

cence. It would be unfair to enter into the details of his self-justification, but we may say that they are sufficiently well and naturally set forth.

Leontas. By E. J. C. Stevens. (Allen & Co., 6s.)

THIS slight and ineffective story of South African life in the days of the Boer War is treated in a serio-comic mode, both of style and thought, which is irritating. With such rich material as the subject affords, and the local knowledge the writer evidently possesses, a far better book should have resulted.

The one good passage is the trial of an Englishman who loses his memory from shock, imagines himself to be a Boer, and takes up arms against his country. We must, however, hope that it is not a recital of a real episode, but that the officers—cold-blooded, obstinate to visit with the severest penalty a more or less technical offence, and in the face of the strongest evidence for acquittal—are figments of the imagination. Even so, this presentment of British justice is distressing.

Bosambo of the River. By Edgar Wallace. (Ward, Lock & Co., 6s.)

THIS is a series of tales about various African tribes, whose wars, intrigues, love-affairs, and diplomatic relations with the British Government form the subject-matter. They are not arranged in the order of their occurrence, which makes things occasionally puzzling for the reader.

Bosambo, a native of the Kroo coast, escapes from a penal settlement of the Liberian Government, and by dint of a certain forcefulness of character, mixed with plenty of native guile, establishes himself as king of the Ochori, one of the tribes of the interior. Here he comes under the jurisdiction of Sanders, the English Commissioner.

Mr. Wallace does not refrain from the usual gibe—in his case quite good-natured—at the short-sighted policy of the Home Government compared with the wise despotism of the man on the spot. One of the tales, in fact, has as its subject the criminal folly of some home official, who, out of sheer slackness, allows an Americanized native to assume the reins of government, and interfere, to a disastrous extent, with the harmony which Sanders was labouring to produce. The latter, indeed, is the real hero of the book, although Bosambo is a strongly drawn figure in his cunning, his savagery, and his peculiar notions about Christianity. The book contains much native humour, and has a certain Biblical simplicity of narrative.

The Spotted Panther. By James Francis Dwyer. (Melrose, 6s.)

THOSE who have a taste for adventure can indulge themselves to the full in the 293 pages of Mr. Dwyer's effervescent Americanized English.

The three protagonists meet in an opium den in Banjermassin, whence they rescue

a broken-down Englishman who in his day had stolen from the Orang Bukkit tribes the "Chalice of Everlasting Fire." That inestimable treasure had been, so repute said, stolen by Enrique de Gama, "who is dying in the Sea of China," and had destined it for "my King Juan II." They are shown the wondrous Chalice, the Holy Grail of the Far East, and are told of an equally inestimable companion-treasure, the Great Parang, the sword with which Buddha

"had severed the flaming wire which the legions of sin had bound around the earth, and had cut the stars of the heavens into their proper sizes before flinging them into space."

Thanks to the aid of a damsel descended from De Gama himself, their own strength and resource, and, of course, the luck that belongs to heroes of fiction, they traverse fearful jungles infested with orang-utangs, an appalling morass, a river of mud, and kindred obstacles. They steal the sword, and at once form a scheme on sound business lines for exhibiting it at ten rupees a head to the "four hundred millions" of Buddhists and such in Asia. Further details it would not be fair to divulge.

The style of the book is somewhat turgid and cheapened by repetitions, but on the whole the recital of events is clear and coherent, coupled now and again with picturesque, if insufficiently pruned descriptions of scenery, sunsets, and the like. The writer, who evidently has some knowledge of his ground, has sufficient enthusiasm for his theme to avoid being wearisome, and carries off the improbabilities of his story.

The Red Wall. By Frank Savile. (Nelson & Sons, 2s.)

THE book opens with a delightful and exhilarating "row" between the citizens of Panama and sundry American blue-jackets, who (by a happy touch) emphasize their thumps and thwacks by inspiring phrases from 'Colloquial Spanish in a Month,' a guide which would evidently repay perusal, to judge from one quotation at least: "Give me the eyes, the toes, the nose, and the back teeth of the shoemaker's cousin." So bellows one combatant, his arms working "with the weight and rhythm of flails in autumn harvest."

Adventures, with an exceedingly large A, follow fast and furious. Revolution organized by Teutonic duplicity and enterprise; capture and subsequent escape of the Costanaguan President; treachery, met and defeated by deep subtlety; battle, murder, and sudden death; earthquake, flood, long-hidden secrets of Indian ritual and worship—such are among the component parts of a work sufficiently exciting for any one. The hero and heroine save one another's lives at frequent and well-judged intervals, aided by the wholly delightful Don Concepcion, the Port medical officer, who, almost alone among his fellow-citizens, refuses to be bought by Teutonic gold.

TALES OF OTHER DAYS.

The Magic Tale of Harvanger and Yolande.

By G. P. Baker. (Mills & Boon, 6s.)

MR. BAKER makes a somewhat venturesome experiment in entering the field of saga—of adventure, rather, in periods and lands undefined. We cannot read a chapter of his book without thinking at once of 'The Glittering Plain,' and with that masterpiece in our minds, we are the more inclined to seize upon the least inconsistency of diction or treatment.

We do find such inconsistencies here and there: the author makes his characters say, "What wilt thou lay on" this or that event? Surely he had been better advised to use the word "wager." Again, in certain descriptions of scenery he allows his own personality to appear in undue prominence. The descriptions are admirable, but wholly modern, and therefore inconsistent in a work that should read as though it were a rendering from some ancient book. Mr. Baker seems to have read his Malory, but to have departed therefrom in his visions of the beautiful in Nature.

But apart from these things we have a somewhat striking story of distinct charm and originality, the more pleasing in that it transports us to the restful atmosphere of "lands and days that never were." The author understands the value of clarity and simplicity, and the effectiveness of "dark sayings" on the lips of wise men: he observes mystery, but does not deepen it to excess.

We may commend his shipmaster's view of the sea as a teacher of "full understanding" to men:—

"The land is firm and unchanging, but the sea changeth from hour to hour, and is as a living thing to be watched and understood. Those who are of the sea-folk are the best of all men."

This falls into line with Mr. Kipling's "brass-bound" man, and, for that matter, with the delightful saying of Stevenson's Lawless, that excellent old rogue, who says:—

"There never yet was a bad man who was a good shipman; none but the honest and the bold can endure me this tossing of a ship."

Silver Sand. By S. R. Crockett. (Hodder & Stoughton, 6s.)

THIS book, the last from Mr. Crockett's pen, shows happily the gift he undoubtedly possessed of telling a good Scots story. He knew and loved his Galloway, her scenes and sites, her legends, her sore trials and stirring episodes. In the recital of the doings of John Faa he has bequeathed to us an adequate presentment of an interesting period. We have no intention of forestalling the reader by any description of the book; but we feel sure that those who have followed all Mr. Crockett has written will not find their interest or admiration diminished by this last work.

There are, of course, limitations. The style, especially in matter of simile, is apt to become florid and unreal, and

the character-drawing is open to similar reproach. Lilius, the fair lady whom "Silver Sand" wins for his own at the last, is too sprightly, too forward—as though the writer were determined to justify his opinion of her in every word she says.

But, on the whole, the characterization of the different persons is clear, reasonably shrewd, and lifelike. On small points Mr. Crockett was careless. "The Park ways are her ways, and no one else need apply," does not strike us as a phrase for a seventeenth-century Galloway notable. We cannot see why the "old dominie," of all people, should speak of "Terance." The reference to Naboth's widow puzzles us in its connexion with Bathsheba. On the other hand, we like the phrase that describes the persecuted taking their bread day by day, in uncertainty and trembling, "from the hollow of God's hand." On the humorous side, this concerning baptism is good:—

"If the bairn greets, just whammle him ower on his bit stamack. Maist of mine got the water of reconciliation in the back o' their necks, and feint a bit the waur were they."

2010. By the Author of 'The Adventures of John Johns.' (Werner Laurie, 6s.)

IN this tale of the future men wear whole-piece woollen clothing, and take for their midday nourishment "two sticks of concentrated Omnium, an electric calorification with an instrument, and a glass of water from a pure Bohemian spring." An absolutely antediluvian span of life and work is secured by such means. Mental capacity is a mere drug in such a market. Alexander Silson, for example, the chief assistant of Caesar Brent (the protagonist of the book, and one of the two surviving "Universals"—on that the author does not enlighten us), has "mastered science, although not more than thirty," and possesses an "encyclopaedic mind."

Incident of a rather specious and factitious nature is plentiful. The book opens with the bitter contest in which Brent is involved because he desires to apply a new process to the human brain, whereby all the knowledge and experience of the past can be imparted to unborn posterity. A revolt is then threatened from the Far West; the negroes wish to intermarry with the whites, and Caesar Brent promptly applies a pigment which disposes of the curse of colour.

The main theme, however, of the book is the rising throughout "Dead Asia and the murmuring East," engineered by a talented and masterful, but Orientally feminine leader. That danger is averted by a timely comet, and the European race emerges victorious and supreme; the "reign of lasting happiness" begins. Interest is less conspicuous than incident, as is often the case with such views of futurity, of which, perhaps, the chief merit is that they teach us contentment—comparative, at least—with our own generation.

SOCIAL STUDIES.

Chignett Street: a Provided School. By B. Paul Neuman. (Smith, Elder & Co., 6s. net.)

MR. NEUMAN informs us in his Preface that several of these short stories have already appeared in *The Westminster Gazette*, *Pall Mall Magazine*, &c. They are, he also points out, the result of his impressions of Council School life and manners. Here is the twofold explanation of a certain lack of the spontaneous force that was evident in 'Roddles.' Mr. Neuman has checked the impulse, apparent, however, in certain touches of description and characterization, to let himself go.

We find here sufficiently pleasing sketches of his Council schools: boys, masters, inspectors. Occasionally a parent, and in one case a curate, are decently sketched, sometimes placidly and reasonably filled in, against that exact, drab background which we expect to contemplate, judging from the Introduction. Of course, it may all be true; but we cannot wholly away with annoyance and suspicion, especially after reading just before the Introduction the vivid lines on 'Bob of the Mews,' which begin:—

Father is trying to spot the winner,
Bess is washing, and that 's why Bob
Has got a penny to spend on his dinner.

In these lines we seem to see the genuine, raw, and unadulterated reality which is absent (or, should we say, scraped off by a file?) from these careful stories of the Chignett Street school.

London Circus. By Henry Baerlein. (Fifield, 6s.)

WE should like to apply to this book the word beloved of our Late Georgian forefathers—"diverting." The author presents one personage after another quite airily, pleasantly, naturally, yet in a manner that bewilders while it amuses. We feel rather in the position of one who, waiting for the right number, has to overhear other people's conversations on the telephone.

Derunje, the agreeable and idealistic young Syrian, whose great religious picture excites all London (through the medium of *The Daily Lightning*); Laura, his housemaid-wife—a treasure of a wife and a most attractive personality; Mark Sartorius, learned in penguins; Shirley Grice, art expert without experience; Sir Matthew Drane—all come and go in front of us, and say many excellent and witty words. We are taken to a Cabinet meeting in one chapter, and we leave it with the growing conviction that we have been present at the "real thing"; we trust so, at least: it would be too terrible to suppose it otherwise. Mr. Baerlein is akin to Mr. Hilaire Belloc in his view of politics.

We really owe it to our sense of gratitude to record one Brookfield story:—

"Did they expect me to resign the Censorship and murmur, Domine, non dignus sum; Lord, I am not Galsworthy?"

We also give thanks for a variant of Goldsmith's Pietro Perugino about Shirley Grice, to whom had been explained the terms "chiaroscuro," "Albert Cuyp," and "impasto": "On Monday afternoon he started criticizing art."

We trust that Mr. Baerlein will not make too many enemies by his use of real names, though we may point out that he should have said Grasso instead of "Grassi" in the case of that eminent actor.

Mr. Baerlein has a pleasing trick of unearthing similes from the antique, such as the astronomer Cassini and the *sidera Lodoicea*, named after the Roi Soleil—"a new decoration conferred by the Almighty on the Emperor"—and, even better, Philonous, the subscriber to the *Journal de Bruxelles*, who— But it is not fair to the author to quote overmuch; let readers search for themselves.

Matthew Hargreaves. By S. G. Tallentyre. (Smith, Elder & Co., 6s.)

THE type of man of whom Matthew Hargreaves is an excellent example is a bond of union between the grandchildren of those whose forbears were City men—wholesale merchants, a distinct line being drawn between themselves and retailers on the one hand, and themselves and the professions on the other. All in this wide circle have had, in some instances still have, such relatives or memories of such relatives. With sharp, sure strokes the man and his times are outlined, a number of shrewd sayings peppered here and there affording a pleasant relief.

Matthew respected the conventions, and had *politesse de cœur* to make amends for his gruffness. He loved children and evaded barmaids. He would have agreed that "the poor in a loomp" is bad, but had his shirts made at home to relieve his conscience after reading Hood's famous poem. He was a man prone to attach himself to immobile possessions, an attachment which, as the author remarks, soon renders a man immobile himself.

Our fathers have told us of the times in which he lived—of the hatred of "mounseer," of the fear of ritual, of the terrible patience in suffering one's own afflictions and the afflictions of other people which was characteristic of the period, of the tedious monotony of the meat and drink of the inns, and the almost inconceivable desecration of the churches, the self-complacency of the middle classes, the "education" of the young ladies of the period, and the suspicion with which a woman of evident intelligence was regarded.

Naturally such a man as Matthew Hargreaves in choosing a wife takes one who offers the balm of pleasant agreement with all he says. There comes a time, however, when he realizes what he has thereby lost. In the manner in which he bears the knowledge his sterling worth is displayed.

There are a few crudities of expression, but the effective characterization makes us forget them.