

## The Book of the Week.

THE FOWLER.\*

It is with feelings of the keenest interest that we take up a new book by this author. It is with every faculty stimulated, every hope renewed, that we lay it down again.

The tender, human outlook upon life, the enthusiasm, the nameless charm, of Beatrice Harraden, have had their due effect upon us, and we thank her, especially if we be women, for her book of truth and beauty.

The name of the Fowler is Theodore Bevan; and his mission in life is to dig a pit for the feet of young girls, and to press down their souls. From the innermost recesses of his soul outwards to his most trivial word or action, he is a piece of carefully studied insincerity.

It is a wonderfully imagined portrait. The man has no passions, and in consequence he is able to take his time, to let the slow corrosion of his mock pessimism eat into the hearts of the girls he elects to ruin, while all the time subtly conveying to them the notion that he is a sad, lonely, embittered fellow, and that in their society lies his only hope of ever becoming anything else. He is cowardly, cunning, cruel; yet so well is his rôle studied that the noble-minded Nora does not see through him, and solaces herself, when her nature most revolts from him, with the thought of his temperate justice, his wide patience, his absence of malice.

Perhaps the most cleverly imagined part of the book, is the slow and gradual awakening of Nora from her bondage. But almost as good is the process of her gradual, inevitable estrangement from her father. This father of Nora, Roger Penhurst, is a truly delightful person. His language is pleasingly natural, his hastiness with Nora, and the resulting slow alienation, so true to life. Of what use for the poor old, simple-minded man to revolt when the fowler could lay his snares with such consummate and devilish skill?

And yet—and here is the touch of genius—it is, after all, the simple and direct method that overcomes the malice of the tempter. It is Madge Carson and Brian Uppingham between them who clear away the mists and help the sun to rise, by simply telling the truth.

Nurse Isabel is a delightful person also, very true to life, and I should say, from a living model. The country folks are not quite so successful; there is a suggestion of stagginess about their simple devotion to their social superiors, which is a little reminiscent of the late Hannah More.

It is perhaps hyper-criticism to ask Miss Harraden what she means by saying that Mr. Penhurst was organist "at one of the Catholic Churches" in London? Which are the un-Catholic ones?

I wish I had space to quote some of the charming bits of thought and philosophy which are sprinkled through these invigorating pages. The observation of life is both shrewd and kindly, for instance—

"My dearest friend, who, during the last epidemic of 'women's books, wrote one of the most miserable and 'most successful, was always talking about the 'burden of 'living.' I must say, however, that, since the success of 'her book, her spirits have considerably improved; but I

\* By Beatrice Harraden. Blackwood and Sons.

"believe it is a known fact that six editions have a wonderful effect upon nervous depression, altering one's whole way of looking at existence. I never thought 'much of the book until I saw what good it had done her.' This is excellent, and there is much more of the same sort to soothe and cheer the jaded reader, between the covers of 'The Fowler.'"

G. M. R.

## Bookland.

Where'er great pity is and piteousness,  
Where'er great Love and Love's strange sorrow stay,  
Where'er men cease to curse, but bend to bless  
Frail brethren fashioned like themselves of clay;  
Where'er the lamb and lion side by side  
Lie down in peace, where'er on land or sea  
Infinite Love and Mercy heavenly eyed  
Emerge, there stirs the God that is to be!

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Turn from that mirage of a God on high  
Holding the sceptre of a creed outworn,  
And hearken to the faint half-human cry  
Of Nature quickening with the God unborn!

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

## WHAT TO READ.

- "The Temple of Mut in Asher: An Account of the Excavation of the Temple, etc." By Margaret Benson and Janet Gourlay. The Inscriptions by Percy E. Newberry.  
"The Bath Road." By Charles G. Harper.  
"Reminiscences." By Justin McCarthy, M.P.  
"The Awkward Age." By Henry James.  
"Ragged Lady." By W. D. Howells.  
"Tandra." By Andrew Quantock.  
"England's Peril." By William Le Queux.  
"The Newspaper Girl." By Mrs. C. N. Williamson.  
"On the Edge of a Precipice." By M. A. Dickens.

## Coming Events.

May 13th.—Princess Christian presides at the Annual Meeting of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association, Royal United Service Institution, 3.

Lady Campbell-Bannerman reopens the Passmore Edwards' Hospital for Willesden, Harlesden Road, 3.

May 15th.—The Duke of Connaught presides at the Festival Dinner of the East London Hospital for Children, Whitehall Rooms.

North Eastern Hospital for Children, Hackney Road, Annual Meeting of Governors.

May 16th.—Princess Henry of Battenberg opens the New Hospital Buildings at Beckenham.

Concert and Variety Entertainment, under the patronage of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales and Her Royal Highness the Duchess of York, in aid of the funds of "The Free Home for the Dying" (The Chase, Clapham), Grosvenor House, 3.

May 17th.—The Queen lays the Foundation Stone of the New Museum Buildings at South Kensington.

May 18th.—Annual Meeting of Hospital for Women, Soho Square.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)