

A Book of the Week.

"MACLEOD OF THE CAMERONS."*

ALL who read the "Self-denying Ordinance" will be glad of a chance to read another book by the same hand. And "Macleod of the Camerons" is in no sense disappointing; the dialogue is good, the observation acute, the drawing of character smart, if not very deep. There is a certain reserve in dealing with certain subjects very fashionable just now, that makes one inclined to think that M. Hamilton is a man. The writer preserves her secret on the whole with admirable discretion, but, on page 175 she finally gives herself away to the acute observer:

"Gerty came into the drawing-room in a very pretty pale pink frock, with a burnt straw hat trimmed to match, and a brown coat and shoes, and sunshade."

Burnt straw! No sort of doubt after that! M. Hamilton is a woman, and we are very proud to welcome her to the ranks of distinguished women of the day.

Christina Stoddart is a girl of good, nay, aristocratic birth, who is neglected at home, and who, at the age of nineteen, falls in with a young naval engineer, who makes desperate love to her, flatters the lonely heart of the unsophisticated girl, and induces her to go through the marriage ceremony with him before he departs to his appointment in China. The story opens on board a P. and O. steamer; three years later Christina is on her way to join her husband, who is now stationed at Malta. They have never met since their wedding day, and in the interval Christina has had three seasons in town, has come to know that she has abilities, and has taken to writing stories. The situation is not exactly new, but it is full of possibilities. The unknown husband may turn out anything in the way of an utter surprise; Christina even doubts whether she shall know him by sight. The account of their first meeting is excellent, but it is a shame to spoil the story by quoting it.

The account of life in the little world of the Malta garrison reads as if from life, and it would not be surprising to hear that there were real persons who smarted under the personal application of characters like the Whites, Mr. Grant, Lord Ruskin, and Gerty.

The account of the little evening party in the White's flat is exceedingly funny; and the main cleverness of the book lies in the continual friction between poor Christina and the people who form her husband's set. It is not that they are less good, or less kind than the people in her own set, only that they are so different as to be quite incomprehensible.

The tragedy of the fate that overhangs poor Macleod is a thing which has been much dealt with in recent fiction. It needs an expert to say whether the gradual approach of the homicidal madness is here correctly described; but it sounds real enough, and grim enough. The service which he exacts from Christina, is also one of those moral dilemmas of which we have perhaps lately had more than enough. It is not at all unlike "Mrs Keith's crime," though we must admit to feeling

a good deal more sympathy with Mrs Keith's action than with Mrs. George Stoddart's.

The account of George's family and their Manchester home seems a little overdone; but it must be very difficult to avoid exaggeration in such a case; and we leave poor Christina in her hopelessly mediocre surroundings with a good deal of reluctance, for she is a brave and dignified heroine, with very little of the claim to "live her own life" which is the glory of modern heroines, and, strange to say, a consideration for her husband's feelings which might almost be called excessive.

G. M. R.

Bookland.

MESSRS. OLIPHANT, ANDERSON AND FERRIER will publish in a few days an interesting booklet containing a biographical sketch of Lady Blanche Balfour, the sister of Lord Salisbury, and mother of Mr. Arthur Balfour. The little work, which will include a number of portraits and illustrations, has been written by the Rev. James Robertson, D.D., of Whittinghame.

LIFE'S WORK.

All service ranks the same with God;
If now, as formerly He trod
Paradise, His presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.

Say not "a small event!" Why "small"?
Costs it more pain that this, ye call
A "great event," should come to pass,
Than that? Untwine me from the mass
Of deeds which make up life, one deed,
Power shall fall short in or exceed!

ROBERT BROWNING.

WHAT TO READ.

"The Garden of Romance," by Ernest Rhys. (London: Kegan Paul & Co.)

"The Flight of the Eagle," by Standish O'Grady. (London: Laurence and Bullen.)

"Margot," by Sidney Dickering. (London: Laurence & Bullen.)

"Life of Gordon," by Demetrius C. Boulger. (London: Fisher Unwin.)

"Cecil Rhodes," by Dr. Jameson. (London: Chapman & Hall.)

"The Sepoy Revolt." A critical narrative. By Lieut.-General McLeod Innes, V.C. (London: A. D. Innes & Co.)

"The Well-Beloved: A Sketch of a Temperament," by Thomas Hardy. (Osgood, McIlvaine and Co.)

"A Story of the Supernatural Flames," by Robert Hichens.

"The Money-Spinner," by Henry Seton Merriman and S. G. Tallentyre. (Smith, Elder & Co.)

* "Macleod of the Camerons," by M. Hamilton, author of A "Self-denying Ordinance." (Heinemann.)

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