

makes it apparent that the wits do not stand alone. Someone takes a platitude—"Being in love is a woman's normal state." To this is appended a sting—"Quite as often with herself as with someone else"—and the result is said to be an epigram. There is the unkind grain of truth in the next which is its justification—"The greatest test of feminine beauty is a sea-voyage." The morality of another is more questionable than its philosophy—"About the best way to retain your ideal of a lover is to let him become another woman's husband." One which is aimed at the woman with a mission is very comforting—"The women who have the most sympathy for the world at large often have the least for their families." This breathes of geranium passion—"Love is the flower of life, and yet some people are so unreasonable as to expect it to outlive the season allotted to blossoms." This betrays an intimate knowledge of feminine ways—"The average woman has no moral conception of the law. Having made up her mind to tell a lie, she will readily swear to it." Finally—"A burnt child dreads the fire well enough, but if she is feminine she will try to see how near she can come again without being scorched." The sting of most of these sayings is to be found in the fact that they are woman's work.

### A Book of the Week.

EBEN HOLDEN.\*

This is an American book which has already won distinction "on the other side." Its weak point is that it inevitably challenges comparison with another and far greater book, the inimitable "David Harum." There is some pretentiousness in Mr. Bacheller's preface, a kind of pompousness which the scrappy nature of the story hardly seems to warrant. But the reader who is put off by this will be unwise, for there are many amusing and some really good things in the chronicle. The first part is undoubtedly the best.

"A small boy in a big basket on the back of a jolly old man, who carried a cane in one hand, a rifle in the other; a black dog serving as scout, skirmisher and rear-guard—that was the size of it. . . . Mid-summer had passed them in their journey; their clothes were covered with dust; their faces browning in the hot sun. It was a very small boy that sat inside the basket and clung to the rim, his tow head shaking as the old man walked."

The account of that flight is very pathetic and very funny too. The little boy in the basket is the suddenly orphaned child of Uncle Eb's employers; having no relations, he is to be sent to the union. But Uncle Eb elopes with him and saves him from such a fate. He must have been very, very small of his age—which is stated to be six—if he could be carried all day in a basket as described; it seems a little inconsistent that he should have grown up so large and handsome and generally massive. It is the character of Uncle Eb around which the tale is written, and he is very charming. The story of the horse-deal is immeasurably inferior to the celebrated fooling of the Deacon in "David Harum"; in fact, all the stories are inferior to those in the finer book; but some of the sayings of Uncle Eb, his dry retorts, his views on things in this world and the next, his religious convictions, and his

\* By Irving Bacheller. (Grant Richards.)

unchanging affections are very excellent of their kind. The tale is full of those curious social jumbles which occur in American books and make them seem unreal to the English reader. Uncle Eb, the farm hand, sitting down to late dinner in New York society, is a thing we can hardly picture. The little tow-headed boy develops into a hero and a genius, the little girl at Brower's farm, with whom he is brought up, develops into a beauty and a genius, and remains in spite of all temptations, in spite of fame, and a European tour, faithful to the friend and companion of her youth. The episode of the "Night Man," also, is bewilderingly improbable.

But as long as Uncle Eb is simply Uncle Eb, engaged in the farm work, boiling sugar maple in the woods, driving to town in a snow storm, or fooling the men of the neighbourhood over the big fish in the deep hole, he is a most humorous and entertaining person.

The death of Old Fred the dog is full of pathos, and a grimmer note is struck in the story of how the doctor's horse stopped at the door with the motionless figure of the doctor seated in the gig, cold and stark frozen in the bitter night.

The manner of the book is better than the matter; the latter is no great things; the former is very charming indeed.

G. M. R.

### Verses.

Send but a song oversea for us,  
Heart of their hearts that are free,  
Heart of their singer, to be for us  
More than our singing can be;  
Ours, in the tempest at error,  
With no light but the twilight of terror;  
Send us a song oversea!

Sweet smelling of pine-leaves and grasses,  
And blown as a tree through and through  
With the winds of the keen mountain passes,  
And tender as sun-smitten-dew;  
Sharp-tongued as the winter that shakes  
The wastes of your limitless lakes,  
Wide-eyed as the sea-line's blue.

(From "Ode to Walt Whitman in America.")

ALGERNON SWINBURNE.

### What to Read.

- "Little Memoirs of the Eighteenth Century." By George Paston.
- "A History of the Four Georges and of William the Fourth." By Justin McCarthy and Justin Huntly McCarthy.
- "Princes and Poisoners." Studies of the Court of Louis XIV. By Frantz Funck-Brentano; translated by George Maidment.
- "The History of Tammany Hall." By Gustavus Myers.
- "Highlands of Asiatic Turkey." By Earl Percy, M.P.
- "His Familiar Foe." The Story of the Degrading Inheritance of Captain Robert Ducie, of H. M. Silver Lancers: His Struggles, Defeats, Victory, Marriage, Fatherhood, and Love. By E. Livingston Prescott.
- "The Lone Star Rush." By Edmund Mitchell.

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