some deal swift and unexpected, I felt assured that I had not done by any means badly for myself.

At least I could call Alexander-Jonita my friend. And there was never a lad upon all the hills of heather that could do so much."

Mr. Crockett has not chosen a very ambitious theme in *The Standard Bearer* or handled it with very great elaboration. But the book is written easily and fluently, and there is a wholesome out-door tone about it. The thread of the story, too, is better kept than in some earlier writings, which have irritated us by their devious and episodic course.

The Potentate. By Frances Forbes Robertson.
(Constable & Co.)

THE telling of this story of Everard Val Dernelment (who is not the Potentate, but the Potentate's victim) would seem to be the result of a study of the style of George Meredith, and the open manner of Maeterlinck. Everard Val Dernelment was a count, with features chiselled as a young Greek's, eyes with a wistful look in them, and flaxen curls that fell about his shoulders like any pretty maid's. But "where the bully thought to find a likely prey for jesting at, he must, on the contrary, have discovered a veritable wight for the breaking of bones." Such was Everard; and, "across the centuries the fragrance of the man's sweet life reaches us, and the story of his death, with his child-son's untimely knowledge of it, stand out among the countless tragedies that colour our chronicles of the Middle Ages." The Potentate is the Duke of Bresali; and this is the kind of place Bresali was, and the manner of its wit:

"In Bresali shapes were mostly crooked. The hearts of men seemed awry, however fair were their outward bodies, for an evil man governed, and evil governing, as the wise know, maketh the governed evil. 'The root of the matter is in the head,' quoth a wag, and spoke something of the truth, which perhaps dawned on the minds of his listeners—made their fingers itch to be at that head. Indeed, we read of one among them remarking, 'They grow too thick; at the falling of one up sprouts another, and who is to know it would not be even an uglier one?'"

Everard Val Dernelment was a good man, therefore he was done to death by the wicked Duke, and his head was set to "decorate the city gate," where his youthful son discovered it. The mother of the young Everard implanted in the young heart of him, and cultivated there a deeply rooted desire for revenge; and on the night of his coming of age there came to him one whose "strange eyes seemed to peer at him from across the long years of his life, paralysing the consciousness of the present, and dragging him back into a real and living past." This gentleman with the "strange eyes" is one whom Everard had formerly seen, seen at the moment when he had discovered the bodiless and bloody head of his father on the city gate. He has come now to intimate to Everard that the opportunity for his revenge is at hand, may be seized that very night. The man who destroyed his father is on the point of betraying "five hot-headed youths" to the wicked