

Book of the Week.

FRATERNITY.*

They who read with delight "The Man of Property" and "The Country House" will not be disappointed with Mr. Galsworthy's "Fraternity." As the title indicates, it is of a Socialistic tendency, and is a rare collection of wonderfully delineated characters woven into an elusive and rather disturbing history. The majority of these people feel that "something must be done" for their fellow men, but the attempt to accomplish this something leads to many complications. Read superficially, it might appear that would-be disciples of Fraternity would do well to follow some less unpopular cult, but underneath there is the insistent appeal for the strong to help the weak, and to the fortunate to succour the downtrodden, and this in spite of apparent failure, and the gibe of those who are passing contentedly along on the other side. The description of Hugh's infant's funeral is very true to life.

"Following out the instinct planted so deeply in human nature for treating with the utmost care and at great expense when dead, those who, when alive, have been served with careless parsimony, there started from the door of No. 1, Hound Street, a funeral procession of three four-wheeled cabs.

"In the first cab Silence was presiding, with the scent of lilies over him who in his short life had made so little noise; the small grey shadow that had crept so quietly into being, and taking his chance when he was not noticed had crept so quietly out again. Never had he felt so restful, so much at home, as in that little common coffin, washed as he was to an unnatural whiteness, and wrapped in his mother's only spare sheet. Away from all the strife of men he was journeying to a greater peace. His little aloe-plant had flowered; and between the open windows of the only carriage he had ever been inside the wind stirred the fronds of fern and the flowers of his funeral wreath. Thus he was going from that world where all men were his brothers."

What could exceed the skill with which the following passage is written:—

"Three persons traversed the long winding road leading from Wormwood Scrubbs to Kensington. They preserved silence not because there was nothing in their hearts to be expressed, but because there was too much. They walked in the giraffe-like formation peculiar to the lower classes, Hughs in front, Mrs. Hughs to the left a foot or two behind, and a yard behind her to the left again her son Stanley. . . . In their three minds so differently fashioned, a verb was dumbly and with varying emotion being conjugated:

"I've been in prison."

"You've been in prison."

"He's been in prison."

Beneath the seeming acquiescence of a man subject to domination from his birth up, those four words covered in Hughs such a whirlpool of surging sensation, such ferocity of bitterness, and madness,

* By John Galsworthy. (William Heinemann, London.)

and defiance, that no out-pouring could have appreciably relieved its course."

The little model who exercised such a strong fascination over the fastidious Hilary is portrayed as following:—

"He found her standing in the middle of his study, not daring, as it seemed, to go near the furniture. She was resting a foot, very patient, very still, in an old brown skirt, an ill-shaped blouse, and a blue green tam-o'-shanter cap. Hilary turned up the light. He saw a round little face, with broad cheek bones, flower blue eyes, short lamp black lashes, and slightly parted lips. It was difficult to judge of her figure in those old clothes, but she was neither short nor tall; her neck was white and well set on; her hair pale brown and abundant."

This girl's dog-like devotion gradually dominates him.

"So it was with Hilary in that special web where in his spirit struggled, sunrise unto sunset, and by moonlight afterwards."

Anyone who has not already read this book should make a point of doing so. The exquisite language, subtle description, and admirable sentiment cannot fail to leave their mark.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

September 1st.—Garden Party in the Grounds of the Infirmary, Kingston-on-Thames, by invitation of the Matron.

CONGRESS OF THE ROYAL SANITARY INSTITUTE, ROYAL PAVILION, BRIGHTON.

Principal Events.

September 5th.—Reception of Members and Delegates by the Worshipful the Mayor. 1 p.m.

Opening of the Health Exhibition in the Dome by the Worshipful the Mayor. 3 p.m.

Inaugural Address to the Congress by the Hon. Sir John A. Cockburn, K.C.M.G., M.D. 8 p.m.

September 6th.—Conference, 10 a.m.

Lecture to the Congress by Dr. Arthur Newsholme, F.R.C.P. (Principal Medical Officer to the Local Government Board), "The National Importance of Child Mortality." 8 p.m.

September 7th.—Conferences on Hygiene of Childhood and Sanitary Inspectors. 10 a.m.

Conversazione and Reception at the invitation of the Worshipful the Mayor. 8 p.m.

September 8th.—Conference of Medical Officers of Health and Women on Hygiene. 10 a.m.

September 9th.—Conference, 10 a.m.

Popular Lecture by Dr. Alex. Hill, M.D., F.R.C.S., J.P., on "The Bricks with which the Body is Built" (Illustrated by Lantern Slides). 8 p.m.

October 10th.—Territorial Force Nursing Service, City and County of London. Reception at the Mansion House by invitation of the Lady Mayoress and the Members of the Executive Committee. 8—10.30 p.m.

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"One's capacity is infinite as one's being is, and one cannot be filled but by Infinity."

GENERAL GORDON.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)