

A Book of the Week.

IN FULL CRY.*

RICHARD MARSH is a writer with a strong vein of originality in his fiction. He is, of course, a sensational writer. "The Beetle" was one of the most weird productions of late years, but there is something in his imagination which prevents him from sating with horror, and which enables him always to introduce, even to the modern and jaded novel reader, the invaluable element of surprise.

I chanced to read, within the same week, this new book of his, and another murder story, by B. L. Farjeon, which I am told is in great demand just now, and which is called "Samuel Boyd, of Catchpole Square." I was much struck with the great distinction between the two. Mr. Farjeon's is a well worked-out idea, but it never for a moment rises beyond the level of the ordinary; the people are the stock characters of such romance, the virtuous injured, and the malign schemer—the stony-hearted usurer, his ground-down clerk, the plausible villain, the clever detective. But Mr. Marsh gives us none of these people. Pollie Hills, with her elementary knowledge of morals, her intimate knowledge of the usual proceedings of "coppers," her quickness to jump at conclusions, right or wrong, her capacity for sacrifice, not for a principle, but only for a person, her intuitions, her pluck, her stubbornness, her inability to see anybody else's side of the question. Pollie is a creation.

So is the Gentleman; though with regard to him, Mr. Marsh certainly misleads us a little at first, intentionally no doubt, making it seem as though he had treated Polly in a way that would have been most unlike our after knowledge of him. That, in his despair and starvation, in his new anxiety as to whether he would not be in a few hours arrested for murder, he should have severed his connection with the girl whom he so really loved as not to be able to bear to see her starve, this is all likely enough; but it is not explained, or even alluded to; and Pollie, who understood him so well, would have probably divined his feeling in this matter also, and waited for him to return to her, instead of rushing with frenzy to his betrayal.

But, putting this one fault on one side, the book is very clever.

The chase of the police over the snowy roofs, the hiding of the Gentleman in the chest, Pollie's assumption of male attire, and more than all, the ghastly awakening of the Gentleman and his companion in the chest, is of the most acute order of excitement. Another bit of wonderful description is the return of the Gentleman to his old home. His choosing to come unexpectedly, his walking through the not perfectly remembered park, his losing his way in the dense darkness, and his feeling of haunting, the visions that he sees, are intensely real, as told by Mr. Marsh.

The end, too, is possibly the only fitting one that could have been devised; though one would not think that Pollie's evidence, even when backed by the evidence of the revolver, would have been enough to hang Robert Foster.

But, taken all in all, this story is a really clever one all through, carrying the reader along by its curious charm of distinctiveness.

G. M. R

* By Richard Marsh, Author of "The Beetle." F. V. White.

The New Woman.

Pausing on the century's threshold
With her face towards the-dawn,
Stands a tall and radiant presence,
In her eyes the light of morn,
On her brow the flush of knowledge,
Won in spite of curse and ban,
In her heart the mystic watchword
Of the brotherhood of Man.
She is listening to the heart-beats
Of the people in its pain;
She is pondering social problems
Which appeal to heart and brain.
She is daring for the first time
Both to think—and then to act.
She is flouting social fictions,
Changing social lie—for FACT.
Centuries she followed blindfold
Where her lord and master led;
Lived his life, embraced his morals;
Trode but where he bade her tread:
Till one day the light broke round her,
And she saw with horror's gaze,
All the filth and mire of passion
Choking up the world's highways.
Saw the infants doomed to suffering,
Saw the maidens slaves to lust,
Saw the starving mothers barter
Souls and bodies for a crust;
Saw the workers crushed by sweaters,
Heard the cry go up "How long?"
Saw the weak and feeble sink—neath
Competition's cursèd wrong.
For a moment paused she shuddering;—
Her's in part the guilt, the blame,—
Untrue to herself and others,
Careless of her sister's shame. . . .
Then she rose—with inward vision,
Nerving all her powers for good;
Feeling one with suffering sisters
In perfected womanhood.
Rising ever 'bove the struggle
For this mortal fleeting life;
Listening to the God *within her*
Urging love—forbidding strife.
Love and care for life of others
Who with her *must* fall or rise.
This the lesson through the ages
Taught to her by Nature wise.
She has pondered o'er the teaching,
She has made its truths her own;
Grasped them in their fullest meaning,
As "New Woman" is she known.
'Tis her enemies have baptised her,
But she gladly claims the name;
Hers it is to make a glory,
What was meant should be a shame.
Thinking high thoughts, living simply,
Dignified by labour done;
Changing the old years of thralldom
For new freedom—hardly won;
Clear-eyed, selfless, saved through knowledge,
With her ideals fixed above,
We may greet in the "New Woman"
The old perfect law of Love.

From *Singings through the Dark*,

By DORA B. MONTEFIORE.

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