

## Book of the Week.

## FRATERNITY.\*

Like the photographer's, Mr. Galsworthy's art sees below the mere surface, and this is clearly a book with a purpose. A profound and somewhat merciless student of human nature, Mr. Galsworthy views life through no rose-coloured spectacles; his latest book deals with the old, yet ever new, problem, as to the possibility of a Universal Brotherhood, and he certainly goes far to prove that under the existing conditions of life, such a brotherhood is impossible; very subtle is his reasoning, and much truth is spoken through the medium of the half-crazy old philosopher, Mr. Stone, whose whole life is given up to the writing of his great work on Universal Brotherhood.

"In social effort as in the physical processes of Nature, there had ever been a single fertilising agent, the mysterious and wonderful attraction known as Love. Man had yet to wait for his delirious impulse to Universal Brotherhood, and the forgetfulness of Self." The author proceeds to show that it is the utter absence of this essential quality, which renders all the well-meaning efforts of the possessors of "social consciences" of not much avail.

The interest of the story is chiefly centred in the various members of the Dallison family. Living in the heart of Kensington, eminently respectable, cultured, comfortably off, and kindly, with a vague idea that they ought to be interested in their poorer brethren, their various methods are passed in review, they are all admirable in their way, and all equally futile so far as real good goes. The Stephen Dallisons, who believe only in charitable societies, which "take time to enquire into details and find out the worst," are supremely natural in all their dealings. It is when we meet these conventional people in Hound Street, see them in close contact with the extremely poor, that the reader realises the utter impossibility of any real assimilation. "There is no chemical process so far as my knowledge goes, that does not make waste products. That there is a submerged tenth is as certain as that there is an emerged fiftieth, like ourselves, exactly who they are, and how they come, whether they can ever be improved away, is, I think, as uncertain as anything can be." So speaks Hilary Dallison, the most striking and interesting figure in the whole picture. A literary man a little over forty, married to a thoroughly unsympathetic woman, shy, ultra-refined, and sensitive, he makes an effort to give individual assistance to a poor girl, and in so doing very nearly makes complete shipwreck of his life. Here, once more, we have one of Mr. Galsworthy's subtle touches, this delicate-minded, gently nurtured man is saved from a grave mistake by the sense of smell, which "awakened in him the centuries of his gentility" at the crucial moment the "scent of stale violet powder . . . penetrated to Hilary's heart he started back in sheer physical revolt." Martin Stone, an enthusiastic young doctor, perhaps comes nearest the truth when he

\* By John Galsworthy. (Heinemann.)

points out that, the first essential to the poor is health, and to ensure that, there must be cleanliness. His friends laugh at him, calling him the "Sanatist." We are inclined to agree with the author that the classes will never freely mingle with the masses, because they know "whatever they may give, or time devote, their hearts could never open, unless—unless they closed their ears, and eyes, and noses."

Fraternity is a book to give one pause, to make one think, full of vital truths and deepest interest, dealing as it does with one of the burning questions of the day. It is no mere romance with which to while away an idle hour, but a story taken from real life, all the many characters well drawn, and the interest in the story never flags.

Mr. Galsworthy mercilessly shows up the failures on all sides, but, alas, suggests no remedy.

E. L. H.

## CONDITIONS.

Life, and the fire of youth, and the scent of Spring,  
And salt on the lips a wind that has known  
the sea;

Sun, and a lark to voice what the heart would  
sing—

How shall we doubt a God who lets these be?

Age, and the flames of courage fallen and dead;  
Grief at the heart, and dark in the toiling city;  
Home betrayed, and a body that cries for bread—  
How shall we praise a God who shows no pity?

E. C. in *Westminster Gazette*.

## Coming Events.

March 23rd.—A Public Meeting, Women's Local Government Society. In support of Dr. Shipman's Local Government Qualification Bill, Caxton Hall, Westminster, 4.30 p.m.

THE ROYAL INFIRMARY, EDINBURGH.

LECTURES.—Extra Mural Medical Theatre, 4.30 p.m. Trained Nurses cordially invited.

March 24th.—"The Treatment and Nursing of Some Cases of Abdominal Surgery," by Professor F. M. Caird, F.R.C.S.E.

ULSTER BRANCH, IRISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

March 25th.—The following Lecture will be given in the Club Room, 16, Crane's Buildings, Wellington Place, Belfast: "Nursing of Eye and Throat Cases," Dr. Cecil Shaw. Members may bring a friend on payment of sixpence to the Secretary.

April 7th.—Meeting of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, 431, Oxford Street, London, W., 3.30 p.m. To receive reports and make further arrangements for the International Congress of Nurses.

April 19th.—Queen Alexandra's Committee, Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses.—General Meeting, Adeline Duchess of Bedford presiding, 26, Bruton Street, 11.30.

April 20th.—Opening of the New Nurses' Home and Out-Patient Department of the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital by Princess Alexandra of Teck.

*previous page*

*next page*