courage and male ambition: the sort of man, in short, whose support makes it possible, and whose opposition makes it impossible, for women like Isabella to govern. And it ought not to be forgotten, though it is the tendency of the day to forget it, that it is to the credit of such men to yield to the influence of such women.

We are very grateful for one thing M. de Nervo gives us, which is not in Prescott, though we wish he also gave us his authority for it; and that is the complete text of the speech in which Isabella, when not yet sixteen years old, refused the crown of Castile, unlawfully tendered her by the Archbishop of Toledo in the name of the confederate forces united against Henry IV. Her full brother, the boy Alphonso, had allowed himself to be crowned after the deposition of Henry, and he had died suddenly. An attempt had been made to arrive at a pacification by marrying Isabella to the brother of the Marquis of Villena, who headed the revolutionary army; and Isabella, indignant at the slight proposed to her Royal blood, had invoked heaven to avert the *mésalliance*. And it had in fact been averted by the opportune death of the proposed bridegroom. And now, though solemnly assured by the Archbishop that "God had visibly destined her to save the honour of Castile," she based her refusal upon the simplest recognition of right and justice. This is her admirably modest and dignified reply:—

"I am very sensible to the marks of affection you have given me. I would wish some day to recompense them, but although your intentions be good, nevertheless the sudden and premature death of my brother, the Infante don Alfonso, is a sufficiently evident proof that Heaven approves not of the resolutions you have adopted. What else do they seek, those who run after novelties, who delight only in the revolutions of States, but to excite the passions, to sow discord, to kindle civil war and set everything in a flame? In order to prevent and to avert so many evils, would it not be much more advantageous to tolerate in the State some abuses which should have less serious consequences?" [that is to say, the disorders consequent upon the lawful King's licentious habits]. "The throne is too narrow to afford room for two Kings, and the royal authority cannot admit of division. A precocious fruit which ripens before its time does not keep long. Ambition and the desire of reigning make but little impression on my heart. I wish that the crown of Castile may not too soon descend on my head, that the life of the King my brother be prolonged, and that his reign may not end but with his life. Whatever the arguments you may urge, nothing will be capable of inducing me to assume the title of Queen before death should have closed the eyes of the King my brother. Restore to him the crown, and you will put a stop to the evils that have so long oppressed Castile. I shall consider your submission as the most signal service you could render me. It will be the most agreeable fruit I could taste, and the most sensible mark of your affection."

The account of the internal reorganisation of Castile, when Isabella and Ferdinand were finally established on their joint throne, makes an especially interesting chapter in the book. The conversion of the *Hermandad* or Holy Brotherhood, which had come into existence as an independent force working for justice in opposition to the Crown, into an integral and invaluable part of the Constitution of the State, is one of those masterly strokes of great administrative policy which now and again in the world's history vindicate the wisdom of the children of light against that of the children of this world. The merit of its conception belonged to Isabella, but Ferdinand and the Cortes co-operated actively in carrying it into operation. The Queen also showed herself wise and able in administering the details of justice:—

"Solemnly enthroned in the great hall of the Alcazar, the palace formerly of the Abderrahmans, she took her seat every Friday surrounded by her council, with all the pomp and parade of a court of justice. Her judgments were received as definitive and never gave rise to the slightest demur, so much were they impressed with goodness and equity."

That Isabella's genius in military matters was at least equal to her capacity in civil affairs is well known. Jousts and martial exercises had made a part of the wonderful education she received under the direction of her mother in the years when her brother was demoralising the kingdom. She took personal command of the army in the war with Granada, which resulted in the annihilation of the Mussulman power in Spain. She rode with her troops in the face of the enemy, wearing mail armour; she cared, with practical forethought worthy of our own humane century, for the sick and wounded; and, above all, she showed the great woman's sure intuition in regard to the character of the men she has to deal with, by the confidence she reposed in her chosen General, Gonzalvo of Cordova. The same intuition has covered her name with glory as the patroness of Columbus; and to her glory also was her insistence on nominating Ximenes to the archbishopric of Toledo in opposition to the King, her husband, who would have elected his own natural son to the See.

There is really nothing in all Isabella's actions more remarkable than the firm attitude she adopted at the very beginning of her reign, and maintained unto its end, in matters of ecclesiastical patronage and reform. The fact that it was in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella that the Inquisition was introduced into Castile as a method against heresy has left the one tarnishing blot upon Isabella's fame, suggesting an element of bigotry in the intention of her surname, "the Catholic." But Isabella, though a devout and scrupulous Christian and a loyal Catholic, was not a bigot. In the matter of the Inquisition, as M. de Nervo emphatically insists, she protested. But the prestige of the Papal Power and the spirit of the age were too strong for her, and she yielded to what she was told was a measure necessary to the glory of God and the salvation of souls. That is to say, in a day when the principle of religious toleration was not known, she did not discover it and assert it against the authority of the Church. But at every point where it was possible for her to urge counsels of mercy and justice in dealing with heretics, Mussulmans, and Jews, she urged those counsels, and often with success; while in matters where common-sense and the justice that rules in visible things could be her guide —that is to say, in the extremely important department of Church patronage—she fought and won the battle of National Independence and the Prerogative of the Crown, against the unjust pretensions of an aggressive Papacy. The story of her bold but perfectly constitutional resumption of her right as Sovereign Queen of Castile to nominate her own Bishops and Archbishops, subject only to ratification by the Pope, is even more remarkable than that of her military achievements. Bigotry is a term hardly to be applied to the woman who played that part. And it is a particular merit of M. de Nervo's volume that it shows us clearly how humane a wisdom guided the religious zeal of Isabella the Catholic.

RECENT NOVELS.*

ADVANCING years have not modified, but rather confirmed, Dr. George Macdonald's sense of the responsibilities attaching to the novelist's calling. The plot of *Salted with Fire* is painful, even repellent, but it is handled with a delicacy, a purity of motive, and a religious fervour unsurpassed by modern writers of fiction. The book, however, has one serious defect. James Blatherwick, the young Scottish minister with whose lapse and repentance it is concerned, is not a villain, but the author has contrived in the earlier chapters to bring home to the reader his ingrained selfishness, callousness, and lack of natural affection with such a multitude of convincing touches that his sudden conversion partakes of the nature of a miracle. A more odious specimen of the prig it would be impossible to conceive than is revealed in the picture of his relations with his parents, and, above all, in the scenes with the poor girl whose devotion he so cruelly abuses. On the very verge of the catastrophe which brings about his abasement, when he is already represented as tortured by the stings of conscience, he addresses his mother in a set speech which out-Pecksniffs Pecksniff. A reader must not be merely "gentle," he must be a monster of magnanimity, to acquiesce in the extremely easy terms on which this canting hypocrite is allowed to expiate his guilt. Again, in the character of the old "soutar," the good genius of the plot, there is a vein of superhuman and mystical saintliness that is at times rather oppressive. Far more interesting, more human, and more touching are the characters of the three chief female personages of the story,—the "soutar's" daughter Maggie, an impulsive, generous girl, the erring but unselfish Isobel, and Blatherwick's mother, in whom the sense of justice is momentarily eclipsed by the desire at all hazards to conceal the shame of her son.

Mr. Bram Stoker gives us the impression—we may be doing him an injustice—of having deliberately laid himself out in *Dracula* to eclipse all previous efforts in the domain of the horrible,—to "go one better" than Wilkie Collins

* (1.) *Salted with Fire*. By George Macdonald, LL.D. London: Hurst and Blackett.——(2.) *Dracula*. By Bram Stoker. London: Archibald Constable and Co.——(3.) *Elementary Jane*. By Richard Pryce. London: Hutchinson and Co.——(4.) *The Philanderers*. By A. E. W. Mason. London: Macmillan and Co.——(5.) *The Folly of Pen Harrington*. By Julian Sturgis. London: Archibald Constable and Co.——(6.) *Equality*. By Edward Bellamy. London: Heinemann.——(7.) *The Lady Grange*. By Alexander Innes Shand. London: Smith, Elder, and Co.

(whose method of narration he has closely followed), Sheridan Le Fanu, and all the other professors of the flesh-creeping school. Count Dracula, who gives his name to the book, is a Transylvanian noble who purchases an estate in England, and in connection with the transfer of the property Jonathan Harker, a young solicitor, visits him in his ancestral castle. Jonathan Harker has a terrible time of it, for the Count—who is a vampire of immense age, cunning, and experience—keeps him as a prisoner for several weeks, and when the poor young man escapes from the gruesome charnel-house of his host, he nearly dies of brain-fever in a hospital at Buda-Pesth. The scene then shifts to England, where the Count arrives by sea in the shape of a dog-fiend, after destroying the entire crew, and resumes operations in various uncanny manifestations, selecting as his chief victim Miss Lucy Westenra, the fiancée of the Honourable Arthur Holmwood, heir-presumptive to Lord Godalming. The story then resolves itself into the history of the battle between Lucy's protectors, including two rejected suitors—an American and a "mad" doctor—and a wonderfully clever specialist from Amsterdam, against her unearthly persecutor. The clue is furnished by Jonathan Harker, whose betrothed, Mina Murray, is a bosom friend of Lucy's, and the fight is long and protracted. Lucy succumbs, and, worse still, is temporarily converted into a vampire. How she is released from this unpleasant position and restored to a peaceful post-mortem existence, how Mina is next assailed by the Count, how he is driven from England, and finally exterminated by the efforts of the league—for all these, and a great many more thrilling details, we must refer our readers to the pages of Mr. Stoker's clever but cadaverous romance. Its strength lies in the invention of incident, for the sentimental element is decidedly mawkish. Mr. Stoker has shown considerable ability in the use that he has made of all the available traditions of vampirology, but we think his story would have been all the more effective if he had chosen an earlier period. The up-to-dateness of the book—the phonograph diaries, typewriters, and so on—hardly fits in with the mediæval methods which ultimately secure the victory for Count Dracula's foes.

It takes a somewhat keen vision to detect the possibilities of romance in the life of an average music-hall "artist," but Mr. Richard Pryce has succeeded in constructing a very pretty, and even touching, story out of unpromising materials. Whether there ever was a music-hall singer so guileless and gentle as Jenny Tandem—the scene in which the question of her stage-name is decided is excellent—need not be discussed. It is enough that in such surroundings so artless a girl would in all probability have behaved and fared very much as Mr. Pryce represents her as behaving and faring. That she should have preferred the overbearing courtship of the handsome acrobat to the unobtrusive devotion of the meritorious drum-player was inevitable. Elementary Jane, as we are told, had read much penny fiction, and besides, a warm heart is hardly a safe guide amid the dangers and temptations which beset the path of an inexperienced and attractive orphan girl, driven by force of circumstances to find her livelihood in the "halls." The book is eminently an honest book, for, in spite of a certain amount of necessary idealisation, no attempt is made to disguise the sordid realities—all, in fact, that makes against domesticity—in the atmosphere of middle-class Bohemia. At the same time, *Elementary Jane* is very far from being a novel with a purpose. The reader is left to draw his own moral from a tale which owes not a little of its effect to the animated style and whimsical humour of the author.

Mr. Mason has lost little time in giving proof of his versatility. *The Courtship of Morrice Buckler* was a spirited incursion into the domain of adventurous romance; in *The Philanderers* incident and adventure are exchanged for subtle analysis and character-drawing at times almost as "meticulous" as that of Mr. Henry James. The whole situation is described with great felicity by one of the characters in the comedy as "suggesting Watteau figures mincing a gavotte, and made more unreal by the juxtaposition of a man." For happily the *dramatis personæ* are not all of the philandering type. Stephen Drake, the "man" in question, who has suddenly come to the front as a pioneer in South Africa, had been impelled by a sense of inflexible justice to hang a man named Gorley, a member of one of his expeditions—an Englishman—for robbing and murdering natives; and by the irony of fate he subsequently falls in love with the very girl who had been for a time engaged to Gorley. All the other white men on the expedition have since died, but Gorley's relatives, knowing what manner of man he was, have acquiesced in the justice of his punishment. Moreover, Drake, when he finds his affections engaged, tells the girl the whole terrible truth. The fact that in these circumstances she should almost immediately succumb to his powerful personality may be taken as an index to the stability of her character. For Clarice Le Mesurier presents what one of her friends rightly calls a "deplorable combination,"—a child's capacity for emotion united with a woman's knowledge of its use. It should be added that she is at the same time not strictly truthful, that she invariably has two or three strings to her bow, and is as fascinating as she is fickle. Hence, repelled by Drake's absorption in his colonial schemes and his self-sufficing nature, she speedily gives him his *congé*, and marries an old admirer, Mallinson by name, a vain, clever, but venomous literary man, who on realising very soon after his marriage that his wife has repented of her decision and conceived an infatuation for the man whose suit she rejected, basely sells his knowledge of Drake's antecedents to a hostile journal. The Gorley story is blazoned abroad in a manner calculated to blast Drake's character; but he, solely preoccupied with the desire to save the woman from the consequences of her infatuation—for he now half realises her unworthiness—meets her proposal for an elopement with the false admission that the newspaper charges are true. Happily this tremendous self-sacrifice is rendered unnecessary by his discovery of Clarice's crowning act of falseness,—her immediate resolve to elope with another admirer. A great deal of thought and observation is compressed within the limits of the story, which only occupies two hundred and thirty-two pages; and although it does not exactly conduce to a high opinion of one's fellow-man or fellow-woman, the contrast between the straightforward, Quixotic man of action and the subtle, emotional philanderers is finely conceived and logically carried out. The dialogue is terse and natural, and in the case of the two characters who play the selfish part of amused onlookers of the tragi-comedy, animated by a delicately ironical humour.

The close resemblance in outline between Mr. Julian Sturgis's novel and that of Mr. Mason naturally suggests their being noticed in immediate juxtaposition. For in *The Folly of Pen Harrington* we again have for the hero a South African pioneer and explorer, a strong, simple, unsophisticated, yet magnetic personage, who is plunged into the artificialities of London society, and loses his heart to an extremely modern young woman. Peter Blake, however, is far luckier in his love than Stephen Drake, for Penelope Harrington, the idol and foundress of a select coterie of philandering fashionables, has a soul—though she takes some time to realise the fact—far above the futilities of her set, while her philanthropical exertions are prompted by a really sincere desire to befriend her sex. Still, she hardly deserves her ultimate good fortune after the astounding levity and recklessness with which she dismisses Peter and entrusts her happiness to an elderly but wealthy *roué*, of impeccable manners but dubious antecedents. She is soon awakened to his true character by the fortunate discovery that one of her humble *protégées* is his daughter by a woman whom he betrayed and deserted; and by a pretty piece of poetic justice it is this girl who brings back Peter, when on the eve of sailing for Africa, to find his divinity free and in her right mind. Pen's set is sketched with all Mr. Sturgis's habitual felicity of phrase and fantastic humour: in particular the stolid Duchess of Buckland, with her bovine imperturbability, and a pair of amateur entertainers—husband and wife—who devote their entire energies to angling for invitations to the "right houses," are hit off with admirable art. Still we could wish that Mr. Sturgis had infused a little more earnestness into his satire of the essentially contemptible excrescences upon "smart" society. For demolishing decadents, parasites, and grubbers in the gold-dust bin, somewhat heavier metal is needed than Mr. Sturgis has at his command.

Personally, we own to having found Mr. Bellamy's *Looking Backward* an extremely depressing performance. *Equality*, the sequel and expansion of that attempt to forecast the Socialistic Millennium, is not only depressing but well-nigh unreadable. The narrative form is kept up, and there is a