

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"YELLOWLEAF."*

This remarkable and clever novel has in it every element that makes for success, and is guaranteed to hold the readers' close attention from start to finish.

The personalities of old Lady Mary Dampierre and her butler Bruno alone are sufficiently interesting to secure interest. The whole atmosphere is unusual and arresting.

Lady Mary, known to the family as "Grandmother" and to the servants as "the old lady," had been crippled in the early days of her married life by an accident.

Possessed of considerable wealth, her affliction was mitigated in every possible way by means of a succession of improved wheel chairs.

She sat in her irregularly-shaped drawing-room in St. John's Wood, in a spot protected by a screen, known as Grandmother's or the Old Lady's Corner. Asked to write down the phrase, eight out of ten members of the household would have given to the corner a capital C, for the corner had become during the years of Lady Mary's inability to move something between a household shrine and a market place. The other *dramatis personae* are Lily, the widowed daughter of Lady Mary's only son; her two children, Jim and Picotee; and Charles Thorn, the old lady's nephew, and Jim's tutor.

At the opening of the story the peace of this extremely happy and interesting circle of people is threatened by the expressed desire of the musician, Jacques Aghassy, to marry Lily Dampierre.

On this man is destined to hang the fate of nearly all the other persons mentioned.

In spite of imperious old Lady Mary's instinctive dislike of the man, and her usual dominating will, he attains his desire.

Referring to Lily's musical susceptibility, he reminds Lady Mary "The piano is my friend."

The old lady tells him bluntly, "If you wish to bully her you will find it easy to do so; but you will not find it easy to bully me, and until I die I shall stay with her."

And so Aghassy married gentle Lily Dampierre, and another member was added to the house in St. John's Wood.

On the morning of the wedding, faithful old Bruno went to church and confided in God and Old Lady his true feelings as to Aghassy.

He acknowledged that he had been a vile old man in hating the illustrious gentleman who was to-day to marry his illustrious lady, but he added "There is something, O dear God, and dearest and most understanding Our Lady, about the shape of his feet that I cannot stand."

From the time that Aghassy brought back his bride to Yellowleaf there was a note of discord

and discomfort in what had hitherto been a happy household.

The old Lady, Charles and Bruno viewed him with a sense of distrust, and on the part of the two latter actual dislike.

Aghassy wormed himself into the children's affection, and subtly alienated the boy Jim from Charles, to whom he had hitherto been devoted.

Old Lady Mary's letters to Charles, who then decided to travel, are very characteristic documents, and full of grim humour. She ends one letter with a pathetic touch, where she lives again her brilliant and fascinating youth.

"It's late at night, my dear, and the faithful and unpleasant Drake (her maid) believes me to be asleep. I am sitting up in bed writing, as no lady of seventy-eight ought to be writing, by the light of one candle, and the candle's behaving very badly. It seems to be spitting all down its own sides, and I must go to sleep.

"Some day, my dear Charles, I mean to write a book about dreams, the dreams of old people, for do you know, here I am, an old, old thing, and yet almost every night I am young again, and wandering about in beautiful parts of the earth that I knew when I was young; and the people who are with me are not old, but young and bold and bad, many of them, and dear and delightful, and, oh! my dear Charles, so many of them make love to me."

The strong affection existing between Lady Mary and her old servant Bruno, is touching and convincing.

He makes bold to tell his lady of his dislike and distrust of Aghassy. "Shall I tell your Excellency what I mean? Mr. Aghassy frightens the Signorina Lily; I believe she's sorry she married him. She sits and thinks and thinks of my Captain (her first husband). Ah! furbo, furbissimo, he is, Signor Aghassy!"

"Furbo!" repeated Lady Mary under her breath. "Artful—sly."

Aghassy fully justified old Bruno's instinctive dislike of him; and the outcome of his extremely unpleasant character ends in tragedy—but we will not spoil a good story by revealing its plot.

Our readers must not omit to place this absorbing novel upon their holiday list.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

July 14th.—Presentation of Prizes to the Probationers trained at St. Marylebone Infirmary, by the Mayor of St. Marylebone. Reception at the Infirmary, St. Charles Square, W. 3 p.m.

July 19th.—National Union of Trained Nurses. Lecture, "Unemployment Insurance," by Miss Florence, Secretary, Women Clerks and Secretaries' Friendly Society, 46, Marsham St., S.W. 7 p.m.

July 21st.—Concert at 10, Downing Street, by kind permission of Mrs. Lloyd George, in aid of St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Viscount Sandhurst will preside.

* By Sacha Gregory. Heinemann, London.

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