

Recent Fiction.*

THERE is no escaping the "new woman." She is with us always and is come to stay. She wants something, what it is she hardly knows yet, but at any rate she means to have it. She is in deadly earnest about it, too, and is outraged because frivolous man only looks on and smiles. Books without end are being published written by the "new woman" about "the new woman." It is a relief therefore to come across a book written by a woman on this question in which there is some sense of humour and proportion. Such a book is "A Bachelor Maid" written by Mrs. Burton Harrison and published by The Century Company. It is a good story, brightly written. The heroine is carried away by the movement of the day, and at the beginning of the book breaks off her engagement with the hero, in order to throw herself more completely into it. We recommend our readers to obtain the book and learn how she is disillusionised and finally taught the lesson that

"The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink
Together."

The scene is laid in New York, and society life in that city is well described. "The Maiden's Progress" teaches a somewhat similar lesson. Its heroine, Moderna, is a fast girl, at least so she would have been described some few years ago; now we suppose she is only modern, Heaven help the times! Compared with the heroine of the previous story she is frivolity itself, though of course she has the proper amount of yearnings, etc. She lives her life in English "Society" and after the due number of experiences and disappointments settles down to be the wife of the faithful lover who has waited for her through the book. We were pleased when this fate befel the heroine of "A Bachelor Maid," but would have preferred an unhappier ending for Moderna.

In form the book is an experiment, the story being told throughout in dialogue. As an experiment it is fairly successful, but we trust that it will not be followed to any great extent. To our mind its disadvantages far outweigh the advantages, and we much prefer a plain, straightforward narrative.

"Denzil Quarrier," by George Gissing, is an excellent piece of work, and in these days of revolt against social conventions it teaches an important lesson. "Now I understand the necessity of social law." These are the last words of the hero of the book, and he has come to this knowledge only after an attempt to defy social law, an attempt which has brought into his life sorrow and death. Yet there was much to excuse him. He has taken to live with him as his wife a girl whose husband was carried off to prison immediately after the marriage ceremony, and who has never seen him since. Together Denzil Quarrier and Lilian lead a happy life, husband and wife in everything but the legal tie, which of course is out of the question. For two or three years they live this life in concealment, but at last the opportunity of representing the little town of Polterham in Parliament is offered to Quarrier, and he comes to reside there, bringing Lilian with him as his wife. No one suspects the situation besides themselves, one person only knows the facts, Glazzard, Quarrier's bosom friend. Glazzard, however, had hoped for the nomination himself, and partly for the sake of revenge, and partly for the malicious pleasure in causing a disaster, he hunts out Lilian's first husband, now released from prison, gives him the requisite information and sends him down to Polterham. Then comes a period of blackmail and horrible fear for Lilian and Denzil. The strain is more than Lilian can bear, and she drowns herself just at the very time that Denzil is triumphantly elected. It is a sad and powerful story, and if our sympathies are interested on behalf of those who thus violate the laws which bind society together, at the same time we are shown how the offence brings the inevitable punishment in its train.

It is a relief, however, to turn to a book in whose teaching we have nothing to condemn or excuse, and that is what we

* "A Bachelor Maid." By Mrs. Burton Harrison, with illustrations by Irving R. Wiles. New York: The Century Co. Price \$1.25.

"The Maiden's Progress: A Novel in Dialogue." By Violet Hunt. Bell's Indian and Colonial Library. Toronto: The Copp, Clark Co.

"Denzil Quarrier." By George Gissing. Bell's Indian and Colonial Library. Toronto: The Copp, Clark Co.

"Doreen: The Story of a Singer." By Edna Lyall. Longman's Colonial Library. London and New York: Longmans, Green & Co. Price 75 cents.

can do with certainty in the case of anything which Miss Edna Lyall has written. Her books we may recommend to everyone with the absolute assurance that they cannot fail to be better for their perusal. "Doreen," her latest, is, it seems to us, her best work, and will, we are sure, have thousands of readers. It deals with the Irish Question, being the history of the life of an Irish girl who rises to the front rank as a professional singer. It is the first attempt by an English novelist to deal with the Irish Question in a sympathetic manner, and we are sure that its readers whether they are in sympathy with Home Rule or not cannot fail to have their sympathies enlisted and some of their prejudices removed by this delightful story. The whole book is a plea for a better understanding between English and Irish. We are shown something of the condition of things which led to the great movement of which Parnell was the leader, but whilst Miss Lyall has no doubt of the justice of the Irish national cause or of the reality of the social and agrarian grievances of the time, she shows that she can appreciate and excuse the position taken by the majority of Englishmen at the time. One of the chief characters of the book is evidently Michael Davitt, and both Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Foster are introduced. Though the main purpose of the book is political, it must not be thought that the story is wholly political. Far from it: it is full of general interest from beginning to the end, and if it in no way touched upon modern problems it would remain a fascinating story. We follow with eager interest the fortunes of Doreen and the hero Max, and are thoroughly pleased when, at last, after difficulties and misunderstandings, they are happily united.

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The Dead Statesman.

Cruiser, the flag that flies,
O'er all the world best known,
With warrant kind as wise,
Spoken from Britain's throne,
To our Canadian shore,
With rime of winter hoar,
Thou brings't across the foam
Our statesman's body home.

Where Windsor's castle rears
Its towers of regal mien,
He stood among his peers,
In Council of his Queen;
When, entering through the gate,
Unseen among the great,
Death's angel whispered "Come!"
And called our statesman home.

Not in declining days,
Life's journey well-nigh run,
But in the full warm blaze
Of manhood's noon-day sun,
Sudden the summons came,
Like lightning's flash of flame,
Straight out of heaven's dome,
That called our statesman home.

No more his wisdom proves
The staff on which depends
His party. From the loves
Of wife and child and friends
He parts, the people's choice.
No enemies rejoice;
Grief strikes contention dumb,
And bears our statesman home.

An honourable man,
In duty's path who trod,
Far as earth's eye can scan,
The rest is with his God.
Stainless his name shall stand,
With theirs who served the land;
And our Canadian loam
Welcomes his body home.

J. CAWDOR BELL.

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In the report of a London literary tally-keeper, we are told that nearly 1,000 novels a year are got out in England. That is about two and a half novels, most of them in three volumes, for every day in the year. We have tried to keep tally of the fresh stock in the New York novel market, and, so far as we can make out, it averages about ten novels in book form a week, or nearly one and a half per day, most of them but a single volume. The supply of foreign-made goods in our market exceeds that of domestic. We must stir up our American novel-writers.—*New York Sun*.