

Now what are we women going to do to prove our admiration of Mme. Curie's wonderful work? Surely the meeting of the International Council of Women in Berlin in June would be a unique occasion to proffer the congratulations of the women of the world to this great genius.

A Book of the Week.

REBECCA.*

"Rebecca" is that wonderful and priceless thing, a bit of real life. It is a portrait; and though the type is a distinctly foreign type to British readers, its own intrinsic truth makes it convincing at once.

Rebecca is one of the seven children of Lorenzo de Medici Randall, and Aurelia his wife. To the reader on this side of the Atlantic names like these seem at the very outset to savour of farce, to set the persons who own them outside the pale of possibilities, and make it hard to treat them seriously. But in New England, spite of that sense of humour for which the American nation is so renowned, these incongruities make no difference. The mother of Lorenzo de Medici achieved celebrity in her circle, on account of having fixed upon this name, and upon that of Marquis de Lafayette for her other son, thus performing the truly ingenious feat of having their respective initials L. D. M. and M. D. L.

In a community where such things are recorded and admired, Rebecca Rowena Randall lives and moves and has her being; and the vitality of her triumphs over her ridiculous accessories, and enables one really to love and sincerely to admire her.

We first make acquaintance with her on her way to take up residence with her spinster aunts Miranda and Jane Sawyer, women of that type which Miss Wilkins has made us so familiar with—hard, narrow, ignorant, bigoted, honest, conscientious, proud, and wholly given over to little petty household details. On the way there, from her happy-go-lucky, poverty-stricken home, Rebecca's conversation amazes and enthral's Jeremiah Cobb, the driver of the stage. The flood of information, comment, and appreciation which she pours forth cannot fail to entertain the reader also, especially on the subject of large families.

"They're dear, but such a bother, and cost so much to feed, you see. Hannah and I haven't done anything but put babies to bed and take them up again in the morning for years and years. But it's finished, that's one comfort."

"All finished? Oh, you mean you've come away."

"No; I mean they're all over and done with—our family's finished. Mother says so, and she always keeps her promises. There hasn't been any since Mira, and she's three. She was born the day father died. I told mother last night if there was likely to be any more children while I was away I'd have to be sent for, for when there's a baby it always takes Hannah and me both, for mother has the cooking and the farm."

The adventures of this naïve maiden are what constitute the charm of this irresistible book. She is at first a veritable thorn in the flesh to her formidable Aunt Miranda, the edge of whose dislike of her is sharpened, as one guesses, by the fact that she,

Miranda, would gladly have wedded the ne'er-do-weel of a fellow who married her younger sister and was Rebecca's father.

Rebecca is one of those people who somehow cannot remain in the background; as the author says, it refused to hold her. In school she is the most brilliant, among her playfellows the leader of every game. She can even succeed in the selling of soap on commission, with the laudable object of endowing the penniless Simpsons with a "Banquet Lamp," which, after it has been acquired, is suddenly remembered to require oil to keep it alight, a luxury the Simpsons are wholly unable to provide. However, "Aladdin" meets this difficulty as he meets others in the course of Rebecca's eventful career, which terminates, or rather the narration of it terminates, much sooner than the reader wishes.

G. M. R.

New Year.

Look at it sleeping,
Peacefully sleeping;
Breathing so softly,
Softly yet quickly.
Cradled in Silence,
Innocent, lovely,
Here lies the New Year,
The last-born of Time!

Hush! for the Young Year
Wakes out of Dreamland!
See how its small hands
Unclasp and unfold;
Whilst its eyes open,
Gazing in wonder,
Deep into your eyes,
Reflecting your soul!

Bend o'er it gently,
Silently praying;
Whisper sweet love words
In ears undefiled.
Reverently take it,
Tenderly guard it;
Yours is this New Year
To make or to spoil!

EVA ANSTRUTHER.

—Westminster Gazette.

What to Read.

"Lives and Legends of the English Bishops and Kings, Medieval Monks, and Other Later Saints." By Mrs. Arthur Bell.

"Memoirs of Marie Antoinette." By Madame Campan.

"Between the Acts." By H. W. Nevinson.

Coming Events.

January 18th.—The Lord Mayor presides at the Annual Court of Governors of the Royal Waterloo Hospital for Children and Women, at the Mansion House. 3 p.m.

January 26th.—The Lord Mayor presides at a meeting at the Mansion House in support of an appeal for St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

January 28th.—Annual Meeting Matrons' Council, at 431, Oxford Street, W. 4 p.m.

*By Kate Douglas Wiggin. Gay and Bird.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)