

Book of the Week.

KATRINE.*

Though Miss Lane does not label her latest book a Romance, there is nevertheless a strong romantic element all through it, and taking into consideration the fact that some of the leading characters are Irish, of the best type, the others natives of one of the Southern States of America, the flavour of romance is easily accounted for.

This volume is given in Miss Lane's best manner, varied, easy, and never monotonous. The characters are all real, living human beings, and appeal to one as such; there are no absolute angels, and it is quite a relief to meet no absolute villains, a type too often considered needful to add excitement and interest to a book.

The "Preface" opens with these words, "It is difficult to tell the story of Irish folk intimately and convincingly, the bare truths concerning their splendid recklessness, their unproductive ardour, their loyalty, and creative memories, sounding to another race like a pack of lies."

Ravenel Plantation occupies a singular rise of the wooded land in North Carolina, and it is with the inhabitants of this plantation that we have to do. Mrs. Ravenel, a very charming widow, has an only son; Frank, when we first meet him, is what heredity and circumstances have made him. Good-looking, well born, well off, with no necessity to work, possessing a certain magnetic charm, which is born of a naturally sweet, though pleasure-loving disposition. He has often played at love, but at the age of twenty-five, has never thought seriously of marriage. It is not till he meets Katrine, the daughter of his overseer, Patrick Dulany, that he realises what love really means. She is very young and beautiful, with an extreme trustfulness and innocence, living alone with her father, and faithful Irish servant. She is easily attracted by Frank, whom she meets accidentally in the woods. He does not realise at first where Fate is leading them; it is a rude awakening to him when he does fully understand that for the first time he really loves, and that a girl, his family pride tells him, too much his inferior in rank for him to marry her. Any other relation, he knows, is impossible. There is a powerful scene when he tells Katrine what he believes to be the truth, which she accepts unquestioningly, though with a breaking heart. He leaves her, with the intention of forgetting, but he has not known this high-minded girl for nothing, she has awakened all that is best in him, and he cannot get away from the wish for a better, higher, more useful conception of life than he has ever had before. He feels he must do something, as he cannot forget, so wisely turns to that universal panacea, Work. "I'm going into business, mother," says Frank. "Well, dearest," Mrs. Ravenel says, "if it amuses you, I'm glad you thought of doing it," with which words the comprehending love of this aristocratic lady accepts what seems to her an impossible situation.

* By Elinor Macartney Lane. (Harpers.)

To Katrine also comes the boon of work. Her father dying, she goes to Paris to study music with a great master, to cultivate the splendid voice Nature has given her. All through her young life her most faithful friend has been Dermott McDermott, an Irishman with the warm heart and intense loyalty common to his race, combined with all an American's keen business sense. Once embarked in business, Frank and he often find their interests clashing, as also in their love for Katrine, whom Dermott has cared for, for years. She, whilst accepting his friendship unreservedly, knows she can give him no deeper love. As the old Irish servant says, "To an Irishwoman the drame comes but wance." Katrine asks Dermott, "Do you think any woman ever married the man who was kindest to her?" "It's unrecorded if it ever occurred," replies Dermott.

This is essentially a woman's book, and makes pleasant reading for her, showing what an enormous influence a really good high-minded woman has on the life of any man with whom she is brought intimately into contact.

Needless to say, with so much of the Irish element in the book, the gleams of real humour are constant. It is a rather short work, in spite of which Miss Lane crowds it with incidents and many really beautiful thoughts. We are glad she brings it to quite a happy conclusion.

E. L. H.

VERSE.

To the wise man in the city
Came the young man worn with fear,
Worn with watching and with thinking
How to serve his Master here.
And he said: "Oh, kindly father,
"Teach me truly how to pray;
"And to watch the holy flower
"Growing purer day by day."

And the old man answered smiling:
"Leave the watching to the All,
"Think not greatly of your rising,
"Think not greatly of your fall;
"Take the axe and take the hammer,
"Cleave the wood and break the stone,
"Let your labour be a greeting
"To the man who works alone."

LINA MOLLETT

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

A man may lose influence, position, wealth, and even health, and yet live on in comfort, if with resignation; but there is one thing without which human life becomes a burden, that is human sympathy.

F. W. FARRAR.

Things will always right themselves in time if only those who know what they want to do, and can do, persevere unremittingly in work and action.

GOETHE.

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