a light matter who has attempted to read it. Of the school of Mrs. Humphry Ward, appertaining thereto by its pamphlets in dialogue, and by the solemnity of the central figure, it has yet its own characteristics—a bitterness of conviction on the points where Mr. Mallock feels cocksure for one, grace of diction and subtlety of sentiment for another. Mr. Mallock is a sentimentalist who does not readily find a home for his feelings to-day; and his fastidiousness and discontent give an interesting flavour to anything he writes, though these are not good equipments for a novelist. He very naturally endows his hero with them, but alas! he endows him with little else, unless it be a parliamentary air, and a craving after sympathy for his shadowy personality. Reginald Pole is an aristocrat by birth; he is a man of the world; he has lived much abroad, and has experience of English parliamentary life. These should imply certain definite and robust qualities, but Pole's only quality, of which a reader can be convinced, is his unfailing gentility. A genteel aristocrat! What a blow has been struck at our ideals.

Mr. Mallock evidently started out with the idea that Pole should be no milksop, and went so far as to make him be in love with three ladies at the same time—but always genteelly. Number one, whose connection with him had been close in times past, is now married to an eccentric husband; number two is a fascinating cousin, Countess Shimna; number three, a saintly young woman called Ethel de Souza, who flatters him tremendously. He thinks he is badly treated by all of them—by Pansy, because from her husband's house she writes matter-of-fact and sensible notes in answer to his sentimental effusions; by Shimna, because she marries the wealthy *fiancé* of her girlhood, after casting at Pole, as at all the rest of the world, some fascinating glances; and by Miss de Souza, because she says, though he is the greatest man in the world, she loves him only like a brother. The selfishness of all three, because they do not come and minister balm and healing to the wounded soul of this flourishing young politician, is a terrible thing for his soul to regard. So he whimpers through three volumes—it is genteel and modulated whimpering—about the domestic hearth he would like to preside at, the woman who would sit there ever ready with the ointment, and the prayers he would like to say, but mustn't, because he is an interesting agnostic.

Fiction is always illustrated in the mind's eye of a careful reader; and Pole, till his shadowy form sink into oblivion for ever, will sit kid-gloved and with spotless cambric at the grave of those old beliefs which go so well with a long descent, with a fine park in the West of England, and with office in the Conservative party. We are grateful to the delightful parson financier of simple tastes, who, with a tale of investments in Australian mines and fourteen per cent., gambles away his friends' thousands on the Stock Exchange. Canon Bulman is a flaring caricature, but if his awful fate be a warning to amateur detectives of his order, we say good luck to Mr. Mallock's mission. There are other personages, too, that give variety, piquancy, and a certain up-to-date observation; but the gentility, the air of having the whole gospel of good society entrusted to him, sap the worth and the manliness of even so able a writer as Mr. Mallock. The Heart of Life is, we suppose, the peaceful love of wife and child, and, if possible, the simple religious faith for which his hero was ever searching. On this, when Pole is not his exponent, he speaks with much tenderness and beauty. But life's heart-beats have many meanings: he does not know them all. And they will always be faint and feeble where finnicking gentility makes poor the blood.

Annie Macdonell.

GERTRUDE HALL'S NEW VOLUME.*

"If I can write a story," says Mr. H. C. Bunner, in a recent number of the *Century*, "which will make you believe, *while you are reading it*, that when my hero was strolling down Fifth Avenue to attend a meeting of the Young Men's Kindergarten Club, he met a green dragon forty-seven feet long, with eighteen legs and three tails, and that the green dragon wept bitterly and inquired the way to a cheese shop—why, that's realism."

Upon this principle, no doubt, Miss Gertrude Hall is a realistic story-teller;

* Foam of the Sea. By Gertrude Hall. Boston: Roberts Bros. $1.00.

otherwise one might be led to ascribe to *Foam of the Sea, and Other Tales* certain characteristics bordering upon idealism. They are sketches of the impressionist school, of which they share the faults as well as the virtues. The impressionist, whether in painting or literature (it is not without significance that impressionism in sculpture is an impossibility) usually has a story to tell; and no doubt he has as much right to tell it in broad splashes of colour as by means of millions of fine lines on wood or copper—provided always that he does really tell it; that we believe, while we are looking or listening in the green dragon with the particularly inconvenient number of legs and tails.

The tale (not of the dragon) which gives name to Miss Hall's present volume is an attempt to convey the impression produced upon her own mind by the sea and seacoast; it does not seem necessary to say the Grecian seacoast, though she has resorted to Greek mythology for some of her personages and located them on a Mediterranean island; the resulting impression is, however, thoroughly American. And there is no question that she makes us believe in the green dragon; we feel it all, the fascination, the savagery, the fulness of life, the semi-divine *something* always just beyond and forever unattainable; and then one closes the book in something of a pet and says, "How could I —I! yield to so poor a spell as that?"

Now we submit, that such a result as this is not worth working for, and that Miss Hall can do better—as, indeed, she has proved in the second story in this volume, "In Battlereagh House," where the portrait of the chaplain is of exquisite tenderness and beauty. "Powers of Darkness" is a psychological study of a young woman who believes herself possessed of a devil; it shows the value of impressionism in art, inasmuch as a more careful working out of details would have lessened the force of the *motif*, or perhaps, we should say, "weakened the impression." "The Late Returning" is less meritorious; "The Wanderers" is a pagan tale thinly veneered with Christianity, and "Garden Deadly" is the old story of Circe, who might as well, in our poor opinion, be let alone for all future time. There is, however, something of fascination even in this, and in the very modernised Heracles, with his club and his boyish innocence; moreover, we desire to record our gratitude to Miss Hall, who has succeeded where other writers have failed (Marie Corelli, for example), and, however sensuous, is never sensual.

But why, oh why! should Miss Hall "sling English all over the ten-acre lot," as little Frank Minor would say, in another sense? Is it essential to impressionism to use words from the Jabberwocky language? "Some lovelily strange development," "indefinably tormented," "exquisitely tantalised," the sea's "innumerable smile" can only be defended by one who claims Humpty Dumpty's privilege of making words mean whatever he chooses they shall. And "tapering off" is destructive certainly to the impressionism of an Italianesque tale. We have great charity for Miss Hall, especially as we imagine that we detect in her traces of the influence of—strange to say—no less a person than George Meredith. The following passage is certainly Meredithian, but the phrases are well chosen and picturesque: "The little upstart half-sister must surely rue her presumption confronted with the honest mirror; divine, if you pleased to say so, the young half-sister—ay, a divine young minister of drink to the higher gods, beside the Queen of Olympus herself! Mistress Berenice could vanquish her by every feature; the habit of victory was all in her face!" Why, however, not simply "in her face"? Wherefore that little word "all"? Miss Hall has by nature something of that novelist's gift of phrase-making, and also something of the weakness through which he stereotypes his own originality. Perhaps Mr. Meredith can do this with comparative safety, but lesser lights had best beware. Would that Miss Hall, for example, might cast aside all weights, and the affectation which doth so easily beset us, and tell the tale, trippingly upon the tongue, with simplicity, and in any manner that suits herself and her story, so that it be in English.

Katharine Pearson Woods.

SÓNYA KOVALÉVSKY.*

Between 1860 and 1870 the educated classes of Russian society were occupied

* Sónya Kovalévsky: Her Recollections of