



The Latest Books

MARY AUSTIN, who, since she first stood sponsor for the Arizona "Land of Little Rain," has come to speak of these desert regions with almost maternal alternations of proud understanding and humble admiration, has gathered into an alluring little volume called *Lost Borders* some of the broken beginnings and tag ends of failed endeavor and forgotten happenings that she has salvaged from the sands. It is characteristic of the writer and it is the determining characteristic of the book that it is not the salience of the human drama but its insignificance that seizes the imagination in these fragments of story; and that they get their needed touch of finality not from their being humanly inevitable, but from their having chanced upon nature in the utter aloofness and irresponsiveness of her desert self-contemplation. The attitude of Mrs. Austin to the American desert is in striking contrast to that of Mr. Robert Hichens to the African. Mr. Hichens has, as one might say, rented the Sahara furnished; and after seeing to the putting in of all the modern requirements for the purpose, has used it as a studio and schooled its inhabitants as models. Mrs. Austin has rather given herself to the desert than set up any claim over it, either of lease or of squatter sovereignty. And one is conscious in all her writings that the desert in return has made her articulate.