

## A Book of the Week.

## OUR LADY OF DARKNESS.\*

Again Mr. Capes has gone to the arena of the French Revolution for his inspiration; but the result is by no means so satisfying nor so seductive as were the adventures of the Comte de la Muette.

The book is a far more ambitious attempt than was that other. It is full of research and care; the style is polished to the point of being irritating, the historical allusions are wonderfully correct, and here and there the author succeeds in giving us a taste of the real strange power which held us enchanted over his earlier work. But the book leaves us wondering why it was written.

The hero is Edward Murk, heir to a wicked old Viscount, and it is the young man's fancy to travel in France afoot, and to view human nature as a philosopher. He is a most delightful change from the usual type of male novelist's hero, inasmuch as he is really and truly chaste. For this the author apologizes continually. He admits that the coldness of this young man is quite abnormal. In face of the extremely elementary methods of the two French village maids, Théroigne and Nicette, who lay siege to his heart, I think the apology quite uncalled for.

A man is not cold-blooded because he is not instantly accessible to the solicitations of vice; he is probably capable of a far warmer, deeper, truer passion for the right woman, when he meets her, than is he whose senses are more easily swayed. Escaping the very obvious nets of these two sirens, the young man returns to England, and falls a victim to the charms of the celebrated Pamela, that historic *protégée* of Madame de Genlis, whom scandal called the daughter of Duke *Egalité*.

Pamela, after giving him a certain amount of encouragement, is betrothed to Lord Edward Fitzgerald. So all the three women who cross the hero's path are unworthy, and he is left desolate at the foot of the guillotine whereon Nicette perishes. The author seems to think that Nicette should be an object of sympathy, because of her great love. But she is too loathsome for that; she murders her little orphan brother, whom she also ill-treats, she invents a vision of the Virgin, and lives in luxury on the proceeds of her reputed sainthood. The fact that she is extremely fond of Edward Murk, does not seem to weigh in the scale against these things.

Théroigne, the magnificent village beauty, seduced and abandoned by a vicious young nobleman who plays at Republicanism, goes first to London, then to Paris, and finally becomes one of the harpies of the Terror—though, being unprepared to go the lengths which are reached by some of her associates, she is finally almost torn to pieces by the mob.

We have a glimpse of Sheridan, as a widower, and also of that strange creature, the Chevalier D'Eon, whose sex was a matter of dispute until the day of her death, when she turned out to be a man.

But, from beginning to end of the book, there is no human being with whom we feel ourselves in sympathy, save the hero himself; and of his virtues the author is evidently ashamed.

G. M. R.

\* By Bernard Capes. Blackwood.

## WHAT TO READ.

- "Betwixt Two Seas. Poems and Ballads." Written at Constantinople and Therapia. By Violet Fane.  
 "Myth and Romance." Being a Book of Verses.  
 "The Transvaal from Within. A Private Record of Public Affairs." By J. P. Fitzpatrick.  
 "A Tale of the Siege of Delhi." By Colonel A. F. P. Harcourt.  
 "Mary Reed, Missionary to the Lepers." By John Jackson.  
 "The Jamesons." By Mary E. Wilkins.  
 "Illusion: a Romance of Modern Egypt." By E. Livingston Prescott.  
 "Two Women in the Klondike." By Mary E. Hitchcock.  
 "A Plaster Saint." By Annie Edwardes.  
 "The Tower of Dago." By Maurus Jokai.

## Coming Events.

October 25th.—The Archbishop of Canterbury presides at the Annual Distribution of Prizes to the Students of the St. George's Hospital Medical School.

October 26th.—Quarterly meeting of the Matrons' Council, at the Matron's House, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 4.30 p.m. The Executive Committee will meet at 4 p.m.

## RESOLUTIONS TO BE PROPOSED AT THE MEETING OF THE MATRONS' COUNCIL.

1. That, for the future, the Matrons' Council be composed only of Members who shall be trained nurses who are, or have been, Matrons of hospitals.
2. That No. 5 of the objects of the Society be deleted.
3. That the Matrons' Council define a curriculum on Hospital Economics, in view of the establishment of such a course of instruction for those trained nurses desirous of further qualifying for the position of Matron and Superintendent of Nursing.
4. That the Matrons' Council form a Provisional Committee to consider the organization of a National Council of Nurses, in view of affiliating with the International Council of Nurses.

October 27th.—Annual Meeting of the National Union of Women Workers—the National Council of Women for Great Britain and Ireland—at the Cavendish Rooms, Mortimer Street, W. Reports will be presented by the Secretary and Treasurer, the Secretaries of Sub-Committees, and by the delegates to the International Council of Women; and the Council will proceed to elect a President, twenty Vice-Presidents, six members of the Executive, and a Treasurer for 1900. 11 a.m.

October 27th.—Meeting at 21, Carlton House Terrace, by the kind permission of Lady Frederick Cavendish, convened by the Women's Local Government Society, to consider the steps to be taken to remove the disabilities imposed upon women by the London Government Bill. Admission to delegates by ticket. 8 p.m.

November 3rd.—Meeting of the British members of the Provisional Committee of the International Council of Nurses, to consider the Constitution of the Council, 20, Upper Wimpole Street. 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

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