

A Book of the Week.

THE PARISH NURSE.*

Mrs. Mann is always enthralling. One cannot picture her as writing a book in which one was not thoroughly and deeply interested. Her characters always arouse and pique the reader into energy. Without melodrama she can achieve tragedy; without pathos she can "end happily." Who shall mete out higher praise than this to the story-writer?

If her present book never quite touches the pathos of "The Cedar Star" or "Olivia's Summer," or the tragedy of "Under the Syringas," it nevertheless manifests very strongly that quality of enthrallingness—if we may be allowed the word—above alluded to. And, to come to the point, the heroine is a nurse.

Certainly few central figures could be more fascinating than that of Emily Geldart. She was not driven to nursing by penury—she had enough, as the orphan daughter of a general, for her needs. Her motives in taking up a definite profession are thus analysed by Mrs. Mann, who sees as far as most people into the modern woman's mind.

"She thought of her work and her motive in undertaking it, in the painful disillusion of the moment seeing herself and her action in a jaundiced light. Why had she embraced the scheme? From enthusiastic zeal for the work? Hardly that. To comfort the helpless poor, to attend to the sick and needy, was perhaps the highest order of work on which a woman could embark; but these things she might have done without accepting a post of which some poorer woman, equally efficient, stood in need. "I did it," said Emily, ruthlessly analytical, 'from restlessness and vanity, and a desire to escape from myself; from a puffed-up ambition to count—to be something; if it was only a village drudge, yet to be 'at it,' to have a station, ever such a poor one, in the struggling crowd. I deserve to fail: and I have failed."

Nurse Emily was mistaken in writing herself down a failure. She was a splendid worker, though the vicar's wife did object to her "gentleman visitors." Mrs. Mann is at her best amid the villagers, their sordid, unlovely poverty; the account of Nurse Emily's daily ministrations among them is almost uncanny in its fidelity.

It is *de rigueur* in Mrs. Mann's books that we should have an odious clergyman's family. We take this as a matter of course; but the Clay family, here depicted, are not unduly prominent, and we must own they are lifelike!

Emily Geldart, a very handsome woman, and in her private capacity a very well-dressed woman, was taken one night, by the man who was urgently her suitor, to a certain restaurant, to which men who are particular do not take the ladies whom they respect. He left her there alone while he went to fetch a cab, and she was seen, admired, accosted, by a certain man, who appeared later as tenant of the large house in the village whither she went as parish nurse.

This man, utterly mistaking the kind of woman she was, attempted forthwith to gain a hold upon her by threatening to tell the vicar's wife where and how he had seen her nurse. Not a very promising opening for a friendship between a man and a woman! But see what Mrs. Mann makes of the situation.

Some women may think that Emily succumbs too

* By Mary E. Mann.

easily. In this the present reviewer would agree with them. But as an example of how warily it behoves a handsome woman to walk in uniform—of the fierce light that beats upon the "trained nurse"—the book is invaluable, and one that we should all read.

G. M. R.

After the Battles are Over.

(Read at the Réunion of the G. A. T., Madison, Wis., July 4th, 1872.)

After the battles are over,

And the war drums cease to beat,
And no more is heard on the hill side
The sound of hurrying feet;

Full many a noble action,
That was done in the days of strife,
By the soldier is half forgotten
In the peaceful walks of life.

Just as the tangled grasses,
In summer's warmth and light,
Grow over the graves of the fallen
And hide them away from sight;
So many an act of valour,
And many a deed sublime,
Fade from the mind of the soldier,
O'ergrown by the grass of time.

Not so should they be rewarded,
Those noble deeds of old;
They should live for ever and ever,
When the heroes' hearts are cold.
Then rally, ye brave old comrades,
Old veterans, re-unite!
Uproot Time's tangled grasses—
Live over the march and the fight.

* * *
Brave men of a mighty army,
We extend you friendship's hand!
I speak for the "Loyal Women,"
Those pillars of our land.
We wish you a hearty welcome,
We are proud that you gather here
To talk of old times together
On this brightest day in the year.

And if Peace, whose snow-white pinions
Brood over our land to-day,
Should ever again go from us
(God grant she may ever stay!)
Should our nation call in her peril
For "Six hundred thousand more"
The loyal women would hear her
And send you out as before.

We would bring the treasured knapsack,
We would take the sword from the wall,
And hushing our own hearts' pleadings,
Hear only the country's call.
For, next to our God, is our Nation;
And we cherish the honoured name
Of the bravest of all brave armies
Who fought for that Nation's fame.
—By ELLA WHEELER WILCOX, in *Poems of Life*.

What to Read.

"Knock at a Venture." By Eden Phillpotts.
"Red o' the Feud." By Halliwell Sutcliffe.
"Driven." By Margaret Watson.

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