

25 August, 1900.

The Academy.

153

holding attention: within his limits he is trained to the closest observation; he can afford to miss nothing; his brain and body are in absolute accord. Such men—and Mr. Paget is no exception—think straight, and say what they have to say with precision.

The greater part of the book is, naturally, concerned with fox-hunting and all that pertains to it. The breeding, rearing, and training of hounds are considered with a common-sense freedom from prejudice. Mr. Paget has no fads as far as his favourite sport is concerned, his idea being to get every ounce of value out of every creature concerned, from hounds to M.F.H., from fox to huntsman and whippers-in—every ounce, but no more. Each, in his kind, must be an artist: it is the artist's privilege to do his best; therefore hard work is essential. Fox-hunters may be born as well as poets, but both must learn the rules of the game; you can make neither. It is greatly to be hoped that the person who buys a couple of horses, pays his hunt subscription, and forthwith considers himself fully equipped, will read what an expert like Mr. Paget has to say before arriving at that desperate conclusion. His neck, perhaps, does not matter much, but farmers' hedges and fences and the comfort of the field do. "An M.F.H., to be perfect," writes Mr. Paget, "must embody all the virtues of a saint with the commanding genius of a Kitchener and the tact of a diplomatist." This is a true saying. The man who could always command his temper under the diabolical strain of an M.F.H.'s duties would be capable of going smilingly into any conceivable situation and coming out on top.

The chapters devoted to hare, stag, and otter hunting, though not so exhaustive, are much to the point. "There is no technical detail," says Mr. Paget "that is beneath the notice and study of any one who loves the sport he pursues." This might have been wisely set upon the title-page of his book. The most interesting illustrations are portraits of well-known huntsmen, with Tom Furr, late huntsman to Quorn, in the place of honour. Of him Mr. Paget writes: "I consider he was as near perfection as it is possible to find anything in this world." (Dent. 7s. 6d.)

THE DAY BY DAY COOKERY BOOK. BY A. N. WHYBROW.

A. N. Whybrow is a veritable Napoleon of the kitchen. He (or she) has provided *menus* for the breakfast, luncheon, and dinner of every day in the year, except "when February's days are twenty-nine." The book is for those who can afford to sacrifice honest yolks in order to enjoy that slightly bizarre dainty known as "stuffed eggs." It is, in short, a book for the West End, and as such it is really admirable. It shows remarkable versatility, and, at the same time, preserves a thoroughly British table. Accompanying the *menus* are concise directions for the preparation of the dishes enumerated in them. Our plebeian, but excellent, friend, Toad-in-the-Hole, is the one bright spot in an otherwise sombre luncheon on January 26, and he reappears on March 27. Oranges as an item for breakfast strike us as rather queer; but we have known reputable citizens to "begin with an apple," and even with a glass of hot water. (Sands. 3s. 6d.)

MURET-SANDERS'S ENCYCLOPÆDIO GERMAN DICTIONARY.

An English-German dictionary on the lines of the monumental French-German work of Sachs-Villatte is at length an accomplished fact, and publishers and editors are to be congratulated on having produced a work that is in every way worthy of its great predecessor, and is destined, if we mistake not, to give a considerable impulse to the serious study of German in this country. To discuss the elaborate plan of the dictionary does not fall within the province of this paper, but some idea of its scope may be gathered from the fact that the abridged edition—for "Hand and School" use—runs to nearly two thousand closely-printed pages (11 in. by 8 in.) and weighs ten pounds.

Fiction.

Public Sacrifices.

Hilda Wade. By Grant Allen. With Illustrations by Gordon Browne. (Richards. 6s.)

Little Anna Mark. By S. R. Crockett. (Ward, Lock. 6s.)

"My pensive Public, wherefore look you sad?" exclaimed the Brothers Smith in an immortal parody. If the public had an artistic conscience it should often be detected in the act of mourning the offences against art which it causes its brethren, the novelists, to inflict. Chief among these offences are the apotheosis of noise, the complication of the simple and the falsification of the real. For the distinguishing vices in the two romances before us the public is responsible, and if it is not pensive it ought to be.

For one of the authors, Mr. Grant Allen, is no more. *Hilda Wade* is his last novel. The brilliant empiricism that had in it something of the forthrightness of science utters its last word in the embodiment of a new type, a woman of an amazing memory and power of intuition who acted as a nurse in an English hospital though she was worthy to have entered "the pale of the Vrilya."

It is convenient to quote a short passage in this connexion:

It was Le Geyt's first luncheon-party since his second marriage. Big-bearded, genial, he beamed round on us jubilant. . . . The new Mrs. de Geyt sat at the head of the table, handsome, capable, self-possessed, a vivid, vigorous woman, and a model hostess. Though still quite young, she was large and commanding. Everybody was impressed by her. "Such a good mother to those poor motherless children!" all the ladies declared. . . . And, indeed, she had the face of a splendid manager. . . . "Hugo le Geyt seems to have made an excellent choice," I murmured. . . . "Don't you think so?"

[Miss Wade] glanced up at her hostess with a piercing dart of the keen brown eyes, held her wine-glass half-raised, and then electrified me by uttering, in the same low tone, audible to me alone . . . these astounding words: "I think, before twelve months are out, Mr. Le Geyt will have murdered her."

Now, daringly improbable as is the supposition that such a pronouncement should issue from a lady-guest at a luncheon party, the scene thrills, and when the prophecy is fulfilled one is thrilled anew. Such a thrill does not arise from the fulfilment of arbitrary prophecies in fiction, as, for instance, when the Third Kalandar plays into the hands of the astrologers, by letting the knife drop into the heart of the Shaykh's son. Why? Because this tragedy is the result of causes not to be found in individuals but in destiny; and there is no game really worth watching in fiction that is settled by that *deus ex machina*.

To show that *Hilda* is the mouthpiece of Science, not of destiny, let us turn to Mr. Furneaux Jordan's *Character as Seen in Body and Parentage*, where may be found some curious generalisations on women of the type of Mrs. Le Geyt:

I came slowly to see [he says (we quote from the third edition)] that the skin of the assaulted women [brought into the Queen's Hospital, Birmingham] was often clear, delicate, perhaps rosy. Their hair growth was never heavy or long, and the eyebrows were spare and refined. Their upper spinal curves were so formed as to give a somewhat convex appearance to the back and shoulders.

They were, in short, naggers, hall-marked by Nature. The assaults were but violently logical tributes to the activity of what, for the gaiety of nations, we may be allowed to term their "Caudle" appendage. Such a lesson in the art of induction spurred Mr. Jordan on to visualising Lady Godivas and Sir Galahads of his own, by fitting appropriate bodies to the dispositions he imagined them to possess. The same lesson, as we see,

inspired Mr. Grant Allen with the main idea of a long story of modern life. It must be admitted that, while the story remains under that inspiration, it is absorbing, when it departs from it it is tedious. Nowhere does Mr. Allen produce a more vivid effect than when Hilda lifts the grizzled end of a great professor's moustache, while he is unconscious, to show the cruel curve of his mouth. If only, the reader cries, the intellectual duel with the professor—which is the substance of the book—had been fought out in the laboratory, how satisfactory a book it might have been. But who is to believe in a professor who chases a hospital nurse in Africa and Asia, who plots her murder with Matabele cut-throats and Tibetan fanatics? And who can but regret the tameness with which a tremendous piece of sensation, borrowed from "The Case of M. Valdemar," falls into rank among the other properties that hold the stage at the melodramatic close of the story?

It was the public who spoiled *Hilda Wade*; it is the public who spoiled *Little Anna Mark*. Yet in the latter case it is probable that the public would plead "Not Guilty," for the public would scarcely see the reason for the curious piece of biographical falsification which Mr. Crockett has here accomplished. His story describes the adventures of a son of that Philip Standsfield, of New-Milns in Scotland, who in the reign of James II. was hanged for high treason and parricide. There is a long report of the affair in Howell's *State Trials*, to which Mr. Crockett directs the reader in a footnote. We at all events have taken advantage of the direction, and must express ourselves astonished that Mr. Crockett should have thought it worth while to bring a ruffian, whom Clio reports hanged and mutilated, to a mysterious "Isle of the Winds," thence to hurl him into a gaping volcano guarded (somewhat supererogatorily) by venomous snakes. Moreover, the sentence on the real Philip Standsfield asserts him "to have forfaulted, amitted, and tint all and sundry his lands, heretages, titles, offices, tacks, steddings, rouns, possessions, goods, and gear whatsoever pertaining to him, to our sovereign lord, to remain perpetuallic with his highness in property." Yet we find Philip the younger stepping into the estate as though King James had never been born. We see little point in the massacre of history. It is but fair to say, however, that *Little Anna Mark* is a story so full of heart and humour that, realising it is Mr. Crockett's twentieth work of imagination, we can but lift up our hands in praise of his staying powers. To begin with, Anna Mark herself, who figured in the State Trial (giving evidence at the age of ten) is, in Mr. Crockett's story, expanded into a truly delightful maiden. She is courage incarnate, and ever maintains her superiority over the hero, who, let us add, is free from the objectionable except in the initial effrontery which allows a child to set forth with much circumstance the life of a despicable parent. Gruesomeness reaches the high-water mark of intelligibility in the passage where an apprentice (named in the report of the State Trial) thrusts his sword through and through a packing-case which contains a live man. There the reader holds his breath. But yonder in the Isle of Winds and in Porto Rico, Illusion suspends her kind offices. We do not believe in Eborra of the "blood of kings" and his army of *fers de lance*; we do not believe in the shoal of devil-fish that carried the hero's craft to Porto Rico—Victor Hugo knew none of them, nor yet his *travailleurs de la mer*. We do not believe in the Grand Reunion on Mr. Crockett's Island. But we do believe in little Anna, while she is little, and hits "Bowie Fleemister on the elbow-joint" in order to persuade the hero, who is jealous of her accuracy of aim, that she is missing a bullock. And we believe in Mr. Crockett's Scotch, which is racy—racy, perhaps, as any now written, and well furnished with words that deserve the distinction of a glossary, though they do not balk the reader, who somehow manages to fit a meaning to most of them. Yet the

fact remains that the public has vitiated Mr. Crockett's talent just as it vitiated Mr. Allen's. Science was enough to have supplied sufficing interest to a larger book than *Hilda Wade*. The bare painful facts of Standsfield's ignominious career offer foundations for a story rich with the wonder of life. Yet the public said "Give us Noise," and Noise was given unto them. But Reality hid her face.

Notes on Novels.

[These notes on the week's Fiction are not necessarily final. Reviews of a selection will follow.]

THE COURTESY DAME. BY R. MURRAY GILCHRIST.

The fragrance of Mr. Gilchrist's story *The Peakland Faggot* is in this story of Old Derbyshire life, and of Anne Witchett—"a fine lady when she pleases, a country wench by nature"—the protégé of Lord Bostern. The story of the relationship of these two is as original as it is delightful. "Her birthday is in April," he said with a sigh, "and hers is an April fortune. An ideal April, mind you, Stan—ininitely more sunshine than rain. But when there is rain, a real torrent." The story is dedicated to Mr. Eden Phillpotts. (Heinemann. 6s.)

TALES OF THE PAMPAS. BY WILLIAM BULFIN.

The excellent "Overseas Library" is slowly but surely pegging out its claims in remote fields. The West Indies, the Guiana wilds, Kaffraria, and portions of Asia have already yielded their volumes. Here we are taken to the pampas of South America, where we are presumed to know the meaning of *pulperia*, *pingo*, *comadre*, *nino*, and *guapo*. Ranch and camp life and hints of cattle trooping and revolutions give colour and substance to these racy stories, of which the first is concerned with a bad man, and the second with an enchanted toad. "Sailor John was very unpopular. He was dishonest. He stuttered. He despised the Irish and the Guachos. He was a liar." (Unwin. 2s.)

THE SHADOW OF QUONG LUNG. BY DR. C. W. DOYLE.

"Of course, the best thing to do with Chinatown would be to burn it down." So says Dr. Doyle in his preface to this story, in which he sets forth the terrible condition of the slave girls in Chinatown, San Francisco. The term "slave girls" is curious; but Dr. Doyle proceeds: "The kidnapping of Moy Yen . . . can be matched by many cases that have actually occurred in Chinatown." Readers of Dr. Doyle's faithful transcriptions of life under the Himalayas, published under the title of *The Taming of the Jungle*, will not be inclined to suspect the author of exaggeration even when he is most forcible. (Constable. 3s. 6d.)

NEIGHBOURS. BY JULIA M. CROTTIE.

We have here just a score of short sketches or episodes of Tipperary village life, under such piquant titles as "The Sunday-Boy," "The Town in Danger," "The Delicate Tinker," &c. The whole spirit of the book seems to be indicated in the lines chanted by a voice in a room above O'Dell's drinking-shop:

Down the New Walk, in bonnets and shawls,
Down the New Walk go the three Miss Costigans,
Eliza's the best, for she is best dressed,
Oh, Eliza's the best of the three Miss Costigans.

(Unwin. 6s.)

THE WHISTLING MAID. BY ERNEST RHYS.

The period of this story, by the author of *The Fiddler of Carne*, is somewhere in the days of yore. We are concerned with the fortunes of a Welsh family, and in particular with the adventures of the gallant maid of Rhos, in her effort to bring aid to a beleagured house. (Hutchinson. 6s.)