

even from their own standpoint, and in view of their own interests. In point of fact, the entire missionary body is a most valuable ally to every form of legitimate foreign trade. While their purpose is religious, they are, unconsciously, perhaps, yet of necessity, true, unpaid 'commercial agents.' They speak the language, which is never the fact with merchants; they penetrate and reside in interior districts which the merchant never reaches; their houses, and contents, their clothing, utensils and appliances of every sort, constitute at each mission station, and as they travel, a miniature exposition of the thousand and one conveniences and comforts which foreigners possess and which they lack. Wonder gives place to admiration, admiration to the desire to possess. Millions of the natives of China never knew how uncomfortable they were, how much they lacked, until brought thus to compare their crude inventions and clumsy appliances with the immeasurably superior articles brought into their midst by the missionaries. Before any man can be elevated, he must first be made discontented. As the agent of a wholesome discontent, the missionary is an invaluable aid to commerce. He probably brings far more customers to the foreign merchant than converts to his own system of faith, however successful he may be in his direct work."

A Book of the Week.

MARY BRAY—X—HER MARK.*

There is an amount of originality in this book which makes it distinctly worth notice. The author is, probably, to judge by internal evidence, a very young man; and it is a mere platitude to observe that, in consequence, there are many things which he does not know. Withal he has the saving grace of being able to write with much force and ability concerning the things which he does understand.

His story is written in the first person, and the narrator is a well-born young Englishman, one of the numerous army of anything but noble martyrs, who are sent out to Canada by confiding parents who pay a heavy premium, to "learn farming"—in other words, to do work which the average American artisan will not attempt, for no wages, with no prospects, in a most inaccessible part of the world, and minus every appliance of civilization. All this part of the book is excellent. The character of Captain Silcox, who superintends the entirely aimless proceedings of the jovial crew of young public school men at Gopher Creek, is evidently studied from life.

"We had all been promised a sort of 'Inspectorship'—an appointment about which it struck me at the time there was a vagueness, not unlike the vagueness which grew about other promises made me at the London office of the Land Company, whenever I tried to focus my memory on some one of the many allurements I am perfectly certain were dangled before me. . . I had almost hoped that a deputation of my future underlings might meet me and welcome me with quite a little acclaim. . . But the troubles of the road were nothing to our annoyance when each found himself one of half-a-dozen 'Inspectors' who were permitted to inspect nothing but the job in front of them."

Anybody who has the misfortune to have a friend

* By Jenner Taylor. John Long.

or brother who has been taken in in the same way, must realise the truth of this picture.

The only society of these youths, is that of an old trapper, named Bray, with a daughter Mary, an ignorant, uneducated, pretty girl, whose freshness and whose detestable accent are very well given. The old trapper dies, and it becomes the duty of someone of the "Inspectors" to see Mary safely across twelve miles of trackless forest, to the shelter of her "only aunt" at Cayoti Creek.

For this duty the hero is selected, and it turns out to be by no means as simple as it sounds. Two nights are spent in the open by the unconventional couple before their destination is reached, and when they at last arrive they find that the uncle and aunt have betaken themselves down to the town to buy stores and the house is deserted. At this point the writer's common sense deserts him in the way that sometimes happens when one is concerned to invent complications. Why could not the couple stay where they were and await the return of the relations? The question seems unanswerable. Why was it worse to pass the night under one roof than to pass the night in a clearing in the forest? There they had food and shelter and separate apartments. Why must they consider it necessary to follow the waggon tracks through a trackless waste and get instantly and much more completely lost than before?

To these questions there is only one answer; it was the only way the author could invent, of introducing what certainly is the most striking part of the book; the journey down the Ganlitz river in the mysterious canoe of the unseen Englishman; and the visit to the Indian reservation. Here the author paints, in few, vigorous, trenchant strokes, the tragedy of the decay of a people, perishing in the midst of prosperity and plenty, perishing by a law of nature which seems a cruel one.

The love affair of Mary and her guide is, on the whole, poor stuff. It was merely juxtaposition, against which the hero holds out for three days, to succumb on the fourth. That the five-and-twenty year old widower, with his future and his English home before him, should settle down for life in Gopher Creek, vacated by the bankrupt "Company," is so unlikely as to be simply ridiculous—the kind of gratuitous gloom indulged in only by the very young. G. M. R.

Coming Events.

April 30th.—The Lord Mayor presides at a festival dinner in aid of the East London Hospital for Children, Grocers' Hall.

May 1st.—Opening of the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo.

Lord Roberts opens a Bazaar in aid of the Bristol Royal Hospital for Sick Children and Women, Colston Hall, Bristol.

Annual dinner of the Hackney Society in aid of the Hackney Road Children's Hospital, Holborn Restaurant.

May 2nd.—The Duke and Duchess of Fife open the Glasgow Exhibition.

The Lord Mayor will preside at the annual meeting of the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society. The Archbishop of Canterbury will speak, Mansion House, 3.

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