

She was the daughter of Ananias Dayre, assistant and son-in-law to Governor John White, and she was christened Virginia, though there is no record of who performed the ceremony. Her grave has hitherto been marked by a mere board, but this is now to be replaced by some more fitting monument.

To an American woman living in England, says the *New York Sun*, there is no natural phenomenon that strikes such awe and amazement to her soul as John Bull exercising his full marital authority. She experiences some vivid emotions, watching him as a sort of large and masterful fate, controlling the destinies of his family to the very smallest detail, and the shock of contrasting a petticoat governed United States with the supreme man power of Britain rather takes her breath away.

The Countess Hélène von Schweinitz has obtained at the Berlin University a diploma for surgical dentistry. This is the first time the diploma has been won by a woman.

### A Book of the Week.

JOHN CHILCOTE, M.P.\*

If to appear simultaneously in the pages of *Blackwood* and in the *feuilleton* of the *Daily Mail* be fame, then Mrs. Thurston has achieved fame with her new book, "John Chilcote."

The book has been so ridiculously over-praised and over-advertised, that people are in danger of overlooking the real ability which is shown by the writer.

The thing which probably has given the book its quite disproportionate vogue is the fact that the idea which has just received such a startling corroboration in the case of mistaken identity known as the "Beck" case, is here used as the leading motive.

John Chilcote, a man who is in Parliament in spite of himself, and who is a morphia maniac in an advanced stage, suddenly encounters, in the vagaries of a London fog, a man who is his very double. The idea comes to Chilcote, who is fast finding his present life untenable, that it would be extraordinarily useful, could he obtain a man exactly like himself, to impersonate him when he was off duty. John Loder, the double, happens to be, not only the exact likeness in face of John Chilcote, but also the very man for his purpose, a gentleman by birth, poor, disappointed, ambitious—above all, ambitious. Not only so, but he is absolutely solitary and friendless; and last, but not least, the trend of his ambitions is in the political direction.

To ask the reader to imagine this likeness, so convincing that even the woman who is married to Chilcote does not see the difference, and to further ask us to believe that everything in the way of circumstance is also favourable, is indeed to strain credulity to the breaking point. But we have constantly to remember that truth is proverbially stranger than fiction. Mrs. Thurston's situation is not artistic, but it is also not impossible.

The man called Loder, having been duly inducted into Chilcote's shoes, the excitement begins. Chilcote is nominally a married man; but, though we are not told whether Eve was ever really his wife, it is very

certain that for years past he has belonged to morphia alone. His own rooms are quite apart from his wife's, and even during the day they meet but rarely, and then in the most conventional manner. When Eve first appears on the scene, we begin to hope that Mrs. Thurston is going to throw off her conventional manner, and give us a real woman. But the difficulties of the position are too great for us to be permitted to know Eve intimately. Were we admitted into her confidence, the unlikelihood of the main situation would grow unmanageable.

Mrs. Thurston has managed most cleverly to write her story wholly from the outside, from beginning to end. We are told just enough about the two, John Loder and Eve, to make us wish to know a great deal more. Nothing whatever about anybody else.

The symmetry of the thing is distinctly clever. It is like an impressionist sketch, that does not give the detail. When you attempt to fill that in you are lost. You must be content with the bold dash of colour, with the outlines of a character appearing for a moment to vanish utterly the next. It is a novel of hints, of indications; and this very quality endues it with a special charm and casts a spell over the reader.

Was Loder a bad man or a good man? Was Eve a pure woman, or would she, at Loder's bidding, have sinned as they two could so easily have sinned? Was the final decision of the pair right or wrong?

These are questions which give a savour of the veritable problem to a frankly melodramatic novel. They are questions which will have many different answers, according to the mind of the reader.

G. M. R.

### Answer to a Child's Question.

Do you ask what the birds say? The sparrow, the dove,  
The linnet and thrush say, "I love and I love!"  
In the winter they're silent, the wind is so strong;  
What it says I don't know, but it sings a loud song.  
But green leaves and blossoms and sunny, warm  
weather,

And singing and loving, all come back together.  
But the lark is so brimful of gladness and love,  
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,  
That he sings and he sings and for ever sings he,  
"I love my love, and my love loves me!"

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

We get back our mete as we measure—  
We cannot do wrong and feel right,  
Nor can we give pain and gain pleasure—  
For justice avenges each slight.  
The air for the wing of the sparrow,  
The bush for the robin and wren,  
But always the path that is narrow  
And straight for the children of men.

### What to Read.

"Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay, 1778-1840," as edited by her niece, Charlotte Barrett. With preface and notes by Austin Dobson.

"Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation." By Lafcadio Hearn.

"The Romance of Royalty." By Fitzgerald Molloy.

"Christmas Eve on Lonesome." By John Fox.

\* By Catherine Cecil Thurston. (Blackwood.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)