

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## "ENCHANTMENT,"\*

We heartily commend this book to the notice of all classes of fiction lovers. It is really exactly what is needed at the present time when there is so much to sadden and depress. It brims over with that most delightful of humour—Irish humour. This is depicted by one who is evidently very much at home with the whimsicalities and contradictions of that attractive nation. The plot, too, is original in its conception and the story holds its sway from start to finish.

At the very outset of the book we are confronted with that hard ultimatum which the Catholic Church lays down for her children, that if in childbirth either the life of the mother or the child must be sacrificed, it is the child who must be saved. Such a decision had to be made by John Desmond, master of Waterpark, at the birth of his tenth child.

It was the doctor who put it to John Desmond, half bemused as he was with whiskey.

"'Tis a matter of losing the mother or child," he said grimly, "and I'm waiting to know from yourself, John Desmond, which it is to be. Will ye pull yourself together now, for the love of God, and if 'tis abiding by the laws of the Holy Church ye are, will ye come upstairs and hold the hand of the poor creature before she goes her suffering ways out of this world?"

Desmond decides in favour of the mother, but, as a propitiation, vows that if the child shall survive and be a girl she shall enter a convent in due course. But it was ordained that in spite of efforts to the contrary the mother died and the tenth child, a daughter, was born alive to the drunkard John Desmond.

Mrs. Slattery, his housekeeper, excellent soul, made many remonstrances with her master about his drunken habits.

"What pleasure is in it, I should like to know?" "What pleasure? Wasn't I sittin' on the bed the other night and didn't the door open, the way fifty weasels 'ud be comin' in, in evening dress? Would ye be gettin' as much entertainment as that out of a glass of water? Ye would not."

It was when his little daughter Patricia was six years old that John Desmond sent for Father Casey to ask if he could make a bargain with the Lord God.

"Well, when ye say a bargain," the priest began cautiously, "when ye say a bargain 'tis the way ye mean ye're goin' to get the best of it."

"Yirra I wouldn't do such a thing. And if I did, sure wouldn't the infinite mercy of the Almighty God make allowances for me the way I'd be only a man, and not always sober at that."

The bargain he proposed was that if little Pat could be released from the vow by which he had bound her at birth, he himself would give up drinking.

\*By E. Temple Thurston. T. Fisher Unwin, London.

Patricia was not informed of her release, and she was brought up to consider herself vowed to the religious life.

For, said her father to the priest, "let 'em all think the way she's going into a convent. 'Twill do no harm to her, for 'tis a little divvle she is entirely. Her eyes weren't made for the good of her soul, I'm thinkin'."

It was when Pat was at the age of sixteen that an invitation came to the daughters of John Desmond, to a dance at a house in Stradbally, "Come along the whole bang lot of you."

Pat decided that in spite of her vocation as a nun she would not be left out of the fun, "and I'm goin' with me hair up, if I have to walk the way of the roads within me stockin' vamps," said she.

Good Mrs. Slattery objected. "If it's the way Pat's goin' into a convent I'm thinkin' 'tis a queer way for her, she tastin' the diversions of life the time she'd be puttin' the world away from her."

Pat makes answer, "'Tis going into a convent I am sure enough. But I'll be seein' what sort of place the world is first, the way I'll be knowin' the thing I'm well quit of."

The way Desmond eventually broke his bargain with heaven, and the way Pat's impetuous lover stood in the way of her being sacrificed to her father's rash vow, is all very well told, and the climax is not lacking in excitement. A very excellent tale!

H. H.

## ENGLAND, RISE!

England, rise! Thine ancient thunder  
Humbled mightier foes than these:  
Broke a whole world's bonds asunder,  
Gave thee empire o'er the seas:  
And while yet one rose may blossom,  
Emblem of thy former bloom—  
Let not age invade thy bosom—  
Brightest shine in darkest gloom!

While one oak thy homes shall shadow,  
Stand like it as thou hast stood;  
While a spring greets grove and meadow,  
Let not winter freeze thy blood.  
Till this hour St. George's Standard  
Led the advancing march of time:  
England! keep it streaming vanward,  
Conqueror over age and clime!

BRANWELL BRONTË.

## COMING EVENTS.

May 5th.—Irish Nurses' Association, Meeting Executive Committee, 34, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. 8 p.m.

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

May 23rd.—Trained Women Nurses' Friendly Society. Annual Meeting. 431, Oxford Street, London, W., 4.30 p.m.

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