

Notes on Art.

THE NEW GALLERY.

(SECOND NOTICE.)

To those who look forward from year to year for the pictures of Sir E. Burne-Jones as for the work of one who consistently makes appeal to the soul, in an age when souls are much left out of the reckoning, to these, this year's work will seem disappointing. However heartily we are with him in his high artistic creed that the use of body is to express soul, we yet must feel that a living soul must be revealed by a living body. Now, the portrait of Miss Dorothy Drew is most emphatically alive, almost alarmingly so! It has a queer kind of elfin charm, but makes one feel acutely what must be the responsibilities of the mother of this very latest thing in "*enfants terribles*"!

But what are we to say to the portrait of Lady Windsor? Whatever else her ladyship may or may not have been, she must certainly have been alive when he painted her! But the portrait is dead! So is Psyche on her way to her wedding, quite, quite dead. All the sweet faces in this picture wear the grey hues of death; and we vaguely feel that this is not our idea of the marriage of the soul. The same over-symbolism mars the study for the last picture in the ever memorable "Briar Rose" series. We are so glad that the great painter himself was not satisfied with it, but painted another, so far more beautiful.

The emaciated shoulders of the slumbering princess would induce, in any right-minded nurse, a strong desire to feed her up. There seemed every excuse for the starving aspect of "King Cophetua's Beggar-maid," but surely one may be spiritually lovely without being scraggy! I could not help wishing that Peter Paul Rubens had left us his idea of the "Sleeping Beauty." Can you imagine any greater earthly contrast than to see it hung side by side with this?

The New Gallery is rich in what might be described as suggestive landscape, not merely paintings of places, but pictures of some mood or caprice of nature, suggesting some answering mood in the mind of the spectator. A painter of such landscape is Mr. Padgett, and the examples of him this year are very characteristic, the most notable being (No. 201) "Evening mists near Abbeville"; but perhaps the most full of suggestion is (No. 344) "Finis," the little lonely wayside shrine in the fast gathering dusk.

"A Frosty Morning," by Alfred Parsons, makes you really feel the first tart touch of autumn on the leaves and in the air. On this wall are also Mr. Douglas Adams' "Tantallon Castle," Mr. Groom's "Whirling Tempest," and Mr. Parsons' other picture "Gravetye Manor." Mr. Wimperis' "Water Meadows" in the North Room must not be omitted.

Mr. Wontner sends two portraits of women under fancy titles, "Rosamonde" and "The Love-Philtre." They are both well painted in a hard and highly finished style. Herbert Schmalz has a large picture called "Her first Offering," full of pure, bright colour, but one of those works which fail to interest, one scarcely knows why.

A Book of the Week.

A PSYCHICAL STUDY.*

DR. ARABELLA KENEALY has achieved deserved success as a medical practitioner, but she has gained a larger success in the wider field of literature. Each of the books which she has published has been marked both by originality and by indisputable literary genius. Her last book, however, we have no hesitation in thinking, places her in the first rank of women writers of the present day. It will appeal most forcibly to scientific people and especially to medical men, each one of whom ought to read the book in question. "The Honourable Mrs. Spoor," whose very title is a grim irony, is a lady over whose past a veil is lightly drawn, while sufficient is disclosed in artistic word-shadows to show that her husband, in introducing her to ordinary County society, was taking a step which might, and in the sequel undoubtedly did, bring upon himself the reprobation of Mrs. Grundy. The story itself can only be rightly understood by realising that it is a remarkable psychical study of a woman destitute of the ordinary restraining influences of a gentle education and upbringing. Mrs. Spoor has the undisciplined mind and uncurbed feelings incidental to her previous life and surroundings, and her mental instability and physical *abandon* are dissected and laid bare by the hand of a skilled anatomist. The manner in which alcohol combined with chloral acts upon the human nervous system, is graphically delineated by touches which perhaps only medical men and nurses will thoroughly appreciate. One can almost see Mrs. Spoor descending the steps which lead to *delirium tremens*, and the tremendous revulsion of feeling after one dramatic scene, during which she forswears stimulants and tries to live as other women, is wonderfully true to nature. There is a secret in the book which the writer requests may not be divulged to the reader, and upon which the story naturally hinges, and which when told, throws at once into high relief the morbid self-consciousness and desperate superstitiousness of the woman's mind and of her actions during the events which are described. Several of the other characters in the book are admirable, and the Duchess and the Theosophist are types which are easily recognised. They serve to lighten and relieve a physiological romance which is almost painful in its powerful intensity. "The Honourable Mrs. Spoor" will be widely read, and will be highly appreciated by those who understand the psychical and scientific problems involved in the story. It is the best work which Miss Kenealy has done, so far; and we believe those who have admired her former novels will recognise the great advance and superiority of this book, not only over her previous literary essays, but also over the great majority of the romances of the present day. We have no hesitation in predicting that with the graceful diction and fluency of thought and expression always evinced by Miss Kenealy, and with the power shown by her creation of Mrs. Spoor, this gifted writer will produce still better and greater work in the future.

* "The Honourable Mrs. Spoor," by Dr. Arabella Kenealy. (Digby, Long & Co.)

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