

A Book of the Week.

"A TOUCH OF THE SUN."*

MRS. AYLMEY GOWING'S book is a book to make one pause and think over the various complications that may ensue when a Western race not only rules an Eastern people, but also, as in the case of England and India, educates, associates with, and does everything except intermarry with that people.

"East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."

That wonderful line of Kipling's might well be the motto of this story.

It was to Marion Crawford that the idea first occurred—what would be the result, supposing that a Mohammedan gentleman of high birth fell in love with an English girl of high birth, and she returned it? He embodied the idea in "Mr. Isaacs," and came to the conclusion that the only way out of it was to kill the heroine of the story. The idea then occurred to Mrs. Henry Norman, in her very clever little story "The Crook of the Bough," reviewed in these pages last summer. She also shirked the ultimate difficulty, and the rapprochement between East and West proved too hard a thing to show in concrete form. But Mrs. Gowing with unfaltering hand, lifts the Purdah, and shows us the clergyman's golden-haired daughter, love having made her a tame snake, living, and content to live, as the wife of the Prince of Boristan, and to remain hidden in her harem, while her husband gives garden-parties to his English friends.

This is the situation, and everyone must own that it is a bold one; and when it is added, that in order to marry the Prince, an elopement from London to India is necessary to the heroine, it will be seen that Mrs. Aylmer Gowing makes large demands upon the credulity of the modern reader.

But she displays great ingenuity in the development of her plot. The villain of the piece is Aimée Hildebrand, the illegitimate daughter of an English Colonel by a Mohammedan mother. This girl, herself a Mohammedan at heart, has tainted the mind of Mildred with her ideas from early youth, for they are school-fellows. It is not very easy to believe that the half-caste would have been received as a pupil in the select girl's school here depicted; but that once granted, the sinister influence of Aimée is very well described. Being herself in love with Rupert Daventry, the man who wishes to marry Mildred, she furthers the designs of the Prince of Boristan, takes Mildred with her to India, and leaves her safely married in the palace of her jealous and handsome husband. Mildred is the mother of a son, the future Prince of Boristan, and is not yet tired of the experiment of living for one man only, when the final tragedy which one feels is the necessary outcome of such a situation, bursts over her head.

It seems to me that the madness and roughness of Rupert Daventry are overdone. It is perfectly credible that, loving Mildred as he did, and believing her to be the mistress of a "nigger," and to be living in the inconceivable degradation of the harem, that his fixed idea should be to rescue her. The thing itself is enough to unsettle a man's reason, without that "Touch of the Sun" of which we hear

* "A Touch of the Sun." Emilia Aylmer Gowing. Burleigh.

such frequent mention. His conduct throughout seems very inept, for a man of his nature would have set the whole British Government in motion, one would think, with the evidence he possessed, of Mildred's handwriting, on a list of books sent for from the Prince's harem. But the book as a whole is, it cannot be denied, extremely interesting, and the sketch of the English Doctor Lady particularly amusing.

G. M. R.

WHAT TO READ.

- "Gordon in Central Africa. 1874-1879." By George Birkbeck Hill.
- "Tales of the Enchanted Islands of the Atlantic." By Thomas Wentworth Higginson.
- "Ashes of Empire." By R. W. Chambers.
- "The Two Standards." By Dr. W. Barry.
- "South London." By Walter Besant.
- "The Mayfair Marriage: A London and Paris Book." By Grammont Hamilton.
- "The Divine Romance of Love and War." Through Lady Bowyer.
- "Dear Irish Girl." By Katharine Tynan.

Coming Events.

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR NURSES.

PROGRAMME—SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING, FEBRUARY 1899, IN CHICAGO.

- "The Work of Nursing the Insane," Miss M. E. May. Discussion—Miss Clark, Methods at Kaukakee; Miss McKenzie, Methods at McLean.
- "Contagious Hospitals," Miss Griswold. Discussion—Miss Riddle, Work of the South Department; Miss Sanborn, Work of the Willard Parker.
- "The Record of Trained Nurses during the War," Miss Maxwell, Miss Palmer, Mrs. Quintard.
- "The Preparation of Pupils for Duties as Alumnae," Miss Walker. Discussion—Miss Cabaniss, Miss Breeze.
- "The Tendency of Nurses to Extravagance," Miss Twitchell. Discussion—Miss Greenwood, Miss Barnhart.
- "Class Clinic for Pupil Nurses—A Demonstration," Miss McIsaac.

January 31st.—The first of a course of public lectures, given under the authority of Childhood Society "Mental Abilities and Disabilities of Children," by Francis Warner, M.D., F.R.C.P., at 72, Margaret Street, W. 8 p.m.

February 1st.—Opening of the New Ward for Cancer Patients, and the Nurses' Home, at the New Hospital for Women, Euston Road.

February 8th.—The Queen opens the Children's Wing of the Royal Isle of Wight Infirmary at Ryde.

February 16th and 17th.—Central Poor-Law Conference at the Guildhall. Paper by Miss C. S. Wilkie, Lady Superintendent of St. Luke's Hospital, Halifax, on "Workhouse Nursing."

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