

A Book of the Week.

THE CELEBRITY AT HOME.*

It is a great pity that Miss Hunt, all through this clever book, has been unable to make up her mind whether she meant to write a satire or a farce pure and simple. On one page she gives an incisive and scathing picture of some particularly ridiculous fad of society as at this moment constituted; and this is followed by some caricature so wild as to almost cease to be bitter. The whole thing is put into the mouth of a child of thirteen, who says, and sees, and does things which no child of her age could by any possibility say, or see, or do; and this no doubt prevents one from considering the thing seriously, or awarding to it any definite meed of literary praise.

But, considered as amusement, the whole business is delightful. The idea is novel and excellent; the fashionable author of the hour, described by the candid pen of the young daughter who lives behind the scenes! Opportunity here, and no mistake! George, as he likes his children to call him, is a writer whom only the people alive in this particular year could appreciate in all his fulness. He is the tame cat of all the Society women who want to have interesting house-parties. He is a wit and a decadent; he gives lectures on modern fiction, with scathing sneers at the suburbs, he himself having a wife and three children concealed in Isleworth. The manner in which the secret of the pet author's marriage and *ménage* leak out is one of the preposterous bits of caricature in the book. By the bye, is the author going too far or not in making her Society beauty stop her motor-car and go by herself into a London public-house to "liquor up"? The knowledge of social etiquette of the reviewer breaks down here. Have things really come to this? Perhaps they have.

George's wife is a beautiful but not well-born woman. Her sister, Aunt Gerty, the actress, is the best thing in the book, the only personage who is consistent throughout. Her blatant vulgarity and frank coarseness, her good nature and candour, and irresponsibility, her outspoken hatred of her brother-in-law, whose hospitality she is nevertheless always willing to enjoy—all this is admirably life-like. George's wife is not so satisfactory. And her final bursting before the public as the heroine of a romantic drama is in every sense of the word too theatrical. The masked ball at the poet's new house—Cinque Cento House—is as good as anything in the book. The guests walk about freely, talking about the interior of a writer's house, and presently Lady Scilly and the man who reviews for the *Bittern* find their way into the kitchen.

"And so this is the poet's kitchen!" Lady Scilly said, rather scornfully. "How his pots shine!"

"Very comfortable, indeed!" said the *Bittern* man. Then he continued, laughing under his mask: "It's no end of a privilege to see the humble objects that minister to a poet's use. This is his soup-ladle, and—"

"Mother made a step forward and finished his sentence for him.

"And this is his dresser, and this is his boiler; that is his cat, and I'm his wife."

The way in which Lady Scilly shunts her poet directly she has sucked his brains, and got him to

By Violet Hunt. (Chapman and Hall.)

"help" her to write a novel, is true to life. The novel once out, George is of no further use. The thing to do then is to cultivate reviewers.

And so the world goes round and round. But Miss Hunt lets us see that even a fashionable author has his feelings, and some touches of Nature still prevent this earth from being quite the hell it might be.

G. M. R.

"Charity?"

Charity blankets are poor and mean,
Cottony, coarse, and with waste between;
And charity garments are ugly and hard,
Bargained for—bought at the least per yard.
"Wear them, my brother! I give to thee
In the sacred name of Charity!"

Charity dinners are tasteless and fat,
Served out in haste from a steaming vat;
Served out in flowerless, pictureless gloom,
In a whitewashed and boarded charity-room.
"Eat them, my brother! I give to thee
In the sacred name of Charity!"

Charity sermons are wordy and long,
And the charity festival full of song;
And money is gathered with clinking sound
From the well-fed "merciful" seated round—
Is gathered for brothers too sad to sigh,
Who suffer in silence and droop and die.
"Take—take then, my brother! I give to thee
In the sacred name of Charity!"

And over it all the pale Christ stands,
Stretching in mercy His bleeding hands,
Gazing with infinite love and grace
On each upturned, sorrowful, suffering face.
"Who gives to My brethren, he gives to Me,
In the sacred name of Charity."

LINA MOLLETT.

[We hope Miss Lina Mollett will send us a few verses on the "widow's mite."—Ed.]

Coming Events.

May 28th.—The Duchess of Albany lays the Foundation Stone of the Walton, Hershams, and Oatlands Cottage Hospital, 4.

May 31st.—Costume Ball in aid of Charing Cross Hospital at the Royal Albert Hall.

June 3rd.—The Queen and the Prince and Princess of Wales give their patronage to a Concert organised by Signorina Giulia Ravogli at the Queen's Hall in aid of the Appeal Fund of St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

June 4th.—Visit to London of Miss M. E. Thornton, Secretary to the National Associated Alumnae of Nurses of the United States, and the American delegates to the Berlin Congress.

June 6th.—English nurses entertain American nurses at Dinner.

June 8th.—Princess Henry of Battenberg attends the Annual Meeting of the Colonial Nursing Association, Sunderland House, Curzon Street, Earl Grey presiding.

June 13th.—Opening of the International Congress of Women, Berlin, in the Philharmonic.

June 17th.—Meeting of the International Council of Nurses in the Victoria Lyceum, Potsdamer Str., Berlin, 10 a.m.

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