

REVIEWS.

Lalage's Lovers: By George A. Birmingham. (London: Methuen and Co. Auckland: Wildman and Arey. 3s 6d.)

Mr. Birmingham's book is simply delicious, and his heroine one of the most delightfully irresponsible creations of the latest fiction. Lalage, who is the only daughter and spoiled child of the pedantic Canon Beresford, who seemingly cannot open his mouth without exuding Greek, goes to school after successfully combating the efforts of half-a-dozen governesses to instil in her the elements of a modern education, and there imbibes, along with very up-to-date tuition, some very strange notions of women's mission in life. Going on to the University, she, and two other individuals, one of whom may be likened to a feminine edition of Sancho Panza and the other a masculine copy of Eliza Harris, since, though much of what may be termed the common sense in the series of adventures that comprise this amusing comedy is attributable to him, he is never once seen in person by the rest of the actors in it. Lalage Beresford, Don Quixote like, is firmly of the opinion that she has a mission to reform modern political, economic, and religious abuses. First she and her friends set to work on the Bishops, attacking in right Catholic fashion, Anglican, Roman, and Greek Church dignitaries alike. Actions for libel being threatened by some of the incensed high churchmen, Lalage, at the earnest entreaty of her relatives and friends, reluctantly ceases to tilt at these reverend gentlemen, and gets to work in the political arena. Holding the opinion that all politicians are liars, and especially the opposition, Lalage forms a society for the Suppression of Political Liars. An election, in which she is interested, is being keenly contested in Ballygore, and Lalage, hearing that the candidate in which she is interested is likely to lose his election, goes down and demonstrates that the other candidate is a liar of liars. And so encouraged is she by her audience that she warms to her work and finally reverts to her first presumption that all politicians are liars, which so mixes up the committees of the two desirable candidates that a rank outsider "trumps in." Whatever fresh mischief Mr. Birmingham's heroine might have done we cannot say, but, feeling no doubt, that she was getting out of hand, he marries her to a very good fellow, who has all along been financing her mad schemes, with a view, we suppose, of sooner or later showing her what woman's real mission is. For Lalage marries her love, and we leave her trying to inspire a very wealthy and indolent husband to write a book. And that he will with Lalage's heart set upon it we are certain. "Lalage's Lovers" is not the pure comedy it appears to be on the surface. But read it and see, for it is exceedingly good fun, every page of it, and conveys more than one moral.

"The Sins of the Children": By Horace Newte. (London: Mills and Boon. Auckland, Wildman and Arey, 3/6.)

By "The Sins of the Children," Mr. Newte has cleansed his reputation of the foul stain left by his "Sparrows." "The Sins of the Children" deals with middle class society, and portrays with

splendid fidelity to life, the social ambitions of that class, who in order to get into "Society" forget what is due to the power that has enabled them to place their feet on the first rung of the higher social ladder. Jeannie Pilcher, who is the heroine of the story, and a very admirable heroine she is taking her all round, is the daughter of Joe Pilcher, the head of a department of the Great Western Railway, who has early been left a widower and whose whole soul is wrapped up in the one child of his marriage. And, because his ambition is totally wrapped up in Jeannie, he denies himself everything beyond mere living, that he may send her to a school for gentlefolks' children. That is a school that admits the daughters of people who, socially, are a rung or two higher than tradesmen in the social sphere. Now Jeannie, although she is good and true at heart, has social aspirations, both beyond the means and the station in which she lived and was born and bred. A chance meeting, however, threw her in the way of one, Edgar Baverstock, a brother of Mabel Baverstock, a school chum, and the son of a London stockbroker. The acquaintance ripens into love and marriage. But the marriage sorely vexes Baverstock pere on financial grounds, although he is a warm admirer of Jeannie, both for her great personal attractions and worthiness to fill an even higher social position than his son Edgar could then hope to give her. Now Edgar Baverstock had a mother, who, though only belonging to the upper middle-class, would have adorned any position in society, and from her Edgar inherited, in part, a disposition which, together with a very attractive personality, would make him the sort of man a woman would remain ever faithful to, though she were not a Jeannie Pilcher. Well! the two marry, and the rest of the story is taken up with the recital of the married life of the Edgar Baverstocks, in which Jeannie is shown to neglect her father, who is the real hero of the narrative, and with the retribution which finally awaited her, when as a widow her own sin of disloyalty rises up against her and punishes her by the very unflinching love shown her by her son, the one child of the marriage. But all's well that ends well, and as the sequel of the story will show, "Joey," Edgar and Jeannie's child is brought to a sense of his filial duty by one Titterton, a former admirer of Jeannie's. But here we must stop, and strongly recommend the purchase of "The Sins of the Children," which is one of the most realistic, the most ideal, and the finest commentaries on modern middle-class society that we have ever read, besides recording a vigorous protest against false socialism, disarmament, woman suffrage, etc.

Wholly Without Morals: By Sway Dinga. (London: Duckworth and Co. Auckland: Wildman and Arey. 3s 6d.)

Sway Dinga's story possesses at least one questionable distinction in that it provides a fitting background and possesses the correct atmosphere for the creation of quite the most contemptible scoundrel we have ever seen portrayed in or out of fiction. And, in spite of its author's plea that it has been written in the public, one might say Imperial, interest, we cannot believe that such a state of things prevails in Rangoon or Burma as is testified to by this writer. That in the East a looser code of morals

prevails than in the West we know, and believe. But that lends like the Limkin of this book are allowed to thrive and mix among men of even second-rate reputation we cannot believe. That wherever the king of sports is indulged in there is more or less knavery and trickery we are aware. But the knavery and trickery detailed in this book transcend belief. There are, we firmly believe, men who are born un-moral. But there are things that no man, unless he were absolutely insane, could, or would, do. And especially one who had received an education in the humanities. Sway Dinga has dedicated his book to Mr. Barry Pain. This, we take it, is in recognition of "The Exiles of Faloo." In that book Mr. Pain desired to perform an Imperialistic service by pointing out an evil to which Englishmen are prone when dealing with coloured races. But Mr. Pain's villains were all derelicts of English society, and he handled his subject with discretion, delicacy, and honest purpose. Sway Dinga's story may depict faithfully racing, gambling, and borrowing methods in the districts in which he has laid his sordid scenes. But nine readers out of ten will not believe his story. And we are sorry for the tenth who does.

BITS FROM THE NEW BOOKS.

Where Cannibalism Survives.

"In some parts of Melanesia to be slain and eaten is still the highest penalty of the law—if a great man's pig is stolen, or, it may be, one of his wives. Extenuating circumstances being admitted, the culprit will sometimes be let off lightly by being merely burnt to cinders. . . . Really, the correct thing when a person dies is for the next-of-kin to request to be killed and buried with him. If the petition is granted, the mourner is wrapped up alive with the corpse and trodden to death."—"Islands of Enchantment: Many-sided Melanesia," by Florence Coumbe.

A Battlefield Poker Party.

"At Sailors' Creek several wagons were captured by the Unionists and were found to be loaded with the Confederate Treasury. Then followed a most extraordinary spectacle of jollity and good humour. A Monte Carlo was suddenly improvised in the midst of the bivouac of war. The Confederate notes and bonds were rapidly disbursed. If they were at a discount they were crisp and new and in enormous denominations. Spreading their blankets on the ground by the bivouac fires, the veterans proceeded with the comedy, and such preposterous gambling was probably never before witnessed. Ten thousand dollars was the usual 'ante'; a raise of fifty thousand to one hundred thousand was not unusual, and frequently from one million to two millions of dollars were in the 'pool.' They kept up the revelry during most of the night, though some were to make the soldier's sacrifice on the morrow, while others were to witness the scene of final triumph."—"Serving the Republic," by Nelson A. Miles, Lieutenant-General, U.S.A.

Points of View.

"The armaments of Europe are for all nations madness and for each nation imperative."

"Ragging is either a great insult or an affectionate familiarity. There is nothing between the two. But you must know a man very well indeed before you put him into a horse-pond."

"Granted, by all means, that there should be nothing which a husband couldn't tell to his wife, or a wife to her husband, there ought still to be a great many things which neither should tell, and real confidence consists in not wanting to know."—"The Comments of Bagshot."

Arnold Bennett and the Umborn Babe

"My first venture was on a woman's paper. My apprenticeship to frocks was studded with embarrassing situations, of which I will mention only one. It turns upon some designs for a layette. A layette, perhaps I ought to explain, is an outfit for a new-born babe, and naturally is prepared in advance of the stranger's arrival. Underneath a page of layette illustrations I once put the legend, correct in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand—but this was the thousandth—'Cut-to-measure patterns supplied.' The solecism stands to

all eternity against me on the file of the paper."—"The Truth about an Author," by Arnold Bennett.

Exhaustive.

"No woman trusts any man about any woman."—"The Grain of Dust," by David Graham Phillips.

The Latest in Moral Codes.

"She strips her bed in the morning to air it. When people do that they never go wrong."—"The Third Miss Wenderby" by Mabel Barnes-Grandy.

The Great Flickergraph Industry.

"On the average about 150,000 feet of film are placed on the British market every week, and this quantity is steadily increasing. It is computed that there are some 50,000 picture theatres scattered throughout the world, and as the number thereof is increasing daily, the supply of films has by no means yet reached the limits of demand."—"Moving Pictures: How They are Made and Worked," by Frederick A. Talbot.

Feminine Joys.

"Grania accepted the metamorphosis from the life of a grub to that of a butterfly readily enough, and revelled in the joy of delicious silk stockings . . . the joy of pretty petticoats and companionable stays . . . of jewels on neck, wrist and finger."—"The Fair Irish Maid," by Justin Huntly McCarthy.

From "What Diantha Did."

"The stately mansion was covered with heavy flowering vines, also with heavy mortgages. Mrs. Roscoe Warden and her four daughters reposed peacefully under the vines while Roscoe Warden, Jun., struggled desperately under the mortgages." "Mr. Bell took his hat and went out—a conclusive form of punctuation much used by men in domestic discussions." "Do you love me?" they ask, and "I will make you happy" they say; and "you get married—and after that it is housework!"—"What Diantha Did," by Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

The Search for the Human

"Clever people and dull people are common enough; very often both these descriptions will apply to the same person. But people who are simple, spontaneous, impulsive, affectionate—in a word human—are not so very easy to find."—"One of the Family," by Kellie Howard

SUFFERED WITH ECZEMA FOR YEARS

On Face, Hands and Body. Spent Night after Night Without Sleep. Felt Like Scratching Herself to Pieces. Tried Cuticura Ointment. Free from All Itching.

"For several years I have suffered with eczema on the face, hands and body, and when it got very bad I would spend nights after night without any sleep, and at times I would feel like scratching myself to pieces. I tried several so-called remedies without getting the slightest relief. One day I was telling a friend of mine the pain I was suffering and she told me to try the marvelous Cuticura Ointment. I did this and I am very pleased to state that to-day I am quite free from all such itching that is brought about by that dreaded eczema.

"I will never be without a pot of Cuticura Ointment in the house. Any one suffering from eczema, burns, boils, or any other abrasions of the body could not possibly do better than keep a pot of Cuticura Ointment in the house." (Signed) Mrs. F. J. Hazelwood, Bimston, So. Australia, Dec. 9, 1910.

Baby's Face Like Raw Beef

"My baby boy had a large pimple come on his forehead. It burst and spread all over his face which soon looked like a piece of raw beef, all smothered with bad pimples. It was awful to look at. The poor little thing used to scratch it and cry terribly. I took him to a doctor but he said he got worse and I was quite fit to cry. I thought he would always be disfigured. Then I got two tins of Cuticura Ointment, together with Cuticura Soap, and in two months had quite cured him. Now of course I use Cuticura Soap for all my children." (Signed) Mrs. E. Perry, 98, Waterloo Rd., Aldershot, England, May 21, 1910. Sold throughout the world. R. Towns & Co., Dept. NK, Sydney, for sample of Cuticura Ointment and Soap.



"So you've read my new novel. How did you like it?" "I laid it down with intense pleasure."