

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## THE QUEST OF GLORY.\*

This story of the eighteenth century, which opens with the Siege of Prague, fully comes up to high standard of interest and charm of style that we have learnt to expect from the pen of Miss Bowen. From first to last it holds our interest. The "Quest" is that of a young officer of the French aristocracy, and if its fulfilment was widely different from that which his early dreams had pictured, indeed, so far as he was consciously concerned, it failed altogether. It was not until many years after his death that his name became famous. The remarkable point about Luc de Clapiers, Marquis de Vauvenargues, is that he sought glory for its own sake, and not from any one point of view. And it was glory that must be unsmirched with any breath of dishonour. Thus he started as a soldier, in the *regiment du Roi*, and died an obscure journalist in Paris. Glory and success were often within his reach, but not on terms which his high-souled nature could accept. The retreat from Prague was hampered by the presence of some hundred of refugees, men, women and children, among them the Countess Carola, who, afterwards, played an important part in Luc's life. The death of the young officer, M. d'Espagnac, on the march, with whom Luc had made compact in his quest, is tenderly told.

"Provence," said the lieutenant, "they will want news of me, you know, Monsieur; I must tell them—the quest of glory. . . . Give me my sword; I am starting out on a quest. Do you hear? Jesu, have mercy on me!"

Carola rose and walked up and down with the child.

"You are Catholic?" she asked.

"No!" answered the Marquis.

"An atheist?" she questioned.

"An ugly word, mademoiselle." He gave a little sigh; but, yes—perhaps—

"I am sorry for you," said Carola, "but your friend?—we have no priest."

"His soul does not need shriving," said M. de Vauvenargues.

The words seemed to have penetrated the lieutenant's clouded consciousness; he clamoured for a priest, for the last Sacrament, for the Eucharist.

The Marquis caught him in his arms, and held him strongly. "None of that matters," he said with power. "You are free of all that—upon the heights."

The fatigues and stress of the siege told upon Luc's delicate frame, and to his bitter disappointment he is compelled to resign his commission. He next hopes to achieve fame by becoming a politician, and in Paris he obtains an introduction to Richelieu. It is with a rude shock that he learns the Countess Carola, whom his chivalrous imagination has clothed with every virtue, is in fact the mistress of this great man, and it is for her sake that opportunity is offered him.

\*By Marjorie Bowen. Methuen & Co., London.

"Carola moved her long hands, so that they covered her face.

"Who are you?" asked Luc, dreamily; "what are you?"

She looked at him.

"I do not know; whatever men label me, I think. To you, at least, I was a beacon of pure flame; was I not?"

He thought of her with the dead child in her arms, and holding the dying head of Georges d'Espagnac; and looked at her tenderly.

"Poor soul!" he whispered.

The words seemed to sting her into fierceness.

"Am I so soiled that you pity me?" she demanded. "I pity you too—you, who are flinging everything away for glory—glory! Dear God! I wonder where you will find the woman you imagine; you are too severe for this frivolous age."

Cast aside, as she presently is, by Richelieu, he again crosses her path, and together they tend a deserted child, suffering from black smallpox. She expiates her sins by sacrificing her life, and Luc's quest is again hampered by extreme disfigurement and partial blindness.

His little fiancée's love is not noble enough to surmount the trial, and almost broken-hearted with failure and defeat, he reveals to his proud old father that he is an Atheist, and intends to throw in his lot with Voltaire. His father did not answer, nor turn from his haughty attitude, but his mother said, in an awful voice—

"Fare well, and may Christ have mercy on you."

He dies in Paris—poor, lonely and deserted.

"M. de Voltaire that evening found him lying across the floor, with his head on his book, and his right hand where his sword should have been."

H. H.

[This is a lovely and inspiring book, everyone should read it.—Ed.]

## COMING EVENTS.

April 6th.—Irish Nurses' Association, 34, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. Meeting to consider the formation of a Nurses' Friendly Society.

April 10th.—The Infants' Hospital, Vincent Square, S.W. Lecture: "Boiled Milk and the Means by which its Fatal Effects on Infants are produced," by Dr. Ralph Vincent. 3.30 p.m.

April 15th.—Irish Nurses' Association. Lecture: "Babies," by Dr. Hastings Tweedy, 34, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. 7.30 p.m.

April 17th.—Meeting Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, 431, Oxford Street, London. 4 p.m. Tea.

April 17th.—Meeting Trained Women Nurses' Friendly Society, 431, Oxford Street, London. 5 p.m.

April 23rd to 26th.—Nursing and Midwifery Conference and Exhibition, Horticultural Hall, Westminster, S.W.

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