

A Book of the Week.

ALICE OF OLD VINCENNES.*

Yet another of the numerous books treating of the American War of Independence!

In the present state of feeling in England towards America, in the warmly kindled interest, the passionate sympathy which we have of late been sensible of, books like this are doubly welcome, both in their historic and on their social side, as showing both what did happen in those tumultuous days, and to what manner of people the happenings arrived.

Mr. Maurice Thompson has tapped quite a different part of the vast revolted continent, and his book is consequently especially interesting. He does not treat of the States which bore the brunt of the fighting, but of the great North West, the district of the Wabash, where the population was almost wholly French, and dwelt on the grim borderland beyond which was Indian territory, and death and tortures unheard of. It came curiously to the doubtless ignorant ears of the present writer, to hear these people constantly alluded to by the author as Creoles, which one is accustomed to regard as a distinctively Southern term, applied chiefly to children born in the Indies; but doubtless Mr. Thompson knows what he is talking about.

Alice, the heroine, has been rescued from Indians by Gaspard Roussillon, dealer in furs, and has grown up in the wild and spartan surroundings of the trapper's frontier dwelling, at Old Vincennes, on the Wabash. But she is really of distinguished extraction, being a Tarleton, a member of one of the good old English families which first settled in the South; and this fact of her good birth is of the greatest comfort to Fitzhugh Beverley, her aristocratic lover from Virginia.

Beverley is a young officer, sent, with Captain Helm, who is apparently historical, to hold Vincennes against the English under Colonel Hamilton.

Before the outbreak of the war, Alice had shown kindness to Longhair, a Red Indian whom she had found, seriously wounded and starving, in the forest, at a little distance from Vincennes. Longhair utters no word of gratitude for the service rendered, but later on in the book it turns out that Alice's good deed bears fruit, since it saves the life of her lover.

Beverley, who is living on parole as the prisoner of the English commander, in consequence of an act of gross cruelty on the part of that commander, takes back his parole and escapes. Longhair is detailed by Hamilton, who seems to have made use of Indian allies to bring him back, and he is captured, along with two famous *coureurs du bois*—Uncle Jazon and Simon Kenton, when at the critical moment Longhair discovers that he is Alice's lover, and so in deadly silence, and with consummate craft, contrives his escape.

There are many delightful portraits, of which Uncle Jazon is one of the best. "I can't shoot, I can't shoot wo'th a cent" is the old man's invariable formula, as he raises his gun in aim, which is unerring and deadly.

Then there is Père Beret, the good old priest who fences so ably, and hits so straight from the shoulder; and Gaspard Roussillon, the big, boastful, brave,

bellowing Frenchman, kind guardian and adopted father of Alice.

The English are, of course, the villains of the piece; Hamilton's character is apparently drawn from life. The author has the justice to admit that Hamilton indignantly denied the charge of having paid Indians to collect scalps for him, and we may perhaps be pardoned for thinking that the Americans saw everything English through somewhat jaundiced spectacles at that time. But making all possible allowance for prejudice, it is certain that the pictures we get of the manners and customs of our race at the time of the war are not encouraging.

G. M. R.

Verses.

IN MEMORIAM.

"Good-bye all, good-bye. It is God's way. His will be done."—The PRESIDENT'S last words.

"It is God's way!" Take comfort, O my soul,
His path of peace lies ever through the land
Of sorrow: yet, for all, with saving hand,
He holds the wheels of life with strong control.

Brave heart! "It is God's way": Christ's Creed
in truth
Was thine: His prayer—"On earth the Reign of
God"—

Was thine: and thine the dolorous way He trod,
Victim of senseless folly, void of ruth.

"It is God's way. His will be done!" Thy King
Hath called thee, and for hard-won heavenly wage
Gives nobler work, and loftier embassy,
To be through Death thy nation's hallowing.

O Heart of Mercy! come with healing Light;
Shine on her soul who sits in sorrow crowned;
Chase far the shadows, till the day be found
When cherished memory changes into sight.

Thou King of nations and their hearts' Desire,
O Corner-stone, man's starting-place and goal,
Our manhood's faith in History's unread scroll,
Enhearten with Thy Spirit's holy fire:

Love and Goodwill, on earth Thy will be done,
Treason and war and Devil's hate bid cease.
Oh, guide Thy Peoples to the Way of Peace,
Through cleansing splendours of the Eternal Sun!

CHARLES W. STUBBS.
(Dean of Ely.)

From the *Westminster Gazette*.

What to Read.

"The Social Problem: Work and Life." By J. A. Hobson.

"Italy To-Day: A Study of her Politics, her Society, and her Letters." By Bolton King, and Thomas Okey.

"The Voyage of Ithobal." An Epic Poem. By Sir Edwin Arnold.

"A Motley Crew." By Mrs. G. W. Steevens.

"Love Idylls." By S. R. Crockett.

"The Snares of the World." By Hamilton Aidé.

* By Maurice Thompson. (Cassell and Co.)

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