

A Book of the Week.

A MORMON PROPHET.*

ALL of us probably, at some time in our lives,—that is, if we are in the least interested in the study of human eccentricities and human emotions,—have been conscious of a desire to know how the curious sect known as "Mormons" originated, and how it came to be what it afterwards was, a tyranny rigid and exclusive, with low moral standards, and a hateful system of espionage and despotism. Such a system cannot arise full grown in a day, or a week; how did a people who insist upon using their own judgment, to the extent to which the Americans do, ever come to be tied and bound, to the number of tens of thousands, by the chains of such a captivity?

This question is so ably answered by Miss Dougall in her new romance, that the reader who only wants an interesting story will find that she has secured not only that, but a fresh light upon a most fascinating page of history.

Susannah, the daughter of an American mother, and an English father, comes to live with her New England relations, Aunt, Uncle, and cousin Ephraim, a silent man of thirty, with a wise head, full of curious reading, and a consequent impatience of the bigotry and sectarianism of his excellent parents. To him, Susannah becomes the centre of existence. But Susannah falls in with Joseph Smith, the first prophet of Mormonism, and the whole current of her life is changed.

Joseph Smith was the son of parents of the very lowest social rank. He was barely five-and-twenty when he began to preach, and the question as to how far he believed what he taught, and how far he consciously deceived, could be settled for us only by such a mind as created "Mr. Sludge, the Medium."

Joseph Smith professed to have had revealed to him, by an angel, some gold plates upon which were written, in an unknown tongue, the Book of Mormon, which was an inspired account of the aboriginal inhabitants of America, from the flood to the time of Columbus. This he was guided to interpret and translate; and three of the men who heard him dictate were so convinced that such a document could not proceed from the brain of an ignorant young field-labourer, that they advanced the money for its publication. The doctrines of the new prophet differed but slightly from the commonly received forms of dissent as then preached in America. His morality was sound, and his faith great. It seems to have been the prophecy that, in the Mormon church, the promise that the saints should possess the earth, was to be literally fulfilled, which filled the people of the United States with such a mad blind rage against the sect. It was no doubt the persecutions they endured that made the Mormons become, after their troubles were over, so cruel to those who were not of their creed.

Polygamy was never part of the original plan, and, up to his martyrdom, Smith never taught it.

The account of the terrible winter march of the "Latter-day Saints," driven out of Missouri at the point of the bayonet, is very fine; so is the awful story of the massacre of Haun's Mill, and of the death of

* "A Mormon Prophet." By Lily Dougall. A. and C. Black.

poor Susannah's little child. Her own escape, too, from the luxurious Mormon city, which has now become to her an odious cage, which she can only leave at risk of her life, is of breathless interest; and Miss Dougall has pity on her readers, and gives this noble woman rest at last, after her struggles, in the home of her girlhood, where her shy, grave lover has remained faithful, and welcomes her with the devotion which at last she understands and appreciates.

G. M. R.

A Life's Parallels.

NEVER on this side of the grave again,
On this side of the river,
On this side of the garner of the grain,
Never,—

Ever while time flows on and on and on,
That narrow, noiseless river;
Ever while corn bows, heavy-headed, wan,
Ever,—

Never despairing, often fainting, rueing,
But looking back, ah never!
Faint yet pursuing, faint yet still pursuing,
Ever.

WHAT TO READ.

- "Poems of Emile Verhaeren." Selected and rendered into English by Alma Strettell.
"Poems." By A. Bernard Miall.
"Idylls of Old Greece." By Ambrose N. Blatchford, B.A.
"Tennyson: a Critical Study." By Stephen Gwynn.
"Fragments of an Autobiography." By Felix Moscheles.
"A Daughter of the Vine." By Gertrude Atherton.
"The Marble King." By Lilian Quiller-Couch.
"Young Lives." By Richard Le Gallienne.
"Cousin Ivo." By Mrs. Alfred Sidgwick.
"An Opera and Lady Grasmere." By Albert Kinross.

Coming Events.

March 24th.—Annual Meeting, University College Hospital, Gower Street.

March 27th.—Royal Sea-Bathing Hospital—Annual Court.

March 29th.—North London Hospital for Consumption—Annual Meeting.

Annual Meeting, Hospital for Throat Diseases, 11, Chandos Street.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)