

bewigged ones will now proceed to define what sort of a Thing woman is, and of what her substance consists!

Olive Schreiner, the gifted authoress of that book of books "The Story of an African Farm," will arrive in England next week, and is to be the guest of the Lyceum Club at Dinner on the 29th inst. In spite of the holiday season, we are glad to know Mrs. Cronwright Schreiner is to have a great welcome.

### BOOK OF THE WEEK.

#### "HORACE BLAKE."\*

The personality of the man who gives the title to the book is a powerful one—powerful and sinister. A writer of plays which caused the censor to pause. His wife, a charming woman, who had lived with him so long, who had adored his genius, and borne with his more than difficult temperament, had become a little blunted in her susceptibilities. His gibes and sneers at religious beliefs had caused her to cease to respect what she had never believed. At the very outset of the book we learn that he is a doomed man, ordered to the coast of Brittany in charge of a male nurse. As Sir Thomas put it, "Your husband is overworked and needs a complete rest—ordered by Sir Thomas Goodstone to take a complete rest for some months." Did he stumble at the word "months"? When he tells his wife "I think you had better stay in London while I am away," for this and that reason, he might as well have repeated over and over again, "I don't want you—I don't want you." From experience Kate knew what going away from her meant in the past, the holidays he took that left a trail of shame and trouble behind them. Besides, there was her own side of it, her awful failure at the end of all her care. He did not want her that was the great failure."

She was very seldom startled but she was startled at the next thing he said: "I think I shall take Trix abroad; it would amuse me." Trix was the only child, now eighteen years old. "Kate had registered a vow years ago that Trix should learn to know what Horace had taught her." So this oddly assorted trio, Horace, Trix, and the male-nurse go to Brittany.

"The Church bells were ringing for it was the eve of the *Fête Dieu* as the MS. of the last act of Horace Blake's play was put into the post box. Hitherto it had been easy for the public to say that after all it was only the conventionalities and the pruderies that he was attacking. But now he had taken off the mask and strutted before them. Blake had written sometimes in bed, sometimes in a chair, sometimes kneeling. Roberts, the nurse, had been cowed into submission. He had never been cowed by a patient before." It was the morning after the posting of this last defiance of morality that Blake knelt as the

\* By Mrs. Wilfrid Ward. Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster Row.

Host was carried in procession. "A few moments after he walked away with difficulty: Presently he stopped and dusted his knees with his handkerchief. "Now why on earth did I do that," he asked himself. This was the beginning of his conversion. There are some very beautiful passages in his conversations with the old curé. He tells him "I was at Mass this morning. I was little more than a boy when I last heard Mass."

He writes home for the MS. of his play to be destroyed. The old curé asks him, "This play, is it really impossible. Could I understand it if I read it." Horace tried to hide his amusement, "I fear not. I almost hope not."

"May I try?"

"Heaven forbid!" said Horace.

"You are suffering to-day?"

"I am no good" said Horace "I had one thing to sacrifice and I have not done that with decent grace."

"God does not expect the most beautiful manners from us."

After his death, Trix discovers the secret of her birth, namely that she is not Kate's child, but the offspring of a disgraceful liaison that he set him to contract with a perfectly good girl. Kate with characteristic pity for the victim, and pride for herself, had concealed the facts and treated Trix as her own. But Trix is filled with unspeakable bitterness and hatred of her father's memory.

Stephen Tempest, who was her father's biographer, who wished to marry her, felt the difficulty of his task, and the revelation it must be to the girl. She on her part, tells Kate "It is not my mother that I should be afraid to see again in my children—it is my father. . . . I am determined to leave no human trace of him upon earth. I live now for the cause of women against men such as he." After a interval of work for Women's Suffrage, however, she marries Stephen.

We should have like to have left the dear old curé in kinder hands than his cross housekeeper, "Aux petits cœurs tout est grand. Aux grands cœurs tout est petit," he murmured to himself as he shut the worn old breviary. H. H.

### COMING EVENTS.

December 18th.—Meeting Central Midwives' Board, Caxton House, S.W. 3.30 p.m.

December 19th.—Central Midwives Board, Penal Board, Caxton House, S.W. 2 p.m.

December 25th.—Christmas Day, Hospital Festivities.

### A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"Thank God every morning when you get up that you have something to be done that must be done whether you like it or not. Being forced to do your best will breed in you temperance and self-control, diligence and strength of will, cheerfulness and content, and a hundred virtues which the idle never know."—Kingsley.

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