

The *Episodes* are described as occurring in the lives of certain imaginary men and women—a mode of conveying sentiments and ideas which is not new with the author, but made very effective by original treatment. In the matter of skill in semi-imaginative writing, the episodes called “At Anchor” and “Eclipse” are the most successful. In both of these, there is conceived a chance analogy between certain states of mind and certain special conditions of external nature, and the latter are made to appear as expressions of the former. “Midsummer Noon” is a lighter piece of delightful fancy, and “Love and Friendship” is much in the same vein. A quotation or two from the last and most directly didactic, “*Sat est Vixisse*,” will indicate another quality:

It is while we have no feelings but our own to think about that we think our feelings afford a rational base for conclusions about the nature and worth of life.

For the man who has done nothing worse than fail innocently—and the worst luck forces on us no worse fate than this—who has failed to do great deeds and win a greater love (and for each one the love and the deeds are great which are great enough to content his own desire)—for such there is nothing worse in store than this, to know that there are others in the world better off than he.

It is the combination of literary power with power of thought upon abstract ethical questions which makes this little book remarkable. The abstract problem is thrown into a more concrete shape by the use of fictitious narrative. For minds which have any affinity with the author's own, these *Episodes* will have much charm.

MEN, WOMEN, AND LOVERS.*

MISS SIMCOX is a writer who has already attracted notice in England by her volume on *Natural Law*. The present little book has an unfortunate title, suggestive of nothing more than a collection of sentimentalities; but, in reality, it is serious rather than light in character. Thrown into the shape of fictitious personal narratives, the different chapters are so many brief dissertations or musings on the meanings and motives of human life and conduct, or analyses of certain special moods of thought and emotion. As a whole, the book is certainly original, curious, and interesting. There are matter-of-fact readers who may pronounce it nonsense, and half of it unintelligible nonsense at that; but imaginative authors write for imaginative readers, and, as the author puts it, “there are some truths, I grant, that it seems almost impossible to convey in words except to those who know them already, and yet it is worth while to make the attempt.” The various topics touched upon are of kindred nature. The subtlety of thought in several of the chapters reminds one of George Eliot; the style, too, has many of the merits and defects of that writer. The resemblance, however, is plainly not due to imitation, but is the unconscious result of a desire to tempt the reader into those fields of rather abstruse meditation which, to the writer, are favorite and familiar ground.

* *Episodes in the Lives of Men, Women, and Lovers.*
By Edith Simcox. James R. Osgood & Co. \$2.50.