

news of Alexander's death: that the Macedonians and Greeks would massacre and plunder the natives, and then start for their Western homes? Oriental despots did not hesitate to carry out transportation on a large scale, mostly by way of punishment. We have a signal example in Jewish history. But what man of sense ever imagined that a homogeneous, a contented, a loyal society would ever be created by such violent operations? This was indeed the *Uebermensch* policy, which is not to the credit, but to the discredit of Alexander's political wisdom. If some of these cities, such as Candahar, have lasted till now, that is because there was probably always a settlement there, owing to the favourable site, and because the natives reasserted themselves when the Greeks were driven out or had disappeared.

There has been plenty of nonsense talked about Egyptian Alexandria also. Probably every Greek in Naucratis pressed Alexander to move that mart down to the sea, and so the site was shown him by public opinion. But the opening of Egypt and the East made it certain that the new city would flourish at any one of the mouths of the Nile convenient for shipping. Or if Alexander does deserve extravagant praise for choosing an obvious site, how is it that the founder of Antioch never comes in for a word of commendation? Or was that too the work of the Over-man?

The demand sent to Greece that Alexander should receive divine honours was coupled with another order, which shows how he could condescend to punish at the cost of confusion and not for the purpose of amendment. In ordering the restoration of many thousand political exiles to their respective cities he deliberately excited furious internal discords everywhere. For these people came back to find their property sold, divided, absorbed by others, whose title was in most cases perfectly legal. By whom and from what fund were the old and the new owners to be satisfied, consistently with justice? Surely such a policy was unworthy of the ideal sovereign of the world.

NEW NOVELS.

The Fiery Dawn. By M. E. Coleridge. (Arnold.)

OUR chief impression after reading this book is one of surprise that a writer of Miss Coleridge's experience should have produced anything so crude and undigested. One of the first requisites, as it seems to us, of historical romance is that it should be of the utmost limpidity, and that the circumstances of the time should be made so clear to the reader that he can almost feel himself a contemporary witness of the events described. Now this Miss Coleridge has signally failed to do. Anyhow, till about half way through the book there is very little, if any indication as to the date at which the story is laid, and for the reader to enter into the spirit of it this should have been made clear from the beginning. But even when one has got the "hang" of the story the different journeys and adventures of the duchess with her faithful little band seem often purposeless. Why, for example, towards the beginning they all

got nearly drowned in crossing a river only to come back again is still a mystery to us, and all the difficulties about raising the troops and countermanding them are still not made explicit enough to be very interesting. Again, while in some respects too little is told the reader, in others he is overburdened with information. What conceivable point, for example, there is in the chapter called 'Maison Botherel,' which, as Miss Coleridge candidly tells us, she has conveyed bodily from various French authors, it is difficult to imagine; as it is, and in its place at the end of the book, it is a meaningless purple patch. If it had been introduced earlier, as a means of explaining the literary spirit of the times, it might, for example, have made clearer the attitude of the Hugo-maniac who goes about the country chalking up Marion de Lorme, and have been an elucidation instead of being, as it is, a mere excrescence. It must be confessed that better work than this was to be expected from a writer of Miss Coleridge's reputation.

The Firebrand. By S. R. Crockett. (Macmillan & Co.)

MR. CROCKETT has his limitations, but he understands his countrymen, and undoubtedly he can tell a story. So when his Quentin Durward—Rollo Blair from the kingdom of Fife—goes through many adventures among the Carlists and Christians of Spain, and mingles in the destinies of queens and commanders, he does so with that perverted directness and detachment of aim which are as much part of Scottish nature as the caution which is more proverbial. "Fier comme un Écossais" is true of Rollo among more authentic national heroes. The characteristics of his comrades, the Frenchman and the Englishman, are also deftly set forth in appropriate contrast. The author has not always been happy in his female characters, about whom there is often a coarseness of touch. In the present case little Concha Cabezos of Andalusia, a flirt of the first water, is a spirited and quaintly fancied character. On the whole, we should class this book as among the best of its author's recent works.

A Modern Antæus. By the Writer of 'An Englishwoman's Love Letters.' (Murray.)

A CLEVER and somewhat irritating book, over which we foresee a certain probability of controversy. Those who like the exquisite word, the ingenious phrase, the style that suggests more than it expresses, the air of pregnant vagueness, will hail it as a work of genius; while the plainer sort, who regard novels as primarily means of relaxation, will be annoyed by having frequently to make sure that they see "what the fellow is driving at." For our own part, being in the nature of things omnivorous as regards fiction, we have read it, not exactly with pleasure, for the story is not pleasant, but with the emotions that the author, it may be supposed, intended his readers to feel. It is obviously a variation on the theme of 'Richard Feverel.' The difference is that the system which Sir Austin elaborates for his son's education, Tristram Gavney chooses for himself, no doubt in a more rudimentary

form, but in essentials the same; while the paternal influence, if so it may be called, is cast into the scale of convention. Again, whereas the carnal commonplace man, represented in the older story by Ripton Thompson, was in all points the inferior being, Raymond Hannam, who here plays the same part, and plays it even more thoroughly, is the better man when it comes to fists. Of course, the parallels must not be pressed too minutely; but every reader of the two books will feel that, without Richard, Tristram would hardly have come to birth. Nor is it necessary to read many lines to recognize our author's *caposcuola*. The sooner he sets up on his own account, the better will be his chance of making a real mark in fiction. He has great power in realizing moods, as even his former work, crude as that was in many ways, was enough to show; but at present he seems to us to lack both grip of character and flexibility of invention. His figures are too much of specimens and not enough of types. Also, let him studiously avoid such lingo as "Suddenly as she envisaged the objection, her face grew stained." He may be assured that precisely the same idea can be conveyed in plain English with no loss of euphony.

A Fool's Year. By E. H. Cooper. (Methuen & Co.)

NO doubt horse-racing is regarded from a more businesslike point of view on the other side of the Atlantic than with us, but it is to be hoped that Mr. Hopper is not intended to be a fair specimen of a thorough-going American sportsman. Certainly Geoffrey Stewart, who accepts a considerable bribe to keep silent upon this gentleman's habits in London society, and thereby practises an unjustifiable deception upon his kindly relative and patron Lord St. Ives, is a feeble specimen of an English gentleman. He is nevertheless an attractive young man, with a conscience which gives him trouble, and some sympathy may be felt for the poverty which lays him open to such a temptation. His weakness with regard to the vulgar, sordid-minded daughter of Lord St. Ives lands him in further complications, and those readers who are at all interested in his welfare will be glad to leave him in the firm and competent hands of Patricia Hopper, by whom it may be supposed he is finally redeemed from his year of aberration and folly. The story is, of course, largely occupied with racing and racecourses, but contains enough of other matter to make it readable to the uninitiated.

Three Men of Mark. By Sarah Tytler. (Chatto & Windus.)

THE gentlemen of the title were, we feel assured, much more interesting than their ill-executed portraits upon the cover of this book would lead us to imagine. They were brothers—an admiral, a colonel, and the principal of a small university. They were rich in the possession of a sister, Miss Janet, with a genius for housekeeping and a mind as clean and sweet as her well-scoured house. The story—a quiet, leisurely study of a certain phase of Scotch domesticity, admirably true to life, and perhaps for this reason devoid of dramatic force—opens with the triumphant forgoing under