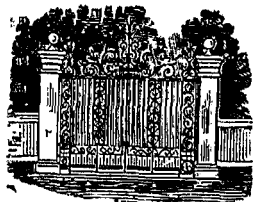


Outside the Gates.

THE PRICE OF LIS DORIS*



A curious title, with doubtless a hidden meaning, and, as one reads it, it is borne in on one that Love, unstinted and often unrequited, is the price of Lis. It is impossible to read of a life of absolute self-abnegation such as his without being enveloped in an atmosphere of sadness, in spite of which the book is not a depressing one.

In his vivid, virile English, this great Dutch writer fills his pages with such interest, such clever and varied character studies, some of them mere thumb-nail sketches, and yet so absolutely life-like, that the reader is carried on to the end with unbroken interest. Lis is a really beautiful conception, the work of a master hand. One may at times feel half annoyed at his almost foolish selflessness, and yet one realises that with his temperament he could not have behaved otherwise.

Once more Mr. Maartens lays the scene in Holland, writing with insight of the people and country he knows so intimately.

Lis Doris is the son of a small grocer, a man of unswerving honesty, one who "strives to serve the Lord." From the Old Testament he learnt that "scant measure is an abomination," but apparently the slightly overweight system did not bring him prosperity. His wife dies when Lis is an infant, and from the beginning of his life the person who takes the keenest interest in him is Yetta, the daughter of the Dominé of the little village of Boldam. Four years his senior, Yetta mothers Lis even when herself a little child. The lad is born with an intensely artistic temperament, which, not unnaturally, is totally uncomprehended by all who surround him—except Yetta; at a very early period she realises what is in him that is striving to express itself.

Boldam in the summer months is the resort of town visitors. The natives call them "summer flies." One of these town gentlemen, Odo Pareyo, is a good amateur artist; to him Yetta, now a beautiful young girl, goes, and by allowing him to draw studies of her hands and arms, makes enough money to buy Lis a paint box.

All his art work has to be done *sub rosa*, his father wishing him to be a grocer like himself. When the old man loses his health, Lis sacrifices his heart's desire, and nurses his father for years. It is not till Lis is eighteen, when old Doris dies, that he is able to go to Amsterdam to study. He lives in the house of his master, Mynheer Lokster, and here are given some amusing depictions of character in the Lokster family, given in Mr. Maartens' most humorous style. Unknown to him, it is, thanks to Yetta, that Lis is able to pursue his studies; from the very first, he is the greatest living interest in her life; it never falters, and he does not know for many years all that he owes her.

* Maarten Maartens. (Methuen.)

She marries Odo Pareyo, chiefly to enable her to help Lis. When his father dies, she buys the shop for a far larger sum than it is worth, though Lis accepts the amount as its just valuation, not knowing from whom the money comes.

After years of close study Lis develops into a really great artist, but, with an almost morbid shyness and modesty, he shrinks from showing his best work to anyone. When staying with Pareyo and Yetta at Aldervauk, he paints, with all his heart in his work, some lovely pictures of the Heath. Two great artists come to stay in the house; having heard that Pareyo is a painter, they insist on seeing some of his work. But this dilettante has nothing to show; he talks art, but accomplishes nothing. Lis being out, half in joke Pareyo sends his servant into Lis' room to bring out the paintings hidden there, allowing his visitors to imagine they were his own work. They realise at once that they see before them the work of a great artist. Pareyo now feels that he cannot disown the pictures. Lis comes in, sees at once what has happened; for Yetta's sake he will not expose her husband. He loves her, and feels he owes her everything, so he sacrifices his career. It is difficult to believe that anyone with such genius could make such a sacrifice until the fact of his hypersensitive nature is taken into consideration.

That such a book can end happily in the ordinary acceptance of the word is not possible, but that the end, though dramatic, is wholly natural and artistic, none will gainsay.

E. L. H.

COMING EVENTS.

December 3rd.—The Nurses' Co-operation "At Home" at the Nurses' Club, 35, Langham Street, W. Show of Nurses' Needlework Guild. 3.30 to 5.30 p.m.

December 7th.—Infants' Hospital, Vincent Square, S.W. Lecture on "How to Advise Mothers of the Poorer Classes in the Management of Their Babies." by Dr. Ralph Vincent. 5 p.m.

December 7th.—Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland. Reception to welcome Miss L. V. Haughton as Matron of Guy's Hospital, at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C. 4.30 to 6.30 p.m. Miss Isla Stewart, President, will receive the guests.

December 8th.—Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. Lecture on "The Larger Outlook on Tuberculosis." By Dr. R. W. Philip. Extra Mural Medical Theatre. 4.30 p.m. Nurses cordially invited.

December 11th.—The League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses. General Meeting, 3.30 p.m. Social Gathering, 4 p.m.

December 13th.—Hammersmith and Fulham District Nursing Association. Miss Curtis and the Nurses' "At Home" to all Collectors and other Friends of the Association. The Hammersmith Town Hall, 4 to 6.30 p.m.

December 13th.—Central Midwives' Board Examinations.

December 16th.—Meeting of Grand Committee, Territorial Force Nursing Service, Mansion House, 3.30 p.m.

December 16th.—Meeting Central Midwives' Board, Caxton House, S.W., 2.45 p.m.

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