

master of his craft; he has the artistic temperament which chooses the right word; and although hitherto all his novels have been severely local in character, they have all been different—he is never monotonous, though he so often chooses a minor key, to the accompaniment of the soft, sad, misty west wind, sighing from the sea.

In the character of Alpheus Newte, otherwise Johnny Fortnight, pedlar and Evangelist, he has achieved a triumph. This is the man who has words—always words—a mellifluous flow, powdered thickly with biblical quotations; and to the farmer of Western England, ever limited sternly because of lacking power to express himself, it is hardly to be wondered at that this gift of language should seem to infer the special guidance of the Spirit.

The man is entirely dishonest—hollow, self-seeking, altogether despicable; yet the common folk trust him and revere him, and to him old Thomasin Hatherleigh entrusts the secret of the thousand pound portion treasured up for her granddaughter Sibella, in the little old Sheraton cabinet.

The knowledge of the existence of that money is the spiritual downfall of Alpheus. From that moment he sinks deeper and deeper in the mire of avarice and sophistry, till he condescends to associate and bargain with the villainous old Crab Hatherleigh.

There is one thing in the book which is simply absurd, namely, the sum which the Squire is supposed to give to Alpheus as a reward for bringing him the papers showing Sibella to be the Squire's granddaughter. For such a service, in a moment of exaggerated gratitude, an old gentleman might possibly reward a rustic with five hundred pounds, though this seems an extravagant sum, in view of the service rendered—simply handing over papers belonging to the Squire, quite accidentally fallen into the man's hands. But that he should pay £5,000 seems quite preposterous. To part with such a sum of money would mean a perceptible crippling of his income to a gentleman of moderate means; and the episode destroys the air of real life, so successfully given to the rest of the story.

The little chronicle is but slight—the merit of the gem is the beauty of the setting. The description of Compton Castle in the first chapter is one of the most charming bits of descriptive writing from a modern pen; or take this description of the ruined mill, where Dick avows his love for Sibella—

"Here, upon this eminence, braced by winds from sea and moor, the youngsters of the parishes around found courage to put the question of fate; here, under the air and sunshine, or within the shelter of the ruin, many a good man had been lifted up to bliss, or cast into temporary perdition.

Upon the rotting inner rind of the mill, where plaster still survived in patches on the conglomerate of which the tower was built, countless initials, scratched or written, told of happy lovers. Now, peaceful, silent, and usually deserted, the place gave rest to the sparrow-hawk and lonely crow by day and reflected the moonbeams by night. Flowers picked there—pimpernels, wild geraniums, champions—still reposed, hidden within the pages of old prayer-books by maidens, now mothers. There was not a girl; wife-old, who could think of the wind-mill without quicken-

ing of heart-beat; scarcely a Marldon woman who might recall the spot without a smile or a sigh. There the great west wind had toiled full many a year to make man's bread; now its labours were ended, and it dawdled on the hill-top to listen to the ancient eternal vows of love."

G. M. R.

## Verses.

### NOT UNDERSTOOD.

Not understood. We move along asunder,  
Our paths grow wider as the seasons creep  
Along the years; we marvel and we wonder  
Why life is life? And then we fall asleep,  
Not understood.

Not understood. We gather false impressions,  
And hug them closer as the years go by,  
Till virtues often seem to us transgressions;  
And thus men rise and fall, and live and die,  
Not understood.

Not understood. Poor souls with stunted vision  
Oft measure giants by their narrow gauge;  
The poisoned shafts of falsehood and derision  
Are oft impelled 'gainst those who mould the age,  
Not understood.

Not understood. How trifles often change us!  
The thoughtless sentence or the fancied slight  
Destroy long years of friendship and estrange us,  
And on our souls there falls a freezing blight;  
Not understood.

Not understood. How many breasts are aching  
For lack of sympathy! Ah! day by day,  
How many cheerless, lonely hearts are breaking!  
How many noble spirits pass away,  
Not understood.

Oh, God! that men should see a little clearer;  
Or judge less harshly where they cannot see!  
Oh, God! that men would draw a little nearer  
To one another! They'd be nearer Thee,  
And understood.

THOMAS BRACKEN.

From the *Indian Medical Record*.

## Coming Events.

*June 29th.*—The League of St. Bartholomew's Nurses' Annual General Meeting and Social Gathering, the Great Hall, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 3 p.m. In the Chair, Miss Isla Stewart, President.

*July 10th.*—Garden Party, Guy's Hospital, S.E. Medals and Prizes to be distributed to the Students by Lord James of Hereford, 3 p.m.

Opening of the new Pathological Institute at the London Hospital by Sir Henry Roscoe. Prizes to be given to Medical Students and Nurse Probationers.

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