

## A Book of the Week.

### "THE ACTOR-MANAGER."\*

MR. MERRICK'S last book, "Cynthia," was so extremely clever, that I always regretted that it came into my hands too late for me to review it in the "RECORD." I eagerly hastened to get his new one, "The Actor-Manager," and it is in almost all respects worthy of its predecessor.

There is a wonderful quality of freshness in this writer's style. He puts before you things as they are, but knows how to illumine all with that touch of glow and grace which the realist is so apt to ignore. Above all, he believes that there are good women and good men, and that self-sacrifice and self-control are worth while.

The opening chapters of the story are really beyond all praise. One sees before one the dingy restaurant, the habitual haunt of those soiled-looking students who work and strive and starve at the British Museum. One sees the awful aspect of that part of London on Christmas Day, the shut shops, the dreary street, the aimlessness of everything, in the absence of the ordinary stream of workers. Alma King, is a delightful girl, one's whole heart goes out to her, just as Royce's must have done; and when she disappears from the pages, on tour with a South African company, she leaves a gap in the story which is only filled by her reappearance.

Meanwhile, that has been happening to Royce which so certainly would have happened to one of his temperament. His drama is accepted and put on the stage, and the girl who plays the heroine makes a grand success. In his joy, he goes near to deifying the vulgar-minded clever little actress who fills the part so entirely according to his dreams.

He has only himself to thank; for she refuses him over and over again, but continued proximity is too much for him and he marries her at last.

Then he begins to find out how wide apart are their hopes and aims. To succeed—no matter how, no matter in what—that is the object of Mrs. Royce Oliphant. To have plenty of money, to entertain, to revel in frocks and furniture, to have theatrical paragraphs in the papers, and her full-length photo in the entrance of the theatre. The scene in which she brings home an objectionable part, wild with delight over the big salary she is to earn, is one of the best.

Royce is weak, of course—that is to say he is an example of the curious power of the man in love to blind his eyes and stop his ears, and utterly decline to look at the character of the woman who has bewitched him. While a man is in love, that critical faculty seems to become entirely dormant, only to awake with great force when the passion subsides. This is, of course, the reason of nine out of ten unhappy marriages. Anyone could tell the lover that this woman on whom he has set his heart will never make him happy; but it is no use to speak! However, with all his weakness, Royce is entirely noble and loveable. He is a good man, and he is not a prig. His grief at the death of his little child is so written, that one hesitates to apply to it any stock word of commendation.

To my mind, the tale is somewhat injured by the last scene. That Blanche should have done what she is here made to do, is more than likely; but was it

\*"The Actor-Manager." By Leonard Merrick. Grant Richards.

necessary for the success of the book that the where and when should be chronicled? In "Cynthia," I admired so much the great delicacy with which Mr. Merrick handled a difficult subject. I would prefer that the latter half of the last chapter of "The Actor-Manager" had been left unwritten.

With this exception, the book is an admirable whole, well balanced, well worked up, and, for those who are fond of the stage, of very great interest.

G. M. R.

### WHAT TO READ.

- "Charles I." By Sir John Skelton, K.C.B.
- "Sir Benjamin Brodie." By Timothy Holmes.
- "Cyrano de Bergerac." By Edmond Rostand, translated by Gladys Thomas and Mary F. Guillemard.
- "Life is Life." By Zack.
- "Ezekiel's Sin." By J. H. Pearce.
- "Modern Instances." By Ella D'Arcy.
- "The Wheel of God." By George Egerton.
- "The Dull Miss Archinard." By Anne Douglas Sedgwick.

### Coming Events.

July 11th.—The Princess of Wales opens the science laboratories of the London School of Medicine for Women, 4.

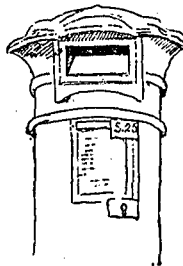
July 12th.—Annual Meeting of Royal British Nurses' Association at the East Conference Hall of the Imperial Institute, South Kensington, 4 p.m.

July 13th.—Mr. Balfour distributes prizes at Guy's Hospital Medical School, 3.30.

July 16th.—Garden party at Mitcham Hall, members of the Registered Nurses' Society invited, 4 to 7 p.m.

### Letters to the Editor.

#### NOTES, QUERIES. &c.



*Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not in ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.*

#### POST GRADUATE LECTURES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—The path of preliminary training for nurses is doubtless beset with difficulties. At least it is our own fault if we were not properly impressed with this truth at the recent Conference of the Matrons' Council. We are waiting for many things—for the co-operation of the training schools, for instance, which seems about as likely to come to us as the proverbial green cheese which we know the moon is made of, if we could only get hold of a slice; or till some millionaire founds a College of Nursing (*we* wouldn't refuse his gift, as the Government did the noble offer of Mr. Alfred Harmsworth); or till doctors agree instead of differing, and they decide—leaving the opinions and wishes of

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