

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"TWILIGHT." *

"A couple of years ago on the verge of an illness that subsequently overwhelmed me, I took a small furnished house in Pinelands.

"Three months of neuritis, only kept within bounds by drugs, had made me comparatively indifferent to my surroundings. I wish to relate a set of circumstances that made my stay in Pinelands memorable.

"The house was called Browans, and it was haunted for me from the first by Margaret Eldon and Gabriel Stanton."

The writer goes on to describe her first arrival and how Dr. Kennedy at the instigation of her sister visited her the same evening.

"A tall and not ill-looking man in the late thirties or early forties. He had on the worst suit of country tweeds I had ever seen, and incongruously well made boots."

He did not accord with the black-coated London brigade, and his opening was certainly different.

"How long have you been feeling unwell?" was what I expected, but Dr. Kennedy sat for a few minutes without speaking at all. Then he asked me abruptly:

"Did you know Mrs. Eldon?"

"Who?"

"Margaret Eldon? You knew she lived here, didn't you? That it was here it all happened?"

"What happened?"

"Uncouth" was the adjective that presented itself to my mind as I looked at him.

In vain this strange man endeavoured to interest himself in his present patient. He could not keep off his text. "I used to come here so often—two or three times a day sometimes."

"Was she ill?" The question was perfunctorily asked. Margaret Eldon was nothing to me then.

Evidently the romance of his life had been this Margaret Eldon. Unnerved, unstrung, and highly imaginative, and under the influence of nepenthe the writer described how at night she had visions of and conversations with Margaret, with whose presence the place had become impregnated.

"That night I took less nepenthe, yet saw Margaret Eldon more vividly. She stayed a long time too. This time she wore a blue peignoir, her hair hung down and she looked very young and girlish."

Margaret, like the writer of the story, belonged to the literary world, which was a point of union between her and her shadowy visitor.

The story alternates between the descriptions of the writer's serious illness, for which she is treated by Dr. Kennedy and the history of Margaret Eldon, which is culled partly from visions but mostly from letters and papers in the possession of Dr. Kennedy and lent to her for perusal by him

The following is a brief outline of her very fascinating history

Margaret Eldon, young and attractive, had come some years previously to Pinelands to wait for the decree against her husband to be made absolute. Gabriel Stanton was to marry her the moment she was free.

Margaret, a frail creature, suffered from acute attacks of angina pectoris, for which she was treated by Dr. Kennedy, who in his turn became passionately attached to her.

A few days before the decree was to be made absolute, blackmail was levied against Margaret, though she was perfectly innocent, accusing her of impropriety with both Gabriel and Dr. Kennedy.

In a passion of dread that her marriage with Gabriel will be made an impossibility, she allows Dr. Kennedy to pay hush money. Gabriel, a high-minded man, keenly resents his action and he entreats her to stop the cheque.

"Margaret, we are clean. There must be no one that can say 'Had they been innocent would they have paid to hide it.'"

The horror of the prospect of once more standing in the divorce court, of once more going through that terrible ordeal, before Gabriel and she could taste their bliss, overwhelms her.

A terrible attack of pain overtakes her. She persuades Kennedy, who loves her, to give her an overdose of hyoscine.

"He had feared his strength, but his strength had been equal to her need. She was out of pain, nothing else mattered. He had sealed her to him, she was his woman now and for ever, no self-righteous iceberg could hold and deny her.

"Sleep well, beloved," he whispered. "I kept my promise, I did not fail you."

This same Dr. Kennedy attends the writer of the story and entrusts her with his secret. His disordered mind at last imagines her to be his lost Margaret.

This book is a most interesting psychological study, and the imaginations of a mind under the influence of drugs are vividly penned.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

May 2nd.—Nurses' Missionary League. Fifteenth Annual Conference and Meeting. *Morning*, 10-12.30. *Afternoon*, 2.30-5. *Evening*, 7-9.30. University Hall, Gordon Square, W.C.

May 3rd.—Society State Registration of Trained Nurses. Meeting Executive Committee, 431, Oxford Street, W. 5 p.m.

May 21st-25th.—Post Graduate Week for Midwives, General Lying-in Hospital, York Rd., Lambeth, S.E.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

May 1st.—Examinations. London, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, and Newcastle-on-Tyne.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD (Scotland).

April 30th.—Examinations. Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen.

* By Frank Danby. Hutchinson & Co., London. Price 6s.

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