

interpret "boh, boh, boh" until it reappears as "poh, poh, poh," spoken, we are informed, with an "inflection which made the expression correspond in meaning to our 'the very idea.'" If proverbs reflect the thoughts of a people, the Turk is not entirely neglected in this tale. We read of some one "standing no more chance of going to heaven than a Turk;" and that youth was accounted strong to whom the cry of "The Turk!" would never be a bugaboo—as "Napoleon" was, at the beginning of the present century to English children.

THE FASCINATION OF THE KING. By Guy Boothby. New York: Rand, McNally & Co. \$1.00.

This is a story of the kind recommended by many critics for perusal in *very* hot weather. One may read it through without the slightest agitation. Every action is labelled, every cog in the machinery explained, every move verbally anticipated. Lady Olivia first experienced the fascination of Marie I., King of the Medangs, in Venice, and thence repaired with him to his kingdom "at the back of" Annam. As for any distinction of local colour, she might with perfect propriety have met him at Oporto and sailed for Kamtchatka, which would have been much cooler for summer readers. As it was, she "slowly considered the Annunciation in all its lights." The Medangs "dressed in their brightest colours." The sounds of the jungle were "curious in the extreme."

At the start Marie I. was not a prepossessing fellow morally. He melodramatised about his failing health, and fawned upon Lord Instow that he might fascinate the latter's sister. But for the author's information we would not suspect that he had "just that flavour of romance which appeals to women." For two hundred pages nothing unexpected happens. Then, as the chapter head assures us, "the plot thickens." There is a fight—presumably with the French. The moment comes when "that battery must be silenced at any cost." While the King is away silencing batteries, Gaspard Roche, a trusted officer, whose baseness was detected from the first by the European members of the royal household, concocts a plot to supplant him. After a forced ride of fifty miles, the King appears resplendent at the garrison, whereupon Roche dies, like Brian de Bois-Gilbert, "a victim to his own contending passions." The climax is capped by Lord Instow's betrothal to the blind princess Natalie and the complete recovery, despite medical predictions, of the King. Mr. Boothby should look to his conversation, among other things. It is often stilted, and at times needlessly ungrammatical. The ladies do not say "to a boundless degree" and "to a wonderful degree" (on the same page) when there is an adverb or superlative within easy reach. And "who can I send?" is too distracting to meet with a ready response from one's European subjects.

JOAN SEATON. A Story of Parsifal. By Mary Beaumont. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co. \$1.25.

A Yorkshire romance written in terse, musical English, with only a sprinkling of dialect, is a rarity. Such a tale is *Joan Seaton*, which embodies the strength of the hills and the freedom of the winds, and as a love-story, despite

its slightly melodramatic accessories, exhibits a fine consistency of tone and a psychology that is as true as it is unobtrusive.

In Parsifal, or Percival Dion as it was sometimes called by the dalesmen, the Stanfelds, the Seatons, and the Pigots had been friends for centuries. It was said that the Stanfelds "had the vision"—that is, an unusual clearness of sight in matters of right and wrong. In the Pigot blood, however, there was a strange mixture of levity and determination which turned rejected love into vengeful jealousy. Joan's mother was a Stanfeld, and the daughter not only preferred a Stanfeld of Thurstone to a Pigot, but, when she was wilfully persecuted, made no attempt to disguise her contempt for the relentless persecutor. Her pluck and loyalty and unerring perception of the right are so blended with the softer human qualities that one hardly knows which most to admire, her filial affection or her adequacy in meeting the most trying emergencies. Owing to an inheritance of debt left by Joan's grandfather, there was a mortgage on the family seat, Parsifal Head, which it was a point of family honour to pay off before the daughter's marriage. The intervening period was fraught with perils arising from the passionate designs of her pursuer. How Mrs. Seaton worked and planned, and the aged father, who had somehow "tapped an unfathomable holy well of content," maintained his farm, is pictured with a sympathy and attention to detail that give reality to the background of a distinctly strong story.

WHEN THE CENTURY WAS NEW. By Charles Conrad Abbott, M.D. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. \$1.25.

With no particular desire to prove anybody's grandfather a murderer, Dr. Abbott has written a detective story, suggested by the unearthing of a fractured skull and rude knife near the site of the old Horse-Head Inn, and the conflicting evidence afforded by the diary of the supposed victim and the recollections of an aged resident. The story is told with an air of sobriety, which is in singular keeping with its Quaker investiture, but which retards its movement and militates against its clearness and conclusiveness. The facts are simple enough. Two rivals in love, Robert Hutton and Mark Watson, had fought, and in the scuffle killed, as they supposed, a faithful Indian servant. Fearing detention, they fled to the West Indies together, and married there. The wife of Hutton dying, he committed his little boy to the care of Watson, requesting the latter on his return to leave him with his grandfather, that he might in due time inherit Hutton Hall. Watson, however, resorting to a deception of the ancient changed-at-nurse variety, sold the boy to a sea captain and substituted his own daughter, who was accepted on trust as the rightful heir. Upon discovering this trickery, Hutton murdered Watson, and with shattered mind hovered about until his identity was established as the father of the sea captain's adopted child. Meanwhile Mr. Walter, as he was called, had fallen in love with the fair substitute, Ethel Hutton (*alias* Ethel Watson). In the readjustment of names she lost nothing, nominally at least, in marrying the son of her father's assassin, who "galloped away" after he had set things right. In

divulging these facts the writer, like his own Mr. Walter, "suffers from too much teaspoon." The mystery leaks out, here a little and there a little, until, when all is told, the *eclaircissement* carries little force, and the effect produced is that of diffuseness rather than intricacy. Mr. Abbott's love of historical research lends itself more easily to the reanimation of old Quaker scenes and the description of quaint interiors. Hutton Hall is admirably pictured; and Miss Ethel's "Thee has spoiled my afternoon" and her aunt's shrewd enquiry, "Did thee bang thy head against the bedpost for the sake of a headache?" are touches that are momentarily convincing to one who has fathomed the beatific quietism and coy penetration of the Quaker heart.

AT THE QUEEN'S MERCY. By Mabel Fuller Blodgett. Boston: Lamson, Wolfe & Co. \$1.25.

The conscientious reviewer can scarcely have a harder task than to be just to a book belonging to a kind that he dislikes. And one who looks mainly to literary quality is unlikely to be attracted by the sort of romances that were fathered by Mr. Rider Haggard and mothered by *She*. Yet they are undoubtedly fine of their kind, and appeal to far larger audiences than Walter Pater ever won. To this class belongs Mrs. Blodgett's new book, and that, too, is good. It bears, indeed, a general resemblance to *She*, yet the work is at the same time original. There is a human element in Lah that *She* lacked, and all the characters are more real than those of Mr. Haggard's creation, although they show against a background that rather exceeds his—if that be possible—in supernatural horrors. Not even *She* devised the plan which commends itself to Lah, to have her reluctant lover devoured alive by the Mad Man of the Moon.

"Then the curtain of grass was pushed aside and the Thing that dwelt within leaped into the circle. It was white, with a loathsome whiteness, naked, and painted with spots of red and blue, and it mooned and mumbled and danced uncouthly there in the moonlight."

It is the lover himself who tells the gruesome tale.

"Then the Thing raised its head and its eyes rested on me with a look of greed and cunning. It stopped its hideous play and began to crawl warily but surely toward me. Nearer it came and yet nearer. My throat was parched, and I shut fast my lips, lest a womanish shriek shame me forever."

And this is but a minor incident leading up with steadily increasing force to the final climax, which can only be described in the author's own words.

"The clash of arms and the cries of the wounded told me all too surely which way to turn. Breathlessly, I rushed into the Queen's own chamber. This place the last desperate handful of her followers had made their stronghold. In their midst, clothed right royally, stood Lah, their mistress and my own. . . . The great, tawny tiger that she fondled stood guard on one side; Zobo the Mighty, with drawn sword, had taken his place on the other. The same look of hostile jealousy leaped into the eyes of both man and brute as I advanced."

And then came the crack of doom. It is almost impossible to speak seriously of such work; and yet, let it be conceded, the story is good of its kind.

A DEVOTEE. By Mary Cholmondeley. New York: Edward Arnold. \$1.00.

The trouble with this story seems to be that the author herself appears rather uncertain as to just what she means to do. The sub-title, *An Episode in the Life of a Butterfly*, is misleading and confusing at the very outset; for there is nothing of the butterfly about the titular character. She might, on the contrary, be better described as a grub that never unfolds a wing—a grub that merely lies still, and would use humanity and the world only to make her wrappings thicker and softer. *A Devotee* she may be called—in the sense of a self-worshipper—but the term is rather too active to fit this peculiarly passive case. Only once throughout the progress of the story—if it may be called a story—does she actually do something; but it must be conceded that this single exception stamps the type of woman to which she belongs. She asks a man to marry her, and finally carries her point, not by entreaty nor—it is scarcely necessary to say—by charm, but by that dull, speechless persistence by which brilliancy, eloquence, and passion are quelled. We have all seen such women and such instances of their inscrutable power, and so far the work is strong and true. But from the marriage on the story wanders, and neither the reader, nor, apparently, the writer, can tell what it aims at or when (if ever) it arrives. On one page the grub seems quiet enough; on the next she seems on the eve of some transformation. Now she is represented as resting content, having won the husband she coveted, and again she is wretched because she dares not show how much she loves him, which is remarkable in view of the circumstances leading to the marriage. Beginning to fall off and ramble aimlessly at this point, the story grows absurd, as it becomes uncertain whether she is a devotee to her husband or to another man. And yet with all these drawbacks there are admirable bits of writing scattered throughout the work, so that it is never really dull reading.

DERELICTS. By William J. Locke. New York: John Lane. \$1.50.

The author has been courageous enough to take for his subject one of the profoundest questions of civilisation—the possibility of retracing a downward step. Many, indeed most, writers of fiction have approached the problem in much the same manner that Mr. Locke approaches it, but his work stands apart from other stories of the kind in that it shows not only one or two, but all the principal characters as striving to regain the slippery steeps. The different social grade engaged in the common struggle also enlarges the work. The gentleman who in a moment of temptation uses money that is not his own; the bishop who unknowingly takes another man's wife, and who hesitates when he learns the truth; the woman whom both the men love, and who is essentially good but weak, and driven like a feather before the wind of destiny—these are the central characters. Grouped about them are several others of less importance to the story, but all struggling with equal earnestness to regain the icy heights, which not one of them—which not one, perhaps, of the myriads who have so striven—ever completely regains. The story is infinitely sad, as all such blighted lives are, and the light at the