

at (No. 15) *The Landscape*, by J. S. Colman; (No. 21) *On Thames Bank*; *The Rainbow*, by David Cox; and *The Landscape*, by Constable (No. 13); all good and typical works. Turner is also represented in No. 19, but very imperfectly, it must be admitted.

Before we turn to the older painters let us look at the works of Stothard. Our great critic has told us that "The works of our own Stothard are examples of a mind, singular in its gentleness and purity; dealing with mere worldly subjects, it seems as if Stothard could not conceive wickedness, coarseness, or baseness; every one of his figures look as if it had been copied from some creature who never harboured an unkind thought, or permitted itself an ignoble action." Mr. Ruskin is amply justified by these collected works of Stothard; all delicate, careful and graceful, but displaying an utter incapacity to express facts beyond his own sphere of soft delicacy and graceful mirth.

We will conclude this notice of the more modern work by reference to the room devoted to the vigorous work of John Pettie, R.A. His chief feature are the rugged strength with which he treats melo-dramatic subjects—the scene usually being laid in the 17th century. Perhaps the most noteworthy is *The Highland out-post* (No. 206), a full length figure of a Highlander, with a drawn sword, kneeling with one knee on the rocks overlooking a lake. Pettie's works are always characteristic and by seeing them collected together, one realizes how great a painter he was.

A Book of the Week.

"THE DELECTABLE DUCHY."*

THIS appears to be the age of short stories. Many people lead such busy lives that they have not time to wade through a three-volumes novel; they prefer their stories "*en bonbon*." Now, it is far more difficult to write good short stories than a long novel—as any writer who has tried his 'prentice hand will acknowledge—but reviewers find, by experience, that the demand creates the supply; and they also discover by painful experience the difficulties of reviewing, satisfactorily, a volume of short tales, as by the time the last is conscientiously read, it is often exceedingly difficult to remember what the first of the series was about at all. Yet, in carefully choosing books worthy of being dignified by the title of "A Book of the Week," it has been impossible to avoid selecting several volumes of short stories, such as "The Real Thing," "Key-Notes," and "The Delectable Duchy," as being, without doubt, among the most interesting of recent publications, and for Nurses who have but short and interrupted opportunities of reading, the short story should prove a special boon. The author says in a sentence what it would have taken a literary ancestor several pages to express; thus the modern short story acquires a kind of "compressed beef style," built up of aphoristic sayings and snap-shot descriptions; and all redundant padding removed, the tale is potted and pressed down till it is contained in a neat and portable form, to be taken like a literary capsule or tablet.

"The Delectable Duchy" is the Duchy of Cornwall,

* The Delectable Duchy. Stones, Studies, and Sketches, by Q., Cassell & Co.

and all the stories in the volume before us are about Cornish men and women. They are very unequal—some of them rising to high literary merit; but others are vague and unsatisfactory, ending in a sort of literary kick-up, which by no means hides the poverty of the tale behind. To illustrate what we mean by a "futile kick-up," we will ask any one to read the story called "The Family Bible," which we think is one of the poorest in the book; it is colourless and leaves little impression on the mind, yet this is how it ends:—

"Marry me, Bab, or send me back; I give you leave to do either, and advise you to send me back. Twelve years ago you might have been proud of me, and so I might have helped you. As it is, I have travelled far, I am tired, and can never help you now. . . . And though he married her she never did."

Now such an ending has a kind of effectiveness, but it is not Art, and it is most certainly not worthy of "Q."

The first story in the volume, called "The Spinster's Maying," is of a very different calibre; it is short, but it is, we venture to think, an example of all that a short story ought to be; it has that touch of rare humour that enhances pathos, and it is impossible to turn over the few pages in which it is contained, without a smile for the gentle and prim old spinster and her ringlets, and a sigh for the sorrow that still lingers in her tender old heart. The whole story leaves an ineradicable impression on the mind. The third tale, called "When the Sap rose," is full of the scent of pine woods, the song of birds, and the joys of spring.

"High up, the pines sighed along the ridge, and far down, where the brook ran, a mad duet was going on between thrush and chaffinch—'Cheer up, cheer up, Queen!' 'Clip clip, clip and kiss me—Sweet'—one against another.... The oak sapplings rubbed their old leaves one on another, as folks rub their hands feeling life and warmth; the chestnut buds groped like an infant's fingers, and the chorus broke out again, the thrush leading—'Tiurru, tiurru, chippewee; tio-tee, tio-tee; queen, queen-qu-eeen!'"

Read this passage aloud, and see if it does not contain the very sound of Spring.

"The Paupers" and "The Drawn Blind" are sad little tales. "Love of Naomi" is Mr. Q.'s version of "Enoch Arden"—we prefer Tennyson—though the courtship of the supposed widow over her wash-tubs is most 'delectable' reading. "St. Piran" is laboured and lacks spontaneousness; but "The Woon Gate" and "Mr. Punch's Under-study" are vivid, and these and "The Spinster's Maying" may rank among the strongest and best work that Mr. Quiller Couch, under the pseudonym of "Q," has given us, and are worthy to be placed beside his novel "Troy-Town" and his shorter story of "The Mad Mayor of Gantick," which those who have read them will mostly acknowledge is very high praise indeed.

Letters to the Editor.

PROPOSED NEW ORDER OF MIDWIFERY PRACTITIONERS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—The action of those medical practitioners who now grant midwifery diplomas to women, and which empowers the holders to practise midwifery, has stimulated others to examine, and grant a diploma in medicine. No doubt there will soon be a third body which will examine and grant a diploma in surgery, so that all the bone-

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