

initiated, but it is not much required because the stories so strongly speak for themselves. If we were called upon to select the most typical we would hesitate. "Ghamba" is a reminder of Gagoool and her friends. "The Fundamental Axiom," illustrating the old maxim *naturam si furca expellas tamen usque recurrit*. To some extent these tales are echoes of Rider Haggard, but they have an individuality of their own and we cordially recommend them.

"A Chosen Few" is a collection of tales grouped together as representative of Mr. Stockton's best-known work in this line. It contains selections from "The Lady or the Tiger"; "The Christmas Wreck"; "The Watchmaker's Wife"; "The Bee-man of Orn." It is published in the Cameo Edition and has as a frontispiece a handsome etched portrait of the author, who is represented as seated at his writing-desk. As regards the binding, letter-press, etc., it is sufficient to say that it is in Messrs. Scribner's best style. The published price is: Half calf, g.t., \$2.75; half levant, \$3.50; cloth, \$1.25. That the selection has been judiciously made will appear from the fact that it includes "A Tale of Negative Gravity" and "The Remarkable Wreck of the Thomas Hyke," stories which the late R. L. Stevenson has marked out for especial commendation; "His Wife's Deceased Sister," "The Lady or the Tiger," "A Piece of Red Calico," all old favourites whose composition, we learn from the preface, was occasioned by actual experiences of the author. It is interesting to note that "Thomas Hyke" was written in emulation of Clark Russell, the writer's aim being to describe some sort of a shipwreck which had never yet been made the subject of a story. These stories, and, in fact, all the stories contained in this volume, are too well known to need a notice. Among many old friends, however, the present writer has been fortunate enough to find a new one—"Asaph." Richer and more delicate humour than is contained in this story of a man "who liked to use his head so that other's hands might work for him," and who endeavoured to barter his wealthy sister's hand for the replenishment of his wardrobe, it would be hard to find. Whatever may be one's opinion of Mr. Stockton's ability to compose long stories with intricate plots, he is certainly king in the realm of short stories, and every one of the present series is such a work of art that it will stand frequent re-reading.

As it Was in the Fifties*

WE do not know who "Kim Bilir" is, but we wish we did for a stronger story than "As it Was in the Fifties" we have rarely read. It is the account of the adventures in America of a young Englishman of Welsh descent, by name Evan Evans. The young man is not very fairly treated by his father and dissatisfied with his fate decides to leave England to go to the gold mines. He has heard accounts of the gold discoveries in British Columbia and determines to go out there. His uncle, "Uncle Bob," who is a very charming old naval officer, helps him most materially and the interview between him and Evans' father is very amusingly described. On the voyage across the Atlantic Evans saves the life of a young fellow-passenger and makes the acquaintance of a poor Irish family named Murphy. Two of his fellow-passengers—an American lady, Mrs. Beck, and her rival, "The Honourable Sweet P," are very well drawn. On reaching New York his adventures begin. A trip up the Hudson gives him an introduction to some poker sharps and a very lively game in which "four sevens" figure against a "full house" opens his eyes to the mysteries of poker. When he returns to the city he finds that his outfit and spare cash have been burned with his hotel. The consolation he got is described as follows:—

Just then he caught sight of a man whom he recognized as the hotel clerk amongst the crowd looking on at the ruins. He immediately accosted him and stated his claim.

"Kept a chest with an outfit worth £150 and £60 in English notes up in your room, did you? Read the notice over the bell?"

Evan had to confess that he didn't think he had read it.

"Clause xi. Proprietors will not be responsible for damage or loss arising from any cause whatsoever to any property belonging to guests in this hotel unless such goods have been deposited in the

office and checks obtained for same," quoted the clerk glibly. "Got any checks?"

Evans said "No."

"That let's us out," answered the hotel clerk.

Fortunately, Evans meets an English nobleman who is living in New York as Mr. Armitage and is a sort of city missionary. This character is not as strong as the others in the book and might be considered impossible did we not in Canada remember Lord Cecil. Through Lord Armitages' intervention Evans pulls up his loss and starts at last for San Francisco. He then disappears. The Murphy family re-appear and Mr. Murphy who, after seven years, had landed out at the Pacific coast, has blossomed out into being the proprietor of a miners' bar. The man whom Evans had saved, Jim Fink, also turns up, being a friend of the daughter of the family, Martha Murphy. A lively picture follows of the doings in Murphy's Bar. A Judge Lynch Court tries a man whose offence is thus described:—

"Boys," he said, "this here's a pretty serious business, and has got to be dealt with right here. This gold-durned Britisher is accused of having insulted the flag of the United States. He is further accused of having called it a dirty rag. That is the charge against him."

The sentence of the court is unique:—

"As I was about to remark, the sentence of this honourable court is that the prisoner at the bar be condemned to pay a fine of one hundred dollars, to be expended in drinks on this honourable crowd, and, furthermore, that he gets upon this honourable platform and sings 'God—the Queen;' in default of which he shall be taken from this honourable court and planted up to his neck in the sands upon the shore of the Pacific ocean and there left to be devoured by the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, and all that in them is."

How it was carried out must be learned from the book. The scene is one of the most thrilling and pathetic we have read. If Her Majesty could know the devotion which many a poor fellow, utterly unknown to fame, has shown in her cause it would make her feel wretched to think that to them personally she can do so little in recognition. Fortunately, the sentiment is its own reward. Loyalty to the Crown is part of a British heart and to be true to the Queen is just as natural as to be true to one's sweetheart. It is a feeling, too, which lasts to the end and often comes out, is, in fact, often called out at the last supreme moment of life.

Evans rejoins the Murphy family, and the love of Martha Murphy for him leads to many sad complications. Jim Fink's devotion and his affection for Evans are sorely tried but survive and triumph. Towards the end of the book we are re-introduced to the Evans family in England. The wanderer's absence has been so long that he has become a dim memory to all except his "little mother." How he returns and the reception he gets must be read in the book.

We trust that "Kim Bilir," whoever he is, will no longer hide his light under a bushel. On the Pacific Coast doubtless he is well known. We observe by the preface that the story originally appear in The Province newspaper of British Columbia, but from here to there is a "far cry" and we desire to welcome anew, strong Canadian author under his own name. We cordially recommend this book.

Letters to the Editor.

THE QUESTION OF A CONFLICT BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.

SIR,—Having read the article in THE WEEK, "Delenda est Carthago," and the Rev. Principal Grant's strictures there upon, with THE WEEK's comments, I wish to say that I believe the views of THE WEEK are the more correct of the two. For more than forty years I have been a constant and close observer of the attitude maintained by the Government and people of the United States towards England and Canada. I have frequently visited the States and several times sojourned there a considerable time. Three years ago I passed nearly a year there. Besides I have met a great many of their people who were visiting Canada with whom I took occasion to converse respecting the international relations of the two nations. And I have this to say,—that I believe there is an unalterable intention, or determination, handed down from administration to administration at Washington, to seize the first opportunity presented by an untoward position of England,—where her hands may be tied by some fierce struggle in the old world, to find a pretext, as in 1812, to declare war against her and invade Canada. It is all very well to talk about the better element

* "As it Was in the Fifties." By "Kim Bilir," author of "Three Letters of Credit" and other stories. Victoria, B.C.: The Province Publishing Company. 1895.