

attempt had recently been made to open the ranks of skilled labour to girls of the industrial class by obtaining for them suitable technical training.

Laura Marholm, one of the best-known German lady writers, was recently arrested in Munich, in spite of the protests of her husband. The police, who were accompanied by a number of male attendants from the municipal madhouse, produced a medical certificate to the effect that Frau Marholm was a dangerous lunatic, and she was taken by force to an asylum.

Previous to the Empress-Dowager's birthday, her Majesty announced her stern determination not to accept presents from her Ministers and high officials "owing to the deplorable and poverty-stricken state of the country." Yet the value of the presents received has been officially estimated at 15,500,000 taels (about £2,000,000) says the *North China Herald*. Men who had been cashiered and desired to regain their official rank and titles, as well as those whose ambition was to get appointed to lucrative posts, seized this opportunity to buy Imperial favour. Certain officials whose gifts amounted to only Tls. 10,000 in value were put on the Imperial private black list and their "trivial" tributes returned.

An appeal, which should command much sympathy from those who have followed the history of this unhappy country, is made by the Women's Armenian Relief Fund for donations to afford succour to the inhabitants of Van, Turkish Armenia, where famine conditions are prevailing. The funds in hand, amounting to £T. 1,249, mostly from Germany, with about 200 lire from England, have been assigned to different departments, but the number of the hungry is fast increasing. Contributions will be received by the hon. treasurer, Mrs. Cole, Danehurst, Putney.

## A Book of the Week.

### THE DARK LANTERN.\*

Whatever the critics are likely to say of Miss Robins's new book—and they are likely to have much to say on the point, if we are not much mistaken—there is one thing that can never be said—namely, that it is uninteresting.

The power of the book, like that of this writer's last, is perfectly extraordinary. You may attack its morals, you may impugn its heroine's tastes, its hero's manners, its hundred and one outstanding marks of individuality. But, having once begun to read it, you will be chained to its chariot wheels until their triumphant revolutions are completed.

The study of one man's character which it presents is among the most remarkable things lately contributed to literature. Whether or no you admire the man, or think the woman's infatuation possible, is another matter. But you will gasp at him as if he were actually in the room with you—will wince away from his brutalities, cower under his threats, and believe in the truth of what he says.

The place where you will be disappointed is in the character of Katherine Derham, the heroine. That

is, if you are one of those who like to rank women high.

As a *débutante*, Katherine fell in love with a German princeling, Prince Anton of Waldenstein. To her youthful, ardent imagination all things were possible. She imagined all dynastic difficulties overcome, and Anton counting the world well lost for her sake. When she found that a left-handed marriage was all that was contemplated, her heart was almost broken. Anton, imagining how ecstatically grateful she would be that he could concede so much, found that she utterly refused to take what he offered, or anything from him. The fact of finding this man less high, less noble than she had thought, wrought upon her love to its undoing.

This is splendid, and we imagined that Miss Robins meant to show us that a girl may cling to her ideals in face of the temptations of the strongest passion. But no such thing. She merely means that Katherine was not deeply enough in love with Prince Anton. When the brutal doctor comes along, ruthless, violent, coarse, but strong, we have this proud woman, who had refused a prince's love because she was too proud to stoop, actually herself proposing her own degradation, without a shred of encouragement, to Dr. Vincent, asking him to take her away with him; anywhere, on any terms.

To most women this will wreck the book.

Katherine has been suffering from nervous breakdown, and has been treated by the celebrated Dr. Vincent. She had a six weeks' rest cure. And O, ye nurses, how you will chuckle over and enjoy the account of the patient's sufferings, and the witty, humorous description of the nurses and their terror of their professional tyrant! The feelings of Katherine, lying helpless in her bed, and watching the untidy nurse pour cold water over the clinical thermometer, will have a special joy for many of us!

When Katherine is better, and the doctor pays his final visit, occurs this offensive conversation.

"You've had too much of everything in your life, except one."

"You mean rest?"

"Oh, you've caught up some of that."

"What is it I have lacked?"

"You wouldn't like me to tell you."

"Yes I would; but her heart misgave her."

"What is it I have lacked?"

"A man."

"She drew a startled breath as if he had struck her."

"I suppose," he went on brutally, "you have taken credit for your way of life. It's been your destruction, very near." Not a word was uttered on either side for some seconds. Then: "Do you want it put more plainly?"

"No, no," she shuddered, "you are plain enough." But his sullen eyes seem to own no wish to spare her any hurt he could inflict.

"You'd better just look about you as quick as you can," he said coarsely. "It's no time for nonsense, no time for sentiment. . . . Get the first help you can to repair your past foolishness. Good-bye! And remember, even poetic ladies are human—animals like the rest of us."

When, after this "coarse counsel," Katherine begs the man who gave it to take her away with him, one is conscious of a feeling of deep disgust, that not all the amazing talent of the remainder of the book can ever quite dispel.

G. M. R.

\* By Elizabeth Robins. (Heinemann.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)