

## Book of the Week.

### CANDLES IN THE WIND.\*

The Light of every soul burns upward, but most of them are candles in the wind. Let us allow for atmospheric disturbances."—*George Meredith.*

To those who have felt the fascination of India, and more especially those interested in the problems of the Northern Frontier, a book by Maud Diver is always welcome, for she writes of what she knows, and with graphic pen makes us realise our debt to the handful of men who keep that Frontier intact.

We are introduced at the outset to Alan Laurence, an engineer subaltern, who, with a little company of Kashmiri Sappers, has, after three unsuccessful efforts, just completed a difficult bit of road on a mountain side in the Hindu Kush; but the shout of victory of the Sappers breaks midway into a howl of execration, for a fourth time the road gives way, and the native corporal stands before him saluting, the dust of defeat upon his uniform, and the shadow of it in his eyes, asking: "How can the servants of the Maharaj do more? The thing entirely may not be."

"Nevertheless this thing must be," Laurence asserted quietly. "How should I carry such child's talk as thine to the Colonel Sahib?"

The man salaams, then hesitates, and prefers a request that the coolie-log may kill a goat and offer poojah to the evil demon "who wills not that his meditations be disturbed by the noise of shot and hammer."

"And if the request drew a smile from the Englishman, there lurked in it no tincture of contempt. He was beginning, dimly and gradually, to know something of this India—vast, complex, mysterious—and to sympathise, where five years ago he would have scorned; for sympathy is by knowledge out of an understanding heart."

But the problems of India are many sided, and this story—a story in the main of fair women and brave men—brings into strong prominence the inevitable tragedy following on the marriage of an English girl with a Eurasian—"a pure half-breed" with an impossible half-sister. James Videlle, a doctor in the Indian Army, home on long leave, wooed and won Lyndsay Vereker. Not until he took her to India did a suspicion enter her mind as to his mixed blood, and the full tragedy of the situation was revealed to her unconsciously with overwhelming suddenness by Alan Laurence, who, believing her to be free, had completely lost his heart to her. The redeeming point in James Videlle is his genuine love for his wife, but his jealous, vacillating, crooked temperament made her life a martyrdom.

How Lyndsay and Laurence "win through" must be left to the reader to discover. It is refreshing in these days to find an author who points the way to happiness along the path of duty.

But besides its human interest the book holds one by its graphic description of Frontier warfare, and

the story of the capture of Nilt Fort is a fine bit of writing.

The enchantment of the Frontier scenery also lays its spell upon one. The world holds none lovelier. And yet more: "Here, where all is elemental, the man at hand grips with colossal forces finds re-invigoration of mind and body; finds his soul threshed from the husks of materialism, self-indulgence, and the petty self-importance—fostered by civilisation—that rots character as surely as damp rots wood. In this rough fashion the Frontier makes or breaks her pioneers, according to the grace that is in them; and her fashion, however terrible, has about it a certain grandeur conspicuously absent from the making or breaking process of cities."

P. G. Y.

## Verses.

### "MIMMA BELLA."

Do you recall the scents, the insect whirr,  
Where we had laid her in the chestnut shade?  
How discs of sunlight through the bright leaves  
played  
Upon the grass, as we bent over her?

How roving breezes made the bracken stir  
Beside her, while the bumble-bee, arrayed  
In brown and gold, hummed round her, and the  
glade  
Was strewn with last year's chestnuts' prickly fur?

There in the forest's ripe and fragrant heat  
She lay and laughed, and kicked her wee bare feet,  
And stretched wee hands to grasp some woodland  
bell;

And played her little games; and when we said  
"Cuckoo" would lift her frook, and hide her  
head,  
Which now, God knows, is hidden but too well.  
EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON.

### COMING EVENTS.

January 7th.—London Homœopathic Hospital, W.C. The Matron and Nursing Staff At Home. Music. Tea and coffee. 8 to 11 p.m.

January 12th.—Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. Lecture on Operations on the Stomach and Intestines. Preparations and After-Nursing. By Professor Alexis Thomson, F.R.C.S.E. Extra-Mural Medical Theatre, 4.30 p.m. Nurses cordially invited.

January 14th.—Girls' Missionary Conference (C.E.Z.M.S.), Morley Hall, 26, George Street, Hanover Square, W. Nurses' welcome, 11—1, and 2.30—4.30 p.m.

January 25th.—Meeting of the Central Registration Committee, Council Room, British Medical Association Office, 429, Strand, London, W.C., 3.30 p.m. The Right Hon. the Lord Ampthill will preside.

### WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"To do nothing is as fatal as to commit evil, and it is more cowardly."

\* By Maud Diver. (William Blackwood and Sons.)

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