

BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

A new edition is out of Mr. A. G. Hales's "M'Gusky the Reformer."

"At the Villa Rose," by A. E. W. Mason, is described as a tale of crime and discovery, the scene being laid at Aix-les-Bains, and an English reviewer says that the author has in it scored a triumph. The author of "The Four Feathers" is one of the most appreciated of present day novelists.

Readers who can get hold of "Historical Vignettes," by Bernard Capes, will find a very powerful work or, as it has been termed, "a volume of brilliant pen-pictures." The reviews of it are very favourable.

Mr. Harry Whitney's exploration and sport in the polar regions has produced a volume entitled "Hunting with the Eskimos." Sir Wm. Robertson Nicoll, in a speech at the Author's Club in London, recalled the fact that Robert Louis Stevenson only received £100 for "Treasure Island." The "Literary World" says "That figure would seem large to some authors of the present day who regard their work as infinitely more important to the world than even 'Treasure Island.'"

A work described as of the highest importance in regard to the position of the British Army, called "Compulsory Service," has an introduction by Mr. Haldane himself.

A volume of Onda's stories for children, containing amongst others "A Dog of Flanders" and "The Nurnberg Stove," is announced with eight illustrations in colour by Maria L. Kirk. There is also ready a new edition of Bret Harte's "Salome Jane," with decorations and many illustrations in colour by Harrison Fisher and Arthur I. Keller.

Four out of the twenty-four volumes of "The Collected Works of William Morris" were published in November last. They include "The Defence of Guenevere," "The Life and Death of Jason," and two volumes of "The Earthly Paradise."

Lord Rosebery's "Chatham: His Early Life and Connections" comes in for much notice, and a congenial subject has been found in the elder Pitt. This little picture is given of "the fierce old Governor" writing to his family some of his usual invective:—"Thomas Pitt's blood came all aflame from the East, and flowed like burning lava to his remotest descendants, with the exception of Chatham's children, but even then it blazed up again in Hester Stanhope. There was in it, even when it throbbled in the veins of his eldest son and grandson, some tropical, irritant quality which, under happy circumstances and control, might produce genius, but which under ordinary circumstances could only evolve domestic skirmish and friction."

From "With Stevenson in Samoa," by H. J. Moore:—"We never discussed the Bible seriously, so far as I recollect. Reverent always, where matters of religion were concerned, Stevenson was not what I regard as a religious man—and this, despite the fact that for a month or two he taught in the Sunday school at Apia. The interest he took in the Sunday school, in my view, was more that of the student of human nature, the psychologist, the writer of stories, than of one who was really concerned for the spiritual welfare of his pupils, whether whites or half-castes—for the full blood Samoan children did not come under his parview. Steven-

son, though he was more or less a dual personality, was mostly Bohemian; and more than once, to his annoyance, has been surprised in Bohemia. The Stevenson whom some writers have told us of—the man of morals, the preacher, the maker of prayers—is not the Stevenson I knew. Yet it is true that he moralised and preached in his own peculiar way, and true that he wrote some exquisite prayers. The truth is, there were two Stevensons! And I write of this strange dual personality as I found it, not as revealed through the looking glass of the man's books."

In his introduction to "The Life of Frederick Nietzsche" by Daniel Halevy, T. M. Kettle, M.P., says:—"The practical consequences to which Nietzsche was led were in his own phrase inactual, out of time and out of season. Zarathustra is, by a natural kinship, a prophet of the Anarchists, but he hated Anarchism; by a strange transformation, the genius of a certain school of Socialists, but he depised Socialism. German officials in Poland may find in him a veritable Oppressors' Handbook; he danced through the streets at the victory over France, but he derided the German State and Empire as a new idol. He condemned women, but praised indissoluble marriage. He preached pleasure, but celebrated chastity in a noble hymn. He was all for authority and inequality, "a Joseph de Maistre," says Foullee, "who believes in the hangman without believing in the Pope"; but when he looked at a criminal on trial he acquitted everybody except only the judge. He denounced Bismarck, and the Kaiser for being too democratic; he regarded science, too, as disastrously democratic, because it subjected all phenomena, great and small, to the same uniform laws. Will was his god, but he saw the world under the aspect of a Mahometan determinism, and submitted himself to a resignation, an adoption of the hostile ways of existence, and amor fati which a Stoic might think extravagant. A German proletarian, full of German prejudices, he thought himself Polish and noble, and boasted of being a sans-patrie and a 'good European.' Pity, generosity, self-immolation, the whole ritual of civilisation, were condemned by Zarathustra and practised by him. In brief, Nietzsche never rose above a sort of philosophical cinematographism; he had the glitter but never the hard definiteness of the diamond which he chose as his symbol."

A publisher's note on "The Plaint of the English Muse," by J. P. Gannon, says:—"The question asked at the beginning of this poem, 'Why is English poetry decadent?' is answered in plain old-world fashion. England is no longer the England from which the great line of poets sprang. Faith, simplicity, wonder, and reverence, from which their poetry drew its begin, are fading away. Even the paganism of Greece and the Neopaganism which sullied the Renaissance acknowledged those qualities in their ideal of beauty. Modern England is substituting the ideal of the Phoenicians, money-getting, and materialism, the eternal enemies of art. Therefore the poet of to-day can only produce the husk or shell of poetry. He may dazzle with words, but cannot write from the heart. The author is a Catholic, and believes that the only home of a poet is in the heart."

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heart. The author is a Catholic, and believes that the only hope of a poetic revival in England lies in her returning to the old obedience, and imitating the child-like spirit of the Age of Faith."

Madame Judith Gautier, a daughter of Theophile Gautier, and a well known writer of stories and plays (says the "Literary World"), has been elected the first woman member of the Academie Goncourt. Madame Gautier married the late M. Catulle Meades, an eminent critic and poet, and her sister married Emile Bergerat, another poet, thus partially realizing, it is said, the wish of their father that all three of his daughters should marry poets. It is difficult to understand why a father should entertain such a wish in view of the sad record of married life among poets in general.

Mrs. Dora Sigerson Shorter has sent out a new volume of poems, and the following is quoted by an English paper as showing the "beautifully simple" form of some of the shorter lyrics.

Last night a hand on my window tapped,
A voice came out of the sea,
"Awake, awake, thou dreamer, wake,
And open the door to me!"

I freed my door from the bolt and bar,
And the slow tears came to me,
For I heard no sound, save the tapping rain,
And the moan of the rising sea.

"The Moon of the Fourteenth Night," edited by Eustache de Lorey and Douglas Sladen, is a book made from the volume of Mr. Edouard Valmont, a young French diplomatist who was in Teheran during the Persian Revolution and who died at an early age. An English journal says:—

"On the whole the thing is a success. The serious part is interesting and vivid, and the scenes are well sketched with a light but convincing touch. The man who jotted down the notes which formed the foundation of the account must have had a keen eye for details, a sense of the humorous, and an intimate knowledge of Persian life and character. The fact that his observations were made in an unstudied way, with the freedom and carelessness natural in a private journal, makes them fresh and interesting, and they should not be without historical value as throwing an unusual kind of light on a troubled and remarkable period of Persian development."