

## A Book of the Week.

### THE GOBLIN.\*

This book is so much out of the ordinary run of novels that it is rather surprising that reviewers have bestowed so little attention upon it. Perhaps the fact of its undue length has balked those shirkers of duty who like a book, as was lately said to me, "which you can get through between Charing Cross and the Mansion House."

Though the "Goblin" is long, it is not dull, and it is even in parts very funny indeed. The authors have a rare insight into the minds of little boys. That queer trio, Archie, Willie and Lord Calliard, who appear outside the drawing-room door in the first chapter on their way downstairs, the Bishop having asked to see them, are extremely amusing. Willie's version of "Excelsior" is worth quoting—

The shades of night was falling fast  
As through the Alpine villain passed  
A youth who bored with snow and mice  
The banner with the strange advice,  
Eleazar!

King Arthur's advice to his knights "to love one maiden ever" becomes in Willie's diction, "To shove one maiden over"; and Lord Calliard triumphantly explains that a "maiden over" is when there are no runs. Willie's understanding of Cowper's well-known hymn—

Can a woman's tender care  
Cease towards the child she bear?

is, of course, a chestnut; but the idea which follows is quaint indeed. Willie is sobbing out his heart because a fox has been killed by the hounds in their garden. Archie, to comfort him, sings "Around the throne of God in heaven, Thousands of children stand," but Willie implores that for his peace of mind, "Foxes" may be substituted, so Archie manfully sings—

Around the throne of God in heaven,  
Thousands of foxes stand.

The after career of the three is mingled in a curious way. Regarded as a love story, the book is unsatisfactory, for Ruth is a very straw-like heroine. Both she and the authors of the book appear to have a kind of blind belief that you must marry someone—if not the man you want, then the man that wants you, or one of the men that want you, will do; the less objectionable, for choice; but should he fail to come up to the scratch, then the most intolerable of all, only it must be somebody! Misfortune certainly comes to Ruth for acting on these lines; but the writers have more pity than blame for her. She is in love with Archie, but marries Calliard, who has developed into a low-church street preacher, and holder of conventicles: and apparently would have married Fat Freddy, had his lordship not come forward.

But throughout, the book is saved by its humour. The authors firmly believe in Mallock's wonderful saying, that the more sense of humour a cultivated man has, the more delightful he is, but that the more the vulgar man has, the more intolerable he is. This they freely exemplify in the characters of Dr. Frazer and Cousin Fred. The scene is in Yorkshire, and there is dialect, but no surfeit thereof; one of the

\* By Catherine and Florence Foster. (Wells, Gardner, Darton and Co.)

best bits in the book is Archie's opinion on the modern novel. It is to be found on page 120, but is unfortunately too long for quotation here.

The sketch of the mad mother of Archie and Willie is a powerful one. Why Archie is called the Goblin, never transpires. What is a Goblin exactly, and how would one show Goblin-like characteristics?

G. M. R.

## Verses.

### TO A TOWN BIRD.

Poor London bird, what do you say  
Up in the black elm tree?  
How can you sing your happy lay  
Far from the pure country?  
Less sweet your song, shorter, more bold,  
Up in the black elm tree,  
Than the glad bird that sang of old  
In the dear west country.  
Black are the boughs, foggy the air,  
Chimneys and smoke you see,  
Yet your song sounds, as if life were fair,  
Though far from the west country.  
Is it your love is just as true,  
Up in the black town tree,  
Your mate as sweet and precious to you  
As in the west country?  
Sing on, town bird. Happiness lives,  
From trammels of circumstance free.  
Unselfish love peace and joy gives  
Though far from the west country.

*Westminster Gazette.*

E. E. J.

### TO A BOOK-WORM.

Oh, gentle worm, most wise, though oft denounced a  
pest,  
Who didst the pages of the ancients' books infest,  
Their contents chew upon and inwardly digest,  
I envy thee when o'er thy course I look.  
For 'twixt the vellum walls of some sweet classic  
tome,  
'Mid leaves ink-scented, thou didst have thy cloistered  
home,  
All margined round with virgin fields in which to  
roam  
Whene'er thou caredst to leave thy lettered nook.  
And when thou 'dst riddle thy last line, O Ptinidus,  
What happy destiny was thine, denied to us,  
To lay thy sapient bones in such sarcophagus,  
And be forever buried in a book!

JOHN H. FINLEY in the *March Century*.

## What to Read.

- "The Wings of the Morning." By Helen V. Savile.
- "A History of the Four Georges and of William the Fourth." By Justin McCarthy and Justin Huntly McCarthy.
- "Eben Holden: A Tale of the North Country." By Irving Bacheller.
- "The Countess Cosel." From the Polish of J. Kraszewski. By the Count de Soissons.

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