

day a man without a reasonable musical education is not yet cultured; but there is another and far more weighty reason why we should not neglect this important part of our education. Music is worthy of being cultivated for itself, for it is able far better than language to convey thought, feeling or emotion. The inestimable value and the wonderful power of music is brought home to us when, after a term or two of hard, ceaseless study we are enabled to enjoy a musical treat in the way of a recital. How many of those who have had no musical training go away from such an entertainment without feeling a lingering desire to learn that more divine language, or without being inspired with higher and nobler sentiments? If more should consider music an essential factor in an education the world would be brighter and happier.

"SHE."

The somewhat sensational title of this recently published novel, will perhaps lead those who have not read the book to suppose that it belongs to the dime novel style of literature. And, indeed, when one has perused its contents, he may possibly be unshaken in his first supposition. The book is, and purports to be, a history of adventure, and we may safely say that never since we were weaned from the classic dime novel have we been treated to such a series of wild improbabilities and impossible occurrences as are here described. Perhaps for this very reason the novel has created a very wide-spread interest, and has probably given rise to a great deal more discussion than its merits as a work of literary art would warrant.

There are only three important characters in the book, but three more dissimilar types of humanity could scarcely be imagined. The plot of the story depends for its effect upon what ever strange and remarkable system of ethics formulated and followed by the Egyptians ever since they have existed as a people; we refer to that belief in a periodical resurrection to life upon the earth, when the soul and body of the deceased will reunite and live again, subject to the same conditions as before. "She," or Ayesha, is an African queen of marvellous beauty, gifted with such powers as to hold in subjection by the force of her will alone all with whom she comes in contact. It seems that somewhere in the heart of Africa there existed a subtle essence, or fire, capable of imparting immortality to those who would bathe in its flame. This essence Ayesha had discovered some two thousand years before the story opens. She had then become involved in a love quarrel (even a woman of her power was not free from this misfortune) and in a fit of jealous rage she had slain the man upon whom she had centered her affections. Being a firm believer in the ultimate reappearance of those who had died, she had awaited twenty centuries, in remorse and suffering, for the return of the man she had slain.

We now come to the other two characters of this remarkable tale. By a skillfully constructed scheme of genealogy, the author makes the murdered lover reappear upon earth in the person of one Leo Vincey, a young Cambridge student, into whose hands have fallen the mystic symbols proving his descent from his former self, if we may be allowed the expression, and in a spirit of adventure he resolves to unravel the mystery surrounding the hieroglyphics. He and his guardian (a man whose appearance is described in such a manner as

to lead one to think the author must have had in mind his conception of Darwin's missing link) set out to solve the mystery. They have no trouble in reaching their destination and here they meet Ayesha, who goes by the suggestive name of "She-who-must-be-obeyed." After this the story resolves itself into a fairy tale of the most pronounced type. After a series of thrilling experiences, not the least of which is their narrow escape from gratifying the cannibalistic appetites of the natives, they are conducted to the place of immortal life by "She" (who, by the way, has discovered in the person of Leo Vincey her long lost lover) and there the most blood-curdling climax of the story takes place. Wishing to endow her lover (for Leo has fallen a victim to her charms) with the spirit of undying life, she envelopes herself in the mystic flame in order to encourage him to a like attempt. The result is startling, to say the least. Instead of still further instilling into her the everlasting vitality, the flame has the opposite effect, and before their horrified eyes she shrivels and withers until at last there lies before them what more nearly resembles a hideous ape than a semblance of humanity—what, in fact, she would have become under ordinary conditions during so long a period of existence.

It will be seen that the whole interest of the story depends almost entirely upon the startling tableaux and climaxes scattered throughout the book. Yet the story is told so simply, so naturally, that the reader, although he knows that what he is reading is but the impossible product of a lively imagination, finds himself entering so thoroughly into the spirit of it as to make him come back with a start to the ideas of actual life.

To the manner of Ayesha's death, some reviewers have taken exception, claiming that such awful retribution, for her open defiance of the almighty power of God, of whose existence she knows nothing, is inconsistent with her conception of what she is. Believing herself to be all powerful, for a time at least, but yet knowing that some fate or power will ultimately gain the mastery over her, she vaunts her superiority (as she thinks) over the Christian principles explained to her by Holly. Consequently when she feels the horrible transformation taking place in her own person, she shrieks aloud in agony and despair for the loss of her reward, for two thousand years of waiting, snatched from her, as it is, at the very moment of possessing it, and at the moment of entering upon a long, an interminable period of happiness and love; enhanced also, by the dreadful length of years of lonely waiting which she has undergone.

Mr. Haggard, the author, has written a letter to the *Spectator* in which he explains his reasons for making Ayesha die the death she did. He tells us that "the legend was built upon the hypothesis that affection in itself is an immortal thing, and that therefore when Ayesha in the course of ages, grows hard, cynical and regardless of what stands between her and her ends, her love yet endured true and holy." Mr. Haggard goes on to say that in Ayesha may be found a type of the spirit of intellectual paganism, and the spirit which does not look higher than earth for its rewards. This is shown by the fact that at her death she still hopes for an earthly meeting with her lover.

We ourselves do not see how the author could have ended his book in any other way, if he wished to preserve the feeling of interest with which the book as a whole inspires one. Had he extended the plot farther and conveyed his characters into the confines of civilization (as he certainly would have done; for he could not have left them in the surroundings so little suited to their tastes) the spell upon the reader would have been broken at once. While amid such surroundings