

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

THE LITTLE GREEN GATE.*

Lovers of gardens who are also writers seem, as a rule, to have the power of imparting to a romance the charm and the fragrance of their own appreciation. In "The Little Green Gate" this ability is emphasised; it is, in truth, the romance of a garden, wherein nature at the same time added poignancy to and embalmed the agony of two tortured hearts.

Nina was twenty-eight, and she lived with her old father, the Colonel, in a long low house, creeper-clad, with a charming garden, where there was a dear wild bit that visitors were never taken to see, and at the top of all there is a little green gate into the woods. It ought to have been abolished—it should never have been there at all, for it was through the little green gate that the man came and found the woman thoughtfully taking cuttings of double arabis. That is where the story begins.

And the pity of it was that he was made for her and she for him, and their poor little hour was doomed from the start.

For it is cleverly described of Peter that it was from "sheer carelessness" that he was already engaged to little butterfly Muriel. After crossing the threshold of the little green gate he realises this, though not immediately.

And Nina, not at first, but at last, "she knew Peter Marchant was the man she could have loved—the man for whom she had been waiting."

And Peter was engaged to Muriel Brackenridge. "Nina knelt there weeding, moving from patch to patch, mechanically, as each became finished under her tireless hands. All the bitterness—if ever there was any—vanished under the kindness of the flowers and the summer evening."

And then a whole day spent at work with him on the garden, the little concession made to them both for a life-long separation.

So long as he does not know, what does it matter? was her thought. "He will never know." So she enjoyed her hour, her secret triumph.

He begs her to let him come every day to learn from her the secret of her spell over the flowers.

"That is only three days more . . . let me come."

The green gate clicked to, and he was gone. The light had gone out of the sunset sky.

But it had to come. "He bent and kissed her lips—a long, long kiss, with all the world in it . . . their first, their last, their only kiss . . . but to them worth all the rest of time."

Sustained at first by exaltation, the great wonder (undreamt of) that Peter loved her, she would go on working in her beloved garden, and "now and then through the day her hands would suddenly fall idle the tools dropping from them,

and her eyes, looking away down the garden, would see, unbidden, the little figures of strange children, in blue and red overalls, playing about the paths."

But Peter is bound faster than he thought of to his soul-less little Muriel, and the bitterness has to be faced.

And Nina, true woman, makes her superhuman sacrifice.

"You don't care?" he asks her.

"No . . . I don't care . . . like that . . .!"

So they parted, these two.

She had indeed helped him . . . helped him for all the years of his life, and not merely over the bad hour. But what of her? She could not, could not let him go! Desperately she took a few steps towards the little green gate.

Gradually, and very softly, the flowers became aware that the dear woman who had tended them and loved them was lying there among them unheeded, unconscious.

This book should be read by all who are lovers of tender pathos and true sentiment. It is a dull soul that cannot be appealed to by these.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

February 12th.—The Trained Maternity Nurses' Association. Entertainment by the Denbridge Concert Party. All Saints' Hall, Powis Gardens, Notting Hill, W. 8 p.m.

February 13th.—Nurses' Missionary League. Lecture: "Medical Work in a Chinese Country Station," by Dr. Norah L. Bryson. University Hall, Gordon Square, W.C. 10.30 a.m.

February 13th to 16th.—Gresham Lectures: "Sleeping Sickness," by F. M. Sandwith, M.D. City of London School, Victoria Embankment, E.C. Free to public, 6 p.m.

February 13th and 14th.—Central Poor Law Conference, Holborn Town Hall, W.C. Mr. Charles Booth, F.R.S., will preside.

February 14th.—The Midwives' Institute. Post Graduate Lecture 2: "The Theories of eclampsia, thrombosis, and embolism; white leg." 6.30 p.m.

February 15th.—National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland. Meeting—431, Oxford Street, London, W.; Cologne Congress Business, 3.30 p.m.; Tea, 5 p.m.

February 20th.—Irish Nurses' Association. Lecture "Labour Exchanges." By Miss Brown, B.A. 34, St. Stephen's Green. 7.30 p.m.

February 22nd.—Central Midwives Board. Caxton House, S.W. Meeting 2.45 p.m.

March 6th.—The Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. Lecture: "Clinical Symptomatology in Nursing," by Dr. Matthew. Extra Mural Medical Theatre, 4.30 p.m. Trained Nurses cordially invited.

A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

I count Life just a stuff

To try the soul's strength on, educe the man.
Who keeps one end in view, makes all things serve.
—Robert Browning.

* By Stella Callaghan. (Constable & Co.: London.)

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