

A Book of the Week.

HEARTS IN EXILE.*

There comes always, just after Christmas, a lull in the production of fiction. Christmas, with its shower of gift books, is over, and the judicious publisher awaits the return to school of boys and girls after the holidays before producing the works of well-known authors. In another fortnight the new year's crop will begin to spring up; and I usually, during this short "off time," try to glean from among last season's books one or two of special merit, which the pressure of the season has obliged us to pass over. From among these I select to-day John Oxenham's "Hearts in Exile."

There are two reasons why this seems to me to be likely to prove particularly interesting to us. One is that it treats of Russia and things Russian at a time when Russia and her methods of government are looming very large upon the political horizon. The other is that this book forms a curious parallel with another book which has been a success of the year, and was duly noticed in these pages—"John Chilcote, M.P."

Both these books are written well. They have that pretension to be called literature which we flatter ourselves belongs to all the work noticed in these pages. But each of them depends entirely for its appeal to the public upon situation, and not upon character.

The situation in "Hearts in Exile" is, it must be confessed, a very strong one. A lovely young girl called Hope, daughter of a Russian father and an English mother, is a political propagandist. She is loved by Paul Pavlof and Serge Palma. Judging as one best can by the scanty light the author allows us, we conclude that she loves neither, but she marries Serge because he is rich, and because political propaganda need money to render them practically effective. Serge is a good fellow, and he and his wife live happily together. But one of their *protégés* murders an official. There is the usual sweeping arrest of everybody in general, and Serge Palma, who cares nothing whatever for the cause of Revolution except in so far as it is his wife's hobby, finds himself starting for Siberia.

Paul Pavlof, though he has removed to quite another part of Russia, is—probably with more reason—included in the arrests, and he and Palma meet on the great Siberian road. Pavlof's punishment is a lighter one than Palma's. He is to be sent to a district whence escape is possible; but Palma to Kara. In his love for Hope, Pavlof volunteers to change identities with Palma, and is sent to Kara, leaving Palma with the hope of getting away and rejoining his wife. Hope meanwhile has already started to Siberia to join her husband, which one feels, as she is the sole cause of his being there, is the least she could have done. She tracks him, arrives duly at her destination, is led to his hut, and finds—not Serge, but Paul!

Now this situation in the hands of a master would be poignant in the extreme. But we are not told by Mr. Oxenham the one thing that gives it its interest: we do not know the state of affairs between the man and the woman. We knew nothing of Hope Palma from first to last, except that apparently she gradually falls in love with Pavlof, so that, on hearing of her husband's death, she consents to live with him as his

wife. Of the two characters in contact, Mr. Oxenham has no conception, and so can give us none.

But of situation there is abundance, and the construction of the story is admirable from first to last. Sympathy, however, must rest wholly with Serge. His life and his death are equally a sacrifice to the woman he loves. It is a pity that Hope is so unsympathetic; and this in spite of Mr. Copping's lovely portrait.

G. M. R.

Some Other Day.

There are wonderful things we are going to do,
Some other day;
And harbours we hope to drift into,
Some other day.
With folded hands the oars that trail
We watch, and wait for a favourable gale
To fill the folds of an idle sail,—
Some other day.

All Saints.

I gaze in awe at the mystic saint
Who dwells in the light that the rainbows paint;
But I love the saints that darn and scrub,
And the tired old saint at the washing-tub.
—FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE, in the *Sunday Strand*.

What to Read.

- "A Song of a Single Note." By Amelia E. Barr.
- "The Youth of Washington." By S. Weir Mitchell.
- "History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages." By Johannes Janssen.
- "The Historical Tragedy of Nero." By K. H. D. Cecil.
- "Minor Melodies." By John M. Stuart-Young.
- "Alice in Motorland." By Horace M. Wyatt.
- "Wuthering Heights," "Agnes Grey," and Poems by the Brontë Sisters. Complete in one vol.
- "The Unveiling of Lhasa." By Edmund Candler.
- "The Biography of a Prairie Girl." By Eleanor Yates.
- "Leprosy in British India." By Wellesley C. Bailey.

Coming Events.

January 17th.—Annual Court of Governors of the Royal Waterloo Hospital for Children and Women, Waterloo Bridge Road, S.E., at the Mansion House, by the kind permission of the Lord Mayor. The Lady Mayoress, and the Sheriffs of London with their ladies, are expected to be present. 3 p.m.

January 27th.—Quarterly Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Society for State Registration of Trained Nurses, 431, Oxford Street. 4 p.m.

Matrons' Council Winter Meetings:—

February 5th.—Miss Amy Hughes on "The Work of County Nursing Associations."

March 10th.—Miss Helen Todd on "The Affiliation of the Smaller and Special Hospitals for Training Purposes," 431, Oxford Street, W. 8 p.m.

* By John Oxenham. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

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