

A Book of the Week.

LOVEY MARY.*

Even reviewers are fallible, and thus it came about that we missed Mrs. Wiggs when first she shed the light of her countenance on a world which stood sorely enough in need of her. But now Lovey Mary has come to keep her company, and we hasten to repair our omission, and to advise everybody to get them both and to read them in the order in which they appeared. A nurse just off a terrible case of a lingering death, which lasted more than five months, told the present reviewer that these two books were almost the only things which gave real pleasure and distraction to her patient's mind; that almost to the last she could smile over Lovey Mary, and recall the beautiful optimism of Mrs. Wiggs.

For Mrs. Wiggs is an optimist of the most exceptional description. The extremity of the cabbage patch is Mrs. Wiggs's opportunity. She always has a way out of every difficulty ready to her hand. As her ma used to say, "livin' was like quiltin'; you oughter keep the peace and throw away the scraps!"

The worst of attempting to give an idea of the good things in these books is the *embarras de richesse*; one would like to go on quoting. The performance of "Forst and Marguerite" on a stage already occupied by a loaded Christmas tree in a tub, which the minister firmly declines to have removed, is extremely tempting. But perhaps the episode of Tommy's breeches shows Mrs. Wiggs at her best.

"Besides her numerous other duties, Lovey Mary prepared an elaborate costume for Tommy. This had caused her some trouble, for Miss Hazy, who was sent to buy the goods for the trousers, exercised unwise economy in buying two remnants which did not match in colour or pattern.

"Why didn't you put your mind on it, Miss Hazy?" asked Lovey Mary, making an heroic effort to keep her temper. "You might have known I couldn't take Tommy to the show with one blue leg and one brown one. What must I do?"

"Miss Hazy sat dejectedly in the corner, wiping her eyes on her apron. 'You might go ast Mis' Wiggs,' she suggested as a forlorn hope.

"When Mrs. Wiggs was told the trouble, she smiled reassuringly. Emergencies were to her the spice of life; they furnished opportunities for the expression of her genius.

"Hush cryin', Miss Hazy; there ain't a speck of harm did. Mary kin make the front outen one piece an' the back outen the other. Nobody won't never know the difference, 'cause Tommy can't be going and comin' at the same time."

"The result was highly satisfactory—that is, to everybody but Tommy. He complained that there 'wasn't no room to set down.'"

For the account of the dramatic performance, the reader must be referred to the original. The only episode which sounds to the English reader a little weird and incomprehensible is the account of the suitor who came to Miss Hazy, and his final disappearance from the scene. The reader is left in doubt as to whether he was actually married to Miss Hazy or not at the moment of his forcible abduction and removal to other spheres of usefulness. A deeper acquaintance with the methods of American matrimonial agencies would perhaps make this clear. G. M. R.

* By Alice Hegan Rice. Author of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch." Hodder and Stoughton.

A May Morning.

What magic flutes are these that make
Sweet melody at dawn,
And stir the dewy leaves to shake
Their silver on the lawn?

What miracle of music wrought
In shadowed groves is this?
All ecstasy of sound upcaught:
Song's apotheosis!

The dreaming lilies lift their heads
To listen and grow wise;
The fragrant roses from their beds
In sudden beauty rise:

Enraptured, on the eastern hill,
A moment, halts the sun;
Day breaks; and all again is still—
The thrushes' song is done!

—FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN, in the *May Atlantic*.

What to Read.

"The Life of Father Dolling" is published by Mr. Edward Arnold. It has been written by the Rev. C. E. Osborne, vicar of Seghill, who knew Father Dolling intimately for over twenty years, and was for over seven years his principal helper at St. Agatha's, Landport. Any author's profits accruing from the sale of the book will be devoted to the purposes of the Dolling Memorial Fund.

"The Exaggerators, and Other Tales." By Alan Field.

"Rambles in Womanland." By Max O'Rell.

"No Hero." By E. W. Hornung.

"The Diary of a Year: Passages in the Life of a Woman of the World."

"The Magnetic Girl." By Richard Marsh.

"The Gold Wolf." By Max Pemberton.

Coming Events.

May 25th.—Grand concert in aid of the North-Eastern Hospital for Children, arranged by the Duchess of Somerset, by permission of Lord Howard de Walden at Seaford House.

May 28th.—General Meeting of the League of St. John's House, followed by a Social Gathering, 2.30 to 6.30.

The Princess of Wales has signified her intention to be present at the Queen's Hall concert for the Paddington Green Children's Hospital, at which Madame Albani will sing, 3.

June 7th.—The King and Queen attend the Afternoon Service at St. Paul's Cathedral, when collections will be made on behalf of the London Hospitals.

June 8th.—The Princess of Wales opens the Nurses' Home of the British Lying-in Hospital, Endell Street, 3.30.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)