

## Book of the Week.

### THE HOUSE OF LYNCH.\*

When Betty Lynch, the spoilt child of fortune, marries Richard Keith, an artist making a paltry four or five hundred a year by his work, she is under the delusion that she will eventually break down his proud resolve never to touch a farthing of her father's ill-gotten millions. But she lives to discover her mistake, and when the rosy glow of the honeymoon wanes, when household cares arise, and lastly, when her son is born, she pines for the old life of unlimited luxury. To make matters worse Keith is less successful than usual, and he feels the strain to be more than his resources will stand. Still, he will not give in. Betty promised at their marriage that she would not ask it of him, and he holds her to her word. But at last something breaks him; the boy is ill, an operation is necessary. Keith, unable to pay for it himself, cannot forbid Betty to cable to her father for the money. Lynch, the great Trust King, who has been waiting open-armed in the certainty that his spoiled child will eventually return cables a considerable sum, which Betty insists upon accepting. The renewed power of lavish expenditure acts upon the girl as the smell of spirits would upon a reforming dipsomaniac. On the head of it Betty returns with her son to her father's house, and tries to drown memory and conscience by resuming her old life. It is the wish of her father and her friends that she should divorce Keith, but to this she will not consent, and it is soon apparent that all that sufficed her in her careless girlhood is a hollow mockery to her now. Her whole attitude of mind has been changed, and she cannot help looking upon her father's money with a loathing that will not admit of her living upon it. At the same time she remembers the fiasco she has made of her married life, and she cannot make up her mind to go back to her husband and ask him to let her try again. She hits upon a very unique idea very much in keeping with the Betty we know at the outset. Indeed, Mr. Merrick presents us with a most consistent character throughout. Here is a nature with a passion for luxury, and an unawakened conscience, and when the latter is aroused it is a question as to whether it could ever get the mastery over the lifetime education, and a disposition partly inherited from her father.

Meanwhile Keith is left with what he fancies to be the answer to a question he had asked himself before taking the irrevocable step of marrying Betty on the strength of her own proposal to him: "Is a man selfish to try to make a girl renounce a fortune for him, or would he be only half a lover to let her go when they care for each other?" His fate seems very much like retribution, bereft as he is of wife and child, his very ambitions in abeyance since there is no one to share them. One does not feel that his life is broken, the nature that would stand fast for a principle that everyone calls him a fool for holding to is not one to go under eventually. There is nothing weak about Keith,

\* By Leonard Merrick. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

his character, too, is kept consistent to the end.

The very highest praise is accorded Mr. Merrick for his work on all sides. There is no doubt that he deserves it, and that this last book will add considerably to his popularity.

E. L. H.

### A BLIND HYMN WRITER.

The life of the author of the hymn, "O, Love that Wilt Not Let Me Go," should claim the interest of nurses. In Britain, the United States, and wherever the English language is spoken, these beautiful verses are known.

When and how the hymn was written is interesting. Dr. George Matheson was minister of Innellan a small country parish on the Clyde—and it was there, one beautiful June evening, that he wrote the verses. He had just returned from Glasgow, where the wedding of one of his sisters had taken place, and was all alone in his study. The work was quickly done; he thought in little more than five minutes; and after it was written he had the feeling that the hymn had been dictated to him rather than that he had thought it out.

Curiously enough the tune came to Dr. Peace somewhat similarly. Sitting one day on the sands at Arran he was reading, "O, Love that Wilt Not Let Me Go," when the tune came upon him like a flash, and taking out his pencil he dashed it off in a few minutes. "St. Margaret" has done for Dr. Matheson's hymn what "Lux Benigna" did for Cardinal Newman's "Lead Kindly Light."

By the time George Matheson had reached the age of eighteen he was blind. "The cause of the defective sight was found to be inflammation at the back of the eyes." Dr. Mackenzie, the leading oculist in Glasgow at that time, and other specialists, were consulted, but the only hope they held out was that if the lad lived to be an old man his sight might be restored. Dr. Matheson died at the age of sixty-four. His sight, for practical purposes, never returned, but one day, shortly before his death, when out driving with his sisters, he distinguished the colours of their veils.

In addition to study, and writings which would have been wonderful from a man in full possession of all his faculties, "the Blind Minister," as he was familiarly called, fulfilled for many years the arduous duties of a large Edinburgh parish.

E. A. S.

## Coming Events.

December 28th.—The Hospital for Women, Soho Square, London, W. Concert for the patients, 3.30—5.30 p.m.

December 31st and January 1st.—St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C. Christmas entertainment in the Great Hall, 8 p.m.

January 1st.—Pound Day at General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, Lambeth. 3—5 p.m.

January 2nd.—Charing Cross Hospital. The Nursing and Resident Staff "At Home." Tea and coffee, music, 7.30—11 p.m.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)