

## Book Reviews.

THE WEAVERS.\*

THOSE who have taken pleasure in the reading of "Seats of the Mighty" or "The Right of Way" will welcome the new novel from the same pen which has appeared this autumn.

*The Weavers* is a tale of love and adventure in which a secret marriage and a lost heir play their part, the centre of the stage, however, being occupied by the altruistic hero and the heroic five years' work which earned for him the title of the Saviour of Egypt. He is a young English Quaker who accidentally kills a man in Cairo, and determines therefore to devote his life to the land which has been the scene of his crime. The result is a splendid justification of his decision. Five years of incredible toil and self-sacrifice follow, during which he takes his place as the right-hand man of the Prince, and introduces all sorts of reforms,—building canals and factories, restraining the slave trade, lightening taxation, relieving oppression, and so on. Through it all he is surrounded by secret enemies and treacherous friends, and escapes a hundred times as if by miracle. To the subtle diplomacy and duplicity of the East he opposes the simple honesty of the Englishman, saved from sledge-hammerhood however by a certain Quaker shrewdness and innocent guile.

The three distinct circles in the story,—the quiet little Quaker group in the heart of England, the salon of duchesses and ministers of state in London, and the oriental court of Kaïd in Egypt,—serve as admirable foils for each other. In the first we hear the gentle ungrammarians *thee*-ing each other quaintly; then we wake up under the glow of an eastern sky and feel poison and treachery in the air; and presently we step with Lord Windlehurst into the "brilliantly lighted saloon" and listen to the cynico-kindly epigrams of the retired prime minister. "There was deviltry in him, and unscrupulousness, as you say," he remarks to Lady Betty, as they discuss the under-secretary of foreign affairs;—"but I confess I thought it would give way to the more profitable\* habit of integrity, and that some cause would seize him, make him sincere and mistaken, and give him a few falls. But in that he was more original than I thought. He is superior to convictions."

The two objections which may be urged against the book are, the old-fashioned length of the story (530 pages), and the apparent irrationality of at least two of the important figures. To the first of these objections it may be answered that the return to the older fashion is to be welcomed rather than deprecated. We are deluged with ten-line essays and two-page tragedies, and are not sorry to find an old three-decker sailing the seas again. The second objection is not so easy to reply to, but David's self-immolation on the altar of Egypt was probably the result of an exquisitely sensitive conscience rather than of a

\*The Weavers. By Sir Gilbert Parker. Toronto: The Copp-Clark Co.  
Illustrated. \$1.50.

\*Unprofitable?