

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## "LADY CONNIE."\*

Lady Connie was a person who was bound to make trouble. That is to say, she was a girl who absorbed all the things that make girls' lives agreeable. Position, money, beauty, charm. Her own sex envied her, and the other—well, a girl thus accoutred, suddenly sprung upon an Oxford University circle, leaves for certain, impressions of a more or less lasting character upon the other.

The Oxford "bloods"—noticeably Falloden, one of the best all-round undergraduates of Marmion—swarmed around her like flies about the honey pot.

Falloden was a handsome, arrogant, well-born, athletic scholar—and well he knew it.

Lady Connie was something of a prize, but he had supposed all his life that he had but to ask and have—why not now? Was he not the all-conquering Falloden?

Lady Connie was, without much warning, launched into the family of her uncle, Dr. Ewen Hooper, the holder of a recently-founded classical readership. He was possessed of a wife and two daughters of his own. Alice, pretty, with a Watteau-like beauty, with a head full of undergraduates, and who regarded the Eights Week and Commemoration as the shining events of the year. Norah was a "Home Student" and had just begun to work seriously for English literature honours.

Spoilt Lady Connie, under the terms of her father Lord Risborough's will, was to spend the year until her coming of age in their domestic circle. She eclipsed these two ordinary girls as the moon a candle—hence trouble from this source.

The trouble from the other was of a more serious character. Lady Connie, accustomed from childhood to brilliant society in Continental capitals, was not going to be taken for granted by Falloden, although she had secretly in her heart capitulated to his compelling personality.

Otto Radowitz, a handsome young Pole, with a musical career before him, decides unconsciously their future. He is hated and despised by Falloden, who resents his golden hair, his foreign nationality, his music, and—above all—the favours which Connie is disposed to bestow upon him.

He was "ragged" from time to time by his fellow undergraduates, and she appeals to Falloden on his behalf.

On the night of the "Marmion" ball, she elects to ignore Falloden and to single out Radowitz for her favours.

The "ragging" reaches its climax on the same night, when Radowitz is ducked in the college fountain, with the result that his hand is so badly injured that his musical career is at an end.

\* By Mrs. Humphry Ward. Smith, Elder & Co., London.

Connie's reproaches were met by Falloden with a counter-charge.

"No; if this business turns out badly, I shall have remorse enough, God knows—but you can't escape! If you punish me for it, if I alone am to pay the penalty, it will not only be Radowitz that has a grievance—not only Radowitz whose life has been spoilt."

By the same post as Lady Connie's dismissal of him, comes a letter from his father, telling him of the financial ruin of his family.

It is Radowitz who finds Falloden the elder dying alone on the moors adjoining his property; and who ministered to him in the last exhaustion of angina, and who said the prayers of the Church over him.

Douglas Falloden, coming upon the little group on the moor, is even then compelled to cry "*Radowitz!*" "Thoughts ironic and perverse are swarming through his brain, as though driven through it from outside. What a nursery tale! how simple! how crude. Could not the gods have devised a subtler retribution?"

Adversity did for Falloden, however, what probably prosperity would never have accomplished.

His debt to Radowitz compelled him to consider the whole position afresh, and better moments and impulses were acted upon.

He cares generously for the boy's stricken life, for he has learned that he has phthisis and his days are numbered.

As for Connie, she was bitterly sorry for Radowitz, the victim. But she loved Falloden, the offender."

Falloden arranges to take Radowitz south.

He asks Connie, "What good should I be alone? I'm a pretty sort of nurse."

"There was a pause; Connie trembled and flushed.

"Take me with you," she murmured, but her eyes said far more.

"And the next moment she was in Falloden's arms."  
H. H.

My thoughts came drifting down the Prison where  
I lay—  
Through the Windows of their Wings the stars  
were shining—  
The wings bore me away—the russet Wings and  
grey  
With feathers like the moon-bleached Flowers—I  
was a God reclining:  
Beneath me lay my Body's Chain and all the  
Dragons born of Pain  
As I burned through the Prison Roof to walk on  
Pavement Shining.

From "*The Pensive Prisoner*,"  
by JAMES ELROY FLECKER.

## COMING EVENTS.

October 12th.—Society State Registration of Trained Nurses. Meeting Executive Committee, 431, Oxford Street, London, W., 4.30 p.m.

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