

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

The Queen has decided that in June every member of her household, who has belonged to it for fifty years, is to receive a gold medal. Those who have served for twenty-five years will receive a silver medal, whilst those who have served over ten years are to have a bar or badge and the Jubilee medal of 1887.

We learn from a contemporary that "letters from Miss Beatty and the Hon. Sydney Holland, in reference to last week's meeting of the so-called Society for the Protection of Hospital Patients, are to hand. In reference to one of the instances she gave, the lady says, 'Mr. Holland has since written to say that the man performing the experiments should have been prosecuted' Miss Beatty adds, 'We go no further; we leave to the criminal law the amount of punishment.' Mr. Holland wishes to disclaim part of his speech, but this would involve the repetition of details that both our correspondents rightly say are not subjects to be dealt with in the columns of a newspaper."

We learn from the *Daily Chronicle* that Miss Harriet Boyd, who went to the front with eleven Greek nurses early in May as a war correspondent for the *New York Journal* has proved the capacity of the lady journalist to rival the mere man as a war correspondent at the front. She has undergone extraordinary fatigues and privations. Miss Boyd's account of the heroism of the Greek wounded is another testimony to the valour of the race. She says:—"I cannot speak too highly of the bravery, self-respect, and patience of the wounded Greeks."

We cull the following extract from the *Melbourne Argus* of April 26th:—

"On Saturday, before Dr. Youl, the city coroner, some light was cast upon the mysteries of the Chinese pharmacopœia. The subject of the inquest was Kee Sam, 28 years of age, who arrived from his native land four months back, and died on Thursday last. In the course of the evidence it was shown that Kee Sam had been afflicted with some illness about the 14th inst., and four days later, with a view to allaying it, he swallowed a pill prescribed by a fellow-countryman. Mr. Hodges, the Chinese interpreter, produced a pill similar to the one taken. It was about the size of a goose-egg, but, after the outer white crust had been removed, it had diminished, and was only as large as a walnut.

Dr. Youl lifted the pill from Mr. Hodges, and, holding it before the jury, observed, 'I suppose you are satisfied, gentlemen?'

Mr. Hodges continued that the pill was composed of honey, dates, earth, sawdust, ground horn, and a number of other appalling ingredients. It was not meant to be swallowed until its size was materially reduced by sucking. Among the Chinese this variety of pill was known as Ning Shin Yoon, or Repose to the Spirit.

Dr. Youl: That's how it seems to have acted in this case.

Dr. R. R. Stawell stated that in his opinion death was caused by malarial fever, and a verdict was returned to that effect."

A Book of the Week.

"THE THIRD VIOLET."*

MR. CRANE has broken new ground. The din and roar of battle sounds no more in his pages, there is no sign of a regiment or of soldiers from end to end. It is a modern American idyll,—a very curious example of how they do these things over on the other side.

Mr. Crane, sternly true to his gospel of realism, refuses even a euphonious name, as an unfair way of exciting interest in his hero: he calls him Billie Hawker. This said Billie Hawker, when the tale begins, is arriving at a summer resort, to pay a visit to his family. He travels with Miss Fanhall, a pretty young heiress, and is deeply smitten by her, not knowing of the heiress-ship. When he finds out, he despairs, and to the ordinary English mind his despair is founded on most reasonable grounds, for his father, mother and sisters seem, by their manners and conversation, to be unfit for even the humblest kind of society. Miss Fanhall, however, fortunately for her lover, is superior to any desire that his parents should be able to speak their own language. The scene in which she insists upon driving up to the front of the hotel in his father's ox-cart is very amusing and cleverly told. Their arrival is duly noted by the bevy of maiden ladies who are staying at the hotel—as one of the characters observes—"for no discernible purpose save to get where they can see people, and be displeased at them!"

Much of the dialogue is undeniably clever and funny. But we cannot help thinking that the whole is spoilt to English ears by the tornado of slang and expletive in which the people of young America seem to live. Florinda, the artist's model, is clever, though she has not much to do with the story. There is a certain Mr. Hollenden, who is, we are given to understand, a writer: it is to be hoped that he prunes his writing from the excrescences that disfigure his diction—

"'Deuced good fellow! What are you so—Say, by the nine mad blacksmiths of Donawhiroo, he's your rival! Glory, but I must be thickheaded to-night! . . . Lordie, what a situation! . . . Why, blast him, there isn't a man that knows him that doesn't like Jem Oglethorpe—excepting the chumps."

This is a fairly typical specimen of the gentleman's conversation. The English for "chump" I do not know, but it appears to mean something of the same nature as "duffer."

"'I can't paint! I can't paint for a dime!' cries the hero. 'I'm no good. What in thunder was I invented for, anyhow, Hollie?'

'You're a fool,' returns Hollenden. 'I hope to die if ever I saw such a complete idiot. What has got into you now? You are more kinds of a chump.'

Surely this is overdone. With the works of Mr. W. D. Howells in my mind's eye I refuse to believe that American gentlemen converse thus. In his own phraseology, Mr. Crane seems to "give away" his fellow-countrymen "every time" by thus brutally chronicling their unrefined lingual methods.

* "The Third Violet," by Stephen Crane. Heinemann.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)