

dispensing, a nice-looking mixture can be made. It should be the dispenser's object, if a precipitate must be present, to get it in as light a form as possible. It is imperative to be well-informed as to which are soluble salts and which insoluble. The insoluble ones, like carbonate of magnesium or bismuth, gives the dispenser most trouble. Distilled water must be used for all preparations. A dispenser does not often have to make pills—at least, only in a large dispensary. The chief point is to use as small a quantity of excipient as possible, so as to keep the pills of a small size.

The majority of ointments are made on a slab. The active ingredients should be well rubbed down with a little of the base first of all, when well mixed, more base is added by degrees. With ointments which require to be made by the aid of heat, the base must be melted, and then the active ingredient added, well stirred until cold.

Powders are very simple, but tedious to dispense. Each ingredient when weighed must, after it has been reduced to powder, be well mixed with the other substances in the prescription. The total should be weighed again. Then the amount for each powder weighed out.

Great care must be taken to label the medicine correctly, and whenever any insoluble powder is present in a prescription, a "shake the bottle" label must be put on, or where a resinous tincture is used or hydrocyanic acid which is very volatile.

All applications for external use must be placed in blue or green bottles with, a poison label, as well as one "for external use only."

A Book of the Week.

PRINCESS XENIA.*

This is a new contribution to that school of modern romantic literature which may be said to take its rise from the "Prisoner of Zenda."

The situation is a good one, and the author has manipulated it with considerable ingenuity. The hero is a young Englishman, by name Christopher Lambert, who is living on nothing particular in retirement and penury in one of the smaller and remoter German Principalities. To him comes an English solicitor, whose firm has already posted to him several communications, which have met with no response for the good and sufficient reason that Lambert has not opened them. The solicitor reveals the nature of the information which has been important enough to bring him to Weser-Dreiburg in person. Through an intestacy, Christopher is heir to a fortune of over four million pounds.

The young man realises in the course of a very brief interview that he is going to have some fun for his money. To return to England, stand for parliament, obtain a peerage and found a family—this seems to him to the last degree weary, stale, flat and unprofitable. He tingles all over with the consciousness of what his money may accomplish if he flings himself into the vortex of politics here, in this little German state, where the great ones of the Duchy are not unapproachable and where the outlook is lively, owing to a brisk rivalry between Germany and Austria as to which shall absorb the poor little principality.

Accordingly, Christopher plunges into intrigue, with the design of becoming a kind of private Providence

* By Marriott Watson. Harpers.

to the land he has taken under his kind protection. A fortunate chance at the very outset helps him to stumble upon one of the forces at work, and he follows up the clue so given with a good deal of penetration. The scene in which he obtains an introduction to the German envoy and to a young attaché of the Court, at a restaurant, by his curious behaviour respecting the seven beggars is very well done, though it is, more than slightly reminiscent of R. L. Stevenson in "The New Arabian Nights." And, since he was acting in such a manner in order to secure the acquaintance of the men then present, it seems rather a foolish proceeding to have pretended to be American, when they must have subsequently found out that he was English.

The fate that falls upon the would-be Providence is the ablest part of the book. How the interest, which at first is merely the lust of power, and the desire to win, changes into something more personal, how he finds it impossible to reckon upon the movements of his own pawns; how he sets in motion, all unconscious, far other passions than those of mere policy, and how he decides finally that an amateur Providence cannot be infallible, because it is not infinite—all this was well worth writing and bringing out. To interfere gratuitously with the fates of other people is perhaps a special tendency of the benevolent or the active-minded nowadays, and this clever novel gives a fair idea of the ways in which a clever man may fail in the attempt.

The weak point in the book is the total dryness—we can think of no better word—of the love passages. This is owing to an inability, which seems curious in so able a writer, to make women talk or act or think like women. The element of sex is strangely wanting. Princess Xenia is but a shadow, and Christopher, though he is a nimble-witted fellow enough, is supremely unattractive from the feminine point of view.

The irresistible mutual attraction between hero and heroine which we are made to feel so acutely in Anthony Hope's writings is here altogether absent. But Mr. Marriott Watson is presumably as yet somewhat lacking in experience, and he may very possibly acquire this culminating charm. With that addition "Princess Xenia" would be not only one of the ablest, but one of the most charming specimens of this type of romance which have appeared for some time.

G. M. R.

A Christmas Ghost Story.

South of the Line, inland from far Durban,
There lies—be he or not your countryman—
A fellow-mortal. Riddled are his bones,
But 'mid the breeze his puzzled phantom moans
Nightly to clear Canopus—fain to know
By whom, and when, the All-Earth-Gladdening Law
Of Peace, brought in by Some-One crucified,
Was ruled to be inept, and set aside?

From the "Westminster Gazette." THOMAS HARDY.

WHAT TO READ.

"Cities and Sights of Spain. A Handbook for Tourists." By E. Main, author of "The High Alps in Winter."

"Prisoners of the Tower of London: Being an Account of some who at divers times lay captive within its Walls." By Violet Brooke-Hunt.

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