

Bookland.

RENAN has published a short edition (125 numbered copies) of a book entitled *Ma Sœur Henriette*, in which he testifies to the devotion and assistance of that sister, who in a great measure was the means of his literary success. Owing to the death of his father, which took place when Ernest was but five years old, the brother and sister were thrown upon the charity of relatives.

"One day, observing something of embarrassment in my movements, she saw that I was timidly endeavouring to conceal the defects of a worn-out garment. She shed tears. The sight of that poor child doomed to misery—this and other instinctive feelings went to her heart. She resolved to accept the battle of life, and voluntarily undertook the task of filling up, alone and unassisted, the abyss which our father's ill-fortune had hollowed out to confront us."

She studied hard to pass examinations, in order to equip herself for the position of governess, and by dint of great economy was able to pay her father's debts and to assist her struggling young brother.

"I was then fifteen and a half. My sister, whose belief in Catholicism was beginning to be shaken already, saw with some regret the wholly clerical tendency of my education. But she knew the respect due to the creed of a child. Not a word did she ever say to me in order to divert me from a course which I was following with perfect spontaneity. She came to see me every week, still wearing the green woollen shawl which in Brittany had sheltered her proud poverty. She was the same loving girl as before, but with a degree of firmness and sense which had been added to her by the trials of life and hard study.

She had got in advance of me on the same road. Her belief in Catholicism had disappeared completely, but it was a subject on which she had always avoided exerting any influence over me. When I confided to her the doubts which tormented me and which made it a duty for me to abandon a career in which absolute belief is required, she was delighted, and offered to facilitate a transition difficult for me. Twelve hundred francs which she remitted to me were to allow me to wait and to supply whatever was at first insufficient in such a position (as that of tutor without salary). These 1,200 francs were the cornerstone of my life. I never spent them, but they gave me the tranquillity of mind necessary if I was to think at my ease, and they saved me from burdening myself with drudgery, which would have been stifling for me. Her exquisite letters were at that decisive moment of my life my consolation and my support.

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Then began for us those delectable years the remembrance of which wrings tears from me. We took a little domicile at the foot of a garden near the Val-de-Grâce. Our solitude there was perfect. She had no relations with the outer world, and scarcely sought to form any.

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Her respect for my work was extreme. I have seen her in the evening by my side for hours, scarcely breathing lest she should interrupt me. Nevertheless she wished to see me, and the door which separated our two rooms was always open. Her love had reached such a degree of discreetness and maturity that the secret communion of our thoughts sufficed her. She with her exacting heart and her jealousy was content with some minutes of me daily, provided that she felt assured of alone being loved.

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Thanks to her rigid economy with singularly limited resources, she made for me a home in which nothing was ever wanting, and which had even an austere charm of its own. Our thoughts were so perfectly in unison that we scarcely needed to communicate them to each other. Our general views of the world and God were identical. In the theories which I was maturing at that epoch there was no

shade of thought so delicate that she did not seize it. On many points of modern history which she had studied at the sources she was in advance of me. The general plan of my career, the intention which I had formed to be inflexibly sincere was so completely the combined product of our two consciences, that if I had been tempted to fall short in any degree, she would have been there by my side like another part of myself, to recall me to my duty.

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O heart, in which so sweet a flame of love was unceasingly watchful; brain, seat of thought so pure; charming eyes which radiated goodness; long and delicate hand which I have pressed so often; I shudder with horror when I think that you are dust. But all here below is mere symbol and image. The truly eternal portion of each of us is the relation which it has held to the infinite. It is in being remembered by God that man is immortal. It is there that our Henriette, for ever radiant, for ever incapable of sin, lives a thousand times more really than when she struggled to create with her frail organs her spiritual personality, and thrown into the midst of the world which could not understand her, she persistently sought for the Perfect.

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Let her memory remain to us as a precious argument for the eternal verities which every virtuous life helps to demonstrate. As for me, I have never doubted the reality of the moral order, but I see now with perfect clearness that the whole logic of the system of the universe would be overthrown if such lives as hers were only deception and illusion."

WHAT TO READ.

Public Men of To-Day, edited by S. H. Jeyes: "Li Hungchang," by Professor R. K. Douglas. (Bliss, Sands & Foster.)

"The Chitral Expedition," reprinted from the *Pioneer*.

"Lyre and Lancet," a story in Scenes, by F. Anstey. (Smith, Elder.)

"Sir Henry Irving": A Record of over twenty years at the Lyceum, by Percy Fitzgerald. (Chatto & Windus.)

"Birds of Passage": Songs of the Orient and Occident, by Mathilde Blind, author of "The Ascent of Man," &c. (Swan Sonnenschein & Co.)

"An Imaginative Man," by Robert S. Hichens. (Heinemann.)

"George Eliot," by Mathilde Blind. (London: W. H. Allen.)

Although Mr. George du Maurier's next story will not be in his publishers' hands until December, 1896, Mr. J. Henry Harper has been enabled to satisfy the public curiosity with some hints of its character. "It will deal," says Mr. du Maurier's interviewer, "in its opening chapters with French school life, and then with English life, both fashionable and rowdy; then the artistic world of Antwerp, and Dusseldorf is exploited, while the closing stages occur in England. There will be love in the tale, of course, and Du Maurier also brings in the supernatural again. There will be plenty of liveliness, and some tragedy." Unfortunately, there is a doubt whether Mr. du Maurier's health will allow him to illustrate his work. The book, which will be longer than "Trilby," will run as a serial through twelve numbers of *Harper*.

The autobiography of Madame Navarro, née Mary Anderson, which the popular actress finished writing some time ago, is now in the press, and will be published in due course. Madame Navarro's public career was not a very long one, but it was exceedingly brilliant, and she has probably much to say that is interesting.

Mr. Richard Le Gallienne has written four prose fancies for the new number of the *Yellow Book*, which will be ready in a few days. He entitles them "On Loving One's Enemies," "The Dramatic Art of Life," "The Arbitrary Classification of Sex," and "The Fallacy of a Nation."

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