

A Book of the Week.**"LIZERUNT."***

MR. MORRISON has given us a picture of East London streets that is haunting in its terrible realism.

"Lizerunt's" real name was Elizabeth Hunt. She worked at a pickle factory, and was 17 years of age when first we make her acquaintance as one of the inhabitants of Mr. Morrison's Mean Streets. Girls in the East of London marry appallingly early, and Lizerunt was possessed of a type of beauty that is much admired in those parts, for—

"Her cheeks were very red, her teeth were very large and white, and her nose was small and snub, and her fringe was long and shiny, while her face new-washed, was susceptible of a high polish."

Billy Choze was her destined lover and husband, and there is something both grim and ghastly in the following description of love-making as understood in East London :—

"Billy Choze's conversation with Lizerunt consisted long of perfunctory nods; but great things happened this especial Thursday evening, as Lizerunt, making for home, followed the fading red beyond the furthest end of Commercial Road. For Billy Choze, slouching in the opposite direction, lurched across the pavement as they met, and taking the nearer hand from his pocket, caught and twisted her arm, bumping her against the wall. 'Garn,' said Lizerunt, greatly pleased; 'le go!' For she knew that this was love."

The lovers spend the next Bank Holiday on Wanstead Flats, and Mr. Morrison gives us a terrible description of the mingled vulgarity, brutality, and utter joylessness of that festival day. Billy Choze and another admirer of Lizerunt's have a free fight. Sam wins in the encounter, but Billy captures the girl's heart by his goodly show of bruises and his bandaged face. So they married, and here is the account of their wedding day :—

"When Billy Choze married Lizerunt there was a small rejoicing. There was no wedding party; because it was considered that what there might be to drink, would be better in the family. Lizerunt's father was not, and her mother felt no interest in the affair; not having seen her daughter for a year, and happening to have at the time a month's engagement in respect of a drunk and disorderly. So that there was but three of them, and Billy Choze got exceedingly tipsy early in the day, and in the evening his bride bawled a continual chorus, while his mother, influenced by that unwonted quarter of gin, the occasion sanctioned, wept dismally over her boy, who was much too far gone to resent it."

Billy Choze lives on his wife's and his mother's earnings, and ill-treats them both on every possible occasion, and before she is 21 Lizerunt has her third child, and when Billy's mother dies, and Lizerunt is sent away from the pickle factory, her husband kicks her into, and on to, the streets.

Truly this is a sardonic story, a terrible contrast to the peaceful little pastoral of Tryphena's Love Tale, that we reviewed last week. It is impossible to deny the cleverness of Lizerunt's squalid tragedy, but yet at the same time we must take exception to the want of artistic atmosphere that surrounds the tale. Photography is not *Art*, however perfect the apparatus used, and though the tale of Lizerunt is doubtless a fearfully

true story, and though the streets of London are very possibly full of just such types of character as hers and Billy Choze's, yet the piling up of the dreadful details of a drunkard's existence without any softening touches of humanity, is but gruesome work for an able pen to do. Surely it would be possible for Mr. Morrison to draw for us quite as clever and vivid pictures of East London existence as Lizerunt, and yet succeed in making us feel a little commiseration for the characters in his stories, for even in the worst parts of London, street life is not *all* mean—*all* sinful.

Some of the later stories in this volume are less miserably realistic. The story of the prize-fighter, who though he was starving, would not go home till he had won a boxing match, because the old woman "had a trick of pretending not to be hungry, and of starving herself," is pathetic, in spite of the gruesome description of the "baptism of pummelings" that Neddy Milton had endured for her sake. Another story is very humorous, for it relates the agonies of mind that a certain East-ender endured when, having saved a little money and invested it in a house, he became a landlord and a householder himself, and suffered tortures when his pauper tenants would not pay their rents, and he had to find money for the taxes and repairs to his battered property. This story is well worked out and exceedingly comic to read, and, on the whole, "Tales of Mean Streets" are to be recommended to our readers, and perhaps it is as well for some of us to comprehend a little better than we do, how terrible the life of many women in East London really is—to realise their dreary existence with its ghastly want of love, happiness, or comfort, even though the relation of their too sordid and squalid experiences does hurt our artistic susceptibilities.

A. M. G.

Bookland.**WHAT TO READ.**

"Aspects of the Social Problem," by Various Writers, edited by Bernard Bosanquet. (Macmillan & Co.)

"Progressive Morality": an Essay in Ethics, by Thomas Fowler, D.D., LL.D., F.S.A., President of Corpus Christi College, Wykeham Professor of Logic in the University of Oxford. (Macmillan & Co.)

"Notes on Epistles of St. Paul," from unpublished Commentaries by the late J. B. Lightfoot, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D., Lord Bishop of Durham, published by the Trustees of the Lightfoot Fund. (Macmillan & Co.)

"Songs of the Sea and Lays of the Land," by Charles Godfrey Leland, author of "The Breitmann Ballads." (A. and C. Black, Soho Square, London.)

"Uninitiated": a Study of Childhood, by Isabel Fry. (Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.)

"Rooted in Dishonour," by Hartley Carmichael. Sampson Low & Marston.)

"John March, Southerner," by G. W. Cable. (Sampson Low & Marston.)

"The Master," by Mr. I. Zangwill. (Messrs. Heinemann.)

In "Harper's Magazine" for May, "True I Speak of Dreams," by W. D. Howells, and the last of Alfred Parsons' brilliantly illustrated articles, entitled "Some Wanderings in Japan," are of great interest.

Judge Oliver Wendell Holmes is engaged preparing the "Life and Letters of Dr. Holmes," his father. A number

* "Tales of Mean Streets," by Arthur Morrison. 6s. (Methuen, London.)

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