

A Book of the Week.

"A FOREIGNER."*

THIS Anglo-German study is a very readable novel. From the first it engages the attention and sustains the reader's interest till the end. Mr. Dalrymple, a widower of a somewhat selfish disposition, returns from his West Indian estates to find his two daughters grown up. He is somewhat like a bewildered wren returning to a cosy nest, and finding it full of sturdy young cuckoos. His amazement and annoyance are amusing, and his one idea is to get his girls married as soon as possible, that he may be left free to wander once more about the globe and paint amateur pictures of what he sees there. While this gentleman and his attractive daughters are sojourning at Salzburg, the elder sister, Phemie, falls in love with an Austrian officer, and their mutual attachment ends in marriage. The account of the English bride's home-coming to the Salzburg flat, and her amazement at the want of baths, tea, and such like necessities, is very well described. I have myself stayed a great deal in foreign houses, and know well how bewildering the want of the ordinary luxuries of English life strike an Englishwoman. To add to poor Phemie's troubles, the mother of a former *fiancée* of her husband's lives in the apartment above her own, and drops in every hour to counsel and advise the young bride. At first this good lady is full of "feelings," and is always hinting how much better her dear departed "Melita" would have organised and managed the little establishment. The furniture and the pictures, the feather-laden beds, and the bare rooms have all been chosen by the departed one, and Phemie finds it very difficult to replace them by her own draperies and nick-nacks.

Baron Wolfsberg is devoted to his English wife, but, nevertheless, life as a German house-frau is not altogether a bed of roses for Phemie. Home-sick, with longing for a sniff of her native air and a sight of her sister and friends, the bride of the Austrian officer returns to Edinburgh rather unexpectedly, while her husband was away for a time on a political enterprise connected with regimental horses. When she arrives in Scotland she enjoys the amusements and luxuries of life among her relations so very much that she keeps lingering and delaying her return, and her husband being too proud to request her to resume her duties, she becomes involved in a kind of half-hearted flirtation with a companion of her youth, and the consequences might have proved disastrous if— But no, I will not spoil the reader's interest by revealing the story, only I hope I have told enough of its outline to make them wish to read it for themselves. Personally, I enjoyed its perusal greatly. It is well written, deals with no profound and uncomfortable problems of life, and the contrast between Austrian and English social life is dwelt upon with sympathetic comprehension of the idiosyncracies of both nationalities. The sentimentality which English-bred people find so peculiar among the more demonstrative inhabitants of Europe is here well defined:—

"Captain Immhausen and his wife, solely absorbed in each other's society, were displaying their conjugal affection in a frank, unabashed fashion, decidedly startling to English ideas. Husband and wife belonged to the dumpling order

of beauty, and their union seemed to have been determined by motives of analogy. She called him "Mein Schatz" (my sweetheart), to which endearing appellation he responded by calling her "Mein Kind" (my child); and she evidently regarded it as a delicate and tender attention on his part, when, having with his finger and thumb selected a large lump of sugar, he proceeded to dip it into the contents of his own coffee cup, and then playfully popped it between the rosy expectant lips of his delighted little wife."

Phemie's younger sister, Chrissie, who, in the course of the story, forms an alliance with a fox-hunting squire, is an original young woman with very decided ideas as to how to live her life on this planet with most satisfaction and least trouble to herself. She says:—

"Running away from one's husband in the open light of day, and with the companion of one's choice, is a brave, honest sort of action . . . but as to a woman taking up with another man behind his back, merely because the shape of his nose or the cut of his eyebrows happened to please her better—that is a thing which I consider utterly vile and contemptible, besides being so entirely devoid of common sense."

Mrs. Chrissie is an entertaining young lady, and many of her remarks would be worth reading a second time. "A Foreigner" is much above the average type of novel. If it is not a work of the highest type, it is, at any rate, pre-eminently wholesome and entertaining—a somewhat rare combination!

A. M. G.

Bookland.

WHAT TO READ.

"The Great Rift Valley": a Journey to Mount Kenya and Lake Baringo. With some account of the Geography, Geology, Native Races, Fauna and Flora of the Region, and a Sketch of the National Migrations in British East Africa, and Remarks on its Future, by J. W. Gregory, of the Natural History Museum, South Kensington. (John Murray, Albemarle Street.)

"Conversations with Carlyle," by Sir James Cavan Duffy, K.C.M.G. A new edition. (London: Cassell & Co.)

"In the Northman's Land: Travel, Sport, and Folk-Lore in the Hardanger Fjord and Fjeld," by Major A. F. Mockler-Ferryman, F.R.G.S., F.Z.S. With Map, Illustrations, and Appendix.

"Life and Letters," by John T. Morse. Mr. Morse's excellent "Life" of his uncle, Oliver Wendell Holmes.

"History of the German People at the close of the Middle Ages," by Johannes Janssen. Translated by M. A. Mitchell and A. M. Christie.

"His Excellency's English Governess," by Sydney C. Grier. (William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London.)

"The Unconscious Humourist, and other Essays," by E. H. Lacombe Watson. (London: Elkin Matthews, Vigo Street, W.)

"People We Pass by," by Julian Ralph. (New York: Harper's.)

"A Stolen Mask," by Roma White. (London: A. W. Innes & Co.)

"Mr. Magnus," (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Paternoster Square, E.C.)

"Caprices." Poems, by T. Wratishaw.

"Orchids." New Poems, by T. Wratishaw.

* "A Foreigner," by E. Gerard (Madame Laszowska). 6s. (Blackwood and Sons.)

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