

A Book of the Week.

A NARROW WAY.*

Miss Mary Findlater has not the tragic power of the hand that wrote the "Green Graves of Balgowrie," but she has a charm of her own which is conspicuously rare in these days—the ability to chronicle faithfully and delicately, with a touch of sweet playfulness, the small happenings of a narrow life. As William Watson says of Wordsworth in his immortal poem, she draws her inspiration "from the mysterious heart of common things."

To the mind of the present reviewer, there is a powerful fascination in the thoughts and feelings of a woman to whom life is untried and new; who has lived in the tasteless, insipid routine prescribed for her by another, a routine in which, as Kitty says in this delightful story "there are no men," and no happenings beyond Zenana meetings and the arrival of a stray missionary; to trace the mind of a girl so brought up, when brought into contact with the actual world of movement and reality, and love, and sorrow and sin, is a study yielding the most interesting results.

While condemning most fully the narrowness of Kitty's rearing, and making one feel to the utmost how far short her old aunt fell of her duty to the child whose mind and affections she starved, Miss Findlater yet realizes the immense value of the backbone of stern piety and conscientious devotion to duty with which this training had endowed the girl. The book is dedicated "To an old lady," with some charming lines. The old lady must I think, be meant for what Kitty herself would become in the old age which spares not the heroines of novels; and here is the pretty thought which is the central idea of the story:—

For each of all your days, when read aright,
Is like some ancient missal's flaming page
Bordered with garlands, roses, fantasies,
Writ in the midst with precepts of the Law.

Most delicately is this idea evolved. Marks, the widower, married very young to a pretty girl with whom he had no real sympathy, has been for years in love with the beautiful Mrs. Livingstone. In her he sees all the ease, the grace of life, the *savoir faire*, the experience of the world which have been denied to Kitty. But, when, his path clear at last by the death of Mrs. Livingstone's bad husband, he finds her lacking in that inflexible inner fabric of principle which Kitty holds so sacred, the scales drop from his eyes, and he realises that "we needs must choose the highest, when we see it."

Miss Findlater must of course remember that she is describing the effect of this training upon a very unusual mind. The fresh, limpid imagination of Kitty could find enjoyment everywhere, could be amused by folly and remain uninfluenced by bigotry and cant. A woman of small mind, brought up as Kitty was, would have become intolerable; an empty formalist, unable to comprehend, unable to sympathize with anything.

Every character in the book is most carefully shown, the descriptive powers of the writer are of the very highest order. The sketch of Mrs. Simmie and her household grips the mind with an overpowering sense of reality.

* By Mary Findlater. Methuen and Co.

One of the best told things in the book is the account of poor Kitty's disillusionment over her first proposal. She has been so accustomed to put away all the real surroundings of her life, and encircle herself with an imaginary world in which all things are fair, that she is chiefly impressed all the time with the fact of how plain poor Horatio looks, and of the ugliness of reality.

One often puts down a book which ends in marriage, with a more than doubtful feeling as to the future of the couple in question. In this case one has no doubt; the marriage between Dr. Marks and Kitty must have been a success.

G. M. R.

Verses.

THE PEACE OF PITY.

O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother!
Where pity dwells, the joy of peace is there:
To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.
Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of those whose holy work was doing good;
So shall the wide earth seem a human temple
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.
Then shall all shackles fall, the stormy clangour
Of wild war music o'er the earth shall cease;
Love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,
And in its ashes plant the tree of peace.

WHITTIER.

What to Read.

- "The Reign of Woman under Queen Victoria:" Dealing with the Art, Fashions, Literature, Music, and Philanthropy of the Reign.
- "Little Memoirs of the Eighteenth Century." By George Paston.
- "Mount Omi and Beyond." A record of travel on the Tibetan Border. By Archibald John Little, F.R.G.S.
- "His Lordship's Whim." By Gordon Cuming Whadcoat.
- "Casting of Nets." By Richard Bagot.
- "The Cardinal's Rose." By Van Tassel Sutphen.
- "Another Englishwoman's Love Letters." By Barry Pain.
- "Pictures and Problems from London Police Courts." By Thomas Holmes.
- "East London." By Walter Besant.

OPALITE.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

MADAM,—Our theatre walls are lined with opalite, and we find it most satisfactory both in regard to cleanliness, appearance, and durability. The theatre is three years old, and I have only known two cracks—one the result of being well thumped with stretcher poles. Of course it is expensive, but, like all good things, economical in the end.

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