

## A Book of the Week.

### "THE EVOLUTION OF A WIFE."\*

IF this romance be the work of a beginner,—and Elizabeth Holland mentions no previous efforts on the title page of her nicely got up volume,—then it is the work of a very promising beginner. From first to last the interest is held, and very cleverly so; for it would have been very easy to make the love affairs of so attractive a young person as Marie monotonous by reason of their frequency: but the various wooings are most subtly diversified, and the scene changed with a skill which one does not expect of a novice. The title is a happy and suggestive one; and the six divisions into which the Evolution is made to fall,—perhaps in allusion to the six stages of creation—are also well named; for though the title of each is fully borne out by the story, yet the reader gains no clue as to coming events. Even in the fifth division, one has no idea how things are going to turn out.

The only sign of youth and inexperience which the author gives, is her habit of writing bits of sentences in French and German, quite arbitrarily and unnecessarily. There is no point in using two different languages in half a sentence, as, for example, "Such a blow would have felled an ox—*er muss tod sein.*" If half the speech is to be in German, why not all? The French also, with which the whole of the dialogue is interlarded in this curious way, strikes one as being rather school-girl French. What defence is there for the use of the proposition "*a*" in this sentence—"Tante Mathilde m'envoie à te chercher," and would a Frenchman ever express himself thus—"O ma jambe! Ma pauvre chère jambe?"

One feature of the story which strikes the casual tourist with an air of improbability, is the existence of a wealthy Swiss aristocracy; the Ulrichstein riches sound a trifle mythical; but of course this may be merely the reviewer's ignorance.

I must confess a great personal weakness for Rudolf. Certain things we are told about him are of course conventional, and remind one of Bret Hart's parody on "Jane Eyre," in which the mighty hero stands absently twisting an iron candlestick between his muscular fingers! The episode of his dashing off on "Lucifer," the horse which only himself could ride, and which bit all the grooms, is of this character,—the proud steed is represented as "lying down, spent with fatigue and cruel riding."

So great is the interest which the book inspires, that it is a disappointment to find the final scene inadequate. Doubtless it is characteristic of the man that he should humble himself as little as possible; but surely May would have had something more to say to him? Some more complete indictment against the man who had used her so brutally. I am sensible of a strong wish that, in a succeeding edition, Miss Holland would re-write that scene; I do not think there could have been peace in the Château with so much left unsaid,—surely any woman would have stipulated that, if she returned, it should no longer be as a puppet and cipher in her own house, but as mistress.

The minor persons of the tale are all life-like and interesting, notably the malicious Eugénie, and Tante

\* "The Evolution of a Wife," by Elizabeth Holland. (John Milne, Norfolk Street, W.)

Mathilde. The slight sketch of the Milanese children's Hospital is well done, and the Grey nuns are delightful.

I shall look for more stories from this pen, and hope the writer will not lose her gift of sympathetic, bright writing; with a little more mellowing, her love-scenes would be really delightful. G. M. R.

## Bookland.

### SEAGULLS IN THE THAMES.\*

WHAT should lead you to linger here?

Warehouse walls, on whose squalor falls  
Cankering light from a rusty sun?  
Latticed bridges, like webs once spun  
By monstrous spiders, whose threads have run  
In angular links o'er the stream that shrinks  
From mouldering wharf and pier?

\* \* \*  
You should be out on the broad expanse  
Crystalline of luminous brine  
Where fiery morn with her slim strong wrist  
Guides her car through the golden mist  
On a gleaming pathway of amethyst,  
And the sky's bright blue is painted anew,  
And the wavelets ripple and dance.

### WHAT TO READ.

"Forty-one Years in India: from Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief," by Field-Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar, V.C. (Bentley & Son.)

"The Black Riders, and Other Lines," by Stephen Crane. (Heinemann.)

"The Year After the Armada and other Historical Essays," by Martin A. S. Hume. (London: Fisher Unwin.)

"The Dunthorpes of Westleigh," by Christian Lys.  
"The Ugly Man," by the Author of "A House of Tears."

## Coming Events.

January 18th.—Women's Industrial Council. The Second Annual Meeting will be held on Monday, January 18th, at 5 p.m., in Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand.

January 19th.—Invalid Cookery Class, Royal British Nurses' Association, 17, Old Cavendish Street, W. Ninth Lesson: Mutton broth, boiled mutton, parsley sauce, rusks, blancmange, œufs à madame, barley water.

January 21st.—The Matrons' Council Executive Committee, 2.30; and Council Meeting, 3 p.m.; at Matron's House, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C. Conference, Matrons' Council. "The Organisation of Nurse Training School Alumnae Associations," by Mrs. Isabel Hunter Robb, late Superintendent Johns Hopkins Training School for Nurses, Baltimore, U.S.A., at the Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, 8.30 p.m.

January 22nd.—Second Sessional Lecture, Royal British Nurses' Association, 17, Old Cavendish Street, "On the nursing of cases presenting symptoms of Mental Disease," by Professor E. W. White, M.B. Lond., 8 p.m.

\* "Wind on the Harp Strings," by Arthur E. J. Legge.

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