

predecessors. It is a story of Jerusalem in the days of Jehoiakim, before the Babylonian captivity. Asaph is a beautiful child chosen to be a burnt-offering to the god Moloch, but saved on the very edge of the flames by the devotion of his mother. There is a wild beauty in the description of their life in the wilderness, and a distinct interest in the later years when Jeremiah thunders his prophecies from the steps of the Temple, and the lines of the besiegers are drawn closer and closer around the doomed city. In the end, Asaph becomes the beloved favorite of Nebuchadnezzar the king, and survives to welcome, as an aged man, the entrance of Cyrus the Deliverer into Babylon, on the strange night which follows the writing on the wall. — United States Book Co.

FICTION.

The Bachelors' Club.

There are many things the value of which in our eyes is increased when they show evidence of labor in their construction; but fun and humor are not in this class. A chromo will never rank with pictures which are inferior in color, yet bear the brush-mark upon them, a witness of human effort in their production. So a witticism which gives plain sign of mechanical construction, however skillful, falls ineffective upon the ear.

The trouble with this book of the Bachelors, by I. Zangwill, illustrated by George Hutchinson, is that it has had too much hard work visibly put out upon it. The traces of the midnight oil have not been sufficiently removed to allow us to assume — we always wish to do so with books of amusement — that the fun arose spontaneously, and first blushed unseen before any reader's eye was expected to mark it. No, we wish to laugh often, but we are critical of the man who tries laboriously to make us do it. Consequently we vote the *Bachelors' Club* a dull book, hardly deserving, because of its few nuggets, the tedious washing and sifting which the finding of these demands. — Brentanos. \$1.50.

The Heir Presumptive, and the Heir Apparent.

The Heir Presumptive is Marmaduke Parke, and the Heir Apparent his cousin Marmaduke, Lord Frogmore, born in the old age of his father, and temporarily forgotten by his mother during a period of madness, so that the poor boy seemed doubly orphaned. Mrs. Oliphant shows even more than her accustomed skill in first making and then disentangling this intricate snarl of relationships and interests. The crisis, when Marmaduke lies helpless after defeated typhoid, and the mother who had denied him suddenly comes to her senses and rushes in at the critical moment to save her boy, has a real thrill of excitement about it. Looking back at the long series of fictions from Mrs. Oliphant's pen, it is wonderful to note how strong and accurate and fresh her touch still is. In some ways this, her latest book, has a better quality than most of its predecessors. — United States Book Co. 50c.

Asaph.

There seems an odd little fad at present for making novelettes out of old Testament history. *Asaph* is one of these attempts, and its author, Alice Kingsbury Cooley, may fairly be said to have scored more of a success than some of her

What's Bred in the Bone.

This is the story, by Mr. Grant Allen, which took the \$5,000 prize offered by *Tid-bits*. Apparently the author thought that an unusual amount of sensationalism was required, and cast his work to meet the demand. Most of the leading characters have some mystery in their lives, and, sooner or later, all are entangled. The twins who have never known anything about their parentage suddenly have it revealed in a most surprising manner. Lovers are kept apart for reasons that to them are inscrutable; the noblest young man of the story has the greatest misfortunes; the wrong man is arrested for a murder; everybody gets into trouble. Fortunately, the author of this thwarting of plans and rending asunder of plighted lives, of all this anxiety and injustice, knows how to set things right, reward the good and punish the wicked, explain everything, and make everybody happy who deserves to be. Mr. Grant Allen must be credited with a talent for contriving an elaborate plot, and carrying it out; for keeping up the interest, and cleverly managing the persons he has called into being. It was, however, in conspicuously bad taste to introduce the snake, Sardanapalus, for the purpose of illustrating his theories on heredity, and to leave a disagreeable impression by making his heroine the descendant of a gypsy snake-charmer. — Benjamin R. Tucker. 50c.

A Matter of Skill.

This story, by Beatrice Whitby, is hardly in the line of her other novels. It is slight in comparison, is less intense and vigorous; but, in its way, it is quite as pleasing. There is no plot worth mentioning, and the characters are so easily read that no complications are to be looked for. Helen Mitford, the proud and indulged daughter of a country rector, scorns the love of her father's curate, and goes away from home to escape his attentions. While on the journey she meets her fate in the person of Albert Jones, the rich young man of the very neighborhood where she is to stay. The story tells the progress of their acquaintance, with all the haps and mishaps, and depicts the life of the quaint Aunt Elisabeth, whose hobby is gardening. It is charmingly told, and is very readable. — D. Appleton & Co. 50c.

Eleven Possible Cases.

Eleven different writers are represented in this collection, each presumably doing his part to meet the requirements of "stories that could hardly be expected to happen, and which yet have about them the air of possibility." Franklin Fyles has the first — a story of extreme surprises,

"The Only Girl at Overlook;" Mr. Stockton contributes, "A Thing that Glistened;" Joaquin Miller, "A Lion and a Lioness;" Henry Harland, "A Head of Death;" Maurice Thompson, "The Mystic Krewe;" Ingersoll Lockwood, "Strange Adventures of a Million Dollars;" Edgar Fawcett, "A Lost Day;" Brainerd Gardner Smith, "A Tragedy of High Explosives;" Kirke Munroe, "The Bushwhacker's Gratitude;" Nym Crinkle, "The End of All;" Anna Katharine Green, "Shall He Marry Her?" All are entertaining, many are highly ingenious; but, for originality and the treatment of a phenomenal situation, the awe-compelling story by Nym Crinkle takes the lead. — Cassell Publishing Co. 50c.

The Speculator.

The make-up of this handsome book is peculiar; for "a sea of margin" surrounds the printed lines, which, moreover, are nearer to the top than to the bottom of each page. With a few forcible outlines, Mr. Clinton Ross, the author, has depicted the end of the career of a Wall Street broker. The moral would have been more impressive if the tale had been told at greater length. The last words are so keen and true in regard to one phase of the money question that they deserve to be quoted: "All about, like a chorus, was the ceaseless roar of the Town—the sounds of the lives of the Many, neither lessened nor affected at all by the end of the Individual." — G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$1.00.

An Artist.

This novel—written by Madame Jeanne Maret, and well translated by Anna Dyer Page—is a very pleasant, readable little story, having the wedded life of two artists for its subject. The woman loves her husband but also loves her art, and a conflict ensues between the husband who is selfishly jealous of his wife's profession, and the wife who refuses to give up her art even for his sake. After a series of well-described matrimonial differences, the pair finally settle their disputes amicably, and decide to make the best of each other. Of course the husband is unfaithful to his wife, but in a French novel this is always to be expected; on the whole, the story is a moral one. — Cassell Publishing Co. 50c.

Sweet and Twenty.

The natural, girlish feeling that love is the goal of life is strengthened by the reading of many a modern novel. But out of such sentiment grows a frequent inability to think of life as service. The girl reader idly waits for her turn to come when she too will be courted and won as was the heroine of the last story. The reality of the love that abides in friendship is lost in the travesty of emotion with which she invests it from her perusal of many so-called harmless books. This particular tale, however, by Mary Farley Sanborn, while it belongs to the class of sentimental novels, is well written, kindly in tone, and free from morbidity. The characters are carefully drawn, and there is sufficient plot to make the story interesting. — Lee & Shepard. 50c.

The Roll of Honor.

The latest novel from the practiced pen of Annie Thomas (Mrs. Pender Cudlipp) wears the brave name of the *Roll of Honor*, and tells the story of the love of a *beau sabreur* and a charming young woman under a slight cloud, which

passes, leaving her radiant before the world. The story is told entirely in the present tense—an affectation half-annoying but wholly vivacious; the characters include some very cleverly sketched types of men and women in a garrison town; and the whole effect is of dashing ease, gayety, and comedy. The adorers of novels which are the propaganda of a creed, or a social panacea, or the serious treatment of a theory, may well avoid this story. But for the harmless entertainment of a few hours—warranted to keep the reader awake though the summer solstice oppress, and the murmur of woods or waves lull to repose—the *Roll of Honor* may be cheerfully recommended. — United States Book Co. 50c.

Of the two classes of tales in *Sunny Stories and Some Shady Ones*, by James Payn, the latter are the more interesting. They deal with curious instances of past crime and fanaticism; revive the old question whether or not King Charles was hung in chains; furnish arguments against capital punishment; show the prevalence of superstition; relate actual cases of coming to life; and give the reader constant cause to rejoice that he was born in the nineteenth century, in which penology has become an accredited branch of philanthropy, and laws are more proportionate to offenses committed. The historical value of this strange and true medley of marvels eclipses the slight value of the *Sunny Stories* of today's life, which are exceedingly heavy in their prolonged attempts at humor. — John W. Lovell Co. 50c.

There is unmistakable cleverness in the volume entitled *Maid Marian*, a collection of short stories by Molly Elliott Seawell. She seems to be most at home in those which relate to Southern and negro character; but her sense of humor, which is keen, makes itself felt everywhere. *Maid Marian* is the tale of a materialized picture, and shows what inconveniences might arise if even the best-conducted beauties of Queen Elizabeth's reign were to "revisit the glimpses of the moon," and attempt to adapt themselves and their ideas to modern usage. Why, in the mere matter of ale drinking!—but we forbear. — D. Appleton & Co. 50c.

M. Jean de la Brète has wished to write in *The Story of Reine* the journal of a young girl, an *ingénue* brought up under the triple alliance of the curé of the village, a worthy old uncle, and an acidulated aunt. The story is sufficiently amusing, but it is far from deserving praise as a work of art. The simplicity of the little Reine is that of the *café chantant*, the utterance of risky things, with round eyes, and mouth pursed like that of a petulant baby. Her girlish questions and caprices are evidently imagined by a masculine writer, of not the most refined quality. There is nothing to recommend the book, except the very graceful English into which, unmeritoriously, it has been translated by Mrs. J. W. Davis. — Roberts Brothers. \$1.00.

Brunhilde, or The Last Act of Norma, is the name of a Spanish story of a very different stamp from those which during the past few years have shown the power of Spanish writers in realistic and analytical novels, which has been translated by Mrs. Darr. Pedro De Alarcón's *Brunhilde* is the opposite of realistic; from her character to her clothes she is evidently ideal, as are her

two loves, the "famous Spanish violinist" and "Oscar, the Boy-Pirate of Norway." Indeed, Alarcón's whole plot and style are here as quaintly old-fashioned to modern ears as are the artificial situations and airs of "Norma" itself. — A. Lovell & Co. \$1.00.

"Sweet" is an almost unpardonable epithet to apply to a book, yet no other single word so well describes *Mary St. John*, a picture of English middle-class life. Self-sacrifice and sisterly devotion, philanthropic labors and religious fervor, the dream of young love and the fidelity of married life, are told with simplicity, until the reader's heart grows tender. Miss Rosa Nouchette Carey has written a touching story, which should lead many a woman, discouraged by her mistakes, to take heart again. — J. B. Lippincott Co. 50c.

Scarcely could there be a greater contrast to the calm influence of *Mary St. John* than is afforded by a perusal of *A Life for a Love*, by L. T. Meade. A record of selfishness, meanness, and life-long deceit, culminating in the supposed death of the victim (who has sold his life to save the honor of the father of the girl he loves), furnishes the material for the improbable plot of a novel which is so disagreeable that it can injure no one, and please few. — John W. Lovell Co. 50c.

My First Love and My Last Love is another of the sweetly sentimental novels which leave the reader without any inspiration for the service of reality. The hero of the book tells his own story. In his youth he loved a girl who was forced to marry a man of her own rank. He, in turn, married a woman for whom he did not care; so misery came to all. Yet in old age he gazed fondly upon the miniature of his first and the portrait of his last love; they were likenesses of one and the same person, for he had had but one love! — John W. Lovell Co. 50c.

The dreary subject of hereditary insanity has been chosen by Mr. Richard Pryce as the subject of his novel, *Just Impediment*. His book is pleasantly written, though the descriptions of fast society seem quite foreign to the plot, and are carried in unnecessary detail. Mr. Pryce has not entered into his subject with enough thought to justify his handling a question so grave that only serious intention can excuse its introduction. — J. B. Lippincott Co. 50c.

There is no satisfactory outcome in such a story as *The Risen Dead*. Though it may end with marriages and a general reconciliation, and so may suit the taste of hardened novel-readers, it gives false views of life and human character, and has no moral fiber. Fosbrooke, Lady Culwarsen, her son, Miss Paget—all are inconsistent beings, not even true to themselves. There is a good deal of incident and mystery quite as unnatural as the individuals concerned. — United States Book Company. 50c.