

THE tendency to caricature in character-drawing which Alphonse Daudet has shown when copying real personages into his novels has been given freer scope, and is, indeed, the essential element of success, in his latest work, "The Prodigious Adventures of Tartarin of Tarascon," translated into English which occasionally seems a little "broken," by Robert S. Minot, and published by Lee & Shepard. Daudet's fondness for combining biography with his fiction is also here indulged; and a note to this edition informs us that the work is the exaggerated account of a hero still living near Tarascon. It is in effect a burlesque, a satire, a piece of genuine and irresistible drollery. No reader with a capacity for the grotesque and ludicrous can read without laughter any chapter of this most odd and humorous book. The hero, Tartarin, in whom are combined the characters of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza—the one saying to his imagination, "Cover thyself with glory, Tartarin," the other, "Tartarin, cover thyself with red flannel,"—has a mania for hunting; and though he has never been absent from his native village in Provence, he has so constantly read books of travel and adventure in Africa, and has surrounded himself with such an arsenal of guns, sabres, rifles, carabines, knives, blunderbusses, bayonets, spears, and arrows, that at length he comes to believe himself really a famous hunter, and takes the terrible title of "Tartarin the lion-killer." A menagerie visiting the village rouses his hunting zeal beyond all restraint, and he decides to go to Africa; first making the most tremendous preparations—passing his nights in walking behind the menagerie tent, habituating himself to hear without trembling the lion's roar in the darkness. Arriving at Algeria, which he supposes to be the country of lions, he goes a few miles out of town and watches all night for game, his huge body inclined painfully upon one knee with gun ready, according to directions which he has read in the books of lion-hunters. Towards morning he adopts the ruse of bleating like a kid to attract the hungry beasts; and presently some animal approaches stealthily, at

which he bangs away in the darkness. When daylight comes, he finds himself, not in an open desert, but "in a large bed of artichokes, between a bed of cabbages and a bed of beets," with a dead ass near him, for which he is compelled to make an expensive settlement with the furious old woman who owns the garden. He then buys a camel and sets out for the interior; but this mode of travel is rendered almost intolerable by reason of his obesity. Along with his rotundity of body and his wooden courage, he has certain other Falstaffian qualities; and not the least amusing of his adventures is the love-episode with a "veiled Moorish lady of Algiers," whom he afterwards discovers, to his great disgust, to be a French grisette. His adventures in the interior, where he encounters at last a real lion, are indeed "prodigious"; and under all its extravagance and rollicking humor, the narrative so well preserves an air of candor and probability, that the character seems a real one, so distinct and natural that hereafter it may be said of any one who, afflicted with a similar mania, combines the utmost of vanity and pusillanimity with the least of courage and efficiency, "He is almost as great a hunter as Tartarin of Tarascon."