

## A Book of the Week.

### IN THE ARENA.\*

In this volume of stories the author of "Mons. Beaucaire" seems to have come into his kingdom. He has found the vehicle in which his genius really meant him to work. He has achieved the mastery of the short story, and he has done more, he has discovered romance in American politics.

The volume before us is a series of lights, thrown from various aspects upon this dingy subject. Let it be said at once that the volume confirms the reader in his or her previous half-formed, contemptuous opinion of the whole way in which the vast mushroom country is "run." Politics is the domain of the wire-pullers; the State is at the mercy of every mean-minded and corrupt official who has an axe to grind. The writer uses deadly frankness; such frankness as, however salutary upon his own side of the Atlantic, one would hardly think he would care to have sown broadcast here.

But he prefaces his stories with the noble plea that Americans will realise the dishonour they do their fatherland by holding aloof and allowing the dregs of their country to work all the levers.

And every story in the book is, in its way, a "master-piece."

Perhaps the first, "Boss Gorgett," is the most powerful. Gorgett is the typical American politician—the man of the Tammany type—holding power and meaning to keep it, by fair means or foul, and yet a man with his own standards, his own curious views of what is meant by playing the game, his own contempt for the high-toned hypocrite. His opponent is a youth of high-flown ideals; and the supporters of this knight errant have caught the "heelers" of Boss Gorgett in a flagrantly dishonest plot to tamper with the ballot-boxes. The high-flown candidate threatens to expose the whole plot in his outspoken newspaper the following day. But, alas! This would-be Galahad has a flaw in his armour. His wife is too domestic and too wrapt up in her small son to content his cravings for intellectual sympathy, which he has found elsewhere, in the person of a very intense young unmarried lady, whose tender interest in his crusade for purity has led her to hearten him for the fray with a sisterly kiss on the front door-step, seen and noted by the duly posted spies of that old campaigner, Boss Gorgett.

The crumpling-up of the sea-green incorruptible, on the application of this screw, is given with a rare power and pathos.

"The only way to play politics," says his victorious adversary, "is to learn the game first. Then you'll know how far you can go and what your own record will stand. There ain't a man alive whose record will stand too much. . . . It ain't a great pleasure to me to think that the people have let it (politics) get to be the game it is. But I reckon it's good for you. I reckon the best thing that ever happened to you is having to come here this morning to ask mercy of a man you looked down on. . . ."

I suppose you think it's mighty hard that your private character should be used against you in a political question by a man you call a public corruptionist. But I'm in a position where I can't take any chances against an antagonist that won't play

the game my way. I had to find your vulnerable point to defend myself, and in finding it, I find there's no need to defend myself any longer, because it makes all your weapons ineffective. . . ."

"He got up and went over to Farwell with slow steps, and put his hand gently on his shoulder.

"Go home to your wife," he said in a low voice that was the saddest I ever heard. "I don't bear you any ill-will in the world. Nobody's going to give you away."

I must just add that "The Aliens" strikes a truly pitiful note of tragedy; and that perhaps my own personal favourite is the last story of all, "Great Men's Sons."  
G. M. R.

## A Song of Time.

When hearts are young  
Time loiters slow,  
And songs are sung  
And soft winds blow;  
Time brings at length,  
With touch of fire,  
The hope and strength  
Of thy desire.

When hearts are old  
Time lags behind,  
Sad tales are told,  
And eyes grow blind;  
Oh, swiftly flies  
In pain and strife  
The Wheel that plies  
The Thread of Life!

—From the German of Emile Claar, in the  
*July Pall Mall Magazine.*

## Coming Events.

June 24th.—General Meeting of the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses, at the Hospital, 2.30 p.m. Social gathering 4.30 p.m.

June 25th.—Hospital Sunday. His Majesty's Judges attend the Afternoon Service at St. Paul's Cathedral.

June 27th and June 29th.—Select Committee on Nursing. Chairman, Mr. H. J. Tennant. House of Commons, Committee Room 17, 11.30 a.m.

June 28th.—Drawing Room Meeting by kind invitation of Lady Hope, 7, Connaught Place, W., 3.30 p.m. Tea and music.

June 29th.—Princess Louise (Duchess of Argyll) will receive purses at Carnforth Lodge, Hammersmith, on behalf of the Hammersmith and Fulham District Nursing Association.

June 29th.—General League Meeting and Garden Party, Kingston Infirmary Nurses' League, 4—7.

June 29th.—Princess Christian will be present at a Meeting at Chelsea House, Cadogan Place (by kind permission of the Earl and Countess Cadogan), to further the objects of the National Committee for the Establishment of Sanatoria for Workers Suffering from Tuberculosis. The Right Hon. Earl Cadogan in the chair.

July 17th.—Opening of the Marie-Celeste Maternity Wards at the London Hospital.

\* By Booth Tarkington. (John Murray.)

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