

amorous guardsman. Having said thus much, and added that the hero's name is Anthony Wolferstan, and the heroine's Joan Dering, we have already disclosed three-fourths of the plot of Miss Broughton's latest novel, and the remaining fourth need not detain us long. As might have been prophesied beforehand, the course of true love does not run smooth. In Miss Broughton's novels it never does. The hero's mother is opposed to the marriage, and succeeds in inducing Joan to break off the engagement by disclosing to her, in a powerfully written scene, the fact that her father had been guilty of forgery. Wolferstan is manly enough not to allow the knowledge of this fact (indeed, he appears to have been acquainted with it all along) prove any hindrance to his suit; but Joan's determination not to injure her lover's position and prospects in life by allowing him to link his destiny with that of a forger's daughter, is not to be shaken. Wolferstan goes off in despair, becomes entangled in the meshes of an old flame, Lalage Beauchamp (after whom he had once walked round the room on his knees), and marries her out of hand. Eventually Lalage dies of apoplexy, caused apparently by too great devotion to the pleasures of the table, and the reader is left to surmise that the hero and heroine are at last united and live happily ever afterward.

The details of the plot thus sketched are filled in with even more than Miss Broughton's accustomed cleverness; and the work is, we think, the best the author has yet turned out. Joan herself is altogether charming—quite the most high-minded and lovable girl in the gallery of Miss Broughton's heroines. It has been objected, indeed, as a fatal blot on the book, that such a girl deserved a better fate than that of marrying a man so obviously unworthy of her as Wolferstan. If there is a mistake here it is the original one of making her fall in love with him. When Joan sees the great and manifest deterioration in character which Wolferstan suffers from her rejection of his suit, though from an unselfish motive, it is hard to discover what other course was open to her than to correct her error in judgment, and, by marrying him, make the best reparation in her power.

Joan, who has been brought up in all the comfort, refinement, and luxury that wealth can command, at the outset of the story suffers a reverse of fortune through the sudden death of the relative upon whom she has been dependent, and is plunged at once into poverty. She goes to live with an aunt and two cousins—girls—all warm-hearted, but horribly vulgar. Her journey to her new home, at which she arrives in a butcher's cart, is told with much humour; and her new life, and the constant jar which

the tawdriness and coarseness of her surroundings produce in her, are described with truth and power, if with some exaggeration. Miss Broughton has a strong dramatic instinct, and a really remarkable gift of drawing, with a few rapid strokes of her facile brush, characters so real and lifelike that one seems to know them personally. The aunt, vulgar but warm-hearted; Diana, blunt, outspoken, and honest; Bell, sentimental, snobbish, and amorous; are all capital sketches; and even more amusing, alas! is Joan's rival, Lalage. The four dogs, Regy, Algy, Charlie, and Mr. Brown, too, are drawn (evidently from life) with wonderful humour and skill, and serve to give quite a characteristic flavour to the book. The descriptions of natural scenery are another very pleasant feature, being evidently the outcome of a genuine love of nature, the ocean especially.

The work would not be Miss Broughton's if it were altogether free from grave faults. There is the occasional coarseness and slanginess from which she seems unable to rid herself entirely. A sense of humour is an excellent gift, but Miss Broughton's sometimes runs away with her; there is hardly a situation, no matter how serious or sentimental, to which she cannot see a ridiculous side. The gift is so rare in feminine authors, however, as almost to condone the errors of taste into which it sometimes leads this remarkably clever writer.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

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HARPER'S HALF-HOUR SERIES. Epochs of English History. Early England up to the Norman Conquest. By Frederick York-Powell. With Four Maps.—England as a Continental Power. From the Conquest to Magna Charta, 1066-1216. By Louise Creighton. With a Map.—The Turks in Europe. By Edward A. Freeman, D.C.L., LL.D.—Thompson Hall. A Tale. By Anthony Trollope. Illustrated. New York: Harper & Bros. 1877.

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