

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE DARK FLOWER."*

When we consider what Mr. Galsworthy might have given us, and what he has not, we feel we have a right to be annoyed. For a book from this pen is something to be waited for with impatience, and to be read covetously. Mr. Galsworthy cannot help his brilliancy—it shines out in every word that he writes; and his latest production is no exception to this rule—but we are conscious somehow of having been put off with something less than his best.

Is it that passion and love are too insistent? It may be so, for they dominate the book from cover to cover.

From the opening chapter, where we learn how Mark Lennan—then a young Oxford undergraduate—has quite unconsciously obsessed his tutor's wife (a woman of thirty-five), till the closing page, where the undisciplined love of a young girl is laid at his feet—he being then middle-aged—there is no rest for this man, who, by reason of some subtle attractive power and the response of an artistic temperament, is constantly in the toils of some passion. What may be regarded as the study of a temperament is divided into three periods—Spring, Summer and Autumn.

"Anna Stormer felt that romance was over; she had almost worshipped her husband once. Was it really the same man standing there with those bright, doubting eyes, and the grey already in his hair? She sat looking into the street. A figure passed, came to the door and rang.

"She said, softly, 'Here is Mark Lennan.' Quite still she waited for the door to open. There was the boy, with his blessed dark head, and his gentle shy gravity, and his essay in his hand."

Then follows the invitation of his tutor to accompany his wife and himself to the mountains. There Anna Stormer, Delilah like, sets herself to win the boy for herself. It was well for the boy that a telegram from home recalls him. At his sister's wedding, he meets pretty gentle Sylvia; and her healthy young companionship heals the wound that was but skin deep. Summer—six years after—finds Mark at Monte Carlo—once more in the toils of a married woman—Olive Cramier.

"This was illicit love, as it was called—loneliness and torture. Not jealousy, for her heart was his; but amazement, outrage, fear. Endless, lonely suffering. And nobody, if they knew, would care, or pity him one jot."

One is compelled to suffer with these people. There is something so very natural in Mark's attitude, in his longing to be in the house that holds his love. The windows of her house were lighted, so she was not away. Nothing alive but discreet lighted windows like veiled faces, showing no emotion they seemed to watch his indecision. And he thought "Ah, well! I daresay there are lots like me, lots as near and yet as far away, lots who have to suffer."

* By John Galsworthy. Heinemann, London.

One feels sorry, too, for the wronged husband, whose chief fault seemed to be that she did not love him. He quite frankly warned Mark.

"You see a good deal of my wife. I don't very much care that you should. You come between us at your peril."

He made good his words afterwards, when he sprang like a wild beast into the punt on that moonlight night, and the waters closed over Olive's head.

Then in the autumn of life we find him married ten years since to Sylvia, whose gentleness and sweetness had given him at least a pleasant backwater.

But his fatal attraction for women once more destroys his peace. Nell, the young daughter of his friend, beguiles him, and once more he yields.

We leave him seated by his wife's bedside after his confession to her, "not to miss the moment of her awaking to say, 'There, there! It's all over. We are going away at once—at once.'"

There is some excellent character drawing, as might be expected, notably Colonel and Mrs. Ercott, but so much emotion is really too exhausting, something more satisfying, please, next time.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

November 7th.—Nurses' Missionary League. Lecture by Mrs. Higgs: "The Christian Ideal of Womanhood: the Relation of Body, Mind and Spirit in its Attainment." 33, Bedford Square, W.C. 3 p.m. Members of the Nursing Profession cordially invited. Tea, 4.15 p.m.

November 8th.—Nurses' Missionary League, A Sale of Work at Sloane Gardens House, London. S.W. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

November 12th, 19th; and 26th.—Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute Lectures on the Treatment and Prevention of Tuberculosis, Royal Victoria Dispensary, Edinburgh. 4 p.m.

November 13th.—Annual Meeting Leicester Infirmary Nurses' League. Address by Miss H. L. Pearse, on "School Nursing."

November 20th.—Central Midwives Board. Meeting, Caxton House, S.W., 3.30 p.m.

November 26th.—Irish Nurses Association. Lecture, "Massage in diseases of the Circulation," by Dr. Douglas Good, 34, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin, 7.30 p.m.

November 26th.—The Association of Approved Societies: Conference on the Nursing of Insured Persons, Caxton Hall, Council Chamber; Charles Bathurst, Esq., M.P., in chair, 2.30 p.m.

December 3rd.—Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh: Lecture, "The Treatment of Diseases by Bacterial Vaccines," by Dr. Struthers Stewart, Large Theatre, 4.30 p.m.

A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

Could I persuade the hand of fate
To give me just what was my due,
I'd be a bit afraid to wait
For what was coming; wouldn't you?

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