

El Book of the Week.

BEGGAR'S MANOR.*

Mr. Murray Gilchrist is a writer with a distinctly literary flavour; and his present book is almost entirely free from the smack of unpleasantness which marred "The Courtesy Dame."

Charles Babington is the hero—Charles, son of a miserable mother and a vicious father. Charles is the owner of Beggar's Manor, and, besides himself, there reside in the house his seven illegitimate aunts and uncles!!! A family which, as far as the memory of the present reviewer extends, is unique even in modern fiction.

These seven persons are all unmarried, all quite exemplary in mind and morals, all devoted to Charlie, whom they serve faithfully, cleansing and preserving the old shabby house, and taking the greatest pride in it.

Charlie, owing to the domestic complications of his father and grandfather, has been somewhat cold-shouldered by the county. But a kindly little gentleman of musical proclivities—Mr. Tobias Mozart Spurr—gives the lad a helping hand, urged thereto by Annabella, his beautiful daughter, who has fallen in love with young Babington's *beaux yeux*.

But poor Charlie is not free to declare his love to Annabella, since he has imprudently put himself in the power of Emma Lovekin, a farmer's daughter—a handsome, coarse-minded woman, clever and sensual—who has laid her trap carefully to catch the lonely fellow with a show of love.

It is Mr. Gilchrist's great charm that he succeeds fully in making his reader sympathise with the struggles, the weakness, the heroism, of the poor, motherless boy. Will Emma succeed? How far will she succeed? These are questions which carry us through the book before we are aware. When Emma, by means of a shameless trick, actually wrings from Charles a promise to marry her, the struggle is but begun. For Charles, though deciding that his honour compels him to make her mistress of Beggar's Manor, also decides to remain faithful to Annabella in word and in deed. Emma is little troubled by such a decision. Once married, she relies fully upon the power of her luxuriant physical charm to bring the man to her. They enter upon a conflict of wills, the issue of which is cleverly held in doubt by the author, and shall not here be betrayed. Each holds strong cards. Emma has her rich, ripe beauty, her position, and the undeniable fact of Charles's hereditary tendencies. Charles has the safeguard of a pure love for a pure maiden: and that is all.

The district round and about the Peak supplies the scenery, and what local colour there is well worked in. The scene at the sale of Emma's father's effects is perhaps the best; the people who come to buy, the auctioneer, the demeanour of Emma herself, all live before us.

Tobias Mozart, too, is a delightful figure. Perhaps the only thing one regrets is that he does not remain faithful to his life's romance. Still, Mrs. Swift has loved him always; and he would be left very solitary without her.

G. M. R.

* By R. Murray Gilchrist. Heinemann.

Laus Mortis.

Nay, why should I fear Death,
Who gives us life, and in exchange takes breath?

He is like cordial Spring
That lifts above the soil each buried thing;

The lordliest of all things!—
Life lends us only feet, Death gives us wings.

O all ye frightened folk,
Whether ye wear a crown or bear a yoke,

What daybreak need you fear?—
The Love will rule you there that guides you here.

Where Life, the sower, stands,
Scattering the ages from his swinging hands,

Thou waitest, Reaper lone,
Until the multitudinous grain hath grown.

Scythe-bearer, when thy blade
Harvests my flesh, let me be unafraid.

God's husbandman thou art,
In His unwithering sheaves O bind my heart!

—FRED. L. KNOWLES, in *Harper's Magazine*.

Prospice.

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,

The mist in my face,

When the snows begin, and the blasts denote

I am nearing the place,

The power of the night, the press of the storm,

The post of the foe;

Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,

Yet the strong man must go:

For the journey is done and the summit attained,

And the barriers fall,

Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,

The reward of it all.

I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,

The best and the last!

I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and fore-
bore,

And bade me creep past.

No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers,

The heroes of old,

Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears

Of pain, darkness and cold,

For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,

The black minute's at end,

And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave

Shall dwindle, shall blend,

Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,

Then a light, then thy breast,

O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,

And with God be the rest.

—ROBERT BROWNING.

What to Read.

"The Zollverein and British Industry." By J. Ramsey Macdonald, L.C.C.

"The Despised Sex." A Satirical Story, by W. T. Stead.

"A Matter of Morals." By Hugh Cayley. A novel dealing with English social life in India at the present time.

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