

their hearers. Their fee is about a shilling an hour and if their stock-in-trade proves very delectable they go away with a handsome present. Some have regular clients, whom they visit at regular intervals. Such a profession," says an American exchange, "could not flourish in this country, as the entire population, male and female, young and old, are in constant practice."

Book of the Week.

IN SUBJECTION.*

Mrs. Felkin's new book shows us all the dazzling excellencies and all the glaring defects which we have found in all her work. Truth must compel us to admit, however unwillingly, that perhaps the defects are more to the front than usual. The tendency to preach, for example, which mars so much of her work is tremendously in evidence. The way in which she refuses ever to allow a situation to speak for itself is positively irritating. She is growing as moral as Maria Edgeworth, while by no means possessing that wonderful woman's powers of constructing a story.

To counterbalance this, we have the wit, the ease, the sparkling fun of her dialogue—the raciness which leads one on and on; and if she were to take to writing her books after the manner of the Dolly Dialogues—nothing but talk, and let the reader fill in the rest—one feels that they would gain enormously.

Take the delightful comparison between married and single life which opens the book. Two undeniably happy married people—Isabel Carnaby and her husband—are discussing it.

"Single life is like a road, because it is always leading on to something else. It isn't meant to be a permanent place of residence; and people who make it so are behaving like the children of Israel or the gipsies. They ought to fold up their tents, *à la* Longfellow's cares, or the Arabs, and 'silently steal away.' It is against the rules not to move on. . . . Of course, it isn't as cosy and settled and living-on-your-propertyish as marriage. But it is more exciting because it is always the way to somewhere else, and you are never quite sure where the turn of the road will take you. It is a road where all the finger-posts are pure guess work."

"But the mile-stones are not."

"No, worse luck! The mile-stones are dreadfully pronounced and staring before you are married, and are always coming to meet you and hitting you in the face. After you are married they seem to get a little moss-grown, and you don't notice them nearly so much. . . ."

The whole book is full of funny, sensible, shrewd bits such as:—

"Unsanctified human nature cannot endure to be revised and Bowdlerised for the sake of its 'in-laws'."

Or:—

"She seemed to me the sort of pleasant easy-going girl that one asks in at the last moment to make fourteen at dinner; not too clever to get

* By Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler (Mrs. Felkin). (Hutchinson & Co.)

married, and yet too stupid to remain single—the sort of woman to make a man really happy."

Or:—

"A man may be an admirable pastime but an extremely poor profession. He may excel as a recreation but become wearisome as a duty. He may prove delightful as a *hors d'œuvre*, but deadly as a *pièce de résistance*."

This is all delightful, but the plot is so silly that one merely tries to ignore it; and somehow the touch that is so true and so sure when writing merry flippancies sounds less genuine when the happiness of the respective married couples is in question. Of course, people have different ways of showing their devotion; but the methods of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Seaton and their friends seem a trifle crude.

G. M. R.

The Monk Remembers.

Johannes had one annual sin,
Committed when the days begin
To lengthen out in early May,
And bloom is on the hawthorn-spray.
And this one sin was worse by far
Than sudden moral lapses are;
These are spontaneous, done by chance;
That, calculated in advance.

For yearly, on the first of May,
Johannes woke before the day,
And couched in his ascetic cell
Spent the long hour till matin-bell
In sinful dreaming. First he heard
Some timid whistle of a bird
That was not sure the night was gone,
But wished he dared to sing alone.
Next, a swallow flying high
And balancing in palest sky,
The world below him lying dumb,
Would pipe the signal, "Day has come";
And then the birds would hail the light
And sing a requiem to-night;
And then the scent of may would rise
And tears would fill Johannes' eyes . . .
He could not but recall the day—
Years ago, that first of May!—
When rising early he had gone
To gather may with Alison;
And how they rambled hand-in-hand
Through the summer-breathing land,
Plucked the white and pulled the red,
What he whispered, what she said . . .
Just a word: they rambled on.
Cruel pretty Alison! . . .

Then through the year he would redeem
By penance his May-morning dream.

—From "A Mediæval Romance,"
in the *Cornhill Magazine* for June.

What to Read.

"Beyond the Rocks," a love story. By Elinor Glyn.
"The Undying Past." By Hermann Sudermann. Translated by Beatrice Marshall.
"Lady Baltimore." By Owen Wister.

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