

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"TANSY."*

This charming South Down story is a notable addition to our folk-lore novels.

Mr. Edwardes is, we understand, an authority on Sussex and Sussex manners and customs. He is, without doubt, an interested and discerning student of human nature. Indeed, nature of all grades calls to him, and he, with facile and sympathetic pen, imparts with sure touch his enviable response for the benefit of less-favoured persons.

In style he is fresh and original, and we venture to think that "Tansy" ranks in the forefront of the novels of the year.

The story is written in the first person by one Tom Murrow, a taxidermist, who had learnt his craft in the *atelier* of a famous Frenchman. Twenty years in Paris had taught him more than his craft, he had learned there to love, to sin, to atone, to suffer, and then in utter desolation came to hide his wounds in his old Sussex home.

Monella Wrake, the Vicar's daughter, whom he afterwards marries, and the two sons of the old farmer—Joad and Will Wilverly—are his only friends. Joad, like himself, had had a crushing blow in his youth, in the death of his young wife, and this was a bond that drew the two men together. At the time the story opens, in spite of bygone sorrows, they led a happy and peaceful life at and around the old farm—till Tansy came. Now Tansy, for a woman, followed the unusual calling of tending sheep, and it was as shepherdess that she was introduced to the little village circle. How she came to be engaged as such makes charming reading.

"Tansy Firle I be—Shepherd George Firle's only child—as wur born in a sheepfold, and growed up among the lambs and yows to the tune o' sheep-bells every day and night o' her life. Father he'd have loved it a deal better if I had been a boy; but I warn't, and he made the best o' things as God willed them. Shepherds!—there be few shepherd-men on the hill as have seen more and done more than I have."

Tansy was something more than a capable shepherdess. She was a beautiful woman, with lure and fascination, and she quickly wrought havoc with the two farmer brothers.

Passionate, mischievous, affectionate, childish, greedy, callous, no wonder poor Tansy had a history in the past, that she concealed with high-handed cleverness. She played with the brothers' affection with transparent self-satisfaction, loving Will, but bartering with Joad, who heaped presents upon her.

It was sweet-hearted Monella who discovered Tansy's secret. Her passionate defence of her is very beautiful. "She is not to blame. She is no more responsible for her fall than a wild flower

which has been trodden under foot by some ruthless beast."

Very realistic are the descriptions of the sheep-washing and shearing, the "weanding" of the lambs, and their pathetic cry for their lost mothers.

Will says of Tansy, "'She can put up with the lambs yammering, she says, but when it comes to the mothers crying for their children taken from them—little ones they are perhaps never to see again—Joad, she can't stand it.'

"Joad left off studying his finger-nails and took to biting them.

"'Humph! 'Tis strange she should feel it so, after living in the midst of sheep all her life,' he said."

But then neither Will nor Joad knew of the little babe that Tansy had borne.

All Sussex lovers—and it has many—will appreciate the many charming descriptions of things and people to be found in these pages. We heartily commend "Tansy" to our readers.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

June 19th.—National Union of Trained Nurses. Discussion of the Nurses' Registration Bill. Midwives Institute, 12, Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C. 7.30 p.m.

June 23rd.—The Nursery Training School. A Meeting (by kind permission of Mrs. W. R. Malcolm), the Lady Emmott in Chair. 1, Prince's Gardens, S.W. 4 p.m.

June 27th.—National Union of Trained Nurses. Social Gathering. Edmonton Infirmary. 3.30 p.m.

July 2nd.—Association for Promoting the Training and Supply of Midwives. Annual Gathering of Midwives (by kind permission of the Lady Emmott), 30, Ennismore Gardens, S.W. Badges will be presented by Her Royal Highness Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein. 3 p.m.

July 4th.—League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses. General Meeting, Clinical Lecture Theatre. 2.30 p.m. Social Gathering in the Great Hall, 4 p.m.

July 7th and 8th.—National Association for the Prevention of Consumption and other Forms of Tuberculosis. Sixth Annual Conference. Leeds.

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

JUNE.

"It is time to be kind, it is time to be sweet,
To be scattering roses for somebody's feet.
It is time to be sowing, it is time to be growing;
It is time for the flowers of life to be blowing."

"Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
And back of the flour is the mill;
And back of the mill is the wheat and the
shower,
And' the sun, and the Father's will."

—M. D. Babcock.

*By Tickner Edwardes. Hutchinson & Co., London.

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