

WHOEVER has the patience to persevere beyond the first hundred pages of 'The Eleventh Hour'\* will find himself, to his surprise, rewarded. The component parts of the novel—scheming mothers, weak daughters, dissipated heroes, gamblers and gaming-tables—are so essentially poor, and the style at first so low in tone, that it is surprising to find how good a story is developed from the material. Perhaps the main point to be noted is that it is interesting; but the novelist is certainly not devoid of power who can create a hero with glaring faults and a heroine with decided weaknesses, yet interest us in them both and prevent us from despising either.

IN the good old days of 'John Halifax, Gentleman' and 'The Heir of Redcliff,' novelists were wont to delight in the pleasures of married life or at least of betrothal. Now that the taste of both novelists and readers inclines to a rendering of conjugal unhappiness, it is rather a relief when the author, as in the story of 'Amabel,'† chooses a married pair who love each other after a quarrel rather than a pair who quarrel after having loved each other. The plot is involved, but unique; and while in no way above the average of hundreds of stories that serve their purpose if they succeed in amusing one on a dull afternoon, the story of 'Amabel' is to be commended for enforcing a needed lesson in showing how a perfectly innocent woman may suffer from mere indiscretion. The author's style is charming.

THE story of 'Leone'‡ is full of thrilling interest and is charmingly told. As a curious revelation of the way in which European brigands have pursued their system of robbery almost, one might say, under government protection, and of the singular code of honor which leads these outlaws to exclaim, 'We are brigands—not robbers or assassins,' it had been preceded by About's 'Roi des Montagnes,' but even the part devoted to the brigands has original features, and though there is none of the funniness of the 'Roi des Montagnes,' the situations are more dramatic without being more theatrical. The heroine is another American girl abroad, and nothing in the book is better of its kind than the relation, essentially American, between Mr. Norman and his daughter, and the manner in which it confounds the very different Italian temperament.

VERY, very charming is this quiet story§ without plot or incident or climax, about a frank and chivalrous young fellow, who is not exactly the average young man, but who is certainly very ordinary for a hero, in being equally removed from each of the two extremes usually chosen by novelists to depict; who is, in short, neither a prig nor a rogue. In the midst of the charm, however, are bits of brilliancy quite as effective as the caustic sentences of more cynical writers; bright talk, after a delicious description of landscape; or—after a picture such as that of Dick with his mother and the primroses—a page of keen analysis that would do credit to Henry James, Jr. Indeed, there is one lady in the book—Dick's grandmother—who is known to us only through a page of analysis, but whom we know quite as thoroughly as those whose temperament is supposed to be shown in their actions. The book is, then, at once charming, brilliant, and natural; and were we asked what hero of recent fiction we should most desire a certain small boy of our acquaintance to resemble, we should unhesitatingly say—'Let him be like Dick.'

To the uninitiated mind it seems as if the mere compilation of necessary facts for such an historical novel as 'Antinous'¶ would require years of patient poring over a dictionary of antiquities and voluminous taking of notes. As a novel, it is at first dull; but the interest deepens as the story develops. Christianity and the early Christians are shown in different phases, with the somewhat novel introduction of possible faults in both. One of the keenest things in the book is the delineation of the character of Græcina, showing as it does how one may be unwise, unjust and disagreeable in doing good; and the way in which the devout mind—whether pagan or Christian—is led to see the intervention of any special god in any event illustrates well the adaptability to temperament and education of man's religious convictions. The story of Antinous lends itself easily to philosophical romance: a hero who could be made unhappy but not corrupt by an emperor—who remained faithful to Hadrian after he had ceased to honor him, not from self-interest, but because in soothing the nerves of an imperial invalid he added to the comfort of the world; and who sacrificed his life at last for a benefactor whom he no longer loved—is a hero such as is rarely found in literature.

\* At the Eleventh Hour. By Annie Edwardes. 6oc. Putnam's Transatlantic Series.

† Amabel. By Mrs. Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer. 20c. Harper's Franklin Square Library.

‡ Leone. \$1. (Round Robin Series.) Boston: James R. Osgood & Co.

§ Dick's Wandering. By Julian Sturgis. \$1.50. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

¶ Antinous. By George Taylor. Trans. by Mary J. Safford. Paper, 50c.; cloth, 90c. New York: W. S. Gottsberger.