

A Book of the Week.

'POSTLE FARM.*

THIS is a new story, by the author of the "Larramys," a book which left the impression of a strange power, of a distinctly original type.

This quality of originality is much less marked in the author's second venture. The aged retainer who is bribed to make away with the child who stands between his master and the property, and is only half-hearted in his villainy, so that the child is able to grow up, a living incarnation of her dead mother—and the worn-out roué who trembles before the said likeness, and murmurs words such as "'Tis she—she come back from the grave!" We know these bits of stage property well, they come from Sheffield; and so does the glorious, beautiful, tawny-haired heroine, with a mind above her station. And yet, somehow, Cathie is not stereotyped, even though she has Gaelic blood in her veins, and a good deal of second sight is dragged in by the heels. The least satisfactory part of the book is the reflection that, at the moment of her unworthy lover's shameful importunity, it is not virtue, not pride that holds the girl back, but merely the vision of the "Shining lady," which makes her afraid to get into the boat.

But there are some delicious touches in Cathie's character; perhaps the most delightful is when Temple, the man who loves, but does not mean to marry her, brings Elsie, the girl whom he only likes, but means to marry, to call upon the rustic beauty. Elsie's patronage of the magnificent Cathie, and Cathie's entire enjoyment of the situation, and dexterous manipulation of Elsie's weak points, are very good reading.

"A delightful sense of mutual amusement stirred Temple, but he controlled it. It was hideous for them to laugh together over Elsie.

"The girl watched him closely. Now that he was not observing her there was even a little timidity in her mien.

"A sense that she was fighting at that moment for all that her life was worth, caused her breath to come unevenly. If only he would look up, and join her laugh!

"He looked up, but his eyes were grave.

"'I wanted her to appreciate you,' he said. 'Why did you make a fool of me?'

"'Not o' you,' she said; and for the first time in all their intercourse, the heart she had sought to imprison so closely leapt into her voice, and shone for one moment in her eyes."

George Ford is an adept in the description of brute strength. William Larramy had the most wonderful effect upon the imagination of the reader, terrifying, making one fear with deadly fear what he might do on the next page. Miah Sluman also has this horrible fascination. Every time Miah opens the door, you shake in your shoes. But he is a singularly ineffective villain, and in this quite true to life. His immense stupidity prevents his being really dangerous. He fears Cathie, though he could crush out her life with a blow. She is a mysterious being, with unknown and therefore dreadful powers. That a girl of such appearance, and with a complete hiatus in her memory, should get the reputation, in a Devon village, of having the evil eye, is extremely likely, and Cathie was clever enough to make use of her reputation in that line. Elsie Clavers,

* 'Postle Farm. By George Ford. Blackwood and Sons.

Madge Montague, and Miss Scottie, are rather irrelevant people, and one feels they require more explanation than the writer gives them. Robert Montague is delightful, but more of him would be an improvement. Temple is a good example of the man with no strength to be really good, or really bad.

It is an interesting story, but the large amount of dialect will somewhat spoil the pleasure of some readers.

G. M. R.

Poem.

Thick is the darkness—
Sunward, O sunward!
Rough is the highway—
Onward, still onward!
Dawn harbours surely
East of the shadows.
Facing us somewhere
Spread the sweet meadows.
Upward and forward!
Time will restore us:
Light is above us,
Rest is before us.

From "A Book of Verses."

By WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY.

WHAT TO READ.

- "The Awakening of Women." By Frances Swiney.
- "From Peking to Petersburg." By Arnot Reid.
- "The Market Place." Harold Frederic.
- "In this Our World." Verse. By Charlotte Perkins Stetson.
- "The House of Strange Secrets." By A. Eric Bayly.

Coming Events.

June 30th.—Matrons' Council Dinner, Criterion Restaurant. Reception of members and guests in the Prince's Rooms by the Chairman, Miss Isla Stewart, at 7.30 p.m. Dinner, Victoria Room, 8 p.m. The Badge of the Society will be presented to the Hon. Members present at the Dinner.

July 1st.—Second Annual Conference of the Matrons' Council, at 20, Hanover Square. Miss Isla Stewart, Chairman of the Council, will preside. 10.30 a.m.

International Congress of Women—Garden Party at Fulham Palace, 4 p.m.

July 3rd.—Service at Westminster Abbey. The Bishop of Southampton will preach to the International Congress of Women, 3 p.m.

July 4th.—Reception of the International Council of Women by the Countess of Aberdeen, at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, Piccadilly, 9.30 p.m.

July 5th.—Princess Louise distributes Badges and Certificates to Queen's Nurses, Kensington Palace, 3.30 p.m.

The Duchess of Albany opens the Gravesend Hospital Fête, Rosherville Gardens, 2.30 p.m.

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