

Angelica Kauffmann's "Vestal Virgin" were sold by the thousand daily!

But no such pitfalls as these need trouble the visitor to our London treasure-house. The fullest possible justice is done to every masterpiece (except the exquisite Pietà of Francia, which is hung in far too small a room) and there reigns everywhere a peace, a leisure, a roominess, a sense of calm in the midst of turmoil, which makes one feel that the great masters can scarcely regret the bearing of their work across the sea, to bring to us such a message of pure colour, gracious line, and heart's devotion in an age which knows everything, except how to imitate them!

A Book of the Week.

MEMOIRS OF THE PRINCESSE DE LAMBALLE.*

THE original edition of these Memoirs was published in the year 1826, seventy years ago, and it is now very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a copy; therefore many people who are interested in Marie Antoinette and the terrible history of the Revolution will be glad that Messrs. Nichols & Co. have elected to re-print them in their Series of Court Memoirs which they are bringing out from time to time.

The confidential friend of the Princess Lamballe, who edits these memoirs, was constantly employed both by her and the Queen to travel backwards and forwards to England and Germany with secret letters written in a cipher of which she possessed the key. She lived intimately with her patroness and her royal mistress, and therefore apparently was well able to write with discrimination about the secret history of the Court during those tragic times.

Princess Lamballe herself describes the advent of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette as bride to the Dauphin of France. From the very first the sword of Damocles hung over her pretty head, and in spite of all her gentleness, sweetness and beauty, she was fated to do impolitic acts and utter impolitic speeches. She trusted in the wrong people, and according to the writer of these memoirs she also *distrusted* the wrong people with even more disastrous results. The vacillating policy of Louis XVI. is vividly described, and the culpable folly of the historical reception of the Flanders regiment, and the rejection of Dumourier's offers of aid, and the manner in which the Queen flouted his proofs of sincere repentance. Reading their inner life at the Court of France makes one well understand how the French Revolution was brought about. The editor of these journals most truly points out.—

"A sovereign who creates a numerous aristocracy commits two substantial errors. First he lessens his own dignity. Secondly, he alienates the affections of the bulk of his subjects. . . . This vicious condescension, and I may say abuse, of the royal power, was one of the many causes of the French

* "Secret Memoirs of the Royal Family of France during the Revolution." Published from the Journals, Letters and Conversations of the Princess Lamballe. By a Lady of Rank in the confidential service of that unfortunate Princess. With a portrait and cipher of the secret correspondence of Marie Antoinette. Two volumes (H. S. Nichols & Co., London. 1895).

Revolution. . . . It was principally that super-numerous plebeian aristocracy, who, jealous of the exclusive prerogatives of the higher classes of the nobility, and wishing to humble them, and share their immunities, shook the fabric to its foundation, were crushed themselves by its fall, and with it buried the monarchy under the ruins of the nation. . . . To attempt to reform a Court without radically reforming the courtiers was therefore an absurdity, the proof of which has been written, in France, in characters of blood."

The above quotation is full of perception, and as it presents rather a new view of the state of things during the reigns of Louis XV. and XVI., seems worthy of extraction. Day after day these journals and letters record how troubles thicken around the royal victims. Day after day we read the "Queen wept," or "was dissolved in tears," and Princess Lamballe receives a ring as a present from the miserable Sovereign, set with her own hair, which had whitened like that of a person of eighty, and bearing the pathetic inscription "Bleached by sorrow." The one royal character that in simple unselfish devotion towers above the rest is that of the Princess Elizabeth, who during these fearful times lived for the King and Queen, and never seemed to think of her own sorrows and sufferings; but hardly less than her, the Princess Lamballe shows herself to have been the most loyal, devoted and faithful friend that Marie Antoinette ever had, not even excepting the Duchess de Polignac, governess to the little Dauphin and his sister. The heartless conduct of the majority of the French clergy the Princess Lamballe describes:—

"The Princess Elizabeth and myself used our utmost exertions to induce some of the higher orders of the clergy to set the example, and obtain for themselves the credit of offering up a part of the revenues, the whole of which we knew must be forfeited if they continued obstinate; but it was impossible to move them."

The Queen was constantly implored to fly from Treves, and seek her own personal safety in her native country, but her brave Majesty uniformly rejected the proposition. "I have no wish," cried the Queen, "for myself. My life or death must be encircled by the arms of my husband and my family; with them, and with them only, will I live or die."

The terrible death of Princess Lamballe, one of the first victims of the Revolution, is described with sickening details; little wonder that the horror of it remained with her faithful friend, the editor of these memoirs, to the end of her life.

A. M. G.

Bookland.

MRS. PLUNKETT KENNY has planned a simple, yet ambitious series of stories. Taking a number of girls leaving an Irish convent school, with all the strange and mystical, and, too often, disappointing futures before them, she has undertaken to tell of their fortunes and vicissitudes—or to allow them to do so in diaries which they promise to keep faithfully for reproduction long afterwards. But the first of the series, "A State of Life," gives good earnest of the authoress's capacity to perform her task. Stella O'Neil's pretty love story, ending somewhat sadly, as some will say, in her peaceful retreat to a convent, holds the attention of the reader to the end; nor will many care to skip the theological controversies which Mrs. Plunkett Kenny conducts skillfully and eloquently in the latter portion of the book.

Mr. W. E. Tirebuck has written a new story entitled

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