

ning to end, for everything goes wrong, everybody always arrives too late to prevent every catastrophe, and, in short, Destiny and Mr. Rider Haggard from the outset have decreed that Joan shall be sacrificed upon the altar of conventionality. For this reason, I venture to think that the story is not at all a moral one; for he sins, she sins, they sin, and yet the reader cannot help feeling that Providence did not deal fairly in punishing them all so very severely. When Joan is half delirious with anxiety in her London lodgings she writes a most pathetic letter to her lover and betrayer, telling him of the advent of their child, but stoutly assuring him that she never will consent to marry him and be a burden upon his life and purse, and Mr. Haggard in this particular chapter shows great ingenuity in the way in which he makes this quixotic behaviour of Joan's perfectly natural and even justifiable. It seems to be always necessary in composing a tragedy to make the parents and guardians of the principal actors cold-hearted and devoid of feeling; novels of this order apparently could not exist without their unnatural assistance. Nevertheless they weaken the story by their patent improbability. The greatest and most moving tragedies are those in which all the actors, principal and minor, are well-intentioned, whilst possessing certain idiosyncrasies of character and beliefs which are fatally inimical to the happiness of each other in this world; but to write a book in which such characters should be lifelike and interesting demands a high order of genius, and in spite of all his beguiling power of narrative and invention, Mr. Haggard does not quite attain those heights.

The unwary, who have always hitherto considered Mr. Haggard's books as safe holiday reading for their young people, must for once make an exception, as the sad story of Joan's errors and the penalties she paid for them are neither improving nor suitable for those youthful readers who have doubtless enjoyed and cherished previous stories from Mr. Haggard's facile pen.

A. M. G.

Bookland.

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD has been engaged upon her new novel, which is about to appear in serial form, for about two years. It is said that the amount paid for the work amounts to a "small fortune."

In the literary section of the great Paris Exhibition of 1900, which will comprise some very interesting souvenirs and relics of our great authors, it is proposed to include the four inkstands used in writing what the French people regard as the great works of art of the century—the productions of Lamartine, George Sand, Dumas the elder, and Victor Hugo. These four inkstands were given to Madame Victor Hugo to be disposed of at a charity sale she had organised. They are fitted into a small oak table which was sold at the sale in question for 2,500 francs, and bought back by Victor Hugo.

Each of the inkstands is accompanied by an autograph testifying to its authenticity. Lamartine wrote, in presenting it to Hugo: "Offered by Lamartine, to the master of the pen." Victor Hugo's inscription runs thus: "I did not look for this inkstand; chance put it into my hands, and I have used it for months. Now they ask it from me for a good

work, and I gladly give it. Victor Hugo, Hauteville House, June, 1860." Dumas wrote: "I certify that this is the inkstand with which I wrote my fifteen or twenty last volumes. A. Dumas, Paris, April 10, 1860." George Sand wrote a long letter of excuse for the ugliness of "this ugly little piece of wood which is my travelling inkstand."

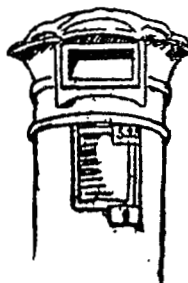
We have received a copy of a charming new illustrated paper, *The Unicorn*, price 3d. Mr. Raven-Hill, who produced *The Butterfly*, is the director of the paper, and we wish him all success in his new venture.

WHAT TO READ.

"The Chitral Campaign, a Narrative of Events in Chitral, Swat, and Bajour," by H. C. Thomson.

"The Life of Jonathan Swift," by Henry Craik. (London: Macmillan.)

"The Idyll of the Star Flower: An Allegory of Life," by the Hon. Coralie Glyn. (Published by David Nutt, Strand.)



Letters to the Editor.

(Notes, Queries, &c.)

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

WHAT WE OWE TO "OUR PIONEERS."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—No one connected with the Nursing world during the last fifteen years, can fail to be constantly struck with the very sweeping changes which have taken place.

In those earlier days, a novice entering the profession was usually thought more than a little eccentric, and one was assured by one set of friends, "Ah! very nice idea indeed, pleasant change, and so on, but you won't care to stay long, we shall see you home again in a month or two," and by another, "So sweet of you, my dear, giving up everything, all your home pleasures, *everything*, to go and nurse poor people; well, my dear, you will have your reward, you will have your reward." I hardly know which view of one's conduct was the more irritating.

In Hospital one had not exactly a bed of roses; the hours on duty were rather long, the food question had not been ventilated at all. At one Hospital in which I worked, the food was so bad in quality, and inadequate in quantity, that in order to do my work I was compelled to spend part of every off-duty time at the nearest restaurant, busily engaged in making up for the arrears of the past forty-eight hours.

No recreation of any sort was provided. At one Hospital there was a very large garden, one part of which was quite separate from the rest, and could easily have furnished a tennis or croquet ground, but we were never allowed to play, and could only walk in the garden by very special leave. No lectures were given to Nurses. But what a change has been wrought.

Now it is considered quite an ordinary thing for a girl lacking sufficient occupation at home, to take up Nursing.

Lectures are constantly given, not only in Nursing itself, but in those allied branches of medical science, the intelligent understanding of which is so invaluable to a Nurse who really loves her work. In many Hospitals, Nurses' libraries have been started, and various forms of recreation are

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