

New Models

"KIT KENNEDY"

One of the chapters—it is the thirtieth—of Mr. S. R. Crockett's "Kit Kennedy: Country Boy" (James Clarke) affords us a singular sensation. It was not merely of having read it all before, but of knowing exactly, at every point, what the next would be; nor was the anticipation ever wrong. The possibility of having met with it during a serial publication of the novel being quite out of the question, we were beginning to feel on the threshold of perhaps



COUNTRY WEAR

Of blue serge, stitched. Collar of embroidered muslin and lace

some important psychological discovery when, to our disappointment, memory gradually identified it as a verbal importation from the same author's "Bog-Myrtle and Peat," where the chapter appeared as an isolated story. We think that a footnote of a word or two would have been considerable on the author's part, for the time of novel-reviewers has become crowded in these days, and their memories taxed well-nigh beyond the power to meet even necessary demands. However, Mr. Crockett no doubt thought that the hit would bear both a second reading and thought into a full-blown novel, and we cannot say that he was altogether wrong. The same Kit Kennedy whom we only casually met as a farm-lad for a few brief early hours of a winter morning we now accompany intimately from his birth to his election to a bursary at Edinburgh, and thence to his marriage. The career of a small Scots peasant, who has fought his way up from the plough to the college, has been as full of sheer human interest as Kit's; and Kit's only losses, we incline to think, by its admixture of improbable complication and sensational adventure. But the story, effective as it is, is of little account beside the real interest of the book; that is to say, the pictures of Mr. Crockett's own Galloway with which it abounds—the pathos and the humour of humble lives passed in a world that still remains old. Mr. Crockett's public will find him, in this respect, at his best, and in his most congenial mood.

"THE PASSION OF ROSAMUND KEITH"

"The Passion of Rosamund Keith," by Martin J. Pritchard (Hutchinson and Co.), is a more than usually able and interesting novel. Its central situation, though it seems to be taking a recognised position among current plots, will not be universally attractive—that of a man whose religious convictions prevent him from marrying again so long as his divorced wife is alive. The misfortune of Rosamund's lover is that the conviction has grown up in him subsequently to his engagement to her; and that his love and his conscience are equally strong. But no special interest in the plot is necessary for an appreciation of the story as one of incident, especially after its scene has been transferred to a remote spot among the Albanian Mountains, where the few inhabitants are as savage as the Nature around them. The "Passion" of Rosamund—as her unique experience is termed—is of a far more dramatic character than her relation to the man who loves her only next to his soul. We were seriously alarmed lest it should end in a tragedy, and we are accordingly grateful to Mr. Pritchard not only for a good story but for a happy close.

"A PASSING EMPEROR"

Mr. Robert Shortz's story, "A Passing Emperor" (George Routledge and Sons), deals with one of the world's great tragedies—that of the Archduke Maximilian, for a short season Emperor of Mexico. That is to say, as much of the story as its supposed narrator, an ex-cadet of Westpoint and an adventurer in the Imperial service, can spare from the more personally absorbing subject of his own love affairs. Five beautiful beings at least are passionately in love with this tremendous young lady-killer, who could not show himself out of doors without attracting the demure but admiring glances of every woman, gentle and simple, old and young, "Greaser" and "Gringo"—as the Mexicans and Yankees respectively nickname one another. Of the five, one disappeared in the character of a woman scorned; another died for him; another,

employed to ruin him, betrayed the plot and forfeited the pay; a fourth, unable to win him back after losing him, died the next morning for herself by marrying his friend and follower; and the fifth married him. She was certainly the best of the lot—though to say that she married him is more accurate than to say she loved him. In short, this John Bellhouse from Westpoint is an amazing character. But, like many a coxcomb, he can fight—at least, on paper. He describes his battles and duels so well as to disgust his friends. The maze of treacherous intrigue that brought about his death is interestingly exposed; and we wish that John Bellhouse had given us more history and less autobiography. An exciting story would then have been more exciting still.



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