

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## "ADNAM'S ORCHARD."\*

It is some long time since Sarah Grand has given the public anything from her pen, and this last novel, produced after an interval of years, tells of careful work and observation of men, women (especially women) and things pertaining to the present age.

Adnam was the dreamer of a yeoman farmer's family, or rather he was assigned the rôle of dreamer by his family. At the time the story opens he emerges from the chrysalis and bursts upon his astonished family his determination to take over the old orchard and its neighbouring unused acres "to make a profit for myself. That's the poetry that appeals to me at present." This he proceeds to do, under happy relations of Capital and Labour. And we must congratulate the writer for presenting to the public such a reasonable and broad-minded handling of the social problems of the day.

The little duchess who was on intimate terms with Adnam's mother, she having been governess in the ducal family, is a happy sketch of a brainless little nonentity, albeit meaning well.

"What are you doing in the orchard, Mrs. Pratt?" the Duchess burst out. "I looked over the hedge as I passed. I never saw such a mess in my life! And Adnam was all mixed up in it. What a pity to spoil your picturesque old orchard, and that dear old field. Surely you've not let Adnam get any dreadful new ideas. The dear weeds, they were so pretty!"

"But they were so unwholesome, and there is no profit to be made out of weeds," Mrs. Pratt reminded her.

"My dear Ursula," the Duchess protested, "surely you have not begun to talk like that! The Duke says it is all materialism. People think of nothing but profit now, and how to make things pay. You used to have ideals."

"I have still," Mrs. Pratt answered. "I want to see the weeds killed everywhere."

The sketch of the Perrys' little home, where love and happiness made up for lack of income, is sympathetically drawn.

"O Alick, you *are* a help! Look at that kettle!"

He looked, but saw nothing wrong. "It's full," he said.

"Yes, it's full," she retorted. "And when do you think it will boil? Aren't you a man all over. Would a woman have put on a kettle to boil without lighting the gas?"

"No, my dear. A woman would have set the gas flaring and put on an empty kettle. We are but parts of one stupendous whole. Men and women make the same mistakes, but make them differently. It comes to the same thing in the end—the kettle does not boil. Thus is the balance of Nature preserved."

\* By Sarah Grand. London: William Heinemann.

Ella, the beautiful lace-maker, stands for the enfranchisement of women, and in frank language she speaks to the Duke, who is interested in her craft.

"Isn't it right and wise for a woman in my position to face life with bald statements? You will see if you will be good enough to think for a moment, that women are expected—are trained—to trade upon their beauty. Their lives are so arranged that there is no possibility of their trading on anything else. Half the marriages made are trade unions. The fact is repulsive in itself, but your opinion of it, your feeling about it, depends on the way it is done. You heap opprobrious epithets upon the unsuccessful woman but there is no honour too great for the one that succeeds—even at the price of her honour. Your servant girl with a baby is made an outcast—your king's mistress is made a duchess, and her son's sons govern the land."

The Duke prepared to pursue the conversation in comfort by crossing his leg and clasping his ankle over a silk sock of vivid tartan.

"And have you worked out, you and Mrs. Pratt, a remedy for the social imbroglio?" he asked.

"The remedy . . . is for men to take women into their counsels. What can be a greater muddle of haphazard than life as most of us are compelled to live it. And they continue to muddle along until woman makes her escape and is free to develop the best that is in her."

"I see," said the Duke, "I see."

Though it is evident that the Duke had some special interest in Ella, it is not clear what it is. We have a great deal to thank the authoress for. Her frank and well-balanced views of social problems should arrest the attention of thoughtful persons. But in our opinion she has endeavoured to cover too much ground, and the introduction of so many characters and so much detail has injured concentration on a great ideal.

H. H.

## COMING EVENTS.

*December 6th.*—The Nurses' Co-operation. Show of the Nurses' Needlework Guild, in the Club Room, 35, Langham Street, W. Tea, 3.30 to 5.30.

*December 10th.*—Army and Navy Male Nurses' Co-operation. Fifth Annual General Meeting. St. James's Theatre, St. James, S.W. 3 p.m.

*December 10th.*—The Infants' Hospital, Vincent Square, S.W. Lectures on Babies: "Intestinal Toxæmia," by Dr. Ralph Vincent. 3.30 p.m.

*December 11th.*—Nurses' Social Union. Lecture on "Eugenics," by Dr. Murray Leslie. Institute of Hygiene, Devonshire Street, W. 3.15.

*December 12th.*—Hammersmith and District Nursing Association, Carnforth Lodge. Miss Curtis and the Nurses At Home. 4.30 to 6.30.

*December 14th.*—Dinner. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Guest of Honour, given by members of the Nursing Profession. Mrs. Walter Spencer in the Chair. Hotel Cecil, Strand, W.C. 7.30 p.m.

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