

such obvious ease that one is always a little irritated that he has not done better. There are very few men in the business of story-making to-day who write with such apparent facility and out of so ready an invention. One feels as if just on this account it would be the proper thing "to slate" roundly whatever he does, and yet somehow one always ends by putting the slating off till the next time. In *Days Like These* Mr. Townsend has written a strong and a good novel, which we lay aside with a certain amount of exasperation, because we cannot but feel that with a little elimination here and a little revision there he might have made it a very fine novel indeed.

That this book will have an extraordinary vogue there is no use trying to deny. For sheer audacity of characterisation it surpasses anything that has appeared for some time, and on account of this its success is as certain as was that of Mr. Ford's *The Honourable Peter Stirling* after it became generally believed that the young man who conducted the "swill mill cases" and bossed a district was drawn from President Cleveland. Mr. Winston Churchill found it convenient to deny that he had intended to caricature Richard Harding Davis in *The Celebrity*, and perhaps we may find Mr. Townsend protesting that if Weston and Drummond are, respectively, Senator Platt and Mr. Croker to the life, it is all a mistake; that if the description of Horace Garnett exactly fits Mr. W. C. Whitney, and if in the Mallorys and Worthingtons are recognised some of the peculiarities of certain notoriously wealthy New York families, it is not his fault; that he was writing of types, and not personalities; and that, of course, as a novelist, he wants to write true, he was obliged to draw as fully as possible upon his knowledge of New York life and people.

*Days Like These* is a very good story, marred by some of the more glaring faults of *A Daughter of the Tenements*. It is entirely too dramatic. Mr. Townsend makes his contrasts too striking. When he has finished a chapter of slum life and rounded up his crooks and ward heelers and wharf rats and drunken sailors, he seems to feel that the reader needs a very decided change, and so he introduces us to "really 'igh society" and pelts

## V.

### E. W. TOWNSEND'S "DAYS LIKE THESE."\*

Mr. Townsend does good work with

\*Days Like These. By E. W. Townsend. New York: Messrs. Harcourt and Brothers. \$1.50.

us with multimillionaires and dukes and serene highnesses. The book was originally to have been called *Incomes*, and the change to the present title was made because of a belief that the first title was too suggestive of a treatise on economics. It is well, however, to keep the original title in mind when one is reading the book. Years before the time of the opening chapter of the story a family dispute separated Martin Farnham and his sister Mary, and the latter marries Jack Cavendish and settles down to a life of toil and hardship in a tenement-house in one of the streets of the East Side. Meanwhile, her brother by his energy and shrewdness and sagacity, and mainly because of his belief that "New York is the greatest boom town in America," goes on building up one of those sudden and great fortunes which are peculiar to this country. Of course when he dies his sister's daughter becomes his heir, and of course the theme of the story is the girl's transformation from a model in an East Grand Street department store to a splendid society woman, about whose beauty and bank account all the eligible men of the story seem to hover. To this extent the book is commonplace enough; where it differs from other stories built up upon the same theme is in the fine scenes, the strong characterisations, the sense and the satire. It is a poor story, or at best a very conventional one, but that is only a detail, because it is enlivened by real humour and strong descriptive power. People will read it because of this; but its real success, it is to be feared, will be owed to curiosity.

*Arthur Bartlett Maurice.*