

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"LOVE AND HATRED." *

Those who are acquainted with the writings of Mrs. Belloc Lowndes need not fear that any book of hers will strike a note of boredom, and her latest keeps up her reputation in this respect.

"Love and Hatred" is a somewhat vehement title foreshadowing vehement emotions.

On the very opening page, the very first words are "O, but this is terrible." Laura Paveley thus receives the first declaration of love from Oliver Tropenell, who was the close friend of herself and of her husband. It was true that she had not found happiness with the man she had married, but the "fastidious, refined, reserved Laura Paveley had an almost morbid dislike of the betrayal of any violent or unseemly emotion."

Paveley, the banker who was Laura's husband, was described by Oliver as an insufferable cad. True, he appeared to be something of a company promoter, and was distasteful to his somewhat cold wife, but we are conscious of feeling sorry for the man so that we describe him as "poor Godfrey."

Mrs. Winslow appreciated him, however, if his wife did not. She had been the innocent partner in a divorce suit, previously to the opening of the story. "Katty—the old childish name still clung to her—was a very clever woman. She possessed the power of getting the utmost out of people round her whether they were friends, acquaintances or servants. Her little house, so far as was possible on very limited means, was perfectly ordered. As a matter of fact, Godfrey Paveley was now happier in Katty Winslow's company than he was in that of anyone else. Not only did she ply him with delicate flattery which caused him always to feel better pleased with himself at Rosedean than when he was at home, but a great and real bond between them was their mutual interest in all the local happenings and local gossip of the neighbourhood. Laura, his wife, was frankly indifferent to all that concerned the town of Pewsbury. She was not disagreeable about it; she simply didn't care.

Had Godfrey been a more imaginative man he would probably by now have come to regret, with a deep, voiceless regret, that he had not married Katty instead of Laura; but being the manner of man he was, he had, so far, done nothing of the sort. And yet at one time he had nearly married Katty. It was a fact which even now he would have denied, but which she never forgot."

When, one day, Godfrey who had gone for what purported to be a short absence, did not return, it caused consternation in his home, and at the bank where his business-like habits were well known, and it at last became imperative to put the matter in the hands of Scotland Yard.

"The stable clock struck ten. Laura suddenly

heard the sound of firm footsteps hurrying down the passage.

She got off the sofa, expecting to see the now disagreeably familiar blue uniform of the Pewsbury Police Inspector. But it was only Preston, the butler, bringing a letter which purported to come from one Fernando Apra, saying that "if you will instruct the police to go to Duke's House, Piccadilly, and proceed to room 18 on the top floor—the only office which is at present let—they will there find Mr. Paveley's body." The correspondent explained that the death was accidental.

Investigation proved that Godfrey was indeed lying dead in the offices indicated, though the writer of the letter was not forthcoming.

Though she was outwardly leading the quiet, decorously peaceful life of a newly-made widow Laura's soul was storm-tossed, and had lost its bearings. Also hidden away in the deepest recesses of her heart was an unacknowledged pain. She had felt so sure that Oliver Tropenell would stay on with his mother through the winter and early spring. But to her bewildered surprise he had left for Mexico almost at once. He had not even sought a farewell interview to say good-bye to her alone."

Then a cable message; then closely following upon it, Oliver himself; then a secret marriage with Laura, then the conclusions of the detective that Godfrey's murderer was no other than Oliver himself, and then Oliver's death from a gun accident before the arrest was made.

There is certainly plenty of romance and tragedy in this book, and except for that of poor Laura the other love affairs appear to be satisfactory.

Katty was ever a shallow little person, and the tragedy of Godfrey's death in no way deterred her from taking another husband.

Lovers of light fiction will find this latest book of Mrs. Belloc Lowndes a welcome volume.

H. H.

TRENCH THOUGHTS, 1916.

Not of the Christ who came
Two thousand years ago;
Only the firelight glow
For one loved cot I know.

Not of those shepherds old,
Watching their flocks by night,
But Father, and Kate with a light,
Seeing that cows is right.

Not of the Angel song;
Peace unto men of Goodwill;
Only my brother Bill
Dead, and he done no ill!

Not of the Heavenly host,
Bringing tidings of great joy;
But my Mother's homely employ,
And her prayer, "My boy, my boy!"

—From *Work-a-Day Warriors*,
By Joseph Lee.

* By Mrs. Belloc Lowndes. Chapman & Hall, London.

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