

Book of the Week.

THE SCORE.*

In "The Score," by Lucas Malet (Mrs. Mary St. Leger Harrison) we have two clever sketches of the motives which govern the characters presented to us.

MISERERE NOBIS.

The story opens in an Italian hospital, where, "around the fourth bed on the window side, the white-habited nursing sisters, at mid-day, had drawn a couple of high screens, thereby intimating to any whom so common an occurrence might concern that its occupant lay in his death agony. And from behind the screens came the sound of two voices. One that of an old man, calm, patient, indulgent, yet weighted with conscious authority. The other that of a young man, now feverish, bitter, eager in utterance, now sinking into halting whispers, now growing tender, and even momentarily gay. The beds on either side of the small enclosure were vacant. The nuns sat working quietly beside the clean-scrubbed deal table. No one, therefore, was near enough to distinguish the words actually spoken. Nevertheless, the sound of those two voices, alternate, intermittent, yet, as it seemed, interminable, so permeated the whole clear, well-lighted space with an effect of sustained suspense, of vague insidious alarm, that now and again the white-habited sisters silently recited a prayer and crossed themselves, while an ill-conditioned little Neapolitan conscript in the bed in the far corner first chanted a dirty music-hall catch respecting the ways of light women, and then, burying his wide-mouthed, monkey face in his pillow, cried himself abjectly to sleep."

The dying patient is a young man—wealthy, poet, full of the love of life, who has ended his life with a soft-nosed rifle bullet after murdering his father (who, unknown to him as such, he had loved devotedly), at the deliberate suggestion, from his childhood upwards, of the cold-blooded, cultured husband of the mother whom he worshipped, when he revealed the truth of the young man's parentage.

In the course of the confession of his terrible sin he owns that though at the outset it was repugnant, "it has come to be strangely comforting. I find in it relief and reconciliation. Through it I am restored to human fellowship. And something beyond even this, Father. For in telling you I seem to tell the Prince Amilcare (his murdered father) also—seem to make my heart, my nature, and the sources of my action plain to him—though whether because he is actually present at my bedside in spirit, or whether because of some intimate bond existing between him and you, some profound and primitive sympathy uniting you to one another, I cannot pretend to determine."

The priest remains to the end unrevealed, but as the dying man passes he goes gladly with the words on his lips: "They have come, you see; the two whom I love. . . . Great Prince and hunter,

* By Lucas Malet. (John Murray, Albermarle Street, W.)

infinitely desired mother, I am ready. Nothing hinders. Let us go."

And the priest looks long and earnestly at the dead man—his brother's son, the last of his race—kisses the dead cheek; and then, "drawing aside the screen, which scooped a little on the bare boards of the floor, a very tall, austere, black-robed figure, he passed out into the ward—his work of mercy done."

"For and against—how stands the score?"

The dead man has passed into the presence of the just Judge. It is best so.

THE COURAGE OF HER CONVICTIONS.

The second story is of topical interest, as it concerns the General Election, and is, indeed, the love story of a successful candidate. The heroine, Poppy St. John, deserves more than this brief notice, for she has charm, genius, and sincerity, and these cover a multitude of sins. Read the story for yourself, and see if you do not agree. P. G. Y.

JUST KEEP ON KEEPIN' ON.

If the day looks kinder gloomy
An' your chance is kinder slim—
If the situation's puzzlin'
An' the prospect's awful grim,
An' perplexities keep pressin'
Till all hope is nearly gone,
Jus' bristle up, and grit your teeth,
An' keep on keepin' on.

COMING EVENTS.

February 8th.—Royal Maternity Charity of London. The annual meeting will be held at the "Hospiz," 28, Finsbury Square, E.C., 3.30 p.m.

February 8th.—Leicester Infirmary. Opening of New Nurses' Home by Mrs. T. Fielding Johnson, 3 p.m. Distribution of Badges to members of the Territorial Force Nursing Service, 12.30 p.m.

February 8th.—Hammersmith and Fulham District Nursing Association. The Annual General Meeting, Council Chamber, Hammersmith Town Hall. The Mayor will preside. 3.30 p.m. A District Nursing Exhibition, Nurses' Home, Carnforth Lodge, Queen Street, Hammersmith, from 2 to 6 p.m.

February 9th.—Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. Lecture on "The Influence of the Mind Over the Body," by Mr. C. W. Cathcart, F.R.C.S. Extra Mural Theatre, 4.30 p.m. Nurses are cordially invited.

February 14th to 19th.—Week of Special Meetings for Nurses, arranged by Nurses' Missionary League. Passmore Edwards' Settlement, Tavistock Place, W.C. Morning, 10—11 a.m. Afternoon, 2.30—3.30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 19th, one meeting only, 2.30 p.m.

February 15th.—Written examination of Central Midwives' Board, in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Leeds. Oral examination a few days later.

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

The object of life is to be happy; the place to be happy is here; the time to be happy is now; the way to be happy is to make others happy.

INGERSOLL.

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