

Deborah, and the New Testament tells us of the Prophetess Anne. What do we find in the modern development of religion to replace the feminine idea, and consequently the Priestess? When a religion symbolises the universe by a Divine Being, is it not illogical to omit woman, who is [the principal half of it, since she is the principal creator of the other half—that is, man? How can we hope that the world will become purer and less material when one excludes from the Divine, which is the highest ideal, that part of its nature which represents at one and the same time the faculty of receiving and that of giving—that is to say, love itself in its highest form—love, the symbol of universal sympathy? That is where the magical power of woman is found. She finds her force in her alliance with the sympathetic energies of Nature. And what is Nature if it is not an assemblage of thoughts clothed with matter and ideas which seek to materialise themselves? What is this eternal attraction between ideas and matter? It is the secret of life. Have you ever realised that there does not exist a single flame without a special intelligence which animates it, or a single grain of sand to which an idea is not attached, the idea which formed it? It is these intelligent ideas which are the elementals, or spirits of Nature. Woman is the magician born of Nature by reason of her great natural sensibility, and of her instructive sympathy with such subtle energies as these intelligent inhabitants of the air, the earth, fire, and water."

Mr. Eugene Easton, lately released from Pretoria, writes, in the *Daily Mail*, in praise of the Dutch women:—

"The women at Pretoria, wives and daughters and mothers of the men at the front, are so certain that the cause for which the Republic is fighting is the purest one that men can struggle for, that they are more fervent and determined in their efforts to assist their Cause than even the men themselves. Every home in Pretoria is a base of supplies of food and clothing for burghers at the front. The women gather together at each other's houses in sewing parties, making trousers and coats for those of their family in the firing line. Every day one can see bright-faced women driving to the station with carts full of provisions for relatives at the front. They take their turns in going to the front themselves as nurses, and in caring for the wounded men in the hospitals of Pretoria itself. No army ever had more serviceable allies than the Boers in South Africa have in their wives. I have seen them taking delicacies to the English prisoners at the racecourse. This at first struck me as most extraordinary."

A Book of the Week.

THE VALIANT RUNAWAYS.*

THIS spirited little tale is quite a new departure for the author of "Patience Sparhawk" and "The Californians." Except for the fact that the scene is throughout laid in California, there is nothing to remind one for a moment of the writer of novels of modern depravity and hereditary vice. It is a book primarily intended for boys—a book of adventure, pure

* By Gertrude Atherton. J. Nisbet and Co.

and simple. But, as was the case with "Treasure Island," "King Solomon's Mines," and a few more such, the charm of the manner is so great that many readers other than boys must be delighted with it.

The truly delightful Spanish boy, Roldan Castañada, who is the hero, is the youngest son of a wealthy Spanish Californian. He runs away from home to avoid the conscription, for the story is laid in the old days before the United States had possessed themselves of California. Roldan is no coward: the idea of fighting has charms for him; but not the intolerable routine of barrack life, the obedience to orders, the hard, uninteresting life. To the spoilt young don, this prospect is intolerable, and so he, with his bosom friend, Adan, runs away.

Their first adventure concerns a bear, and is amusing enough as illustrating the manners and customs of the Spaniard, and his national delight in the killing and tearing of animals. But the real excitements begin when the boys reach the Mission, and discover the impending treachery of the Indians. There is something ever pathetic in the accounts of these lonely missions among the Indians, the self-devotion of the priests, their total failure to enter into the nature and aspirations of those whom they sought to evangelize, and their long patience under failure—failure which was at last complete and final.

There is one figure of a Californian priest in this story which is among the most impressive things Miss Atherton has done. It is a mere sketch—but the whole man rises before us with his strength and his temptations, his fury and his weakness. He has accidentally discovered a vast hoard of gold in the lonely hillside near the Mission. Here, then, is his road to freedom; with this he may end his long banishment, the life of isolation and restraint which chafes his active mind; he is a power among the people he rules; but what of that? He would control empires. Three mischievous boys, quite unintentionally, chance upon his secret: and a demon takes possession of the man. Are all his schemes to be made void, at the eleventh hour, by three boys? One cannot keep back one's pity for the man, even when his intentions are murderous. We should like to hear more of him; but he disappears from the story when his fortunes cease to be mingled with those of Roldan and Adan.

The account of the boys lost in the desert is a very vivid bit of writing, especially the account of the mirage; but the finest and most thrilling thing in the book, is the episode of the earthquake, which takes place during a cattle-branding ceremony. The stampede of the thousands of maddened animals, the flight of the spectators before this horrible death, the knocking down and trampling into pulp of the vaqueros, the final Mass of thanksgiving, held in the Mission when the terror has swept past—all these are stirring reading. Those who read the book, expecting what they usually get from this writer, will no doubt be disappointed: but those who like good adventure, well told, and who want to know something of the life of the Spanish in the old Californian days, will be much interested.

G. M. R.

Mr. Kinloch Cooke's memoir of her late Royal Highness Princess Mary Adelaide Duchess of Teck has been published by Mr. Murray. The proof sheets have been read by the Duchess of York. The book will be welcomed by many.

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