

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"DEEP SEA."*

This West of England romance breathes the spirit of the wild, almost primitive, atmosphere that hangs around and about so many parts of Cornwall. "Out of England into Cornwall." The title leads us to expect the coast and fisherman, and we are not disappointed. The story holds us in its grip throughout, it follows no conventional lines, it aims at no "happy ever after" conclusion; but we are made to come face to face with this race of fisher-folk and take them as they are, neither better nor worse.

Jeffrey Konnar, the cripple, would lie all day long in the window that overlooked the fish market. When he grew tired of the market, or dazzled with the sun, he would throw his head back on the cushion and gaze listlessly into the room, very dim by contrast, and out of this dimness, this fluent glitter of light would come to him very pleasantly with the vague suggestion of shadows dappling the grass of an orchard in summer. His couch was so arranged that if he didn't slip down the sun could warm his paralysed arm, which was slung in the black handkerchief he had borrowed from a naval reservist, and his poor paralysed leg, carefully wrapped each morning in one of the lodger's discarded guernsey frocks. From April till November the window was never opened. Nesta his wife, had gone so far as to close it in his face. And the neighbours, one and all, approved of her obstinacy. She, at any rate, ought to know what was best for her husband, and had a right to insist on it considering that she was the breadwinner of the family.

This was a trifle compared to poor Jeffrey's other sufferings at the hands of his wife, though his past was by no means blameless.

He had gone to sea because he was bred to it; worked because he was born to it; drank liquor because it came in his way; married—heaven only knew why he had married. Possibly Nesta knew better than he."

Reuben Henshall, the lodger, was always "round land" in the winter, and there was only one other person in the community in whom he could confide. This was little Ruth Parnall, the half-day girl, who was shooting up in her short frocks like a sapling of a silver birch. It was because of the lawless love of Nesta for Reuben, and because of Reuben's growing protective love for little Ruth that this story becomes something more than the monotonous happenings of a few fisher-folk.

The earlier story of Jeffrey's wooing of his wife Nesta gives us a little insight into her personality.

He had followed her across the common and found her sitting on a seat facing the sea. He

wished her good evening and sat down beside her.

"It's wonderful quiet here to-night," he said.

"It was before you comed here," she replied.

"You got a sarcy tongue in your head, my maid," said he. And then, not knowing what else to do he took her tight in his arms and kissed her, and she writhed in his grasp—for all the world like a little black cat—and dug her nails into his encircling arms and bit him—actually bit his hand. And her eyes glowed like coals."

It was at regatta time when the swings and roundabouts were in favour that the beautiful wild creature was caught. She loved the movement and excitement, but her poor little purse gave out and Jeffrey was only too ready to pay for her. Afterwards—"very different from the night she had struggled so fiercely. Now she did not shrink from his arms; she kissed him again, till his eyes swam and his eyes were blinded.

Eastward the thin pencil of the lighthouse on the head swept over the sea, and each time it swung above it revealed the whiteness of Nesta's face, and showed her eyes black and luminous as the night itself."

But the passionate wooing ended in unhappy marriage, and at the time of the story opening we see Nesta still beautiful, still undisciplined in her hatred of her crippled husband, and her wild infatuation for little Ruth's lover.

This is a book that must not be missed.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

June 2nd to 5th.—Gresham Lectures, "The History of Nursing and Florence Nightingale," by Dr. F. M. Sandwith. Gresham College, Basinghall Street, E.C., 6 p.m.

June 9th.—Central Midwives Board, Penal Board, 2 p.m.

June 9th to 12th.—National Council of Trained Nurses. Annual Conference and Nursing Exhibition, New Central Hall, Birmingham.

June 9th.—Annual Meeting Colonial Nursing Association. Chairman, the Right Hon. Sir Claude MacDonald, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.C.B. 4, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.

June 10th.—C.M.B. Penal Board. 10.30 a.m.

REGISTRATION REUNION.

June 26th.—The Central Committee for the State Registration of Trained Nurses' Reunion-Reception to meet the Chairman the Right Hon. the Lord Ampthill, G.C.S.I., and Dr. Chapple, M.P. Reception 8 p.m. Address by the Chairman 8.30 p.m. Dance 8.45 to 12 p.m. Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, London, W.C.

TICKETS.

Nurses, 3s. 6d.; Matrons and Hospital Staffs, 5s.; General Public, 7s. 6d. From the Hon. Secretaries, 431, Oxford Street, London, W.; and the Secretary, R.B.N.A., 10, Orchard Street, London, W.

* By Francis Brett Young. Martin Secker, Adelphi.

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