

## A Book of the Week.

## THE LOVE OF PARSON LORD.\*

This dainty collection of stories is like a whiff of pot-pourri, or the fragrance of an old drawer that has long been unopened. The first is a charming and quaint tale, the setting in the New England of a century ago, which Miss Wilkins knows so well and describes so lovingly.

Old Parson Lord has one daughter. He is a religious enthusiast of the old severe type; believing greatly in the pitiless exactions of a just and awful God, who demands the crushing of every natural impulse.

His elder daughter died at the age of seven, having manifested striking traits of early piety. Her father had dedicated her to the work of the mission field, to which his heart and all his wealth are given. Little Love, the orphan, is brought up to understand that she is to follow in the steps of her sainted sister. In very early childhood she has a doll given her, and the stern old Puritan aunt who brings her up confiscates it remorselessly. The description of the child's agony of bereavement is infinitely pathetic. Years after, when the old aunt is dead, she finds the doll hidden in an attic; and this time it is her father whom she beseeches to allow her to keep it. But he, inexorable in his consistency, refuses to countenance what before had been forbidden.

A few days after, Love finds a most exquisite new doll, a mysterious gift from an unknown benefactor—she concludes it is from the Squire's wife, who is kind to her, and again proffers her imploring request to be allowed to keep it. This time the permission is given. From that day on mysterious gifts continue to arrive for Love, and are all ascribed to the kindness of the same donor, until the situation is still further complicated by the appearance on the scene of Mr. Richard Pierce. There is a deadlock; for the parson has vowed his little girl to the mission field, and cannot go back from his given word. How the Squire gets round the difficulty shall be left to the reader to discover.

But the stratagem is helped by the hand of the yearning father himself, though this does not transpire till after his death. Then his diary reveals the tender heart at war with the stern religion, and tells how it was he who by stealth presented his little daughter with the dainty clothes his principles forbade him to give openly, and his delight when the young lover defeats the vow he made and could not break.

All the other stories are good, the most ingenious perhaps being that called "Catharine Carr," in which a plucky girl saves her lover from the English soldiery by a device which is so ingenious that it shall not here be disclosed. This story has some of the element of fun which is one of Miss Wilkins' most delightful gifts, and which appeared so noticeably in "The Jamesons."

Very sweet too is "The Tree of Knowledge," which is really a variant on the theme of "Editha's Burglar."

But here it is not a child but a fair young maiden, who, taking the midnight intruder for her unknown lover, causes him to become in earnest that for which she takes him in her innocent ignorance. There is real tragedy in the young man's piteous appeal to her elder sister not to deceive her. With the picture of these New England damsels,—dainty, pure, rigid, austere,

\* By Mary E. Wilkins. Harpers.

faithful, shrinking, reticent,—it is most interesting to compare the picture of the modern American girl, given us by Kipling in his book "From Sea to Sea." The only trait that the modern girl has in common with her shadowy and dignified great-grand mothers, seems to be her irresistible loveliness.

G. M. R.

## Poem.

## ELUSION.

What would you do if I should give you roses  
Who gave you only lilies yesterday?  
If I should leave my idle pretty play  
Among my shaded sheltered lily-closes,  
And give you roses?

If in an hour I changed from girl to woman  
And gave you back your kisses, each for each—  
And chose, instead of music, passionate speech?  
Nay, but I will not; seeing Love's but human,  
Unveil the woman.

I'll keep my mystery and keep my lover;  
You who have hung with praise and dream my name,  
Being mere man, would find your praise half blame,  
If in my soul full measure, running over,  
You saw my love for you—not flowers but flame.

"Songs of the Morning,"

By NORA HOPPER.

## WHAT TO READ.

- "Life of Wellington." By Sir Herbert Maxwell.  
"The Life of John Nicholson, Soldier and Administrator." Based on private and hitherto unpublished documents. By Captain L. J. Trotter.  
"The Romany Rye." A new edition illustrated. By George Borrow.  
Memoirs of the Baroness Cecile de Courtot, Lady-in-Waiting to the Princess de Lamballe, Princess of Savoy-Carignan. Compiled from the Letters of the Princess to Frau von Alvensleben, née Baroness Loë, and the Diary of the Latter." By Moritz Von Kaisenberg. Translated from the German by Jessie Haynes.  
"The Farringdons." By Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler.  
"The Valley of the Great Shadow." By Annie E. Holdsworth (Mrs. Lee-Hamilton).  
"Midst the Wild Carpathians." By Maurus Jokai.  
"By Order of the Company." By Miss Mary Johnston.

## Coming Events.

April 27th.—The Lees and Raper Memorial Lectures. The second lecture will be delivered by Professor Victor Horsley, M.B., F.R.S., in St. James' Hall, Piccadilly, W. Subject: "The Effect of Alcohol on the Human Brain." Chair to be taken at 8 p.m. by Augustine Birrell, Esq., Q.C., M.P. Admission by tickets only, applications for which can now be registered. Tickets for numbered reserved seats will also be issued at one shilling each. John Kempster, Hon. Secretary to the Trustees, Broad Sanctuary Chambers, 20, Tothill Street, Westminster, S.W.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)