

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE SECRET CITADEL."*

This book deals with the problem of a mixed marriage; mixed in more senses than one. Beautiful Melanie Ettrington came of an old exclusive Roman Catholic family. Godfrey Dewne on the other hand was a semi-millionaire, the son of a soap manufacturer; and vague as to his religious tenets, which he described as Protestant.

"They met for the first time at an audience of the Pope, and at once Godfrey was aware that Melanie was the one woman for him. His thoughts were wholly occupied with the scene he had just witnessed. He felt as if his life were about to undergo some subtle change. But it was no spiritual change to transform and capture the soul. His inward vision contemplated only the exquisite fair face of Miss Ettrington indelibly impressed upon his mind."

From every point of view he met with opposition to his suit. Melanie's brother described him as a "bounder," and though his manners and appearance were irreproachable, and his tastes refined, we cannot but agree with the verdict passed upon him in view of his later conduct to his young wife.

Melanie's mother, suffering from an incurable disease, the knowledge of which is withheld from her daughter, assents reluctantly to the marriage. The young people were very much in love, and she felt the necessity of the girl being provided with a home and protector when she herself could no longer watch over the child she had idolised. She had received the news of her doom without flinching. "If Melanie were married now that would make a difference, and I think she would feel it less." It was the mother's passionate impulse to save her child from pain, and it struck the surgeon as touchingly selfless. She was a very devout woman, but her flesh shrank from that fiery trial. She knelt down and prayed a very simple little prayer. She prayed that she might have strength to endure until the end. She prayed, too, that she would be always able to pray.

In discussing religion with Melanie, "I have no prejudices, as you know," Godfrey said. "I should love you just the same whatever you were. You can be anything you like—you would still be your beautiful self."

But after their marriage Godfrey goes back on his agreement. The prolonged honeymoon was partly spent in Italy. The real attraction of this work lies in the fascinating description in which Miss Clarke excels. She succeeds in impressing the reader with the poetry and attraction of the South.

Godfrey, always jealous of her mother's influence over Melanie, wilfully conceals her serious con-

dition of health, and stubbornly and almost brutally refuses his wife's request to return to her after many months' absence.

"During the long waking hours of the preceding night he had come to the conclusion that their child should be born in Tunis. It was selfish and inconsiderate of Lady Ettrington to demand her presence in London now. She was making quite an absurd fuss about her own health, and she was probably funkng some quite trivial operation."

The shock of her mother's, to her, unexpected death destroyed the hope of a child, and nearly cost the young mother her life.

"She won't live. I have killed her," said Godfrey. "I have made her miserable. I have killed her love." A woman's love is a wonderful thing. In spite of his treachery to her in regard of her religion, in spite of his cruelty in separating her from her dying mother, we leave them perfectly united again.

"In the soft brilliance of a February day in the South, where a group of almond trees at the end of the garden made a soft blot of delicate colour against the white wall and the blue of the sea beyond," Godfrey makes what reparation he can for the wrong he had done her.

But we confess that in our opinion of him we still agree with Melanie's brother. The book is, of course, written from a Roman standpoint.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

February 16th.—Irish Nurses' Association. Lecture "Poliomyelitis and Neuritis," by Dr. Purser, 34, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. 7.30 p.m.

February 17th.—League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses. Lecture on Florentine Painting, "The Humanistic Movement and the Religious Revival under Savonarola," by Mr. Beckwith A. Spencer, M.A., F.S.A., Medical and Surgical Theatre, St. Bartholomew's Hospital. 8.15 p.m.

February 18th.—Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. Lecture: "The Legal Responsibilities of Nurses," by Professor Harvey Littlejohn. Large Theatre on Surgical side. 4.30 p.m. Trained nurses cordially invited.

February 18th.—Guy's Hospital Past and Present Nurses League. Lecture: "The Feeding of Infants," by Dr. Cameron. Medical School Buildings. 8 p.m.

February 19th.—Kensington Branch W.S.P.U. "At Homes." Speeches on the Women's Movement in Relation to Modern Ideals and Progress. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick on "The State Registration of Nurses." Victoria Room, Royal Palace Hotel, Kensington. 3 p.m.

February 19th.—Central Midwives Board Examination: London, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

February 28th.—National Union of Trained Nurses, London Branch. Lecture "Venereal Diseases," by Dr. Hilda Clark. Royal Society of Medicine, 1, Wimpole Street, W.

* By Isabel C. Clarke. Hutchinson & Co., London.

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