

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE CORYSTON FAMILY."*

Lady Coryston stands for a warning to women who meddle with politics. Having once assimilated that prominent feature of Mrs. Ward's latest novel, we can, whether we agree as to its necessity or not, proceed to enjoy a very characteristic production of this eminent authoress. It is of course riddled with the political aspect from end to end—that is understood—but for those who prefer a lighter vein in their reading there is much to attract. Lady Coryston is the mother of three sons and one daughter, Marcia. During her husband's lifetime "he had represented her political views in Parliament much more than his own. On one matter only he had voted against her, spoken against her openly flouted and disavowed her. And it had broken down their whole relation, poisoned their whole life." And after his death—the will! Everything left to her, both land and personalty.

His eldest son Coryston had been furiously angry when the terms of the will were revealed. "Since his father's death she had given him every chance. He had only to hold his tongue, to keep his monstrous *sans-culotte* opinions to himself." Coryston on the contrary had become openly angry hostile. . . . When he learns that it is her determination that Arthur shall inherit in his stead, there is a strong scene between them. "I am not going to take this quietly, I warn you. I refuse the seven thousand a year, and if I can't possess the property—well!—I'm going to a large extent to manage it. . . . Good-night, mother; we'll play a great game but we'll play fair." He is as good as his word, and settles down at the gates and promulgates Socialism to the best of his very able power.

Glenwilliam, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had an only daughter, Enid. As the unlucky Fates willed it was upon her that Arthur, Lady Coryston's darling son (she prepared his speeches), fixed his choice.

The personality of the Chancellor is thinly veiled and Enid Glenwilliam says:—

"Lady Coryston thinks society is too tolerant of people like father and me. When father goes out of office I shall be nobody. *She* will always be at the top of the tree."

Arthur, beside himself with passion at his mother's intervention between himself and the girl he loves, gives way to furious denunciation of her methods, and this outburst plainly is the gist of the book.

"She put up a trembling hand. 'That's enough, Arthur. I have done the best I could for you always.'

"Why didn't you *love* us!" he cried, striking a chair beside him for emphasis. "Why didn't you *love* us! It was always politics, politics—some-

* "The Coryston Family," by Mrs. Humphry Ward. Smith Elder & Co.

body to be attacked—somebody to be scored off—somebody to be squared. And a lot of stupid talk that bored us all! My poor father was as sick of it often as we were. He had enough of it out of doors. Damn politics for women, I say—damn them!"

Now surely Mrs. Ward by this attitude does not prove her point, for if poor Lady Coryston had been able to express herself, instead of always being driven to express someone else—who naturally objected to the process—she would have been a more contented and a pleasanter woman. It is not contended that she had not a very powerful and able brain, but of her husband it was admitted that he had miserably failed to play the man in his own household.

Many shades of political thought and society are introduced into this interesting book, and it is only fair to say they are discussed with impartiality.

Charming Marcia Coryston becomes engaged to Edward Newbury, son of the unbending High Church old Tory Lord William, and is bored by a religion which she neither understands nor appreciates. Lord Coryston, the disinherited Socialist, marries Marion Atherstone of plain and pleasant appearance, the daughter of a retired doctor, and one of the ablest Liberal organisers in the county. Arthur, separated from Enid Glenwilliam, is still unmarried at the close of the book.

H. H.

LIFE, JOY, EMPIRE AND VICTORY.

Englishwomen, and indeed the women of the world, will read with a thrill of thankfulness, "Scott's Last Expedition," Vol. 1: Being the Journals of Captain R. F. Scott; and Vol. 2: The Reports of the Journeys and Scientific Work undertaken by Dr. E. A. Wilson and the Surviving Members of the Expedition. Here for us all is the lesson of Example: "They all died in faith, not having received the promises."

"To love and bear, to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, to flatter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free.
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory."

A THOROUGHbred MONGREL.

We are pleased to welcome the eighth edition of this delightful work by Mr. Stephen Townsend, brought out at 2s. 6d., as it makes possible its possession by many nurses and animal lovers, who perhaps could not afford the more expensive editions. It is the sort of book to have handy on one's bookshelves. "Hett," the dear and dignified little canine heroine, teaches us to reverence so many lovely things. "A Thoroughbred Mongrel" will be a charming Christmas gift for those who would learn wisdom from the pure in heart.

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