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## BOOK NOTICES.

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*The Seats of the Mighty.* By Gilbert Parker. Illustrated. New York: The McMillan Co., Ltd. Toronto: Copp, Clark & Co., Ltd.

We have read with great interest Mr. Gilbert Parker's latest novel "The Seats of the Mighty,—Being the Memoirs of Captain Robert Moray, Sometime an Officer in the Virginia Regiment and Afterwards of Amherst's Regiment," and it appears to us to be the best novel yet produced by that talented author. As an odd coincidence it may be of interest to mention that we have also finished reading, quite recently, a little volume entitled "The Memoirs of Major Robert Stobo of the Virginia Regiment," published in 1854 by John S. Davidson of Pittsburg, Pa., and we have been impressed with the similarity of the two books. In fact, so closely does one resemble the other in nearly every detail that we do not hesitate to say that in our opinion Mr. Parker's book is derived mainly from the earlier work. We do not say this with the belief that we have made a "find," and we do not for a moment take credit to ourselves for having unearthed something that was not generally known to exist, for the "Memoirs of Major Robert Stobo" is a book that is pretty well known; nor do we mean to insinuate that Mr. Parker has "borrowed," with the idea that he would not be detected, for the reason that when "The Seats of the Mighty" ran in the *Atlantic Monthly* a year ago the name "Major Stobo" was used throughout in place of "Captain Moray," which of course signifies that there was no attempt made to conceal the matter of the origin of the story. But what we complain of is, that when "The Seats of the Mighty" was brought out in book form and the name of the principal character changed so that the identity of the origin of the story was lost, no reference was made in the pre-

face of the new book to the older one, such as is usual when one book furnishes the theme of another. We do not believe that this was done intentionally, rather are we pleased to think it an oversight, for we readily understand how easy it is for a mistake of this kind to occur. It is, nevertheless, an omission which Mr. Parker should not fail to amend.

That the story has been improved in Mr. Parker's hands there can be no disputing. From a simple disconnected tale Mr. Parker has evolved a strong dramatic novel, the interest of which is well sustained throughout. The characters are all well drawn, particularly those of Doltaire and Gabord. The latter is so successfully handled that the reader feels an involuntary pang at the sad ending of the noble jailer. It was indeed a cruel thing to kill Gabord! In the character of Alixe there is a beautiful portrayal of feminine devotion, and although one or two of the interviews between herself and lover are a trifle prolix, this is excusable on the ground that much of the information necessary to an intelligent understanding by the reader of what was occurring in the outside world while Moray was a close prisoner, could only be told in that way, as the story is written in the first person.

If we may not be thought hyper-critical, there is one point that we wish to call attention to, and would like to have elucidated, namely: On page 72 the following paragraph occurs:

"That is your final answer?" asked he, rising, fingering his lace and viewing himself in a looking-glass upon the wall."

What we wish to know is, whether it was customary in those days to hang looking-glasses on the walls of the cells of prisoners?

Such trifles don't amount to anything of course; there has hardly ever been a