

BOOKS and AUTHORS.

A LITERARY CAUSERIE FOR COLONIAL BOOKBUYERS AND BORROWERS.

BOOKS marked thus (*) have arrived in the colony, and could at the time of writing be purchased in the principal colonial bookshops, and borrowed at the libraries.

For the convenience of country cousins who find difficulty in procuring the latest books and new editions, the 'BOOKMAN' will send to any New Zealand address any book which can be obtained. No notice will, of course, be taken of requests unaccompanied by remittance to cover postage as well as published price of book.

It is requested that only those who find it impossible to procure books through the ordinary channels, should take advantage of this offer.

The labour involved will be heavy and entirely unremunerative, no fees or commission being taken.

Queries and Correspondence on Literary Matters Invited.

All Communications and Commissions must be addressed

THE BOOKMAN, Graphic Office, Auckland.

* 'Memoirs of One can very well understand the sad spirit in which Mr Caro undertook to write a memoir of his son, the late Percy Herman Caro.' Herman Malcolm Caro, and also that it was no little consolation to him to record something of the brief life of a youth of whom any father might very justly have felt proud. Parents, we know, are invariably apt to think a little too highly of their favourite children, and death kindly magnifies the virtues of those it takes away from us; but the estimate the author of these pages expresses of the ability and character of his son has been so freely endorsed by all who knew the young man that we are not inclined to question its correctness. This young New Zealander—he was born at Waiti Crossing, in South Canterbury—appears to have been as remarkable for goodness of heart as he was for keenness of intellect; and it is very probable that had he been spared, he would have brought distinction on the colony. He was distinguished in his school career in New Zealand, and at Cambridge signalled his entrance to the University by being the only freshman of his College in that year who passed his 'Little Go' with triple honours. His subsequent work at the University prove him to have been a youth of rare parts, but he was prevented from turning his talents to their full account by the weakness of health, which eventually resulted in his death at the early age of twenty-four years and ten months. During his residence in England he appears to have impressed a very large number of his acquaintances by his ability and fine character, and it was with the sincerest sorrow that these heard of his untimely decease in America on his way back to his home in New Zealand.

* 'The House of the Wolf.' From Messrs Longman I have received a new edition of Weyman's *House of the Wolf*. Most readers of fiction will already be acquainted with this admirable story, which I believe was the first of this author's to attract public attention. There is no English writer at the present time who has a stronger and purer style than Mr Stanley Weyman, and none who has earned through hard work a greater right to the success he has attained. What it cost him to achieve that mastery of his instrument so strikingly evidenced in a 'Gentleman of France,' and other of his more recent novels may be gathered by the curious from an article which appeared in a recent number of *The Idler*, but the dominant suggestion of his style is—as is the case with all good art—of something not made with hands. I am sometimes asked to recommend books for boys, which shall, while possessing the requisite amount of thrill (without which there is no boy), be desirable also on account of their literary merits, and my choice usually alights on Stanley Weyman. The atmosphere of his books is one of adventure, the tone as pure as the most ardent moralist need desire. For the older reader the charm is even more pronounced. To him the strength and beauty of the style will make a pleasurable appeal, and he will follow with unflagging interest along the deviations of narratives as vigorous and picturesque as are to be found in modern English.

* 'The Story of Christine Rochefort.' There is nothing new in *The Story of Christine Rochefort*. The heroine is of the type with which Mrs Humpfrey Ward has familiarized us in 'Marcella.' She is beautiful as a matter of course, she is sensitive and enthusiastic, and—as a necessary corollary—ignorant. Her enthusiasm, while it does not exactly bring about the ruin of her husband, tends to that result. At the outset and through the brief period of her passion for a youthful reformer of anarchist leanings, Christine naturally despises her husband. He is a chocolate manufacturer employing a large number of hands, who through the efforts of the young reformer are induced to go out

on strike and finally to burn down the factory. In the end the anarchist is murdered by his disciples, and Christine makes up her mind that the chocolate-maker is not such a bad fellow after all, and having shown indifference towards him throughout the book, she confesses to loving him on the last page.

She felt the tremor that shook him as he held her in his arms, and heard the thrill of passion in his voice when he said, 'At last! Christine, I would die for your love; my darling, my darling.'

As their lips met in the kiss that consecrated the beginning of their new life, Gaston again touched the mountain height of ecstasy, but for Christine it was the first supreme moment.

The device of a marriage in cold blood warmed into passion after a lapse of eighteen months or two years is one which apparently possesses peculiar attraction for the lady novelist, as witness the lucubrations of the author of 'Molly Bawn.'

The Story of Christine Rochefort is readable, and the plot is skillfully worked out. There are many passages of much excellence, and few or none with which one is disposed to find fault. Though it covers no new ground, it goes over the old very pleasingly in a more or less new way.

* 'Memoirs of the late Percy Herman Caro, B.A., LL.B., Cantab.' By his father.

* 'The House of the Wolf,' by Stanley Weyman: Same Library.

* 'The Story of Christine Rochefort,' by Helen Choate Prince: Same Library.

ROUND THE BREAKFAST TABLE.

[WITH APOLOGIES TO THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST TABLE.]

WHEN the ball of conversation is to be set rolling the Professor generally takes the kick-off. He did so by questioning the Simple Little Miss on her manner of spending the holiday.

'We had a picnic on the oth,' she said. 'Oh, it was so lovely! We had just a nice number, you know—no odd ones—Mamma, of course, to play propriety. After lunch we strolled through the bush and got ferns and things, and had such fun. We did have a delicious time, didn't we dear?'

'Mamma, of course, assents. She doesn't go into the bush at picnics. She washes up the tea-cups and packs the hamper, then settles down underneath a tree, and persuades herself she is cool and comfortable instead of hot and perspiring. She cannot read, because the sunlight slanting across the pages makes her eyes and her head ache badly. She dare not sleep, for she is on duty. Grasshoppers, straw-walkers, and earwigs make her day hideous with their crawling attentions; a family of mosquitoes, brought up in the way that mosquitoes should go, court her with intentions strictly carnivorous. Yet she "has such a delicious time," and it is so eminently proper and sensible that she should broil for three or four hours in a mid-summer heat, in order to chaperone her daughter, who is "getting ferns and things" in the bush half a mile away! When the ferns, and more particularly the "things" are got (in the shape of colds, that sitting upon the damp grass might account for, did one not know the magical influence possessed by the absent chaperone—not to mention faces flushed beyond the limits of sunburn and bush-scrambling exertions) they all go back to town, and Mrs Grundy extols picnic chaperonage, and smiles approvingly at "mamma," for is she not composed of mammas who do exactly the same? Thus the Professor when the Simple Little Miss had marched off her much-enduring parent to attend some new social festivity.

'I agree with you as to the farce modern chaperonage too often represents,' said the Practical Man. 'The older type held by no means a nominal position. She conducted her fair charges into a ball-room; beamed amiably upon their partners, taking care to adjust her smile to the extent of their incomes; was "at home on Thursday" to the biggest figure (not athletic, dear friend, but arithmetic!); required Angelina's presence at the conclusion of each dance, and personally supervised her programme. The present-day chaperone enjoys a hearty supper, as indeed her wearisome occupation entitles her to go; after that, she goes to sleep, or, at any rate, supports the wall and her sisters in misfortune through a stage bordering on somnambulism. A whole chapter of incidents—elopement, registry office, Sydney steamers, and all—might safely be arranged under her sleepy eyes. Angelina has merely to produce her chaperone as a sort of *habes corpus* testimony to her good character, and Vanity Fair in the jury box will wink at any sin on the calendar. As to calculating the amount in pounds shillings and pence of her respective partners, every properly-trained young woman knows how to do that nowadays, else where would be the object of teaching them higher mathematics! At the same time the chaperone is not wholly a superfluous, nor will her mission cease and her lot, thereafter, become a happy one until girls themselves realise their

only right to dispense with her—the right of self-respect, self-sufficiency; the power to regulate their own actions with all due propriety and seaminess. To whom much is given, of her much shall be required. An American girl with her latch-key, says Max O'Reil, is the most discreet and trustworthy young person in the two hemispheres. The colonial girl has not got the length of a latch-key; yet, despite her frivolity and worldly wisdom (for which her age and generation, rather than herself, are responsible) there is being slowly but surely fostered in the fair young New Zealander, by reason of the progressive Liberalism of her country, with its recognition of her political rights and its opportunities for her advancement in every sphere of life, that spirit of "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control," which alone can lead her—or the women of any nation—to sovereign power, and fairly entitle her to her latch key—social, civil, religious and political.'

'Talking of picnics,' said the Frivolous Youth, 'inclined me to suspect myself of somewhat vague ideas on the subject (no one else suspected him of entertaining any ideas on any subject). As far as I can recollect, after the sooty-looking contrivance carried in brown paper by somebody's youngest brother, and technically known as a "billy" has been got to boil, everybody sits round in a ring and receives a cupful of its contents, and deposits them contentedly on the grass behind, when everybody else is looking the other way. Then is the correct thing, I believe, for some heroic soul to plunge into rivers of melted butter, and attack—nay even eat a sandwich. When all are looking, struck speechless at his temerity, he softly—as one would handle an ancient and sacred mummy—introduces the joke about the desert of Sahara and the sand which is there, and a blessed feeling of repose, like to the hand-grasp of an old familiar friend, steals over the Company. The calm and soothing restfulness which we experience in the presence of old age, instantly possesses them. Gazing wonderingly on that hoary-headed embodiment of wit, fancy bekons them back through the ages to the morn when multitudinous little Shems and Hams and Japhets of a third generation played leap-frog about the Ark, and Grandpapa Noah came and gave them sixpence each all round because the Mount Ararat *Bulletin* had made a good joke about him. Imagination recalled, and the sandwich-episode over, it is usual and original for each young man to hand a certain button-shaped style of confectionery to the young lady next him and ask her if she will have a "kiss." She says she should just think she wouldn't, and an argument follows, which, for some inexplicable reason, requires the privacy of a bush-ramble. This is generally looked upon as the most hilarious part of the day's excitement, and for my own part, in spite of mosquito bites and other unpleasant after-effects, I believe it. Let Professorial wisdom R.I.P.! There is something delightfully nice and original about balancing yourself on a tree stump with Angelina, in the heart of the bush, and only blue-bottles and dragon flies and maoribugs around to share in your enjoyment of her silvery rippling voice, as she wonders if mamma knows where she is, and whether she oughtn't to go back. But if you are not in love, and therefore sane, and know discretion to be the better part of valour, you will not linger too long on the tree stump with Angelina, lest mamma should circumvent you, and make it impossible to "go back"—which last remark shows the Frivolous Youth to be at least wise in his day and generation.

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