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## BOOK NOTICES.

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*A Fool of Nature.* By Julian Hawthorne. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

A prefatory note says that "A Fool of Nature" was written for the competition of stories instituted by the *New York Herald* in 1895, and obtained the first prize of \$10,000. The book will bring only keen disappointment to those who possess well-defined expectations of anything from the pen of a Hawthorne, father or son. It had to be confined to certain limits, signed, sealed and delivered at a certain date, and shows every evidence of the necessitous nature of its composition. The opening chapters are clever, suggestive, and analytical, and occasional fragments throughout the story are worthy of the author's name. But, at best, the book is only a fragment, a promise half fulfilled. In the introductory remarks to his "Manual of American Literature," Mr. Hawthorne urges upon writers the need of refusing to be satisfied with less than perfection. Perhaps some day, when not hampered by a prescribed circuit, or to space or time, Mr Hawthorne will re-write his sketch called "A Fool of Nature."

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*Battlement and Tower.* By Owen Rhoscomyl. New York: Longmans, Green, & Co.

Not least among the attractions of this book is the cordial dedication in which each reader has part. After the usual preliminaries regarding title, author, publisher and copyright, we read: "Not desiring to rank as anything but a mere singer of sagas, therefore, to all such folks as prefer the glancing vistas of the free forest to the noxious growths of the social midden, this book is most respectfully dedicated by the author." And so, arguing much from such a modest disclaimer and a bidding so kindly, we follow the writer through wood and fen and mountain torrent to reckless ventures and daring rescues and midnight massacres, which count as naught when

weighed in the balance with love of right, or the love in my lady's eyes. The scene is laid in the days of Charles I., when Roundhead and Cavalier fought for Church and State and all that men hold best. The hero is a young Welsh chieftain, Howel ap Idwal of Turynys, who, when pushing the interests of his house or following the fortunes of the king, hews him a path through fire and and blood. The story resounds with the tramp of armed men, the clash of steel and the roar of artillery, and although in the onrush of midnight attack the reader may experience some difficulty in determining the identity of the fighters and the exact cause of the disturbance, still that the fighting is superb and the disturbance tremendous, he has no shadow of doubt. The description of the battle of Naseby is a wonderful piece of writing, and when we turn the last page of this stirring romance, we marvel at the doings of men of old, and sigh our thanks to him who has made them live again.

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*The Broom-Squire.* By S. Baring-Gould. New York and London: Frederick A. Stokes Co.

The writer is much in need of a friend—a real friend—one who will quietly do away with him rather than see him live to perpetrate another horror as virulent as that of the *Broom-Squire*. The heroine, Mehitabel, is one of the most pathetic figures in latter day romance. A poor, little waif, taken into the family of a tavern-keeper, growing to be a beautiful woman, winsome and white-souled, married against her will, and having a terrible time of it all round. The scene is laid on the moors of Surrey, and horrors are so heaped upon brutalities that when the unnerved reader lays the book down he will be pardoned any lack of zeal for going to bed in the dark or seeking lodgings in unaccustomed quarters. With the exception of Mehitabel, the book has not a redeeming character. Her one-time champion and *soi-disant* lover