

"The Light that Lies"

THE TITLE of this little book by Cockburn Harvey, extracted from its context, is unfortunately equivocal. We had heard of a "Light that Failed," and were tempted to suppose that this one might have entered upon a course of deceit, until the quotation from Tom Moore, on the title-page, explained to us that it only "lies in woman's eyes." But once launched upon a career of suspicion, we readily took up with another puzzle held out to us by the dedication. Here the book is called "veracious." We hope we may exclude the theory that this epithet connotes an autobiographical study, for the hero of its complicated developments might with advantage go to school to such a scapegrace as Henry Kingsley's Lord Welter, and learn that "there are some things a fellow can't do, you know"; but it can hardly have any application to his own habits of speech, for, whatever the Light may do, he certainly lies in a manner which is frequent and painful and free. The book seems to be a sort of attempt at American "Dolly Dialogues," coupled with the reminiscence of the adventures of Mr. Anstey's luckless Peter Tourmalin—though here the legitimate claimant of the fickle young man's affections is a faith-cure prophetess, which is even worse than delighting in Buckle's "History of Civilization." The book, however, if not judged by too high a critical standard, is not seldom amusing, and the diversion of an idle hour may be found in following Mr. Harry Merton in and out of apparently hopeless entanglements. And, after all, many of us read for recreation only. (J. B. Lippincott Co.)