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A MARTYR; OR, A VICTIM OF THE DIVORCE LAW. A novel. By Adolphe d'Ennery. From the French by Aristide Filiatreault. Toronto: Rose Publishing Company.

Not the least amusing writing between the paper covers of this publication may be found in the ingenuous preface of the translator. And not the least amusing statement in that truly naïf production is an explanation of his motive for presenting us with the fiction of Mons. Adolphe d'Ennery's especial excellence. "Heretofore," says the writer, "with few exceptions, the translators of French novels seem to have chosen only the works of such authors as Zola and his disciples." While nobody doubts that "Zola and his disciples" enjoy rather a reprehensible popularity on this side of the Atlantic, a number of mute Gallic literary ghosts will arise before most people in astonished reproach and pained contradiction of this startling assertion of Mons. Filiatreault.

The translator grows eloquent in praise of this "*chef-d'œuvre*" he has selected for its corrective effect upon our morals. "And throughout the entire work not one word—not one thought—but is calculated to depict the nobler feelings of human nature, written in elevated and flowery language." Perusal of the volume will lead the reader to unhesitatingly corroborate the last half of the translator's opinion, and to wonder under what hallucination he ventured the first. Truly, there is none of the loathsome realism of Zola and his imitators, but—there is a distinct moral limitation in the "but" with which most people will qualify Mons. Filiatreault's selection. The story is the work of a playwright, not a novelist. It has an extremely improbable plot, but abounds in dramatic situations. The characters stand out in the vivid prominence of the foot-lights, and there is a brilliant climax. There are about three people in the book whom it is edifying to know. The rest one would rather not be introduced to. But if one is not too fastidious about his literary acquaintances, "A Martyr" will be found to possess quite a thrilling interest for a July afternoon. The translation is admirably done.

THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE. By Thomas Hardy. New York: Henry Holt and Company. Toronto: Williamson and Company.

Mr. Hardy's last novel, while unambitious in scope, will assuredly be found to show more powerful handling of humanity than anything he has before undertaken. "The Mayor of Casterbridge" is a study of no ordinary penetration, of the character and development of a hay-trusser. The story is interwoven with the prosperous and adverse conditions that work it out. Oddly enough, it dispenses with a heroine, for of the three specimens of femininity that play more or less important parts in the narrative, it would be hard to pronounce upon the chief. Indeed among the three it would be no easy task to find the qualification of a properly equipped heroine, even of the modern realistic order that demands no extraordinary endowment. Two of them, mother and daughter, are good and commonplace. The third is bad and commonplace. The female excellence portrayed is excessively stupid, and the qualities which offset it are weakly unworthy, not absolutely vicious. The virtue of the story lies wholly in the masterly delineation of the "Mayor." This single all-absorbing feature of the book cannot be too highly commended. The material with which Mr. Hardy works is of the coarsest fibre, though not wholly base. It is wonderfully flexible in his hands, and, though he leaves it but a sorry figure, the art with which the whole conception is wrought has added definitely to the small amount of genuine human nature embodied in current fiction. The social horizon of "The Mayor of Casterbridge" is contracted. The life it depicts is irredeemably dull, and the dialogue abounds in inconsistencies. Nevertheless the book holds the inalienable charm of truth, and will score a success of a new order for the novelist whose name it bears.

A STUDY OF "THE PRINCESS." By S. E. Dawson. Montreal: Dawson Brothers.

However opinions may differ as to the value of "The Princess," either as a contribution to poetry, or social philosophy, or both, Mr. Dawson's discussion of it can hardly fail to be recognised as a careful, scholarly, appreciative piece of work. It is done in a spirit of whole-souled admiration and enthusiastic defence, a spirit of reverent certainty that its subject is a work of the most unimpeachable inspiration. This deprives it somewhat of critical value, but the rôle of a Tennysonian critic is apt to be rather an iconoclastic one, and perhaps we have enough of idol-smashing nowadays. A little downright, earnest, sentimental idolatry will come like a healing balm upon the "blows of sound" the jarring fragments of our divinities have inflicted upon our devotional consciousness lately. This is the second edition of Mr. Dawson's book, and it con-

tains a dozen pages of exceptional interest in the letter which a presentation copy of the first elicited from Lord Tennyson. This comments freely and approves widely, as well it might. It would be difficult to imagine more thoroughly and intelligently appreciative treatment than Mr. Dawson has bestowed upon "The Princess." One could wish he had given less space to the narrative of the poem—with which everybody may be supposed to be familiar who is disposed to read a discussion of it—and more to the exposition of its beauties. And we could afford to dispense with the somewhat irrelevant citation of the writer's own admirable orthodox views upon the "woman question," in favour of the same. The "Study" is happily written in the same vein as the poem, serious, sublime, and jocular by turns. A copious appendix of notes gives the book a possibility of school-room usefulness.

In advancing a bit of poetic philosophy, Mr. Dawson makes such an apparently unconscious comment on the poet of his choice that we cannot forbear quoting it:

"This idea"—of Tennyson as an interpreter—"has been pushed too far by others, who wish to discover in his poems incessant allusions to current events. A poet who suffers his thoughts to drift into the eddying currents of passing events, will soon lose his grasp upon the inner and real relations of things."

This is most forcibly and undeniably true, but what an excellent illustration of it Mr. Dawson might have found in the "you-you!" rhyming perpetration for which "the eddying currents of passing events" were plainly responsible to the Tennysonian genius!

CHILDREN OF THE EARTH. By A. R. Macfarlane. New York: Henry Holt and Company. Toronto: Williamson and Company.

The author of "Children of the Earth" has attempted rather more than she has accomplished. The grand purpose of the book is evidently to show the action of certain forces upon the moral nature of the heroine. While this is but indifferently done, the effort has resulted in a very clever story in which the abstraction referred to plays no unimportant part. Miss Macfarlane's laudable ambition to write from the inside has proved mainly that she can write most entertainingly from the outside. The scene of the story is laid in Nova Scotia and shifts to New York. The local colouring is fair all through, and Miss Macfarlane indulges in no little sarcasm of a gentle feminine order, at the expense of social Gotham. Vivien Langstreth, the heroine, is rather a strained conception in her extreme youth, but after she abandons metaphysics and takes to shoes and stockings she becomes quite a piquant and charming young person. Her soldier lover seems to be drawn from life, and has some excellent "points," but the author has made only an outline sketch of him. Decidedly the hit of the book is Vivien's "Grandam," a deliciously worldly old woman with a serene capacity for anything. The ideal man, who is jilted, as the ideal man always is, is passively acceptable but not especially impressive. The charm of the story is in the bright, breezy telling of it, its constant piquancy, its occasional pathos. It is the very book for a summer afternoon. And under all its lighter features one can see that its informing spirit is a serious one. The art of fiction has evidently a devotee in Miss Macfarlane. It is to be hoped that this is the first of many novels from her pen, and that her future books may fulfil the promise of this one.

SAINT GREGORY'S GUEST, AND RECENT POEMS. By John Greenleaf Whittier. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company. Toronto: Williamson and Company.

Daintily bound in white and gilt comes this latest, probably this last, message to the world from the Quaker poet. And the world, deaf and graceless though it be, does not fail at this time, as it has never failed at any time, to listen to and revere the quiet voice that speaks to it out of the calm solitudes of a spirituality of wonderful beauty and sweetness. "A little belated collection," Mr. Whittier calls it in his "Prefatory Note." "I am well aware," he says pleasantly, "that for the publication of a new volume of verse when one is on the verge of fourscore, no adequate excuse can be offered. I frankly own that I know of no call for such an act of temerity." A most effectual spiking of the enemy's guns, supposing the existence of an enemy, which is a difficult feat of the imagination. Even the critic who makes a sporadic appearance in the magazines with the demand that the muses enter suit for divorce from every poet over sixty, would lack the hardihood to declare in face of this, that this venerable lyre has reached that unresponsive time before its strings shall be broken forever. Yet few will read the little book without the feeling that it holds an aftersong. The grand harmonies have rolled through the poet-life, this is a refrain that has lingered about the empty spaces, a refrain so gentle, so sweet, so celestially pure that it might be echoed in Paradise—