

Book of the Week.

THE GOD OF LOVE.*

Those who appreciated "The Flower of France" and "The Gorgeous Borgia," by Mr. J. Huntly McCarthy, will welcome another book by this author dealing with well-known historical characters.

Dante and Beatrice—all the world knows of their tragic love story, yet many know little more. Those who wish to have it brought vividly before them by a past master in the art of presenting historical facts in the form of interesting fiction will hasten to secure "The God of Love," which they may be assured is well worth reading.

The book purports to be written by Lappo Lappi, in his youth frankly libertine, now a monk, with this at least to his credit—that he loved Dante and proved himself his true friend.

We are introduced to the City of Florence on May Day. "No city of Heathendom or Christendom," says Lappo Lappi, "could be more beautiful than Florence at any season of the year. But I think that in all the history of Florence there never was a May Day like that May Day. It was gloriously green and gold, gloriously blue and white, gloriously hot, and yet with a little cool, kissing breeze that made the flaming hours delectable."

Monna Beatrice, daughter of Messer Folco, recently returned to Florence, is Queen of the May Festival, but though the city holds high revel, and the lads and lasses make merry with the voluptuous unrestraint of their time, this has little significance for Dante Aligheri, poet and dreamer.

We make his acquaintance on the bridge, where his master and teacher, Messer Brunetto, is discoursing very learnedly about Messer Virgilius. "The first I heard him say was this, in a grave voice: 'Forgive me for lingering, master. I was listening to the Song of the River.'

"What in the name of all the ancients is the Song of the River?' Brunetto echoes, in surprise, and Dante answers:

"The Song of the River, the Song of Life. I cannot sing you the Song of the River. If I could tell you its meaning I should be a greater poet than Virgilius."

"The dappled calm of a green garden, the sable shadows quivering on a ground of gold, a book of verses by him to play with, and a swarm of sweet rhythms like coloured butterflies floating about his drowsy senses," have more charm for Dante than the ladies in Florence, "as lovely as the city's lilies," but questioned by his comrades as to whether he had ever been in love, he owned—

"Once, when I was still a child, I saw a child's face, a girl's face; it lives in my memory as the face of an angel. I had a rose in my hand, and I was smelling at it, and then I saw the child. She was younger than I—and I was very young. . . . Laugh if you like, but I learned what love might mean then, as I peeped over the red breast of the rose at the little maiden. Oh! if I had all the

words in the world at my order I could not truly tell you all I thought of that little child."

Arrives Monna Vittoria on the scenes—light of love, and of "a very sensual disposition," but nevertheless a good friend to Dante and Beatrice when troubles thicken around them. She enquires of the "gentle gentles" why they are not at the sacrifice, and explains it is the sacrifice of the "pearl to the pig," of "a clean child to a coarse churl," the sacrifice of Folco Portinari's little Beatrice to big Simone of the Bardi, "a queen of beauty to a king of beasts."

In the Queen of Beauty Dante finds the little child he worshipped, and the book is concerned with the struggle between Dante and Simone. Dante, as we all know, won her love. Simone, by means of a poisoned rose, achieved her death.

But love of the quality of that between Dante and Beatrice is immortal, and for Dante death must have been the gate of life.

P. G. Y.

COMING EVENTS.

January 21st.—Nurses' Union "At Home," 5, Cambridge Gate, 2.30—7 p.m.

January 25th.—Meeting of the Central Registration Committee, Council Room, British Medical Association Office, 429, Strand, London, W.C., 3.30 p.m. The Right Hon. the Lord Amptill will preside.

January 25th.—Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland. Meeting of the Council, 7.30 p.m. Papers and discussion, 8 p.m. 431, Oxford Street, London, W.

January 26th.—Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. Lecture on "The Blood, its Functions and Alterations," by Dr. G. Lovell Gulland. Extra Mural Medical Theatre, 4.30 p.m. Nurses are cordially invited.

January 27th.—Meeting of the Certified Midwives' Total Abstinence League, Chapter House, St. Paul's Churchyard, E.C. Lecture by Dr. Kelynaek on "Medical and Nursing Aspects of the Alcohol Problem," 3.30 p.m.

January 27th.—Meeting of the Central Midwives' Board, Caxton House, Westminster, S.W., 2.45 p.m.

Word for the Week.

CONSCIENCE AND REMORSE.

"Good-bye," I said to my Conscience—
 "Good-bye for aye and aye";
 And I put her hands off harshly,
 And turned my face away:
 And Conscience, smitten sorely,
 Returned not from that day.

But a time came when my spirit
 Grew weary of its pace;
 And I cried, "Come back, my Conscience,
 I long to see thy face";
 But Conscience said, "I cannot—
 Remorse sits in my place."

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR,
 From *The Nurses' Journal of the Pacific Coast*.

* By Justin Huntly McCarthy. (Hurst and Blackett, Ltd., Paternoster House, E.C.)

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