

link the diverse systems together with one common source. This is much akin to the task undertaken by Mr. Casaubon, the creature of another woman's brain; but how differently George Eliot told her tale! In the story before us we have whole segments of the heroine's book. In "Middlemarch," there is barely a quotation or extract from Casaubon's ponderous tomes, and yet how one little master touch—the reference by the dying man to the "second excursus on Crete"—throws a vivid light upon the wasted labour, the heavy erudition, and their fruitless aim. George Eliot knew such a book would be a failure, but Mrs. Wilson, clinging to the idea, actually makes her heroine work it out and achieve a success, —on paper. We do not propose to tell the tale of St. Elmo; it will bear reading, for the sake of its vivacity and force, by any one who is prepared to skip every other word, or puzzle out its meaning by the help of a polyglot dictionary and an improved Lemprière. At first we thought that it would prove a splendid volume for any one who bore a grudge against an insurance company, to present to the managing director. Four several and distinct deaths and a terrific railway accident in the first 31 pages would certainly suffice to insure him a splendid nightmare! But we are happy to say the characters get more long-lived towards the end of the volume.

It is the duty of the reviewer to point out a few of the grave faults in this work. There is a most terrible anti-climax at p. 25, where an elaborate description of what a country churchyard was *not* like, and a catalogue of the

"rippling fountains, "crystal lakes," and "silver dusted lilies" which it did *not* possess, are wound up by the assertion that it was not so beautiful as "Greenwood or Mount Auburn!" Perhaps the printer (to whom we must accredit a more than usual number of typographical errors) is guilty of the punctuation which on p. 14 makes Mr. Hunt's saddle-bags (instead of his relations) reside in a neighbouring state. The taste which designed "*Le Bocage*," St. Elmo's residence, is supposed by the writer to be well nigh perfect, but Ruskin, whom she so plentifully quotes, would hold up his hands in horror at a mansion combining "a richly carved pagoda roof," "statues of Bacchus and Bacchante," "high gothic windows," "a rotunda with moresque frescoes," and "distorted hideous monsters" carved as "grim doorkeepers."

Edna is not without lovers, who in horsey phrase may be described as "good stayers," and ready to "come again." Neither the "petrified hawthorn," the "man with the granite mouth," nor the "handsome lawyer" with a congenial taste for Chaldee MSS., nor the "haughty, huge-whiskered" English baronet, are content with one snubbing a-piece; they all get refused twice or oftener. While as to the happy man, he . . . but we must pause and refer our readers to the book itself. In spite of its untruth to life, it is worth reading; its tone is sound, and the reader will find that the author has, in its pages, defended herself by anticipation against strictures upon her style and her far-fetched metaphors—with how much success we must leave the public to judge.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

The *Contemporary Review* is peculiarly rich this month in distinguished names and valuable contributions. "Russia: Policy and Deeds of Turkistan," by Mr. Gladstone, is the paper which has excited the ire of the *Pall Mall*. It is a review of Mr. Schuyler's work, and opens with a concise account of the Provinces and peoples of Central Asia. Then follow the strictures on the use made by the journal of what is really a hearsay story. It is alleged by Mr. Schuyler that Gen. Kaufmann demanded from the Yomuds, a sum of money he knew they could not pay, and ordered their extermination in case of default. Mr. Gladstone charges the *Pall Mall* with garbling what it quoted, and deliberately suppressing the Rus-

sian defence, as well as all the favourable testimony to their policy in the book before it. So far as the latter branch of the case is concerned, the editor urges that it was no part of his business to make out a case for the other side. Perhaps not, according to the Old Bailey code of ethics; but one who claims to guide the popular mind has no business to suppress the truth, however unpalatable, and it is quite clear that he has both suppressed and garbled. Mr. MacGahan, lately the *Daily News* correspondent in Bulgaria, went through the entire comparison, and "A Russian," also gives a defence of Kaufmann; both of them tell a very different story from that which Mr. Schuyler heard from Mr. Gromoff nine years after the alleged