

BOOKS OF THE HOUR

MOTH AND RUST. By Mary Cholmondeley. Toronto: George N. Morang. Price \$1.50.

The love stories of two women are thrown into sharp contrast in this tale of English society life. Taking as text the famous scriptural warning concerning the laying up of treasure on earth, Miss Cholmondeley works out a practical demonstration of its truth. In the case of the two characters, the moral, however, does not force itself into particular prominence. The book is rather more of a romance than a didactic novel. As a romance, it possesses those qualities of absorbing interest, which have made Miss Cholmondeley's earlier works so popular and readable. The plot is simple. Janet Black, the fiancée of George Trefusis, the young Squire of Easthope, becomes implicated in a well-concealed London mystery, and their engagement is broken off, never to be resumed. About this plot is built up the story of the book, in which Lady Anne Varney, a beautiful character of lofty morals, plays a leading part. Miss Cholmondeley's style and treatment are careful and possess artistic merit.

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LETTERS OF AN AMERICAN COUNTESS. New York: The J. S. Ogilvie Co. Price 50c.

It was a good idea on the part of the anonymous writer of these Letters to take up the case of the many American girls who marry titled Europeans. Taking for granted the existence of an alleged syndicate in Paris which contracted alliances between American heiresses and impoverished noblemen, the book proceeds to show the practical workings of the scheme. There are numerous letters from a wealthy American girl, who had been mated to a French Count through the agency of the syndicate, relating her experience of married life. Though she was happy and loved her little fop of a husband, one can understand that her case was exceptional and that, even granted that her marriage was successful, her longings were all for home and the friends of her youth. The letters are bright, well-written and decidedly interesting.

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THE KING OF UNADILLA. By Howard R. Garis. New York: The J. S. Ogilvie Co. Price 50c.

The wit and humor contained in this book are of a most boisterous nature. The King is a burlesque character, and so are the courtiers. They are to all intents and purposes keen-witted Americans endowed with a plentiful complement of up-to-date slang and smart talk. Necessarily the conception of a burlesque kingdom offers possibilities for an immense amount of fun, and the twelve incidents of the book are cleverly conceived and cleverly handled.

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THE LONG VIGIL. By F. Jeffer Taylor. London: T. Fisher Unwin. Price 2s. 6d.

A similar conception to that which lies behind the famous old tale of "The Wandering Jew," supplies the theme

for this more modern work. That is, the words of Christ concerning the Apostle St. John, when he said to St. Peter, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" are taken in their literal significance and the reader is confronted with a modern St. John. The tale is told by Gordon Pole, a London clerk, of good birth, but of small means, who is struggling along in a lonely and unhappy way. Into his life enters St. John, and for a period the apostle influences all his actions in an unaccountable and dark way. He is led to give up the woman of his desire and offer marriage to a lonely and half-blind fellow worker. He encounters strange vicissitudes through which he passes and emerges a changed man. It is an unaccountable kind of a book, powerful in its way, but yet elusive in its tone. It is a book of the soul, filled with strange reasonings, strange doctrines and strange characters.

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NELSON AND HIS CAPTAINS. By W. H. Fitchett, B.A., LL.D. Illustrated. London: George Bell & Sons.

Mr. Fitchett has long since proved himself a master of the art of historical description. His pen has illuminated and inspired many a thrilling tale of battle lore by sea and land, while the influence of his writing has been healthy and patriotic to an admirable degree. In his latest volume he has departed slightly from the entirely descriptive character of his former books to engage in a little more character sketching than usual. Beginning with Nelson himself, he passes on to the school of commanders associated with and trained by him, and then, naturally, he takes up the captains individually and illuminates the character of each by plentiful references to their careers. In so doing, not only does he introduce the reader to numerous noble and half-forgotten names, but describes graphically many engagements and incidents worthy of a proud place in the annals of the British nation.

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THREE YEARS' WAR. By Christian Rudolf De Wet. Toronto: William Briggs.

De Wet's book, of which much has been written, both favorable and unfavorable, is an imposing volume of over 500 pages, well printed and well bound. It contains a terse and apparently straightforward relation of the famous Boer commander's personal share in the South African War, from the time he went on commando at Elandslangte, as an ordinary burgher, until the day he grudgingly surrendered at Vereeniging. As a tale of personal experience it makes a stirring and absorbing story. That De Wet was successful in numerous exploits no one can deny, and the story of the hardships he and his followers went through, their night marches and night attacks, their reckless ventures and perilous escapes, forms exciting reading. But unfortunately De Wet's tale has been shown to possess flaws in many important respects. Though he deprecates any references to political matters and pretends to aim at merely a recitation of