

plain red ; as it is, it looks a trifle patchy. But when we proceed to read the book we do not find it come up to its external promise. Perhaps we are over-truculent ; perhaps our taste for novels (if we ever had any) is gone ; it is conceivable that a course of criticism leads us to single out the weak points of a book, as the Moslem Angel of Death singles out the long scalp-lock on the otherwise bald pate of the true believer, only, unlike that angel, we do not haul the subject off to Paradise among honey-lipped houris and love-intoxicated nightingales, but into the cool and butcherly-looking shambles of a literary dissecting-room. The innate probability of all this is enhanced when we read the other reviews on this series. An impartial observer might gather from our review of 'Kismet' that we think that estimable work a trifle, just a trifle, below Thackeray or Hawthorne. Now we know better. It is 'in spots' fairly exquisite. It glows with *beauté de diable*. Another anonymous critic (by the way, this is a novel idea to have a 'No-name Series' criticised by 'No-name' reviewers) has read it twice, skimmed it once, and would like to have it all to do over again. We shudder at that man. Charles Lamb's ogreish fellow Blue-Coat boy, who stole and was supposed to devour the caggy fat scraps and joints of the meat left over at the Charter-house meals, was nothing to this man.

Where do all American writers of the stamp of the author of 'A Modern Mephistopheles' get their language? An English poet makes one of his heroes address an inspired pieman in this frenzied apostrophe:

'Why so very, very merry?
Is it purity of conscience?—or your two-and-seven
sherry?'

Similarly (but by no means wishing to compare our author with an inspired, or, for the matter of that, an uninspired pieman) we would ask why all this verbiage, this alliteration about 'lurking in luxuriant locks,' these violent contrasts, these extravagantly sumptuous dwellings,—though our old friend St. Elmo has not yet met a rival in that line of literary upholstery? Why should a butterfly be given 'changeful wings'? unless, forsooth, insects in that American Paradise which is inhabited by Modern Mephistos, like tourists at Brighton or Scarborough, dress three times a day. Nor must it be said that these remarks are addressed to too petty faults. There is the same stilted language, the same absence of repose throughout. And, graver fault still, there is a terrible sameness in the book, short as it is. It was not until we had nearly closed it that we realized the fact that there were only four characters presented to our admiring gaze ; which sufficiently accounts for a considerable amount of monotony. It is true

that the author contrives to make her wicked woman very suddenly and very causelessly become a good woman ;—the puppet changes its tone, but the wire is the same and so is the showman's hand that pulls it. A baby appears on the scene in the last page or so, but this is evidently too much for the author, who, feeling the stage growing unduly crowded, kills off the baby and its mother, and lays the modern Mephistopheles by the heels on a sick bed, so that had the tale lasted a little longer, it might have wound up with an *Exeunt omnes*, and no one would have been left but the professional candle-snuffer to perform the painful task of carrying off the dead bodies.

THE DARK COLLEEN: A Love Story. By the author of 'The Queen of Conaught.' Lovell, Adam, Wesson & Co., New York and Montreal.

Fashion, all powerful in the world of letters as in that of millinery, has decreed that the artistic novelist of the day must set his palette for scenes of bold rock-bound waste, dashing waves, lowering skies, brilliant sunsets, and the simple life of fisher men and maidens. In 'The Dark Colleen' we have the fashionable colouring, and the 'odour of brine from the ocean' pervades each page after the approved 'Princess of Thule' and 'Maid of Sker' sampler. The story, which is a curious instance of the power of an author to do what he will with the puppets of his creation, is briefly as follows.

The scene is laid on a certain 'Eagle Island,' a happy spot lying off the western Irish coast, 'free,' as we are told, 'from the emasculating breath of modern culture and modern thought'! Here was Morna Dunroon, only daughter of the 'King' of this Irish arcadia. Inheritors of noble Spanish blood, imported involuntarily and regardless of expense through the mechanism of a shattered Armada, the islanders are a handsome, bold, and superstitious race ; and, in addition to being so favoured by accident, they are doubly blest in the possession of a certain hidden reef, the Crag na Luing, the purveyor of many a dainty bit of salvage, flotsam and jetsam, for the benefit of the simple island folk. Morna is the heroine of the story, and to her arrives, without any unnecessary delay, the hero, Captain Emile Bisson, late of that spanking craft the *Hortense*, which, having been driven in the night on the reef, has been swallowed up with all hands. The Captain alone reaches land, in a most Don-Juan-like condition, and Morna, strolling along the shore, very faithfully proceeds to enact the part of Haidee. The results may be easily imagined. Emile Bisson is a Frenchman and a type, possibly,