

says: "In apportioning the work to female convicts no social distinction is shown; it is regulated entirely by the consideration due to health and physical capacity. There were fifteen women employed at the laundry work, and they looked hale and hearty over it. They have the best modern appliances, and an open, breezy, drying-ground, where the things are bleached and sweetened in the fresh country air. In the large, airy work-room twenty-three women were busy either with machine or needle, turning out business-like, well made, neatly finished serge suits for the Greenwich Naval Hospital, and trim serge dresses for the female officers. Every article of clothing worn by the prisoners is made on the premises, and the making of Post Office bags also forms part of their work. In the twine shop some twenty women were employed in converting the twine yarn, bought in Scotland, into taut balls of stout string for the use of the Post Office. Seven hundred and twenty pounds of string are turned out per week, and used solely for Government purposes. The kitchen and flower gardens are entirely cultivated by women of good conduct, under the supervision of a male gardener. One of the exercise grounds has gaily planted beds, round which run the two circular flagged paths where the convicts take their daily walks. Those who cannot move as fast as the others are allowed to use the smaller circle."

A Book of the Week.

ONORA.*

LADY GILBERT'S story has an Irish setting. It is an Idyll of the Green Isle—fresh, tender and dewy, as if enfolded in the very atmosphere of the misty Western seas. There is about it an artless grace of narration, limpid and clear. There seems no straining after effect; and yet, as I once heard said of an impressionist artist, "she gets her effect all right."

Onora begins with an eviction. There is no bitterness in the book, yet the author's sympathies are evidently with the Land League. The idea she gives us is the idea of a patient, industrious people, ceaselessly toiling, passionately clinging to an unproductive soil, denying themselves the merest necessities of life in their frugal self-denial, in order to pay an exorbitant rent—a rent the barren land cannot produce.

Is this a true picture of rural Ireland? I am not an eye-witness, but it does not tally with the character I hear from those who live among these people. Ireland, very possibly, differs in different districts, and a Youghal peasant may be as unlike one from Sligo as a Yorkshire dalesman differs from a Sussex cowherd. But this relentless industry, and sobriety and pinching, and earnest effort to pay one's way in the face of cruel difficulties—well! It throws a new light on sister Erin; and for new light one is grateful, always.

An effective picture is that drawn for us in the "gombeen man." This personage is one who lends money on farms—of course, at a ruinous rate of interest—and so gradually draws into his net the struggling tenantry. The story is a simple one, but so well told that, from first to last, the interest holds you; and to add to the charm of the story proper, there is a store of Irish folk-lore interspersed. Whenever any kind of festivity is arranged, those who can

tell stories, are to the fore; and nothing could be more delightful than the tale of the Princess Farola, or the weird ghost story in which the mother kisses the ice-cold lips of her dead husband, and lays on her breast the ice-cold limbs of her dead babies. There is nothing to show whether this beautiful ballad is original, or a reproduction of something that the author has heard. If original, it is of very great merit.

And, in the discussion that follows the legend, the true Irish humour peeps out.

"Sure, me gran'mother, that seen the ghost—didn't half the children die on her, and the other half got into the emigrant ship, and away with them, afore ere a wan o' em was able to earn as much as a cup o'tay for her!"

"An' where on earth did you come from, Biddy O'Flanagan," said someone, "if a body might make bold to ask such a question?"

A laugh ran round the circle like a light wave on a summer shore. Biddy looked a bit puzzled and flustered, but her love of mirth carried her out of the dilemma, and the longest and heartiest laugh she listened to, was her own.

"Well, I suppose it was my gran'aunt," said she. "A gran'aunt is as good as a gran'mother, any day."

Sabina Doolan is a fine person, and the whole incident concerning her well told, and not overdone. Joe Aherne was a lover to be proud of. Altogether the book, though simple, is charming; and just now, where you will find ten books that you call "clever," you only here and there light upon one that possesses that rare, good gift, the power to charm.

G. M. R.

WHAT TO READ.

- "From Capetown to Ladysmith." By G. W. Steevens.
- "Cromwell: A Speech delivered at the Cromwell Tercentenary Celebration, 1899." By Lord Rosebery.
- "Human Babies: Some of Their Characters." By S. S. Buckman, F.G.S.
- "How Women May Earn a Living." By Helen Churchill Candee.
- "Red Coat Romances." By E. Livingston Prescott.
- "Andromeda: an Idyll of the Great River." By Robert Buchanan.
- "Nemo." By Theo. Douglas.
- "Mr. Thomas Atkins." By E. J. Hardy, M.A.

Coming Events.

March 13th.—Royal Colonial Institute. Lord Loch will preside at a Dinner at the Whitehall Rooms, Hotel Metropole, 6.15. Dr. Patrick Manson, on "A School of Tropical Medicine," 8.

March 14th.—The Italian Ambassador opens the new Italian Hospital, Queen's Square, 3.

March 15th.—Lord Mayor presides at annual court of governors of Royal Chest Hospital, City Road.

March 20th.—The annual exhibition of the Royal Amateur Art Society will be opened at two o'clock at 7, Chesterfield Gardens, Mayfair, by the Marchioness of Lansdowne, in aid of the "Officers" Families Fund, the Parochial Mission Womens Fund, and the East London Nursing Association.

March 21st.—Annual general meeting University College Hospital, 4 p.m.

* By Rosa Mulholland. (Lady Gilbert.) Grant Richards.

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