

solemnity of de meaning;" adding suggestively, "I's been-married befo'."

Some brides, we are told, object to the word "obey." It was not so with Queen Victoria. When arranging about the service, the Archbishop of Canterbury asked her Majesty whether it would be desirable to omit the word "obey." "No," she said; "I wish to be married as a woman, not as a Queen."

## A Book of the Week.

### THE QUEEN VERSUS BILLY.\*

The mere fact that he is the stepson of Robert Louis Stevenson, creates in the mind an interest regarding Mr. Lloyd Osbourne. But, furthermore, we remember that he collaborated with the great genius in his latest story.

The present volume of stories does much to make one acknowledge Mr. Osbourne as an artist on his own merits. The stories are vivid, thrilling, and sketched in with a sure hand. Their fault is, that owing to the limited choice of scenery and of character which the author has permitted himself, they are too much alike.

All of them are West Indian stories, most of them are located on Samoa itself. The picture they give us of the white man—the scum and refuse of Europe, seeking his shark's livelihood among the innocent, kindly, unsuspecting natives, is simply a horrible one; no milder word will do.

The perusal of the book leaves one wondering—as, doubtless, Mr. Lloyd Osbourne means us to do—whether the white man has offered the Samoan any compensation whatever for the depravity, the treachery, the brutality he has shown him; whether even religion, as these poor people can understand it, is to be weighed against the awful knowledge of unleavened evil which the white man has bestowed upon his simpler brothers.

Well, the story of the "Phantom City" partly answers our question for us. The old priest in charge of a happy village, full of childlike confiding creatures, whose lives are an idyll of peace and simplicity, receives from a monastery on a neighbouring island, a lay brother, sent away for change of air and rest. This man, Brother Michael, in a manner related with the greatest mystery and charm, finds gold in a river bed in the unknown centre of Samoa. The old priest, suspicious of his guest's long absences, follows him, discovers his secret—for one day gives way to the delirium of gold fever. Then it all comes upon him, the result to his simple flock, when the existence of the accursed thing is made known. The army of men springing out of the earth, coming from the four winds of heaven like vultures to carrion; the degradation, the madness, the total demoralization which must accompany that awful thing, a gold rush. He pleads with Michael to be content with amassing a fortune for himself, to leave the island in ignorance of its own possibilities. In vain: then his resolution is taken. He himself, the most harmless of God's creatures, shoots Michael with his own hand. For his people's sake he becomes a murderer; later, a suicide; but they are saved.

\* By Lloyd Osbourne. (Heinemann).

There is one tale in the book too horrible for words, the one called "Frenchy's last Job." The bestiality and devilry of the white man without principle, the pitiless intelligence without brake or steering gear, is too forcibly put before the reader. The result is unutterably painful.

All the pathos of despair is in "The Dust of Defeat." The Comte de Charruel is a convict for life, for having killed in a duel—unfairly as such things go, the man who had ruined his only sister. He tells the story of his trouble to a beautiful American girl, visiting the convict settlement with her father. The girl gives him her sympathy—more, her tenderness. He gives her his mother's ruby ring. After her departure, the horror of his loneliness stupefies him. In deadly fear of losing his reason, he goes to the Mother Superior of the neighbouring Convent, to ask for a wife from among the convict girls. A week after this marriage he gets the news of his own pardon. The story stops there. What happened? We cannot but feel that Mr. Osbourne has ended with a jade's trick!

G. M. R.

## Verses.

### A NEW YEAR'S PRAYER.

God keep us in the year to come,  
Between the times of palm and yew,  
Of lilac and chrysanthemum.

God send our happiest wishes true,  
And build our broken towers anew;  
Between the times of palm and yew,  
Of lilac and chrysanthemum.

God keep us all the seasons through,  
And give us rain and sunshine too,  
And every cloud its bit of blue,  
Between the times of palm and yew,  
Of lilac and chrysanthemum.

God send each singing-bird his mate:  
And lovers all a happy fate;  
A rose to every sprig of rue,  
Each blade of grass its drop of dew,  
Between the times of palm and yew,  
Of lilac and chrysanthemum.

NORA HOPPER.

—*Westminster Gazette*.

## What to Read.

"Deirdre Wed, and other Poems." By Herbert Trench.

"The Life of Paris." By Richard Whiteing.

"Jean Paul Marat, the People's Friend." By Ernest Belfort Bax.

"The North American Indians of To-day." By G. B. Grinnell, Ph. D.

"Eccentricities of Genius: Memories of Famous Men and Women of the Platform and the Stage." By Major J. B. Pond.

"The White Company." By A. Conan Doyle.

"Domesticities; a Little Book of Household Impressions." By E. V. Lucas.

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