

A Woman's Hotel Company has been incorporated in New York with the object of providing bachelor women with more comfortable quarters than are to be found in the ordinary boarding house. It is proposed to erect a twelve-storey hotel to accommodate over 500 people. It is stated that over 1,000 applications for rooms have been received. If the need for suitable accommodation for women workers is as great in America as in this country we can well believe it. On all sides we hear the extreme difficulty encountered by women of finding suitable lodgings within the limit of their purse. The problem is one which in London has still to be solved, and probably can only be satisfactorily met on the co-operative principle.

A Book of the Week.

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE.*

When, some time ago, Miss Glasgow published her "Phases of an Inferior Planet," it could be certainly predicted that here was a writer who would be heard of again.

Her present book is very different, but in many respects it is equally noteworthy. This writer belongs to the category of those who essay to describe only what they accurately know; a quality as rare as it is valuable.

The scene of this story is laid in Virginia, just after the civil war. By the way, how many stories lately seem to have been written, with the United States as their theatre, and the Civil War as their motive! It is a kind of epidemic, started one can hardly tell how.

There is a Judge, and an old General, a former large slave owner; there are his ex-slaves, touched off by a hand which is so successful in treating humour that one wishes it less often took itself as seriously as its usual habit. Then there is the emergent Yankee class, the "po' white trash" heartily despised by the coloured folks, as persons who had never owned slaves. The hero of the book, Nicholas Burr, is of this class. His father, Amos Burr, is a farmer who never has made, and never will make more than the barest existence out of the land. The squalor and vulgarity of this home are wonderfully sketched. Nicholas has ambitions to be something better than his "Pa." The Judge lets him come to lessons with his child and two others of the same class, who share a tutor. This is a wholly American episode. The children are considerably more exclusive than their elders, and Amos has a bad quarter of an hour when first he comes to learn. Being so brought in contact with Eugenia, the only girl and spoilt child of the General, he develops that worship of her which ends only with his life.

The book is, like this author's last, sad and pessimistic in its main outlines, but a charming relief is afforded by the humours of the coloured people, and also by some wonderful small character sketches. Such is the study of Aunt Griselda, who had come, twenty years ago, to pay a visit at General Battle's.

"From the family carriage Aunt Griselda had emerged, soured and eccentric. She had gone up to the best chamber, unpacked her trunks, hung up her bombazine skirts in the closet, ordered green tea and toast, and settled herself for the remainder of her days. That was twenty years ago, and she still slept

*By Ellen Glasgow. Heinemann.

in the best chamber, and still ordered tea and toast at the table. She had grown sourer with years and more eccentric with authority, but the general never failed to treat her crotchets with courtesy or to open the door to her when she came and went. To the mild complaints of Miss Chris and the protestations of Eugenia he returned the invariable warning: 'She is my guest, remember what is due to a guest, my dears.'

"And when Miss Chris placidly suggested that the privileges of guestship wore theadbare when they were stretched over twenty years, and Eugenia fervently hoped that there were no visitors in heaven, the General responded to each in turn:—

"It is the right of a guest to determine the length of his stay, and, as a Virginian, my house is open as long as it has a roof over it."

The final tragedy of the book does not come as a surprise; it must have happened; there was no happiness for Nicholas Burr. But there is no getting away from the feeling of utter sadness that clings to the mind after reading of such an end.

"He died for a damned brute," was the Sheriff's grim epitaph. G. M. R.

Poems.

THE USES OF LABOUR.

There's a fancy some lean to and others hate
That, when this life is ended begins
New work for the soul in another state,
Where it strives and gets weary, loses and wins:
Where the strong and the weak, this world's
congeries,
Repeat in large what they practised in small,
Through life after life in unlimited series;
Only the scale's to be changed, that's all.
Yet I hardly know. When a soul has seen
By the means of Evil that Good is best,
And, through earth and its noise, what is heaven's
serene—
When our faith in the same has stood the test—
Why, the child grown man, you burn the rod,
The uses of labour are surely done;
There remaineth a rest for the people of God!
And I have had troubles enough, for one.

ROBERT BROWNING.

DEATH AND SLEEP.

The hands are folded,
Hushed is the breath—
Is that silence moulded
Of Sleep or Death?
The lids are closing,
Vigil we keep,—
Is that life reposing
On Death or Sleep?

—From *Weekly Sun*.

WHAT TO READ.

- "Notes on Sport and Travel." By George Henry Kingsley, M.D., F.L.S. With a Memoir by his daughter, Mary M. Kingsley.
- "Mafeking." By Major F. W. Baillie.
- "Over the Alps on a Bicycle." By Mrs. Pennell.
- "England's Peril." A Story of the Secret Service. By William le Queux.
- "The Mesmerists." By B. L. Farjeon.

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