

this discussion, for certainly Mr. Burgoyne, the valetudinarian philosopher, has no nearer prototype than Spencer. But Mrs. Burgoyne was undeniably pretty, too pretty, for, being mismated with respect to years as well as temperament with the great man, she gives way to a fatal passion that brings disaster upon the whole quiet household. The importance of the book lies not in its plot, but in the marvelously vivid and realistic picture of the genius, whose flickering flame has to be carefully guarded, yet burns so brightly that all the world is lighted by it. The psychology of the scientist has never before been worked out in fiction with such accuracy. The biographies of Huxley, Darwin and Spencer have evidently supplied much of material, but it is not the work of a copyist or imitator, but of a creator of character. He has provided Burgoyne with a whole library full of published works, and he shows us the reasons for their order and nature. He has patiently acquired and arranged the details of the background until the whole figure of the great man stands out before us in three dimensions. In these days of slipshod workmanship and rapid writing it is a pleasure to find a work like this, where the author shows that he is master of his craft and willing to take pains to make his picture perfect. It is truly a grand old man that he has drawn, one that anybody would be the better for knowing intimately; lovable in his daily life, marvelous in the comprehensiveness and alertness of his intellect, admirable in his lifelong devotion to truth, sublime in his forgiveness and forgetfulness of injuries done him personally. Certainly the great scientist is the nearest approach to the true superman that the twentieth century can yet show. Mr. Maxwell has produced the most powerfully written book of the year. It is not likely to be the most popular one, for it is too true to life. Sin, disease and death are not softened by rosy clouds of misty writing. Everything is not brought out all right by an ingenious trick. The curtain does not fall at the climax; the characters have to live on and live down their tragedy, just as they do in real life. The author is the son of Mrs. John Maxwell, better known to novel readers as Mrs. M. E. Braddon.

The Guarded Flame. By W. B. Maxwell.
New York: D. Appleton & Co. \$1.50.

What would have happened if Herbert Spencer had married George Eliot is a question that has been frequently discussed during the past year. No one would have ventured to think of such a thing if Spencer had not in his characteristically grave and naïve manner suggested that this might have occurred if she had been a little prettier. It seems likely that the germ idea of this novel arose from