

possibly effective auxiliary to moral efforts. I find it will always be accepted as a convenient substitute. I take the liberty of addressing this explicit withdrawal of an endorsement in whatever form of the principle of regulation, because it was in a letter to your lordship that I originally incurred the responsibility." Many women, ourselves among the number, will rejoice that Lady Henry Somerset, whose influence is wide and far reaching, has had reason to change her views on this important subject; and will respect her for her frankness in making public her altered opinions.

A Bill has been drafted, and is in the hands of Colonel Dalbiac, M.P. for North Camberwell, and supported by Colonel Bolland, R.E., the Chairman of the National Vigilance Association, which aims at the repatriation of the bullies or *souteneurs* who traffic in foreign women for immoral purposes, bringing them to London with this object, and making themselves responsible for their board, lodging and clothing, while they appropriate the earnings of their victims. The open immorality of London streets is a national scandal and disgrace, and we hope that Colonel Dalbiac's Bill may speedily become law, but English women will, we think, desire an additional clause to it, namely, that before these infamous traffickers in human beings are returned to their native countries they should be made to feel the weight of the British "cat." It is asserted, by a correspondent in the *Daily Chronicle*, that the traffic is international and reciprocative between English and Dutch dealers, English and French dealers, and so on. Such a fact as that must be a public disgrace, and in the name of humanity and morality calls for prompt and effective measures.

## A Book of the Week.

### "THE VINTAGE."\*

MR. BENSON'S clever new book is a mixture of much that is most interesting with much that is somewhat disappointing.

I own that, to me, the history of the Greek War of Independence was much what the history of New Zealand was to the worthy professors at Yale University. Beyond having heard of the battle of Navarino, and having a dim idea that Lord Byron had enrolled himself as a volunteer in the cause of liberty, I was woefully ignorant of what actually took place.

Mr. Benson has evidently studied the history on the spot, and the result is, as so often happens, that his book is too laboured, too geographical, and the action, being clogged by fact, hangs lamentably. The book has the fault which Mrs. Steel's wonderful "On the Face of the Waters" had—the history and the fiction are not really blended, they alternate. Mrs. Steel had more excuse for her prolixity, for her history of the Mutiny was the history of a thing that stirs the blood of Englishmen; but very few people, comparatively, will be interested in the account, nine pages long, of the Greek process of wine-making, nor in the equally long account of the vision of Apollo, seen by a herdsman in the temple at Bassae. The routes from town to town, too, and the lie of the land, are described in a way that can only mystify and weary the reader, and

bewilder, rather than assist, the imagination. This, it seems to me, must always be the result when a writer has "got up" a place, in order to write about it. The convincing books are those written out of the midst of a people or country. The South African veldt of Olive Schreiner, the India of Rudyard Kipling—these are living pictures, described by those to whom every detail of veldt or jungle is the atmosphere of home.

One's sympathies, too, are so strongly with the oppressed people striving to be rid of the worst rule in the world, that one does not care to be reminded that the revolt, like all revolts, called out the very vilest of human passions, that many of the Greek leaders were traitors, nor that the taking of Tripoli was marked by atrocities in comparison with which Cawnpore was a small affair. Two thousand Turks—men, women and children—taken into a dry ravine, and massacred down to the very last! It leaves a vile taste in the mouth, and makes one feel that even liberty may be too dearly bought.

The interest of the book is marred also, to my own taste, by the fact that the only woman in the tale is absolutely without moral sense, and that the hero, the brave young Mitsos, resembles her in that respect. It is hard to believe that the priest, Father Andréas, would not have bitterly resented the insult done to his daughter. This daughter, stolen away as a child by Turks, is brought up in a harem, and Mitsos, sailing on the bay of Nauplia, sees and falls in love with her. He takes her out in his boat one evening, and I own that it was a distinct shock to all my susceptibilities, at their next meeting, to find her cheerfully telling him of her hope to become a mother. With all due deference to Mr. Benson, the fact that her condition was known and condoned in a harem full of idle women, eunuchs, etc., is a thing very hard to believe. It never seems to occur, either to her, or to Mitsos, or to anybody in the book, author included, that her lover's proceedings showed the least want of respect or consideration for her.

The story abounds in exciting scenes, well described, and many of the descriptions are excellent, with Mr. Benson's own pointedness of style. The dialogue is always good, sometimes brilliant; and the heroic figure of Nicholas would redeem a much worse book from the charge of dulness. This man, pure patriot, unselfish, ever ready to sink personal feeling for his country's good, would seem to be historical. If so, then modern Greece has produced one son to whom any country might be proud to have given birth. The account of the ordeal to which he subjected Mitsos, with the idea of assuring himself of his absolute trustworthiness, is one of the best things in the book.

G. M. R.

## Dramatic Notice.

### THE GLOBE THEATRE.

A SWEET story, tellingly told, and admirably acted is the *multum in parvo* description of the piece now being performed at the Globe Theatre under the title of "A Bachelor's Romance." The Bachelor is an old bachelor, and the "Romance" consists in the circumstance that a young girl of the admittedly attractive age of "sweet seventeen," spontaneously falls in love with him, and rapidly draws him out of the isolated shell in which his life had for many long years

\* "The Vintage." By E. F. Benson. (Methuen & Co.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)