

having strong local interest, only polling ninety-three votes.

If one may be allowed to say so, the whole of this electioneering episode is quite ridiculous, but fortunately the story in no sense depends for its interest on the writer's grasp of politics.

The story of Robert and of Brigit, the unfortunate little wife of the worthless Parflete, is both interesting and ingenious. For the part of her tale containing most action, the author has turned, like Mr. Seton Merriman, to the Carlist cause in Spain, and the whole of the Spanish part is told with great spirit and an air of probability. The men, General Prim, the Jew Zeuill, and the agent Mudara, a man who has apostacised from Mussulmanism to Greek Catholicism, and thence to nothing at all, are all exceedingly well done. Brigit, at the age of seventeen, seems an almost impossible heroine: but, granted her possibility, she is charming, dignified, pure, courageous, and of a fine judgment; and Robert is worthy of her, even if he is at times a trifle too persistently melancholy.

The unusual and most striking thing in the book is the tone of deep personal religion which pervades it. The idea that religion can be and is, an active factor in the lives of really intellectual people, seems lately to have been set aside altogether. Robert Orange is written from the excessively militant Roman standpoint, but the moral is just as excellent. It teaches clearly, the fact common to all branches of the Catholic Church, that the Catholic faith is the answer, complete and sufficient, to all the problems that life can offer, and strength for every crisis, help in every need. Thus speaks the author of her hero:—

"The ideal he had set before himself for accomplishment was that of fidelity to one Lord, one purpose, and one woman. Some natures attain the condition of religious faith only after many and harassing years of moral experiments; others, on the other hand, are born with so clear a sense of the Divine Omnipresence, that they doubt more readily the evidence of their sight, than their instinctive knowledge of the invisible God. It does not invariably follow that beings endowed with this spiritual perception are outwardly holier, or inwardly more pure, than those less favoured. The men who have seen, in rare moments of inspiration, the vision of the Eternal, have not had fewer temptations, nor have they sinned less deeply—less wilfully—than their blinder brethren."

See also, on this head, passages on pp. 94-95—too long to quote. There are many other striking thoughts—take this one—put into the mouth of Disraeli:—

"The unmarried nature is, to my mind, incomplete. It has great, even mystical power, as far as it goes; but its range and knowledge is necessarily limited. To quote the example of Christ, is to forget His Divinity. . . . He had an unique mission to fulfil. Few, indeed, of us can feel that we have even so much as a *raison d'être* apart from the divine, incomprehensible desire to multiply souls. Men who take upon themselves priestly vows must—or ought—to be sure that they are marked out for some express service."

The author, in the deeper issues she has set before herself, has not forgotten her knack of epigram; the book is full of pithy little sayings, and there is much in it to arrest thought and claim attention, though her extreme attitude leads her sometimes into statements that make one smile. The characters of Lord Reckage and Hercy Berenville are so good as to make one wish that they could have been woven into the story. But they remain entirely outside it. Robert also, is abandoned at the very outset of his political career,

before he has so much as taken his seat in the House. Perhaps the author intends to give us a sequel—there is plenty of material for it. G. M. R.

### Bookland.

#### THE KINGDOM UNDER THE SEA.

" . . . I love your kingdom under the sea, which, please God, shall some time be dry land."—*School for Saints*.

The lost stars light that mystic realm,  
The land of things that cannot be;  
The land of dreams that died long since,  
The kingdom underneath the sea.

There bloom the flowers that withered here,  
From childhood's fields of daffodil  
To violets plucked by faithless hands,  
Or gifts of hearts grown cold and still.

There breathe the songs we cannot sing,  
There wait the hours which never come,  
There tender eloquence is heard  
From lips and souls that here are dumb.

There love is ours, which life denies,  
There lives the self we fain would be;  
Each lost ideal may be found  
Within our kingdom 'neath the sea.

ZOË PROCTER.

(*Weekly Sun* Literary Supplement).

#### WHAT TO READ.

"The Hope of the World, and other Poems." By Mr. William Watson.

"Sir James Young Simpson and Chloroform (1811-1870)." By H. Laing Gordon. "Masters of Medicine" series, edited by Ernest Hart.

"The Life of John Nicholson, Soldier and Administrator." Based on private and, hitherto, unpublished documents. By Captain L. J. Trotter.

"A Memoir of Anne Jemima Clough." By her Niece, Blanche Athena Clough.

"Down by the Suwanee River." By Aubrey Hopwood.

"Jerome: a Poor Man." By Mary E. Wilkins, author of "A New England Nun," "Madelon," &c.

"Maime o' the Corner." By M. E. Francis, author of "A Daughter of the Soil."

"The Nigger of the Narcissus." By Joseph Conrad.

### Coming Events.

*December 17th.*—Special meeting of members of the Royal British Nurses' Association, by command of H.R.H. the President, at the rooms of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, 20, Hanover Square, W., to consider the proposed new bye-laws. 4 p.m.

*December 17th.*—Dog Show in aid of the Prince of Wales' Hospital Fund at Earl's Court Exhibition. "Leo" on view.

#### SIR SQUIRE BANCROFT'S READINGS.

*January 7th.*—At the Windsor Albert Instituté, in aid of the Princess Christian's Nursing Institution, the Dean of Windsor presiding.

*January 8th.*—In Lincoln's Inn Hall, in aid of the funds of King's College Hospital, the Bishop of London presiding.

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