

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"HOME,"*

Virgin soil, which is also rich and fertile, yields that which no after production can achieve; there is a spontaneity about the growth that can never again be attained.

In this first novel we have this, and a great deal more. There is a vigour, a fertility in its style that makes us fear lest its author should be tempted to over produce. One thing is certain, that he or she (we are inclined to go for the he) will not remain anonymous for very long.

Starting in New England, we are transported to Brazil and to Africa, with the atmosphere in turn of each built up around and about us. We drink in the peace of the New England homesteads.

"Night fell on the hill. The stars came out and with them a glow of light and warmth lit up the windows of Maple House, Elm House, and the Firs. A smell of hot biscuit lingered in the still air. The soft voices of women hushing children to sleep came like the breath of life from the quiet houses. Here a song sifting softly through the rustle of many trees, there the crying, quickly hushed of a wakened baby, and far up the road the trailing whistle of a boy signalling good-night, passed into silence."

It was from this peaceful scene that Gerry Lansing fled, believing his wife Alix unfaithful to him. Indeed, beautiful and frail as she was, she was by no means blameless. The tale is excellently constructed at this point.

Gerry, sound at core, and clean living up to then, is lost to his family, who believe him dead. On the far Brazilian coast, during an early morning river swim, he first meets the young Portuguese girl, Margarita. Graphically we are told of his mad lapse.

"In one terrific swirl life had wrenched him from the moorings of generations, tossed him high and dropped him—broken. It seemed as if it could not be true. With the drops of water from the river he had flicked off the bonds it had taken centuries to forge." The girl Margarita was simply primitive. She bids the old priest who visits them after (for Gerry decided to stay with her), "Look at him; is he not good to see? I found him at the river. He is mine."

The birth of the little boy, "The Man," the tragic death of "The Man" and Margarita, when the river burst its dams, is told with admirable force and restraint; restraint because though Gerry's natural affection and chivalry go out to Margarita and his child, he never forgets that the first place in his heart must ever be his wife's—Alix.

He companys with a man Lieber, who is also an exile from home, though for a different reason. Very appealing is Lieber's yearning to return.

"There's a flag, the sight of which makes my heart come into throat and tears into my eyes. You think I mean the Stars and Stripes, but I

don't, I mean the Blue Peter that flies at the halliards of big ships and says 'We sail to-day.' To me it always says 'We sail for home to-day.' I'd shut my eyes or close the blinds, but what was the use of that? I couldn't stand it; I came up here (inland), and now last night I heard it in my sleep—up here."

One sweet little picture of Margarita and her child and we must close.

"She did not know why she wept, but she knew she wept for the things that were going to be. 'The Man' came toddling out to her, fell on her shoulders, dragged her hands from her face, and crowed with delight. It was an old game, played often before, except that this time when the game was over his little fists were wet."

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

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 3rd and 10th.—Nurses' Registration Bill. Informal discussion; 20, Upper Wimpole Street, London, W., 8.30 p.m. Matrons and nurses cordially invited.

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.

July 16th.—Society for State Registration of Trained Nurses. Annual Meeting, Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, London, W. 4.30 p.m. Tea after the meeting by kind invitation of Mrs. Walter Spencer at 2, Portland Place, London, W.

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"The least flower with a brimming cup may stand,
And share its dewdrop with another near.

—E. B. Browning.

"Have thy tools ready; God will find thee work."—Kingsley.

"Keep hearts, sage minds, take life as God has made it; it is a long trial, an incomprehensible preparation for an unknown destiny. This destiny, the true one, begins with the first step inside the tomb. In the meanwhile, live and suffer, hope and contemplate. Woe, alas! to him who shall have loved only bodies, form, appearances! Death will deprive him of all. Try to save souls; you will find them again."

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* Anon. T. Fisher Unwin, London.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)