

to walk through the forest by the edge of the water. The walk is said to be one mile; as one who has walked it I think the matter is open to dispute; but whether one mile or two it is an exquisite scene and quite worth doing, and one will be rewarded by a sight of the Cascade and the ruins, which are said to have been brought from Pompeii. Then, if the pedestrian has been sufficiently active, time is allowed for tea, which can be obtained in the picturesque garden of the "Wheatshaf Hotel."

The brake drives round and waits for the party at the hotel door, and you drive back by another road which, though less pretty than the other way, is still charming enough to make it pleasurable.

The drivers generally time their return to Windsor so as to suit an express train to town, and the sight-seer may reach Paddington at 6.35, feeling thoroughly pleased and refreshed with her outing for the modest sum of five shillings.

LUCY M. RAE.

## A Book of the Week.

OLDFIELD.\*

The average level of the books produced nowadays must be very high; otherwise the book before us must surely have leaped into notoriety. It is no exaggeration to say that Miss Banks has produced an American "Cranford."

Her style has that delightful finish, that clearness, that love of detail, which distinguishes Mrs. Gaskell. It is long since anyone has produced a study more perfect in its way than that of the two little maiden sisters, Miss Judy and Miss Sophia Branwell.

But it is not in the study of the little sisters alone, but in the whole presentment of the village, that a success of no mean order has been achieved. Oldfield lives before us. Kitty Mills and Miss Pettus are as real as the Doctor or old Lady Gordon, and perhaps Tom and Anne Watson are the crowning triumph.

Tom, a huge giant of a man, with an inherent taste for gambling, has married Anne, the rigid Baptist, believing from the bottom of her soul in the Manichean heresy of the inherent evil of matter in general, and cards in particular.

"Merely look at them, you grovel  
Hand and foot in Belial's gripe."

Tom is stricken down by an awful accident, and survives, a helpless, useless cripple, unable to do anything to divert his mind. The doctor, in the greatness of his compassion, implores Anne to consider the miserable monotony of his existence, and to indulge him in the only thing that could possibly amuse him—a game of cards. Her horror, her distress, her almost frenzy, her utter inability to see outside of her own narrow faith, are so extreme as to be almost sublime. Says the doctor:—

"Foolish or wise, she believes what she does believe. By the eternal, I'd like to hear anyone doubt it! Why, young sir, that little slim unbending splinter of a woman is the stuff that they threw to the beasts in old Rome."

Anne's martyrdom comes when at last she finds that Tom *will* play cards, and decides that, if so, she herself must play with him.

\* By Nancy Huston Banks. Macmillan.

"I can't let you—or anyone—do for my husband what I am not willing to do myself. I can't ask another to commit sin for him in my stead. If it must be done, it is I who must do it; not anyone else."

"It was not long before she could play, after a fashion and from that time on she played ceaselessly through every waking moment, stopping only for the meals that neither husband nor wife could eat. . . . And always Anne played with the unaltered belief—firm as her belief in the plan of salvation—that she staked on every game the relief of her husband's body against the saving of his soul."

O, modern wives! where is our unselfishness after this?

The curious, wonderful, and wholly American personality of Sidney Wendall is another of the author's triumphs. But Miss Judy is the crowning achievement. Her sweet absurdities, her purity, her selflessness, wrap one's very heart about her. Her little delicacies—the last dying murmur concerning a "gentlewoman's bedchamber"—the pitiful economies, the transparent pretences, all the greatness and the smallness, the love and the faith, the intense human loveliness of the dear little creature, make it well-nigh as impossible to be critical of the hand which drew her portrait with such insight, as it would have been to disparage her dainty self, with the perfume of dried rose-leaves always about her. We shall look eagerly for another book from this hand. It is a style which now finds too few expositors. G. M. R.

## Salt and Sunny Days.

Oh, silent glory of the summer day!  
How, then, we watched with glad and indolent eyes  
The white-sailed ships dream on their shining way,  
Till, fading, they were mingled with the skies.  
Have we not watched her, too, on nights that steep  
The soul in peace of moonlight, softly move  
As a most passionate maiden, who in sleep  
Laughs low, and tosses in a dream of love?  
And when the heat broke up, and in its place  
Came the strong shouting days and nights that run,  
All white with stars, across the labouring ways  
Of billows warm with storm instead of sun,  
In grey and desolate twilights, when no feet  
Save ours might dare the shore, did we not come,  
Through winds that all in vain against us beat,  
Until we had the warm, sweet-smelling foam  
Full in our faces, and the frantic wind  
Shrieked 'round us, and our cheeks grew numb, then  
warm,

Until we felt our souls, no more confined,  
Mix with the waves, and strain against the storm?  
Oh, the immense, illimitable delight  
It is to stand by some tempestuous bay  
What time the great sea waxes warm and white  
And beats and blinds the following wind with spray.

By PHILLIP BOURKE MARSTON.  
From the *Open Road*.

## What to Read.

- "The Vultures." By Henry Seton Merriman.
- "The House under the Sea." By Max Pemberton.
- "The Honeycomb of Life." By Violet Tweedale.
- "The Sea Lady." By H. G. Wells.
- "The Eternal City." By Hall Caine.

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