

Book of the Week.

DAPHNE, OR MARRIAGE À LA MODE.*

The sub-title warns the reader that he is embarking on the study of a painful subject. Mrs. Humphry Ward has in her own masterly style tackled one of the much discussed questions of the present day—the amazing discrepancies of the divorce laws, more especially those in America, above all when the case is one of mixed nationalities.

The hero, Roger Barnes, is a young Englishman of good birth, exceptionally good looks, and personal charm, but possessing small means, his father having lost his money just before his death, is induced by his mother, Lady Barnes, to visit America in order to pick up an heiress; he is accompanied by his uncle, General Hobson, an amusingly drawn character, full of insular prejudices, looking on Americans as a nation of rebels, and yet backing his nephew up in his pursuit of American money.

Roger is in many ways a fine young fellow, and most likable, the flaw in his character being a certain weakness which allows him to drift into what he feels is a mean action, making love to a girl for her money when his heart is not really in it. He is still feeling sore at having been jilted by the girl he was engaged to.

Daphne Floyd is not represented as a pleasing young woman. She has a certain fascination, and is, moreover, the owner of millions, over which she has sole control. Her Irish American lumber king father and Spanish South American mother have bequeathed to their daughter the heredity of a truly strange and unpleasant personality: the passionate temperament of the Southerner and the arrogant independence of the Northern American woman of advanced views, with a keen sense of money value, make a most disagreeable blend.

Having heard her frankly expressed views on marriage and divorce, it seems strange that Roger should have allowed her money and his need, to blind him to the fact of the unsuitability of such a mate for an Englishman. His is an easy affectionate nature, with a true English belief in himself, "and something natural and wild in him said, if he married this girl, he would be master in spite of her millions." Daphne captivated by his physical beauty, consents to marry him.

A period of three years elapses, and we next see them in England at Heston Park, Roger's ancestral home. He has become very fond of Daphne, and devoted to his little daughter, but one realises at once that he is not "Master," nor is he really happy. Daphne is imperious, and carries all before her, modernising the old house out of all recognition, turning out family portraits and cherished relics to make room for more artistic articles. Lady Barnes, after a brief resistance, amusingly described, stands aside. And now a new element of dispeace in the person of Roger's former fiancée comes into their lives; Chloe Fairmile, married, but parted from her husband, deliberately tries to make mischief, succeeding only too well.

Daphne's jealous nature is all aflame, after many painful scenes, and partial reconciliations, the end comes. Her brief passion for Roger has burnt out, and being incapable of real love, she leaves him without a word, taking her child with her, goes to one of the States where divorce is all too easy, ruthlessly frees herself in America from her marriage vows, leaving Roger bound to her in England.

With such a very unpleasant representative of America constantly before us, we are glad that there are some truly charming Americans brought before our notice. Captain Boyson is a really fine character, so is Elsie Maddison, the delightful Boston girl. They are most sympathetically drawn. So also is Madeleine Verrier, Daphne's friend. She is a pathetic figure of a young wife who has divorced her husband, and driven him to commit suicide by her action. Her remorse haunts her to the day of her death.

The book is of absorbing interest, most artistic in construction, and fully worthy of its gifted author.

E. L. H.

COMING EVENTS.

June 18th.—Meeting of the Executive Committee, the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, 431, Oxford Street, 4 p.m.

June 19th.—The King presents colours to battalions of the Territorial Force, at Windsor Castle. Some of the Territorial Force Nursing Service will attend.

June 21st.—Institute of Hygiene, Devonshire Street, W. A Conference on the Medical Inspection and Treatment of School Children.

June 23rd.—The Queen will open the Midsummer Fair and Fête at Olympia, in aid of the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street.

June 24th.—Colonial Nursing Association. The Annual Meeting, by the kind permission of Lady Wantage, will be held at 2, Carlton Gardens. H.R.H. Princess Christian will attend, and the Right Hon. Sir A. H. Hime, K.C.M.G., Vice-President, will preside. 3.30 p.m.

June 24th.—Meeting of Central Midwives' Board, Caxton House, Westminster, S.W., preceded by Penal Board, 2 p.m.

June 28th.—Conference between the Promoters of the three Bills for the State Registration of Nurses. Committee Room No. 16, House of Commons, 3 p.m.

July 1st.—Carnival at the Crystal Palace in aid of the removal of King's College Hospital to South London.

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

Grant, O God, Thy protection;
and in protection, strength;
and in strength, understanding;
and in understanding, knowledge;
and in knowledge, the knowledge of justice;
and in the knowledge of justice, the love of it;
and in that love, the love of all existences;
and in the love of all existences, the love of God,
God and all Goodness.

Gweddi yr Orsedd

(the beautiful old form of Druid prayer).

* By Mrs. Humphry Ward. (Cassell.)

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