

It appears that Octave Feuillet made a great mistake in life. Instead of imitating De Musset and 'drowning the emotions' of one love affair in the surging waves of another, he—married. 'She'—(the abominable wife)—reminds M. Mauris 'of a parasite feeding upon a goodly tree.' One feels that this was too bad, and one seeks further particulars. 'She seldom leaves him.' This is hard, but what more? 'She is too homely to satisfy a heart so enamoured of ideal beauty.' One feels sympathetic enough, but doubts if this is sufficient ground for calling her 'his conjugal misery.' Ah! here is the charge, *hinc illæ lachrymæ*, 'she is talented and goodnatured enough, but has never furnished him with a character for one of his plays or romances!' A parasite indeed!

Perhaps the life of Alphonse Daudet is the most amusing. He was so short-sighted that he once threw pieces of bread to a gentleman in a heavy fur coat at the Jardin des Plantes, whom he mistook for a bear! He dressed eccentrically, and once, when very poor, during an interview with the Duke de Morny the lining of his hat, by which he was holding it, came out and the hat fell to the ground; an incident well worthy, for its power to shake the soul, to be recorded in the life of any modern French poet. Once he was arrested with Belot, his *collaborateur* in a play then being written for the Vaudeville, by an over-officious gendarme, who overheard the following conversation in one of the parks apropos of the yet doubtful death of the heroine:

'I don't want her to die,' exclaimed Belot, excitedly.

'But why not?' Daudet rejoined. 'She must.'

We notice several Americanisms and errors in the translation. For instance, De Musset's school surroundings were enough to 'vitate' the meekest boy, but we will be merciful, and admit that these errors are not numerous enough to 'vitate' a very interesting little volume.

A Question. The Idyll of a Picture by his friend Alma Tadema, related by GEORGE EBERS. New York: William S. Gottsberger.

Alma Tadema has achieved singular success in his delineations of the life and

manners of those times which, with convenient generality, we term 'classic.' His figures are not models swathed in blankets, and he has more than one back-scene to his theatre, unlike the old painters of such subjects with their eternal temple fronts. There is air as well as sunlight in his broad courtyards, and the marble of their pavements reflects in sheen and glimmer the gleaming brass of the tripod whence the scented blue smoke is slowly curling up among the folds of the heavy fringed curtains. At times we would fain believe that the doctrine of metempsychosis is true, and that M. Tadema is using up afresh a number of sketches he accumulated during previous stages of his existence.

One of his pictures represents a marble bench with the long line of the blue Mediterranean just visible above it, and beyond that the outline of the clear Grecian hills;—on the seat are a damsel, and a youth who props his reclining figure on one elbow and looks up into his companion's face inquiringly. Herr Ebers has chosen this as the motive for the present little love tale, and has produced quite a pleasant idyll of old times, unburdened by the excessive erudition which he displays in some other of his works. Indeed there is one episode of the two little sucking pigs, which get changed on their way to the temple of Venus, that is quite amusing. Where a tale is written in this way to illustrate a picture, there should, however, be no discrepancy, and we must point out that the 'rose bush' of Herr Ebers is on the painter's canvas a very palpable oleander.

An Egyptian Princess, by GEORGE EBERS. Translated from the German by Eleanor Grove, 2 vols. New York: William S. Gottsberger. Toronto: Hart & Rawlinson.

The historical novel has undergone some curious changes even within our own recollection. The hardiest romancers tried to establish a sort of masonic understanding with their readers, as who should say, 'Look here,—we grant that this never *did* happen, but it might have occurred and, if you will only allow that, we on our part will try and not offend against probabilities *too* glaringly.' Skilled writers thrust their actual historical characters, their Louis XI, or Cœur de