

bewildering in their obscurity, and one sometimes wonders if the author herself has any clear notion of their meaning. But all are written in a style delicate and poetic in the extreme, while the strange and weird descriptions which "fringe" them show a wealth of imagination not common in this prosaic epoch. One extract chosen at hazard must suffice to give an idea of Mrs. Taylor's method:—

"Not a fleece of cloud obscured the star-tinselled sky, a white-gold moon-sickle faded upon an amethyst horizon. The night itself seemed a watcher for the dawn.

"The stars are like ghosts," the woman called Hesper murmured. Then she forgot the stars. 'He will not come,' she said.

"Her arm was whiter than the stone on which it lay. A fugitive flush of faintest scarlet tinged the rounded oval of her face. The deep, short curve of her lips bore no suggestion of weariness, her feet touched the ground as if impatient of repose; in the varied rust colours of her hair the emeralds burning with the fire of their own hearts, accentuated the kindred vitality of the woman who wore them."

A book of this description is not for every one, but many there must be who, weary of the crude realism of so much modern writing, will welcome it for its real literary merit and poetic insight. We have seen many an inferior production hailed as a work of genius!

### Bookland.

THE current number of the *Nineteenth Century Magazine* contains a poem by Mr. Algernon Charles Swinburne, entitled "The High Oaks: Barking Hall." It is written under date July 19th, 1896, and in a footnote the editor explains that the lines are suggested by the birthday of the author's mother. A few extracts from the verses may serve to illustrate the spirit of the poem:

Here, for mine and me,  
All that eyes may see  
Hath more than all the wide world else of good,  
All nature else of fair:  
Here as none otherwhere  
Heaven is the circling air,  
Heaven is the homestead, heaven the wold, the  
wood:  
The fragrance with the shadow spread  
From broadening wings of cedars breathes of dawn's  
bright bed.

Once a dawn rose here  
More divine and dear,  
Rose on a birth-bed brighter far than dawn's,  
Whence all the summer grew  
Sweet as when earth was new  
And pure as Eden's dew:  
And yet its light lives on these lustrous lawns,  
Clings round these wildwood ways, and cleaves  
To the aisles of shadow and sun that wind unweaves  
and weaves.

\* \* \*  
All this old-world pleasance  
Hails a hallowing presence,  
And thrills with sense of more than summer near,  
And lifts toward heaven more high  
The song-surpassing cry  
Of rapture that July

Lives, for her love who makes it loveliest here;  
For joy that she who here first drew  
The breath of life she gave me breathes it here anew.

Never birthday born  
Highest in height of morn  
Whereout the star looks forth that leads the sun  
Shone higher in love's account,  
Still seeing the mid-noon mount  
From the eager dayspring's fount  
Each year more lustrous, each like all in one;  
Whose light around us and above  
We could not see so lovely save by grace of love.

### WHAT TO READ.

"Victoria: Her Life and Reign." An illustrated biography of the Queen from the year 1819 to the present time. By Alfred E. Knight. (S. W. Partridge & Co.)

"False Coin or True," by F. F. Montresor. (Hutchinson & Co.)

"Jo of Auchendorass," by E. Crawford. (Hutchinson & Co.)

"The Reds of the Midi." Translated from the Provençal of Félix Gras, by Catherine A. Janvier. (London: W. Heinemann.)

"The Autobiography of a Truth," by Edna Lyall, Author of "The Autobiography of a Slander."

"Two Knapsacks in the Channel Islands," by Jasper Branthwaite and Frank Maclean. Illustrated by Victor Prout.

"Nancy Noon," by Benjamin Swift. (London: T. Fisher Unwin.)

"All about Bicycling," by G. Lacy Hillier. (Paternoster House, Charing Cross Road, London.)

Mr. Gladstone has addressed the following letter to Mr. Heinemann, the publisher of Félix Gras' "The Reds of the Midi":—"I have read with great and sustained interest 'The Reds of the South.' Though a work of fiction, it aims at presenting the historical features, and such works, if faithfully executed, throw more light than many so-called histories on the true roots and causes of the Revolution, which are so widely and so gravely misunderstood. As a novel, it seems to me to be written with great skill."

R. L. Stevenson's last poems have just been published by Messrs. Chatto and Windus, with the title of "Songs of Travel."

The rumour that Messrs. Hutchinson propose to found a monthly magazine is well founded. The magazine, which is to be called *The Lady's Realm*, will be rather different from anything now appearing, and the first number of it may be looked for early in October.

Volumes on President Cleveland and Lord Cromer are to be shortly added to Messrs. Bliss, Sands and Foster's "Public Men of To-day" series.

Sir Herbert Maxwell, M.P., has written a book on "Robert Bruce, and the Struggle for Scottish Independence" for early publication by Messrs. Putnam's Sons in their series "Heroes of the Nations."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)