

little flower of our garden displays, it is impossible not to believe that our fate would be very different from what it is now."

I do not pretend to translate well; it's not my business; but no translation, however current and inadequate, can possibly disguise the fact that this is a memorable page; and Mr. Maeterlinck's first essay contains a dozen pages as good as the one I have here Englished. I would rather have written this one little essay than all that Mr. Wells has written in his twenty volumes.

The difference, of course, is that Maurice Maeterlinck takes himself seriously, gives us seriously of the best in

him, and nothing else; as a self-conscious, critical artist he will not be seduced into book-making or book-writing; he spends years of study before producing a single volume; but when the volume comes, forty or fifty pages in the three hundred are worth reading, worth remembering—"the wine that's meant for souls." Mr. Wells, on the other hand, seduced by the noisy popular success of his pseudo-scientific tales, has gone on to preach without ceasing. He plays prophet at large, and produces a couple of books every year, meaningless volumes without savour or perfume—volumes evidently meant to sell, and nothing more.

## ON A BURMESE RIVER.

FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF ALEISTER CROWLEY.

THE Maharaja (Sri Swami Swayan Prakashan Raithila) said that the expedition would succeed "after some trouble." The trouble turned up all right, I wish I could say as much for the success. In the evening I went to a nautch, and am compelled to concur in the usual European opinion as to dullness and lack of music; but for all that there is a certain fascination. One feels that one could dream away many years listening to the cacophonous instruments and the tuneless voices of the dancers, and in watching the dull and decent movements of her shapeless and overclothed body and limbs. The next day I was entirely lazy and went off to Agra on the 12th.

On the 13th I went over Agra fort, which was very beautiful in places, but on the whole vulgar and depressing. There is too much of the thing altogether; and although it is well worth one visit, I cannot imagine anyone paying two. The next day was devoted to the Taj Mahal. The first impression is one of extraordinary beauty, though perhaps not of any great fascination. There is no human quality in the building. Very soon indeed, one becomes aware that it is inhabited by loathsome and disgusting larvae. The feeling of deep disgust pervades one, so that whatever beauty there may be in the building (about which I am not at all sure) is entirely discounted.

The central hall, however, containing the sarcophagus, is less objectionable. In the evening I went again to see a nautch, and this time I must confess that the sensation was most unpleasant. Perhaps I was in a different mood. The dancer was certainly far less talented than the one in Benares; but it may be that the novelty of a first visit masks one's critical faculties and prevents the entire badness of the whole thing from appearing. The next day, Munshi Elahi Baksh, the astrologer and geomancer, called on me. His geomantic method was interesting. He obtained the "Mothers" not by points drawn in the sand or on paper, but by throwing little brass dice, four on a string, each side of which had one of the four possibilities of arranging points,

from two to four in number in two lines, one combination on each face. He had two such strings and by putting them together, one obtained four figures, every possible variety being thus represented. He then proceeded in the ordinary way known to Westerns, though he gave



THE ROSE IN THE WILDERNESS.

different names to the figures, and attributed different qualities, though usually rather sympathetic; Puer, for example, he attributed to Saturn.

Above I have spoken of the dice as brass, and that is what they looked like; but he told me they were composed of "electrum magicum" as described by Paracelsus, prepared correctly by mixing the seven metals during the conjunction of their corresponding planets.

The same night I went on to Delhi, where I arrived the following morning, and immediately sat down to literary work, as I wished to finish up everything I could before joining the party, being afraid that afterwards there would be very little time. On the 19th I gave myself a little holiday and went to see the fort. With me was "Major Graham, D.S.O." who had just conducted a convoy of Boer prisoners to Ambala. I put him down as a prize fool; but I was wrong, as I heard afterwards that he had managed to let in the Hotel and the Bank for quite a lot of money. However, his manner was very fine and noble.

The Audience Hall in the fort is a very delightful and restful place. Unfortunately two or three of the rooms have been whitewashed by the prudish stupidity of the inevitable Briton, it being considered that some of the pictures were calculated to make the young person blush. I pass over the appalling depth of immorality which such prudery invariably implies; but what are we to say when we hear that a perfectly innocent room was also whitewashed "in order to secure artistic uniformity"? Surely stupidity could not go any further. I spent the 20th March in writing an essay on cosmic problems from a mathematical standpoint.

(To be continued.)



THE HOME OF THE DRYAD.