

AUTUMNAL TINTS

The Yellow Book. Vol. XI. London: Lane.

Mr. Max Beerbohm's romantic satire of 'The Happy Hypocrite,' his portrait of 'The Yellow Dwarf,' and Miss Syrett's Front Cover Design should have been distributed at intervals over the last issue of *The Yellow Book*. The humour of them, coming as they do at the beginning, is not sufficient to support the reader through the solid remainder of this bulky tome. Mr. Beerbohm comes before us masked for a *fiute champêtre*. Not more astonishing is the metamorphosis of his hero, Lord George Hell, from the naughty buck of Garble's to the saintly recluse of Kensington, who keeps the 'mensiversary' of his rustic wedding with a feast of buns. One fears a little for the sanity or the sincerity, of both. But Mr. Beerbohm's style, as we predicted, is becoming more ingenuous, though still he affects an ugly phrase or two. 'Many persons,' we are told, 'were unobnoxious to the magic of his title'—that is, we may suppose, were not subservient to it. If we accept this rare use of the word *obnoxious*, which seldom in good Latin means anything but 'exposed to,' or 'liable to,' or 'beholden to,' we may still object to the addition of a Saxon prefix as a solecism unworthy of the author's chastity of style. In Mr. Henry Harland's 'The Friend of Man' we have a theme of no very surprising novelty—that of a philanthropist who is unmoved by man without a capital M; but the literary quality of this sketch sets it in a place apart from most of the serious work in this volume. Two slight defects are apparent. The speaker who gives the experience of his relations with the Friend of Man is inclined, when he recalls his own fancies as a child, to use in description the language of childhood. The error is natural, but still an error. Again, the reiteration of words and phrases, which at first gives an air of naturalness to his narrative, declines, by the end, to mere affectation. Baron Corvo, in one of the 'Stories Toto Told Me,' allows himself to burlesque the Judgment-Day. The indecency of the thing is too patent for reproof; our complaint should rather be that while he was about this piece of banality he did not make it funnier. Miss Ada Radford shows a certain feeling for character in 'Lot 99,' but the story lacks coherence, and we are left with a suspicion that the printer has here and there omitted a paragraph or even an entire page. There is a strange elusiveness in the treatment of the actual 'Lot 99,' which is only mentioned once, and then in brackets. Again, that excellent lady, Aunt Lizzie, is suddenly referred to as a thing of the past without any apparent cause being given for her removal. The last we heard of her was that a new servant had starched and ironed a piece of her old lace. But this seems inadequate.

Miss Ella D'Arcy contributes a rather sordid illustration of the old French rule: '*Ne faites jamais de votre maîtresse votre femme.*' If it is true, as rumoured, that Miss D'Arcy is a 'creation' of *The Yellow Book*, one must say that she owes it a more filial gratitude. Her powers of observation scarcely compensate for a slipshod manner of presenting the results. Thus, it is Mrs. Catterson, late mistress, and now wife, who speaks: "And I don't approve of sweets anyway. It ruins the children's teeth. I wish Mr. West wouldn't bring them so often." This was sufficiently ungracious, and West's answer was sufficiently foolish. "Perhaps you wish I wouldn't bring myself so often either?" said he. "I've no doubt we could manage to get on just as well without you," she retorted, and *there were worlds of insult concentrated in the tone.* . . . It is always because of their affection for the husband, that the wife finds it so particularly easy, and perhaps so agreeable, to insult his friends. She offers them their choice between perpetual banishment and chunks of humble-pie. The generalisation here is almost as cheaply vulgar as the style. Miss D'Arcy can do much better work than this. Both she and Mr. Paul Neuman should remember that if they wish to give the right atmosphere of a commonplace interior, there is no necessity to employ a commonplace manner of narration. Mr. Neuman's 'The Uttermost Farthing' is either much too long or much too short. One inclines to the former judgment. For the rest, Mr. H. Gilbert's sketch, 'An Early Chapter,' which leads you nowhere in particular, seems to be rather actual; Miss Constance Cotterell's 'Love-Germ,' is a pretty feminine presentation of the old, old 'Professor's Love-Story,' with microbe

accessories; and Mr. Reginald Turner, by the sudden death of his singular prig on learning of the rejection of his *chef-d'œuvre*, justifies at one stroke the callousness of all Philistia's editors.

There are reviews of the poetry of John Barlas, and the romances of Gabriele d'Annunzio. In the one Mr. H. S. Salt is simply and sincerely concerned to illustrate the claims of a neglected writer, and to this end gives us much of the poet's work, and little of his own; in the second review Mr. Eugene Benson, writing of an author perhaps equally unfamiliar to the average English reader, is content to glorify his own learned appreciation, without submitting any proofs to our judgment. The only criticism that we have to pass on Mr. Salt's review is that among the many beautiful passages which he selects from the work of John Barlas there is scarcely anything to justify the statement that 'he is, if ever poet was, a Greek in spirit.'

The verse of this volume calls for little comment. Miss Alma Strettell, who translates from the French of Emile Verhaeren, must be aware that the adapter can claim no merit for ideas, but only for fidelity and technique. Of the fidelity of her reproduction we are not here in a position to judge; for her technique, though she is not without some sense of form, the rhythm of her anapaestic measure, a measure demanding the most perfect fluency, is harsh and uncertain. Take this line with its unfortunate accentuation:

Have you met him, the savage wind, do you remember?
or these, with the choking consonants:

Here comes the wind
That tareth himself and doth fiercely dismember;
With heavy breaths turbulent, smiting the towns,
The savage wind comes, the fierce wind of November!

'Breaths' and 'fierce' make the most impossible short syllables. From the 'White Statue' of Miss Olive Custance two verses may be cited for singularity, the one of sentiment, the other of rhyme. She is apostrophising the chilly marble:

I love you more than swallows love the south,
As sunflowers turn and turn
Towards the sun. I yearn
To press warm lips against your cold white mouth.

Surely there is an exquisite inappropriateness in these hot fancies. This is the other verse, the accents being our own addition:

I love you most at purple sunseting,
When night, with feverish eyes,
Comes up the fading skies . . .
I love you with a passion past forgetting!

Mr. Neuman, not contented with his tale, prefixes to it a 'ballad.' It is another ballad of a Nun, and suggests an inevitable comparison with her of the Davidson Sisterhood. He has caught too the knack of the Davidson quatrain; but the vigorous impropriety of the master-hand. Mr. Patten Wilson has made a delicate drawing of 'Rustem's War Horses,' but his 'Phantasy' loses the effect of the whole in an elaborate maze of detail where the near and the less near are indistinguishable. Mr. Francis Howard's portrait of Mr. G. S. Street is at best no better than a poor photograph; it does no sort of justice to the genial *hauteur* of that accomplished writer.

OLD AND NEW

The fascination of the theme rather than its appropriateness must have moved Mr. John Geddie to contribute a book on Scottish ballads to Messrs. Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier's 'Famous Scots' series of brief biographies. There is nothing biographical about Mr. Geddie's readable little sketch *The Balladists*. It is doubtful if the makers of the ballads that are now considered Scottish were all of them Scots. They can only be regarded as famous Scots by a considerable exercise of licence. What Mr. Geddie calls 'the matrix of the ballads that have taken the first place in the love and the memory of Scotland' was the country nearest to the English border and most remote from the Highlands. People blinded by 'Celtic glamour' miss the significance of this fact. They imagine a hard-set Border line, and detect nothing but Celtic influence on the northern side of it; whereas there is scarcely a trace of the Celt, but a strongly predominant Norman, and, through the

Norman, Scandinavian, in the Tweed and the Cheviot to note, that in some countries 'the English man from the Scottish version' nothing but a truism. subject for a series of biographies into the 'misty morning' flourished, finds himself 'graphical luggage.' The As Mr. Geddie says, in his song, he is a priest after father or mother, beginning the intimation of a respect as they now exist, reveal they are in their oldest comparatively modern times. regard to them, in the six that the literary 'restore a fine old ballad. From the bad work went on. perversion that Mallett's 'terrific old Scottish tale a ballad may be older 'I hero or deeds that it seen passed on orally through ever far derived from pa and to be understood in many a ballad should rightly insists, of genuine ballads accords well with a rough and approximate 'Mythological,' the 'the most definite and ch selections, Mr. Geddie. poetic elements of the s

Curiously enough, the the *Richard Cameron* of sonality that offers little people Cameron is now the historic title, 'The more generally remen Presbyterian sect and were named after him.

found the Lion of the could hardly get at hi more than a glimpse mater ds. However, I research in the Univer: Library, which have e fill up the gaps of w History tells us little of figure of Hackston th at Magus Muir, when less veiled and intan *Mortality*, appears mo to his followers, though of Cameron's preachin remarks, 'had eviden Carluke sermon—'wh' Kettle-dumple's serm Scott was, naturally, n Cameron's character.

sermon may be, does It impresses us with tl an abiding feeling c decreed, as it were, th mist. It is, as Mr. H his resistance to the C that we see him clea the schism-divided Indulged, but as the the undaunted enem many phases of his co theories of the extrer a clear glimpse of hin with Hackston at A to his countrymen.