in France before being transplanted to her Ayrshire home, so in that of "Bri-seis, a Greek maiden whom we discover in the wooded valley of the Dee, the contrast brings out more sharply and with fresh beauty and wonder the loveliness of the scenery and the peculiar characteristics of the life with which she is environed.

William Black was born in Glasgow in 1841. As a boy he wished to be an artist, and studied for some time in the Glasgow School of Art. Before he was twenty, he contributed to the Glasgow Weekly Citizen, and at the age of twenty-three he came to London, where he joined the staff of the Morning Star, and became special correspondent for that paper during the war of 1866. His first novel, Love or Marriage, was published in 1867. Next came In Silk Attire, Kilmens, and The Monarch of Mincing Lane. He made his reputation by A Daughter of Heith, published in 1874. Tom Cassilis, better known as the "Whaup," is his most famous character. The most important of his other works are The Strange Adventures of a Pharaoh, A Princess of Thule, Three Feathers, Madcap Violet, Green Pastures and Piccadilly, MacLeod of Darr, Yolande, White Heather, In Fair Lochaber, and The New Prince Fortunatus. In twenty years he has produced over twenty books. He was at one time assistant editor of the Daily News.

The latest Yellow Book, just issued by Messrs. Copeland and Day, lays more serious claim than any of its previous numbers, perhaps, to our studious attention. The influence of Mr. Henry James is especially remarkable, as, indeed, it always has been on the little group of contributors. Were it only for Miss Ella D'Arcy's powerful story, "The Web of Maya," this number would be interesting. "It is of such an exceedingly high order of merit as to confirm our claim to regard her among the masters of the short story. Mr. Le Gallienne and Mr. Crackenthorpe are both at their best, and "The Queen's Pleasure," by the editor, is as dainty, fascinating, and peculiar in its quality as is all his work. The "Yellow Dwarf" is generally supposed to be Mr. Harland himself. His outspoken criticism and literary preferences are rather amusing, but they run counter to the judgment of the great body of readers, which is, in the long run, trustworthy and a sure touchstone.

Reading Mr. Anthony Hope's Half a Hero in its new reprint (Harper and Brothers), which, by the way, perpetuates the typographical slips of the former edition, one is impressed again with the fact that it is in such an imperfect but powerful novel as this that Mr. Hope's real promise seems to lie. In this book he shows a knowledge of human nature and an interest in its wayward varieties without which no story-teller can hope to do work worthy of being called literature. But adventure stories were the fashion, and Mr. Hope took to writing them. He might have used his serious talents in this department, but he did not, and he does it less and less. The Prisoner of Zenda was written rather too much from the outside; it is a good story assuredly—lively, varied, original, but it is the story of a clever, adaptable writer who can turn his hand to any kind of work, and never do any of it badly. Mr. Hope is perhaps the most graceful writer of fiction we have at this moment, and he has sounder qualities than grace. But if he is going to do one thing excellently—perhaps two things, for his Dolly Dialogues is more than the work of a clever literary artist—it is not on the order of The Prisoner of Zenda, nor on that of The Chronicles of Count Antonie, but after the manner of Half a Hero. These seem ungrateful words to use of one who has entertained and delighted us so often, but none is probably so well aware of their truth as Mr. Hope himself, who, we incline to think, has greater things in view while diverting himself and us with stories which—we can take his word for it—have cost him little trouble in the writing.

Not many magazine managers are so obliging as those of the Idler, who print the following "notice" on the cover of their December number: "Objection having been taken in certain quarters to the cover of the Idler, a new design is in course of preparation." This is a dangerous precedent, and we shall not be surprised to learn that other maga-