

RECENT FICTION.

The Witch of Prague. By F. Marion Crawford. (New York: Macmillan & Co. \$1.00.) To our mind this is one of the best of recent romances. Mr. Crawford possesses the gift of story-telling, and success has not made him careless. *The Witch of Prague* deals with love and hypnotism in a way to engage the reader at the outset and hold him to the end. Poe's "Case of M. Valdemar," Bulwer's "Strange Story" and a half dozen other mesmeric stories are suggested, but Mr. Crawford has the original touch and his work is masterly to a degree. It is long since a character has been more powerfully drawn and colored than the "Witch" in this romance. We feel that here the most has been made for fiction out of the imaginary phases suggested by the so-called science of hypnotism. Mr. Crawford's incidents strain all the possibilities; but they are sketched with consummate art.

Charles Scribner's Sons have issued a new paper edition of Frank R. Stockton's delightful story, *The Late Mrs. Null*. (Price 50 cents.)

Rand, McNally & Co., Chicago, send us *The Sign Board and Other Stories*, translated from the French of Michel Masson, Émile Souvestre, Théophile Gautier and André Theuriet. The stories are interesting in their English dress, but especially in the case of Gautier, the style of the original is lost. A short biographical note precedes the work of each author.

The Cruel City. After the Russian of Dimitry Grigorovitch. Introduction by Ernest de Lancy Pierson. (New York: Cassell Co. 50 cents.) What can Mr. Pierson, in his prefatory biographical note, mean by saying of Grigorovitch: "As a young man, he was an enthusiastic student of the works of Zola and Guy de Maupassant."

Grigorovitch, tho he is now nearly seventy years of age, leads a busy life in St. Petersburg." We may be a trifle stupid, but we must ask how a man who is nearly seventy could have been in his youth a student of Zola and Maupassant? The story here given is a crude sketch which possesses just the mild interest due to "vulgarity in a strain." The humor is tenuous, and the incidents occasionally invite a smile.

Mr. G. A. Henty, who makes stories for boys—makes them well and by the job lot—has three excellent ones before us just now. *Held Fast for England*, *The Dash for Kartoum*, and *Redskin and Cowboy* are their names. All three bear copyright notice dated 1891. The shortest of the three has 353 pages of nearly 400 words each. We should like to visit Mr. Henty's manufactory. We dare say he has some curious and beautiful machinery warranted to do wonders in the way of turning out manuscripts. The stories now under review are good for boys to read, therefore we cannot object because they were not "hand-made." We recommend them. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.50 each.)

The Boyhood of John Kent. By Willis Boyd Allen. (Boston: Congregational Sunday-School Publishing Society. \$1.50.) This may be called a sensational Sunday-school story; but there is nothing unduly exciting in it. Boys will find it deeply interesting, and certainly the moral purpose is good.

Upton; Its Church, Pastor, People and Saloons, and What They Did. By the Rev. J. A. Davis. (New York: Board of Publication of the Reform Church of America. \$1.25.) This story purports to be fact disguised as fiction. We feel in reading it that, taken in any way, it is wholesome food for reflection.

Oliver Optic's latest story, just issued by Lee & Shepard, Boston, is *Stand By The*

Union. Most of our boy readers will have a good idea of what is in store for them, and will never rest till they have *Stand By The Union* safely in hand. We sympathize with the boys, and should be glad were we one of them.

An Historical Mystery. By Honoré de Balzac. Translated by Katherine Prescott Wormeley. (New York: Robert Bonner's Sons. \$1.50.) Here is a good translation of one of Balzac's romances. We use the word romances with emphasis to mark our disapproval of the criticism which makes a realist out of this great French writer. Balzac had the literary manner of the realists; but he was an inveterate romancer. The present story, tho not his best, is a wonderful piece of fiction. The volume is a handsome one, beautifully printed, and bound uniform with the eighteen volumes of this fine edition of Balzac's works already issued.

Amaryllis is the seventh story in the "Unknown Library," issuing from the press of Cassell Company. It is a cleverly done little piece of fiction; but the plot is the familiar one of two young people who fall in love without knowing that their marriage has already been arranged for by the father of the heroine and the uncle of the hero. It can be read at a sitting, and will be found quite captivating.

Out at Twinnett's, by John Habberton (New York, John A. Taylor & Co., 50 cents), is a story of speculation on Wall street and the results of rascality well mixed up with love and mystery. Those who like mildly sensational fiction will find *Out at Twinnett's* just to their taste.

Sweet Is Revenge is No. I of the "Broadway Series" of novels from the same publishers. The author is J. Fitzgerald Malloy, and the story falls in the catalog of thoroughly sensational fiction. (New York: John A. Taylor & Co. 50 cents.)

From the same publisher we have also No. 1 of the "Mayflower Library," entitled *Well Won*. It is another of Mrs. Alexander's stories of English life, somewhat funny, and interesting enough in its way. (New York: John A. Taylor. 30 cents.)

Tales from Town Topics (Town Topics Publishing Co., 50 cents) is a little bundle of trash unworthy of notice.

Miss Maswell's Affections, by Richard Price, is No. 709 of the popular "Franklin Square Library." (New York: Harper & Brothers. 50 cents.) The heroine had a great deal of trouble with her affections, turning them this way and that, and finally calling in her aunt to help her get them properly settled. It is a decidedly readable novel, and will be popular, we should say.

An Entire Stranger. By the Rev. T. L. Bailey. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co. \$1.25.) This is the story of a teacher's trials and triumphs, a good piece of work in its way, full of sensible suggestions and excellent practical hints on the conduct of life. From the same publishers we have *Led in Unknown Paths*, by Anna F. Raffensperger (\$1.00), which is the story awarded the prize by *The Presbyterian Banner* of Pittsburgh, Penn., in a competition by a hundred writers. It is a clever piece of homely realism. These publishers send us also *Doctor Lamar*, a novel without the author's name. In many respects it is a powerful piece of fiction, and the somber pictures it offers of certain phases of physical suffering and of moral and religious entanglements are strikingly bold and effective. As a whole, however, the work is not up to a high standard of art. The style is without any distinct flavor of individuality, and the artistic management of the story is confused and often weak. The author is evidently in deep earnest, and the burden of his purpose weighs rather heavily on the movement of the drama.

The Scarlet Tanager and Other Blpseds. By J. T. Trowbridge. (Boston: Lee & Shepard. \$1.00.) This is a collection containing four of Mr. Trowbridge's entertaining stories for young people. Whatever this author writes may be depended upon, especially by boys, for affording delight.

The Little Millers. By Effie W. Merriman. (The same. \$1.00.) Children who have read "Pards," by this author, will be glad to welcome *The Little Millers* which is another story somewhat in the same vein.

Shreds and Patches, by E. N. Leigh Fry, with illustrations by Edith Ellison (New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., \$1.50), will make itself a pleasing guest in the households of America. It is a bright, merry little jumble of good things for the youngsters, and no doubt it will keep them quiet for an hour or two.

The Jo-Boat Boys. By the Rev. J. F. Cowan. (New York: Thomas S. Crowell & Co. \$1.50.) Both the story and the illustrations make a good effect when a boy opens this little book of breezy adventures on

river, in hospital, in the streets, and all round the country generally. It is a good story.