

Book of the Week.

TALES OF SPACE AND TIME.*

MR. WELLS' scientific fantasies are always welcome, and three of the five stories in this new volume are delightfully fresh, and original with his own peculiar vein of originality. The first one in the book, the "Crystal Egg," is by no means the best or most striking. It deals—as did his long and clever story, "The War of the Worlds"—with the inhabitants of the planet Mars. But it tells us nothing which was not told better and at greater length in that book, and rather suggests the idea that the short story was written first and formed the germ of the more elaborate romance.

The second story is called "The Star," and is especially interesting in view of the recent discovery of the planet Eros, and the speculations of astronomers as to the possible movements of that eccentric little person.

A star from some system far beyond the solar limits, drops, for some unknown reason, from some unknown quarter of the universe, into the solar system, and, feeling the attraction of the mighty bulk of Neptune, the outermost planet, hits it fair and square; and the immense body, fused by the terrific force of the impact into an incandescent mass, proceeds to fall with ever-increasing velocity into the sun.

The men of science who are on the lookout, soon foresee a danger. The fiery traveller must pass near enough to the great bulk of Jupiter, to cause it to swerve violently from its course, and in thus swerving it must pass near enough to the earth to seriously influence it; if not actually strike it. The account of the atmospheric complications which ensue and the terror with which the world awaits the peril, which no precaution can avert, is excellently given. One holds one's breath as the scorching star rushes through space, and a wall of water fifty feet high travels across the Pacific to hurl itself upon the coast of Asia. The means by which Europe is partially saved from the effects of the catastrophe, should be left for the readers to ascertain.

The third story "The Stone Age," is just as interesting quite a different way. We are introduced to Palaeolithic man in his infancy, feeling after language, fighting wild beasts, slowly and painfully acquiring the art of fashioning weapons, and learning through the passions of love and hate the rudiments of self-sacrifice. The author locates them in the Thames valley near Guildford, and the idea seems somehow to bring these things very near to us and to bridge over the gap of fifty thousand years that lies between us and these "rude forefathers of the hamlet."

The two remaining stories are not so original. "A story of the days to come," is a romance which takes place in that terrible London of the future to which Mr Wells has already introduced us.

"The Man who could work Miracles" is merely a skit, and clever only in the same way that "The Angelic Visit" was clever.

But the whole collection is delightful, the style corresponding to the matter in a way which is Mr. Wells' own secret.

G. M. R.

* By H. G. Wells. Harper and Brothers.

Bookland.

THOSE of our readers who are partial to ghost stories, will be delighted to hear that Miss Goodrich Freer is to bring out a volume immediately. The publishers are Messrs. Hurst and Blackett, and Miss Freer has secured some first rate collaborators—Miss Christabel Coleridge, Miss Bramston, Miss Olive Birrell and G. M. Robins. The great feature of the stories is that they are all "Psychically correct." Just the thing for Christmas!

AMONGST the books lying on our editorial table awaiting notice are: (1) "The Healing of the Nations," by J. Rutter Williamson, M.B., a most interesting treatise on medical missions, published by the Student Volunteer Missionary Union, 22, Warwick Lane, E.C. The subject with which it deals makes a special claim, we are told, upon those who are members of the medical and nursing professions. Members of both professions may, indeed, well ask themselves the question put by Mr. Williamson "Are the sufferings of two-thirds of the world's population to go untended? Is maternity to be a dreaded nightmare to our sisters in India, China, Persia and Africa? Are thousands to lose their sight each year because there are no surgeons at hand to couch cataracts?" We commend this book to the attention of our readers those who are already interested in medical mission work will enjoy its perusal, while in those to whom the pathos of the lives of the sick among the heathen has not yet appealed, interest must surely be awakened.

(2) "The Private Nurse." Some reminiscences of eight years private nursing. By Jessie Holmes. Published by T. Fisher Unwin. We cannot say we think that these experiences for the most part worthy of publication, or that they are narrated in a way calculated to interest the public.

(3) "Who's Who," for 1900. Published by Adam and Charles Black, Soho Square. The reputation of this well-known work of reference is now well established. As a biographical dictionary, giving a short summary of the career of leading men and women, it is a valuable book to keep on the library table. It contains also the names of British Ambassadors in foreign countries, as well as those of ambassadors to this country, with their addresses. The list of members of the London County Council, with the places they represent, is a very general interest, and another useful list is that of members of the London School Board. Again, it contains the names of the principal London, provincial, and foreign newspapers, with their addresses and the names of the editors; the Societies, Royal, National, and learned, with the objects and other information, and many other interesting items. The compilation of a book of this description is a matter necessitating much work, and accuracy of detail, and the editor is to be congratulated on the production of so useful and reliable a work.

Coming Events.

December 25th.—Christmas Day. Hospital Festivities.

January 2nd.—Princess Henry of Battenberg attends a Concert at Ryde, in aid of the War Relief Funds.

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