

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE ADVENTURES OF MISS GREGORY."

It is certain that no person can be the worse for reading this book, and perhaps it is only the unimprovable that will not in a measure be improved by it.

For Miss Gregory is a type, and one rarely met with. Yet she is something more than an ideal, she is a possibility. "A creature not too bright and good for human nature's daily food." She was a born traveller and a maker of books. To quote—

"She was one of those disconcerting people who combine a mannish charm with an entirely feminine strength of personality. She was short and strongly made; her handsome grey hair was drawn away from a keen enterprising face; and below her smooth brows her eyes were humorous and assured. She carried with her to the ends of the earth a certain manner of authority—just the least touch of the arrogance of high-caste; it was not the least potent of her weapons."

The volume consists of her experiences, each chapter complete in itself and introducing Miss Gregory as though we had not met her before. Each of these is worth reading, though there are one or two that carry the palm *par excellence*. These, in our opinion, are "A Season of Miracles," "The Slave Dealer," and "Hamid."

The first tells of a funeral on the shores of the Zambesi, where Doña Fortuna was buried late in the afternoon "while the sun still quelled the streets of Tete and held them silent. Her half-caste women sobbed and whined at the last significant parting, but restrainedly; the presence of the tall priest and the cool, calm English woman who had gone down the stream to bring him subdued them. It was in a hush as of reverence that the priest, shaking with ague, raised his voice in that final office; the forgotten city was voiceless behind his shoulder; the palms overhead drooped motionless in the heat."

The conversation between the priest's boy, Timotheo, and Doña Fortuna's woman describing the events which led up to this conclusion is a literary gem. Anna tells him—

"It was in the grey of the morning that their voices woke me. When you have served a lady like Doña Fortuna you gain the habit of rousing at a whisper to save yourself being beaten with a stick."

"This languor that is upon me," Doña Fortuna was saying, "it tells me more than you can know. It has dried up all my desires like dew in the morning—all save one."

Mees Gregory was leaning on the edge of the bed with her broad back to me.

"Yes," she said, "what is it?"

Doña Fortuna opened her great, dark eyes. "To see him," she said. "To speak to him if

only to confess." . . . Mees Gregory moved the fan above her, and set the sheet straight.

"He is near here?" she asked.

"Twelve hours away," answered Doña Fortuna and a priest. "Is not that far enough? . . . You would send for him? she asked. But he would not come."

"We shall see," said the other in her short way.

"And now you will try to sleep again."

Timotheo takes up the tale of how Mees Gregory arrives at the Padre's dwelling.

"She was as you have said—a man in a *guardape* (petticoat), the strangest thing I ever saw; but I did not laugh."

"Timotheo," bade the Padre, "set a chair and get out."

"That was of no consequence, for the rooms in the old Mission have no doors; one hears quite as well outside as in."

So Mees Gregory takes the "priest who had been a man," with the ague upon him, back to the dying woman who had broken his heart long before. And Timotheo's account of their journey through the infested bush with night coming on holds one's attention, with its human touch, its tragedy and its humour.

Timotheo would have kneeled to him to be left behind, "but he had a certain tone in his voice which told me I should be kicked if I did. Yes, he can kick this saint."

A book full of delight.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS

June 19th.—Meetings to consider the religious aspect of the Women's Movement, Queen's Hall, W. 3.30 p.m., and 7.30 p.m.

June 20th.—Central Midwives Board. Meeting. Caxton House, S.W.

June 21st.—Meeting at 46, Cadogan Square, S.W., by invitation of Lady Helen Munro Ferguson to discuss State Registration of Nurses.

June 24th to 27th.—The Biennial Health Conference and Exhibition 1912, Royal Horticultural Hall, Westminster, and L.C.C. Technical Institute. Opened at 12 o'clock noon by the Mayor of the City of Westminster.

June 27th.—Irish Nurses' Association, Howth (Lawlor's Cottage, Bailey). Cyclists' meet:—The Crescent, Clontarf, 4 p.m.

June 29th.—League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses. General Meeting and Social Gathering. St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C.

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

Genius has all manner of dead dreams and sorrowful lost loves for its scallop-shells, and the palm that it carries is the bundle of rods where-with fools have beaten it for calling them blind.

* By Percival Gibbon. J. M. Dent, London.

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