

The remainder either came through a spirit of adventure fired by reading thrilling stories, or because their parents were too severe with them over their lessons.

Book of the Week.

THE MEN OF THE MOUNTAIN.*

A book by Mr. Crockett is one which is sure to be full of interesting adventure, and to hold the attention of the reader from start to finish, while a certain delicacy of touch and sure delineation of character are characteristic of the author.

The scenes of his latest book, "The Men of the Mountain," are laid for the most part in the border land of France and Switzerland, in the war-swept communes from Mouthe to Le Lochle during the Franco-German War in 1871. The opening chapter introduces us to Pastor David Alix, of the Evangelical Church of Geneva, long domiciled in France, and now in deadly peril of his life at the hands of the German invader.

The pastor was unarmed, but had been caught with a comrade who carried a rifle but wore no uniform. Trossel's Colberg regiment of Grenadiers are angry, for their sentries have been "sniped," and their details cut up, with the result that "old Von Hartmann, Major-General of the Third, has come down on purpose himself to see into things. And twenty minutes ago he had fallen into such an anger at the sight of the *franc-tireur* and his companion—the slim man clad in black—that he himself had ordered the immediate shooting of the man with the rifle out of hand, and even presided at the drum-head court-martial upon David Alix. As Von Hartmann spoke no French in any intelligible fashion, and understood still less of that language when spoken, the trial of David Alix was very summary indeed."

Not a moment too soon did Military Chaplain Hermann Falk precipitate himself into the six yards between the *peleton* of execution and the man about to die, for the General had just given the command to "take aim." The evidences of David Alix's guilt, for which he was condemned to death, were the hard little loaves with which his pockets were stuffed, in the opinion of the Grenadiers destined to feed and sustain the "bush-whackers," who, at eve and morn, slew their comrades, and a long list of names, presumably the roll of a whole company of murderers or their abettors, also found in his clerical pockets.

But the Chaplain of the Grenadiers made short work of these frail evidences. "Bread, a paper, and a Bible! You would shoot a man for that—heathens, Wends, idolaters, witchfolk! Does a man come out to kill, or to give life, thus armed? See you—you fools! Bread for the body, the Word of God for the soul! And the paper! Written in English, is it? Well, I was not three years in Edinburgh College for nothing!"

And this is what he read:—

"List of poor widows and sick folk in the Commune of Mouthe to whom bread is to be taken."

* By S. R. Crockett. (Religious Tract Society, 4, Bouverie Street, E.C.)

He read the list to the bottom, not sparing them one single name, and at the end he took the hand of Pastor David, true shepherd of his flock, and crying aloud: "Now, shoot him if you dare!" strode off to his lodging, taking David with him.

In truth David dispensed the bounty of his mother, Mme. Alix "the old," chatelaine of the farm of Villars Chaumont, just across the Swiss frontier, "a forceful, emphatic, face-to-the-foe woman, full of quick angers and as sudden contritions," to whom the Upper Valley of the Doubs, in those troublesome times, owed its escape from starvation.

The story of these people, of the *franc-tireurs*—the men of the mountain, mostly mere boys, and even women also, for all the able bodied men were at the war—of David's sister Noëlie, of Ludovic Villars, their half-brother, of the little school-mistress, and many others, is full of stirring incident throughout. It is, moreover, clean, wholesome, and of high tone, a book which can be cordially recommended.

P. G. Y.

A GREAT EDUCATIONALIST.

"Madame de Maintenon, Her Life and Times, 1635—1719," by C. C. Dyson, is a work of most absorbing interest. Why do we not learn more history in youth, so that we may realise how many great and wonderfully brilliant women have lived before our time, and thus gain from their teaching? We felt quite guilty when we read of the tireless devotion of this great Frenchwoman to the King, her husband, that in ignorance we had classed her with Montespan and Pompadour, as a venal *maitresse en titre*! To have been the foundress of St. Cyr in the seventeenth century, that famous educational establishment for girls marks Madame de Maintenon as one of the greatest educationalists and organisers of all time.

In connection with St. Cyr, a reminiscence of great interest to British people is the fact that we owe to it our National Anthem!

On the first occasion that Louis XIV. visited the institution the pupils sang a chorus, the words of which were composed by Madame de Brinon, the first Superior, and the music by Lulli, Master of the King's Music. It begins, "Grand Dieu! Sauvez le Roi!" and was sung whenever royalty visited St. Cyr during a hundred years.

In 1721 Handel visited St. Cyr, and was much impressed by this composition, and annexed it.

After translating the words, he had it performed before King George I. in London, and since then as "God Save the King" it has become part of our national life.

COMING EVENTS.

February 14th to 19th.—Week of Special Meetings for Nurses, arranged by Nurses' Missionary League. Passmore Edwards' Settlement, Tavistock Place, W.C. Morning, 10—11 a.m. Afternoon, 2.30—3.30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 19th, one meeting only, 2.30 p.m.

February 15th.—Written examination of Central Midwives' Board, in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Leeds. Oral examination a few days later.

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