

of passion, and glimpses of dark passages which one does not care to explore. We can repeat what we said in connection with *Mrs. Lorimer*, that Mrs. Harrison furnishes suggestions of George Eliot. She is vivid and effective in her descriptions, and telling in her portraiture. One gets for example a most life-like impression of the languid and drawling Bertie Adams; and the pet monkey, Malvolio, is introduced in a striking way. The whole work is carefully studied and wrought, and repays attentive reading; while at the same time we do not think its tone the most healthful. There is a morbid strain running through it; one is tempted to ask whether the imagination which conceived and executed this book has not a touch of inflammation; it can hardly be that one is lifted to the highest moods by those analyses and introspections of diseased individualities.

Mr. Marion Crawford, having begun his career as a novelist with a Mr. Isaacs in the fervid land of Buddha and the Parsees, and having continued by following Dr. Claudius from Germany to Newport, sailing thence To Leeward among dangerous French reefs, and afterward taking up with the delicate and refined company of A Roman Singer, now returns to somewhere near the scene of his first love, and in events supplementary to the history of the Prophet Daniel finds a field for the renewed exercise of his imagination, his love of the sensuous, and his skill in the dissection of passion nerves and nerve-centers. The story begins with a brilliant and glowing description of Belshazzar's feast, and speedily fastens attention upon the figures of the fair Jewess, Nehushta, the last of the descendants of Jehoiakim, and of her lover the godlike Zoroaster. Daniel dies in a sort of splendid apotheosis; Zoroaster and Nehushta are transported at the command of Darius to Shushan; and the story thenceforth follows their exciting and romantic fortunes in the palace of Darius and Atossa. The background is richly and circumstantially furnished, and with historical fidelity, as in touches like this:

Atossa . . . turned quickly and hastened down the dusky corridor. At the opposite end a small winding stair led upwards into darkness. There were stains upon the lowest steps, just visible in the half light. Atossa gathered up her mantle and her under tunic, and trod daintily, with a look of repugnance on her beautiful face. The stains were made by the blood of the false Smerdis, her last husband, slain in that dark stairway by Darius, scarcely three months before.

In attaching Zoroaster to the reign of Darius Mr. Crawford follows the current traditions, but the probabilities are that the founder of the Persian religion belonged to a much earlier date. However the novelist of the present case is more concerned with the star-gazer and heavenly dreamer viewed as a lover than as a philosopher, and possible anachronisms are not of so much matter amid the splendors of court life in that far East, and the contending jealousies, partialities, and enmities of kings, queens, and fair-haired captives. Darius loves Nehushta, Atossa loves Zoroaster, Nehushta is cruelly deceived into a mistrust of Zoroaster and marries Darius, Zoroaster retires heart-broken to the desert and to his reveries, Atossa in remorse reveals her perfidy to the unsuspecting Nehushta who is plunged in turn into the profoundest grief at her dire mistake, and the curtain falls upon a most tragic *dénouement*, in which Zoroaster and Nehushta yield up their

lives in a flow of blood. As a romance of the historico-romantic school *Zoroaster* must be called in many ways a success, though we do not think the school the highest in fiction, or that efforts in it of this kind are very edifying. There can be no question as to the showy realism with which Mr. Crawford has here brought the life of the Persian court in the 5th and 6th centuries Before Christ under the very eye of the reader, though there is room for scientific criticism of the arts by which he has done it. The book has ability and character, and will win applause from certain minds, which care more for the grandeur and display with which the stage is set and the actors are apparelled and disposed, than for the actual merit and interest of the play which is presented.

"The Duchess's" latest effusions belong distinctively to the order of milk-and-water fiction — they are made up largely of tame, wishy-washy sentimentalism diluted with gush and moonshine, and written in a style very nearly the most abominable ever invented by woman. The leading production, "*In Durance Vile*," a story of a boy-cotted family in Ireland, is not without some slight degree of merit, and is, at any rate, the best of the lot. The others are trash — trash — trash.

FICTION.

Colonel Enderby's Wife. By Lucas Malet. [D. Appleton & Co. Paper, 50c.]

Zoroaster. By F. Marion Crawford. [Macmillan & Co. \$1.50.]

In Durance Vile and Other Stories. By The Duchess. [J. B. Lippincott Co. 75c.]

"Lucas Malet" is getting to be known as Mrs. Harrison, a daughter of the late Charles Kingsley. She hitherto has been better known by her authorship of *Mrs. Lorimer*, a clever and in some respects strong novel of 1883. *Colonel Enderby's Wife*, her new venture, is a variation from that work in both directions of quality, having perhaps less strength but more movement; more life and action, less depth and intensity. There is a quiet self-confidence and reserved power in the style which bespeaks maturity in the author, and wins the respect of the reader, and he does not turn many pages of the book without realizing the fact that he is in able and measurably practiced hands. Colonel Enderby is a disinherited English son, whose life has been shadowed by parental misconception and injury. The story begins and ends in England, but has an important episode in Italy, in the course of which much is made of the picturesque scenery along the Cornish Road, in the vicinity of Genoa and the suburb of Terzia. The book has a distinct landscape, and the story lying against it is dramatic, even tragic, with a considerable undertone