

THE LOST VALLEY. By ALGERNON BLACKWOOD. Nash. 6s.

It is the penalty of factitious success that the need of fuel increases like the dose of a drug-fiend. Instead of clothing his with silk from the loom of life and embroidering it with gold thread drawn from the observation of things around him, the slave of popularity wears it threadbare. Morphia won't replace bread after the first month or so!

Now we see Mr. Blackwood and Nemesis. He gets a reputation by marketing his tiny scrap of knowledge of the inner World; the public cries out for more, and the poor wage-slave, bankrupt in invention, does his best to fake—and fails.

It is the male equivalent of the harlot who has drifted from Piccadilly to Waterloo Bridge Road.

So here we see him, the shy smile changed to the open coarse appeal, the tawdry apparatus of his craft seen for what it is—rabbit-skin ermine!— and himself unmistakably the fifth-rate writer, like Baudelaire's "Old Mountebank"—surely no more pitiful—tumbling for no kindlier laugh than that of contempt. (And he might have been so fine!)

This is why success must in the nature of things spoil everybody. Make a hit with one arrow; you must never dare to do more than change the colour of the feathers—till your quiver is empty.

And how empty is Mr. Blackwood's! When it comes to a father hating his twin sons because (why?) he wanted one son very badly, going mad, and after his death turning the two into one in spite of a clergyman's reading aloud of Job—

Well, hang it, Mr. Blackwood, the woman has the best of it yet. It is a very foolish girl who cannot hold her own for ten years. But you who have been writing hardly half the time are only fit for the Literary Lock Hospital.

JONATHAN HUTCHINSON, *Natu Minimus*.