

at what we will call the 'turnstile' of Society, and say (in veiled language, no doubt), 'What will you give in return for these introductions?' The answer comes later, honestly paid in some substantial form or other, a carriage, horses, or a sum of money purposely lost at a game of cards. Occasionally some charity benefits largely, but seldom in the real giver's name.

"Once through the gate," we are informed, "they are welcomed by many; albeit some may smile and call them 'vulgar,' in reality they are not more so than those who introduced them."

Do we not all know that inimitable sketch of the little, greasy, thievish Jew, pranked out in *outré* evening attire, exclaiming: "What, despise me! Rather not; I'm too beastly rich!" That little rogue is Sovereign Lord of Society—as spelt with a large S.

A Book of the Week.

CECILIA.*

Thought transference and telepathy seem to be in the air just now. One feels inclined to say that Mr. Crawford's story would never have seen the light had not Rudyard Kipling given us the "Finest Story in the World." But perhaps this is an injustice, for it is notorious that the same idea is sometimes in the air, as it were, and strikes not merely two, but many thoughtful minds, practically simultaneously. Mr. Crawford lays the scene of his tale in the Rome which he knows and loves so well—the Rome of to-day. His heroine is Cecilia Palladio, a young and beautiful heiress, who has a mind, and dares to read "Nietzsche." This young girl, living with a dearly-loving but totally unsympathetic mother, and living consequently a life alone, has acquired a power which, for want of a better name, we must call self-hypnotism. Keats reached the idea with that prophetic mind which is the proper adjunct of the poet; he described it as the "power to dream deliciously." Cecilia has acquired the art of such dreaming; and in her dream she is always Cecilia, one of the last of the Vestal Virgins. She imagines a whole life-story for herself, in the days of the early Christian Roman Empire, when the Emperor released the last Vestals from their vows, and bade them let the sacred fire expire, and go where they would.

One day Cecilia—the modern, rich, gay young Cecilia—is taken by her mother to the house of the Princess Anatolie, to be presented to the nephew of the Princess, whom the two ladies—her mother and his aunt—desire that she should marry. Guido Este, the nephew, duly appears, and with him is his friend Lamberto Lamberti, of an old Roman family. Cecilia at once recognises the face of Lamberti as the face of the man whom she constantly sees in her hypnotic dreams, as the man who loved her when she was a Vestal and might not indulge thoughts of love. The recognition is mutual, but this the girl does not know. That night her dream takes a new form. She thinks herself standing by a column in the Temple of Vesta, and that the man with Lamberti's face approaches; that they gaze at each other for a moment which seems an eternity, and that then their lips meet in a long kiss. Next morning, full of the dream, she actually goes to the ruined Forum, and there finds the real Lamberti,

who has had the same dream, and been drawn to the same place. Her terror overcomes her and she flees precipitately.

On these lines the story develops with an interest which keeps the reader breathless throughout, and yet which manages never even to border on the sensational. The two friends, Guido and Lamberti, are both so entirely charming, that one's only grief is that one of the two must infallibly be disappointed. Cecilia is charming throughout. When we place ourselves in Mr. Crawford's hands we have always the delightful confidence that his people will be men and women of honour, ruled by the motives and swayed by the traditions of a lofty race. The struggles and disappointments and victories of such people must be interesting in a way in which the lapses of the weak and self-indulgent can never be.

The interest of the story is doubtless much heightened for those who know Rome by the descriptions of the lately-excavated and fascinating remains of temple and cloister in the Forum. Lamberti, in his dream, sees the whole place re-constructed, and that in the manner in which authorities agree that it actually was. The author cleverly leaves the whole question as to the exact nature of the dream-intercourse between his hero and heroine undetermined. The last words of the book are:—

"I wonder whether we really met!"

G. M. R.

What to Read.

"The Prize Essay on the Erection of a Sanatorium for the Treatment of Tuberculosis in England." By Arthur Latham, M.A., M.D., in association with A. William West.

"Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet." By Sarat Chandra Das, C.I.E.

"A Doffed Coronet." By the author of "The Martyrdom of an Empress."

"Fugitive Anne." By Mrs. Campbell Praed.

"Moth and Rust." By Mary Cholmondeley.

"The Valley of Decision." By Edith Wharton.

"Is Society Worse Than it Was?" By Lady Guendolen Ramsden. "*Nineteenth Century and After.*"

Messrs. Black have just issued the first instalment of "London in the Eighteenth Century," by the late Sir Walter Besant. Alas! that he should have died before he had time to complete his projected survey of this monster city during that period. To judge from the volume presented, which is entrancingly interesting to those who know and love their London, the world is indeed the poorer that the whole story cannot be told by the same sympathetic pen.

Coming Events.

Meetings to discuss State Registration of Nurses:—

January 16th.—Chelsea Infirmary, 8 p.m.

January 22nd.—Fulham Infirmary, 5 p.m.

January 27th.—Brook Fever Hospital, 3 p.m.

January 29th.—Fountain Fever Hospital, 2.30 p.m.

February 5th.—St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 8.30 p.m.

January 23rd.—Annual meeting of the Matrons' Council, Matron's House, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 4 p.m.

* By F. Marion Crawford. Macmillan and Co.

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