

A Book of the Week.

THE THREE ESSENTIALS.*

Madame de Longgarde is one of the very few novelists who dare to write a story pure and simple. That is to say, a story about two individuals, designed neither to hit off some particular sign of the times, nor to show up what is known as "Society," nor to expound the fallacy of religion. The present book relies for its appeal merely upon the love story of a young girl, with neither wealth nor beauty, nor any very special intellectual gifts—with nothing but the one grand gift of a charming disposition. There is no sensation, no sparkling conversation, no bridge, no purple patches. Yet the story is fascinating in its quiet animation, its bright calmness.

To say this is to pay a high tribute to the character of Eugénie. She is delightful; natural, and good, without the suspicion of preaching. She has been, as an orphan, taken into the family of the Alwicks, distant relatives of her dead mother; and has become an indispensable part of the household, and the devoted fac-totum of her aunt, an ambitious woman, whose one desire is to see her only son, Herbert, make a good match.

Herbert is a handsome, good sort of young fellow, with an excellent digestion, a fine frame, and no vices. His mother insists that he must marry money and birth. Herbert himself adds a third essential—beauty. He is astonished, when he confides this list of essentials to Gina, that she shows surprise at the smallness of his demands. Then he sets forth upon his matrimonial campaign, leaving behind the little woman, who without possessing one of his three essentials, is nevertheless the one woman in the world for him. The idea is the same as in a charming little German play called *Herz Vergessen*, in which the youth starts out courting and is always returning, on the plea that he has forgotten something; which something finally turns out to be his heart, which he has left at home.

Of course, Herbert has no notion whatever either of Gina's devotion to him, or of his to her. His enlightenment comes by degrees, first owing to the intense admiration displayed for Gina by a phrenologist who visits at the house. The annoyance felt by Herbert when he finds Gina with her hair down, the Professor cautiously feeling about among her bumps, is very humorously given. Gina's own reticence throughout the story is fine. Nothing could be much more trying than her position as confidant to the man she loves; and she is by no means a cold person—her southern nature is full of fire and passion, and also, fortunately, of a keen sense of humour which enables her to grapple with the situation as a more melancholy nature could not. There is one charming little scene where Herbert, in search of Gina's sympathy, comes upon her tying up raspberry jam in the store room. She has left the room a moment, and the book she is reading is lying open on the table, "Plato's Apology of Socrates."

"Are you not ashamed to run after riches and honours, while you neglect the treasures of wisdom and truth which ought to embellish and perfect your soul?"

The book also contains a translation of those wonderful lines of François Coppée:—

* By Dorothea Gerard. (Hutchinson.)

"Fly eastwards," said I to the snowy dove,
'Bring from 'neath Indian skies, that no clouds mar
The herb that gives the power of love.'
The dove replied: 'It is too far.'

"O eagle," said I, 'spread thy mighty wing,
And for a heart that coldly spurns me fly,
Fly, and one spark of heaven's own fire bring!'
The eagle said: 'It is too high.'

"The vulture then I called in wild regret:
'The name that guides my life, that rules my fate,
Oh, tear it from my heart—let me forget!'
The vulture said: 'It is too late.'"

G. M. R.

What to Read.

- "The Downfall of Russia." By Hugo Ganz.
"The Jackal." By Coulson Kernahan.
"A Vagrant Englishwoman." By Catherine I. Dodd.
"Roger Trewinion." By Joseph Hocking.
"Sorreltop." By Mrs. J. A. Crawford.

Coming Events.

May 12th.—Second Reading of Women's Enfranchisement Bill, House of Commons.

May 12th.—St. John's Ambulance Association. Ambulance Competitions open to Railway Companies in England and Wales and to units of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, Portman Rooms, Baker Street, 10 a.m. Presentation of Challenge Shields, Challenge Cup, and Prizes by Viscountess Knutsford, 3.30 p.m.

May 15th to 20th.—Sale of Genuine Old Bric-à-Brac, to aid poor gentlewomen, 16, Brook Street, Bond Street, W., 11 to 7.

May 15th.—The Italian Hospital. Ball, in aid of the funds of the Italian Hospital, Prince's Restaurant, Piccadilly.

May 16th.—The Queen gives her patronage to a reception at the Mansion House in aid of the Royal Hospital for Diseases of the Chest.

May 16th.—Select Committee on Nursing. Chairman, Mr. H. J. Tennant. House of Commons, Committee Room 17, 11.30 a.m.

May 16th.—Queen Alexandra Sanatorium. Dinner, at Prince's Restaurant, Piccadilly.

May 17th.—The Duke of Connaught presides at a Dinner in aid of the Great Northern Hospital, Savoy Hotel.

May 18th.—Lord Glensk presides at the Annual Meeting, Chelsea Hospital for Women, Fulham Road, 4 p.m.

May 18th.—Annual Meeting Rural Midwives' Association, 66, Ennismere Gardens, S.W.

May 19th.—Annual Meeting of the Asylum Workers' Association. Sir John Batty Tuke, M.D., M.P., F.R.S.E., in the chair. 20, Hanover Square, W., 4 p.m.

May 19th.—Lord Stanley presides at a banquet in aid of St. John's Hospital for Diseases of the Skin, Leicester Square, Savoy Hotel.

May 26th.—Annual Meeting of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W., 3 p.m.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)