

Some eminent professors in Paris have discovered that love is a bacillus, and contains a malignant poison. "Love is one of our most dangerous inheritances from the dark ages, one that has been kept alive and fostered by polite literature. It should be under control of a board of health that possessed full police authority." Farewell, then, to poets and romancers; farewell to all the Julietts and Francescas of the stage, sweet victims of love.

A Book of the Week.

THE SHADOWY THIRD.*

This book, on a subject (or rather on an aspect of a subject) seldom taken up nowadays, may fairly be called impressive.

The author—whose sex we strongly suspect is not truly indicated by the name of "Horace"—holds views on the question of divorce, and has written a book to illustrate the truth of her opinions. This is done impressively, because very quietly. There is no preaching, no attempt to rub in the moral; it is all allowed to speak for itself. The motto on the title-page gives the keynote:—

"No priest ordains it; yet they're forced to sit
Amid deep ashes of their vanished years."

This view—namely, that the religious objection to divorce is not an arbitrary prohibition, but grounded on one of the deepest truths in nature—is too often lost sight of in modern thought. Most people live in too great a hurry to reflect; and, though there never was a time when people talked more glibly of physiology, heredity, and such branches of sociology, there probably also never was a time when there were more ill-considered, thoughtless, self-willed marriages.

Ralph Beaufoy has made such a one. He has married, for her beauty and fine voice, a woman of doubtful pedigree—in fact, a woman who is almost a stranger to him. His rigid British proprieties and her frank Bohemianism cannot live together, and she leaves him for another man, taking with her their little daughter.

The young, bereft husband, aged only twenty-three, having sought the relief which the Californian law gives him, allows the mother to retain the child, and becomes a wanderer on the face of the earth. Years later he meets and loves Ursula Severne, the embodiment of everything which Aline, his first wife, was not. There is a struggle in Ursula's heart as to whether she will or will not marry him. Her mother is a Roman Catholic; the writer of the book seems to think that the fact that the daughter is an English Catholic gives her the right to marry a divorced man if she likes. People who write on such subjects should be better informed. The law of this land has so far over-ridden the law of the Church that no priest may refuse to have such a marriage celebrated in his church; but he may, and usually does, decline to perform it himself; and one or two English clergy have recently made themselves of unpleasant notoriety by consenting to do so. The English Church is more strongly against divorce than the Roman; since, in the latter, there is always the by-way of dispensation, where there is money enough; but no traffic of the kind is permissible in the English Communion.

* By Horace Annesley Vachell. John Murray.

Anyhow, Ursula marries "the innocent party," and begins life in the companionship of the "Shadowy Third."

The development of the story shall not be here divulged; it is very forcible. If ever there was a case in which there was clearly an "innocent party," it is this. And yet the writer makes us feel that Ralph Beaufoy might have saved his first wife, and made her a good woman instead of the utterly bad one she afterwards became.

Poor Ursula! One feels for her, all through. Where is the place of the second wife, when the wife and child of this man are still in the world?

The situation is never unfairly forced. No advocate of divorce could say that it is an unjust presentment. Only, a usually forgotten aspect of the case is set forth, not unduly emphasised, but allowed to sink in.

G. M. R.

What to Read.

"George Eliot." By Leslie Stephen. English Men of Letters.

"A Popular Account of the Ambulance Organisation and Medical Arrangements of an English Army Corps in the Field." By Major C. J. Addison.

"Garden Cities of To-Morrow." By Ebenezer Howard.

"The Guardian of Marie Antoinette. The Secret Correspondence of Marie Thérèse and the Comte d'Artois." By Lilian C. Smythe.

"The Memoirs of François René Vicomte de Chateaubriand, sometime Ambassador to England. Being a Translation by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos of the 'Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe.'"

"The Battle Ground." By Ellen Glasgow.

"The New Christians." By Percy White.

Kings may be Crowned.

Kings may be crowned and kingdoms rise
To glorious state;
Beyond the ken of mortal eyes
The issues wait.

Kings may be crowned and kingdoms win
Goal after goal;
All fades, all dies but life within
The deathless soul.

ELLA FULLER MATTLAND,
Westminster Gazette.

Coming Events.

July 18th.—Society State Registration of Nurses' Sub-Committee, Meeting, 4 p.m., 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.

July 23rd.—Princess Christian opens the bazaar for the Essex and Colchester Hospital at Colchester.

July 24th.—Annual Meeting of the Registered Nurses' Society, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W., 5 p.m.

August 20th. to 27th.—The Royal Institute of Public Health will hold a congress at Exeter. The President is the Earl of Iddesleigh.

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