

but of Miss Kate Phillips, as Audrey, we are glad to speak in unstinted praise, of Miss Fay Davis as Celia with much commendation—a greater degree of finish being all that was needed to make her well nigh perfect—while of Mr. James Fernandez, as the banished duke, we need not say more than that he played the part as only an actor of his ability and experience could. The excision of the *first* portion of Sc. IV. Act V. in the original is fatal to the sequence of the play, as it deprives Rosalind of the all important *previous* consent of her father to her marriage with Orlando, but this is a mistake, which Mr. George Alexander shares with Mr. Daly. The elaborate dance at the conclusion most tediously and unnecessarily prolonged the performance, and was quite unwarranted by Shakespeare, who simply meant the courtiers and attendants to dance, and who has in no way introduced any fairy element into "As you like it." *Sperennus meliora!*

E. G. H.

### A Book of the Week.

"FLAMES."\*

THE Author of the "Green Carnation" is a curiously versatile writer. His former books have not been at all like this present one, which is quite one of the most eccentric productions even of this eccentric age. The chief figure in the story—though he is not the hero exactly—is a doctor, a nerve specialist, resident in Harley Street, and he is quite one of the most lovable people we have encountered between the pages of a novel for some time.

The idea of the tale, is the idea of possession by an evil spirit: and the evil spirit obtains access to the bodily frame of a fastidiously pure-minded young man by means of spiritual *séances*, in which the young man and his friend Julian Addison unwisely indulge. The purity of Valentine's life has been the safeguard of the more hot-blooded Julian; and, with the entrance of the fiend into his former friend's mortal tenement, the deterioration of Julian of course begins. The description of the sittings is weird in the extreme. They sit in the dark in a room with a curtain drawn across the door. When the light is again switched on, the curtain is found to be drawn back; some one, or some thing, has entered, and Rip, the terrier, is convulsed with terror.

One of the most curious ideas in the book, is the way in which all dogs instantly and unerringly detect the existence of the fiend behind the saintly face of Valentine, as in the episode of Dr. Levillier and his mastiffs. The doctor and Julian are seated by the fire, the dogs asleep at their feet, when suddenly both mastiffs rise to their feet quivering all over; the street bell rings; a man's voice is heard in the hall; the dogs grow more and more excited; the doctor calls to the butler not to open the door, and asks who is the visitor.

"The doctor said hastily to Julian—'These dogs will tear the person who has just come into the house to pieces if we don't take care. Catch on to Mab, Addison.'

Julian obeyed, and the dog was like live iron with determination under his grasp.

'Some one is with you, Lawler,' the doctor said. 'Does he wish to see me?'

\* "Flames," by Robert Hichens. (Heinemann, London.)

'If you please, sir, it is Mr. Valentine, come back for Mr. Addison.' Julian felt himself go suddenly pale."

The doctor orders Lawler to shut the visitor up in the dining-room, and he and Julian, with a huge dog-whip, proceed to get the infuriated mastiffs downstairs. The description is lurid.

But the most curious part of the story is the means by which the ultimate deliverance of Julian from his persecutor is wrought. And this is the audacity of the book. Cuckoo is a girl of the streets—just a poor little painted wretch, who tramps Regent Street and Piccadilly night after night; but yet a woman who can love, and therefore a woman who can save. Untaught, instinctive, she has the same innate horror of the awful Valentine that the dogs have. And Dr. Levillier sets her will against the will of the fiend. At first the hateful thing despises her; she is too degraded, too utterly sordid, to have any power over him. But she has love, the strongest and most illimitable power that the world knows, and that love for Julian draws her into *rapproch* with the banished soul of the real Valentine; and between them they rescue the devil's prey.

The *raison d'être* of the last scene is a little obscure; but there is some wonderful writing in the book—notably the selling of Jessie, the viewing of Mar's dead body, and the description of the red room in Valentine's flat.

G. M. R.

### Bookland.

"IN HOSPITAL."

AVE CÆSAR!

From the winter's gray despair,  
From the summer's golden languor,  
Death, the lover of Life,  
Frees us for ever.

Inevitable, silent, unseen,  
Everywhere always,  
Shadow by night and as light in the day,  
Signs she at last to her chosen;  
And, as she waves them forth,  
Sorrow and Joy  
Lay by their looks and their voices,  
Set down their hopes, and are made  
One in the dim Forever.

Into the winter's gray delight,  
Into the summer's golden dream,  
Holy and high and impartial,  
Death, the mother of Life,  
Mingles all men for ever.

(A Book of Verses)—W. E. HENLEY.

### WHAT TO READ.

"Cyprian: His Life, His Times, His Work," by Edward White Benson, D.D., D.C.L., sometime Archbishop of Canterbury.

"War, Famine, and Our Food Supply," by R. B. Marston.

"Imperial Defence," by Sir C. W. Dilke and Spencer Wilkinson.

"Ivan Alexandrovitch," by Andrée Hope.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)