

IT IS A foregone conclusion that people who delight in the exploits of literary dalliance of the finer sort, will welcome an 'experiment' by Andrew Lang. In his recent volume, 'Old Friends,' he is like a Japanese conjurer we saw recently, who set a-tossing in the air above his head one bright-hued ball after another, and kept them all in motion without clashing, and apparently without an effort, save that of the will. Mr. Lang's quaint conceit of bringing together in a series of confidential letters the immortal characters of fiction, who, to some of us, have been for long years the best and cheeriest of brain companions, joined to his exquisite knack of taking color from the style of the authors he thus commemorates, makes of these mock epistles the 'most excellent fooling' of its kind. Quite irresistible is the communication of Mrs. Proudie, wife of the well bullied Bishop of Barchester Towers, to her gossip Emily Quiverful, detailing her shocking experience with that 'brazen-faced, painted daughter of Heth (sixty, if she is a day),' Rebecca, Lady Crawley, *née* Sharp, who, as an interesting convert to his Lordship's eloquence, managed to get herself installed as an inmate of the Palace! Not less thrilling is the account furnished by Miss Catherine Morland of Northanger Abbey to her friend Miss Eleanor Tilney, of a visit to the country-house of a Mr. Rochester, and of the extraordinary conduct of that gentleman's governess, Miss Eyre. Catherine, poor dear, who will be remembered as a sensitive as well as an enquiring spirit in the matter of occult mysteries, heard, after retiring to her bed, odd laughter, and a stealthy step outside her door. 'I hurried on my frock and shawl,' she writes, 'and crept into the gallery. A strange dark figure was gliding in front of me, stooping at each door; and every time it stooped came a *low gurgling noise!* Inspired by I know not what desperation of courage, I rushed on the figure and seized it by the neck. It was Miss Eyre, the governess, filling the boots of all the guests with water, which she carried in a can. When she saw me, she gave a scream and threw herself against a door hung with a curtain of Tyrian dye. It yielded, and there poured into the passage a blue cloud of smoke, with a strong and odious smell of cigars, into which (and to what company?) she vanished.'

The experience of Mr. Cecil Tremayne, an officer in her Majesty's guards, who, after serving 'Under Two Flags, performs an act of Homeric valor in the service of Daisy Miller; the revenge taken by Mr. Alan Breck upon Mr. Barry Lyndon, who had ruined him at cards; the artless correspondence between Harold Skimpole, Esq., and the Rev. Charles Honeyman, M.A., respectively in difficulties of a financial nature; the explanation afforded by 'Miss Harriet' to M. Guy de Maupassant, of that 'recurrent mystery—why Englishmen abroad smell of gutta-percha'; the letters of Clive Newcome to Arthur Pendennis, of Mrs. Gamp to Mrs. Prig, of Mrs. Casaubon to William Ladislav, of Mr. Allan Quatermain to Sir Henry Curtis, of Christian D. Piscator and of Truthful James to Mr. Bret Harte—all and more as sparkling await the reader to whose gaze this bright kaleidoscope, styled by the author 'Essays in Epistolary Parody,' has not yet been revealed.

* Old Friends: Essays in Epistolary Parody By Andrew Lang. 2s. New York: Longmans, Green & Co.