

## A Book of the Week.

## Poems.

## THE WHITE DOVE.\*

There is, in the opinion of the *Daily Mail*, a grand opening just now for the production of a "breezy, optimistic novel," and there is no doubt that in these times of low spirits, so largely prevalent owing to the combined influences of the war, influenza, and other depressing factors, a book of this nature would just now be specially welcome. It is therefore peculiarly unfortunate that the publishers have the most meagre list of announcements of new fiction that have appeared for years. They offer us works on scouting, on smokeless powder, on conscription, on the internal economy of South African Republics, and the enormities of greedy capitalists. But one cannot continue for more than a limited period to gorge the brain with facts and statistics; the starved imagination does crave some relief from the sometimes unbearable pressure of the actual, and we nurses know the untold refreshment of a breath of romance after long wrestling with suffering.

The *White Dove*, it must be owned, is neither conspicuously breezy nor in the least optimistic; but it has, for all that, points of great merit. The writer has, unfortunately, like many of his contemporaries, borrowed from Ibsen just that one characteristic of his which is least a subject for admiration. Much as a certain school of painting has seized upon all that is worst in the work of Mr. Whistler.

It does seem hard upon a hero who, if narrow, is nevertheless a thoroughly good fellow, to bestow upon him an unchaste wife and an unchaste mother, each of whom he worships with an adoring belief in their superiority to all other womankind.

It is this man, Sylvester Lanyon, upon whom descends, at last, the "White Dove of the Pity Divine."

He is a widower when the story opens, cherishing the memory of his young dead wife, but likewise falling in love with the charming Ella Defries. But a chain of circumstances brings him acquainted with the fact of his wife's dishonour: and his love for Ella shrivels and recoils.

It is not quite obvious to the ordinary person why this should be. His loyal devotion to his wife's memory was the one thing that held him back from telling Ella he loved her. It seems probable that the discovery of his idol's unworthiness would leave him more free to love again, since a sensible man nowadays scarcely assumes all women to be alike. But that the subsequent discovery that not only his wife, but his own mother, "went wrong," should at once bring him back to love and believe in Ella, is another example of the mysterious mental convolutions of the school of Heredity Novelists.

Nevertheless, the story is distinctly pleasing. Ella is delightful throughout. The account of her gradual succumbing to the specious attractions of Roderick Usher is admirable. By the way, in deference to Edgar Allan Poe's masterpiece of horror, could not the author have invented a new name for this young man? It is almost as gross a plagiarism as if he had called his heroine Hester Prynne!

Sylvester's father is charming. We hope Mr. Locke will soon write again, and realise that he is quite strong enough not to need the morbid element in the cup he mixes for us.

G. M. R.

\* By William J. Locke. John Lane.

## THE LIGHTHOUSE—BIARRITZ.

No home of pleasure or dear household days,  
But a bleak tower, whose single beauty lies  
In a bright flame piercing the murky skies  
And lighting far off seamen on their ways.  
Skaken by rain or storm that madly plays  
About the rough-hewn stones; where breakers  
rise

And toss their foaming crests, as horse that hies  
To the far goal, or shaggy hound that bays  
At castle gate, and would an entrance win.  
There are a few such brave beleagured souls  
Who wear a beacon light, and hear the din  
Of a great strife below, and the winds oft  
Would ruthless beat them down, but the wave  
rolls

And breaks, leaving their steadfast flame aloft.

BY BEATRICE L. TOLLEMACHE.

## THE METEOR.

Did'st thou not see that meteor shoot across  
The star-bespangled, lofty vault of heaven?  
Right brilliant for a moment 'twas, and then  
A blacker darkness quickly followed it.  
So have I seen a young and cherished life  
Diffuse a brilliant gleam of happiness  
On all the inmates of a loving home,  
Then pass away, and leave a sudden gloom;  
And though that home might brighten up again,  
It ne'er might shine so brightly as before.

## WHAT TO READ.

- "Poetical Works of Robert Bridges." Vol. II.
- "Betwixt Two Seas. Poems and Ballads (written at Constantinople and Therapia)." By Violet Fane.
- "The Transvaal Question." By Professor Edouard Naville.
- "Napoleon's Mother." By Clara Tschudi. Authorised Translation from the Norwegian by E. M. Cope.
- "Marie Antoinette and the Diamond Necklace from Another Point of View." By F. de Albini.
- "An Octave." By W. E. Norris.
- "A Daughter of the Marionis." By E. Phillips Oppenheim.
- "The Waters of Edera." By Ouida.

## Coming Events.

*February 19th.*—The Bishop of Newcastle presides at the Annual Meeting of the Hostel of St. Luke at the Church House, 3.30.

*February 21st.*—Annual General Court of Governors, Charing Cross Hospital. Mr. H. Beerbohm Tree will preside. 2 p.m.

*February 22nd.*—Grand Concert in aid of Officers' Wives, Widows, and Orphans, at Covent Garden Theatre, at which Madame Patti will sing. Sheriff Bevan presides at the Festival Dinner of the Metropolitan Hospital, Whitehall Rooms.

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