

THE FOOD OF THE GODS. By H. G. Wells. (Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.50.)

THIS entertaining story, that follows in the track of Swift, Verne, and still earlier writers, yet with an added ability derived from the passing years of the centuries, is now presented to us in neat and simple book form, without the disturbing, even if skilfully drawn, illustrations of its serial appearance. Mr. Wells startled and amused us by his first tale, and some of us, with provincial narrowness of judgment, hesitated to read his later stories; but this last shows that his imagination is still fertile, and his logic correct in result. The publishers speak of "pathos" in their advertising-slip, and to our amazement we find they are right; there is pathos in the book. The death of Caddles certainly gives us that.

But the whole book is an immense bit of fun at the expense of the "scientists" and the politicians, real or pseudo, each, both, all. The shafts of sarcasm hit without partisan bias. All the characters are vivid, but we are particularly struck with Doctor Winkles and his ways. While a story suited to beguile a tedious hour, it is also a series of lessons for those wise enough already to be able to perceive and digest them; but these lessons are not for those who run! Is Caterham suggested by the Right Honorable Joseph Chamberlain? These wonderful giants, are they symbols to teach a stronger belief in the right of every articulating being to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?" Is the argument for "Free Trade?" Let the readers judge.

The epigrammatically sarcastic wit of Mr. Wells is shown in such a phrase as "the unfaltering littleness of men." The value of honesty, conscientiousness, carefulness, tidiness in all experimental investigations, is one strong lesson picturesquely taught. The value of practical common sense as allied to idealism and imagination, is shown in the friendly and helpful relation of Cossar and Professor Redwood. It is a truth that investigators into the wonders of the universe should take to heart, that "nothing destroys the powers of general observation quite so much as a life of experimental science."

The author evinces knowledge both philosophic and scientific, wide sympathies, versatility, and a keen appreciation of the fallacies of the present state of the progress of civilization.