

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

THE GIRL FROM KURDISTAN.*

Miss Kerruish will be remembered as the author of "Miss Haroun Al-Raschid," which book won the thousand guinea competition offered by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton; so her present novel, dealing with Persian customs and intrigue must command our attention. Those who are acquainted with the position of European government officials in the east will be aware that their position is often one that requires very careful handling, and it is from this point that the book under consideration is written.

The opening chapter describes the position of a young Armenian lad, from, "forgetting he had a knife in his hand when he struck a man and God decreed that his neck vein should be cut. The blood ran all over my hand—see, all. And his brother said he would kill me." He was rescued from the infuriated relative by Europeans in a barouche driven by a Cossack coachman. Escorting it was a yelling and threatening mob of street roughs, slipshod policemen and a few respectable but enraged men of the better class and the inevitable rabble of urchins. Two figures emerged and stepped out for the Toup. The larger was a big man of five-and-thirty, undeniably British, his ruddy curls prematurely grizzled at the temples, his eyes choleric by habit. He led his companion by one gloved finger hooked in a greasy collar.

"The very shadow of the Pearly Gun is *Bas* (refuge)," said the European. He swung a foot back and shot his charge sprawling into the sanctuary.

He then made his stately way back to the carriage. The ladies were comparing torn flounces.

"No garden party after all, and a nasty, dirty criminal sitting on my feet all the way from Shimlah Gate."

It was unconventional Janet Macroy, who got herself into a nasty hole, by her friendship with Hajji Jaffier, the chief of a tribe, who was kept in Teheran by the Shah as a hostage for its good behaviour.

"The Hajji Khan was hawking and interrupted his sport to put me on the road," Janet explained to Perdita, as she made the introductions.

The Khan stroked down the diminutive falcon that was perched on his wrist and broke in deprecatingly. What was a lifetime's sport compared to the least service to the Shehzadeh Khanoum? So he demanded, and vowed furthermore that the joy of meeting her had cured him of several specified diseases."

Self-willed Janet, although long resident in the East, chose to ignore the gulf that separates East from West, but in justice to her she was unaware of the havoc her friendship with the Eastern caused in the breast of his little wife. By strategy Janet's

friends contrive a meeting between her and the little heart-broken woman.

"You are a Hakim Khanoum, yea, and a white sorceress. I can see it in your eyes. You will give me a philtre, a love potion?"

She fell full length and kissed Janet's shoes, not knowing her identity.

"The smallest Ferenghi philtre would bring him back. It is a Ferenghi woman who hath led him away, and may Allah send her swiftly to his kindled fire. And may he furthermore make every Ferenghi golden hair of her a serpent to gnaw the black Ferenghi heart of her to the last sounding of Serafil's Wakening Trump.

Janet Macroy, one of the best of women at heart, once having grasped the situation dealt with it thoroughly.

"Thou hast something better than spells," she said. "Thy little one doth but reckon her age in days. Take her and cherish her, O my sister, that when he returns she may be a sweet comfort to him, and a rosy link between ye twain."

She further assures Hajji Khan: "A Christian gentlewoman does not wed a Muslim. I never dreamed thou wouldst entertain such a thought. Hear thee that for it, I will have nothing more to do with thee, and leave thee to do to me as thou wilt."

"Do you deem, I may, as I can, cast dirt on your name in the ears of Teheran?"

But though, for political reasons, he did not dare to take this step, Janet came near to being ostracised for her foolishness, and it required all the finesse of her friends to prevent ugly consequences.

But as her friend, Madame Ecroy said: "Janet is always rather fine when she really knows what she is doing."

We feel sure that this story, that brings so vividly the atmosphere of the East around us, will be welcomed by many readers who are wearied by the commonplace. H. H.

THE LAY OF THE LAZY NURSE.

Breathes there a nurse with soul so dead

Who never to herself hath said:

"To-morrow morning I will rise

Before the sun lights up the skies.

Soon as the calling maid shall ring,

Before the birds begin to sing,

Fresh as a lark I shall awake;

An early morning walk I'll take."

And, when at an unearthly hour

Next morn, the maid with awful power

Makes noise enough to stir the dead,

And wake the nurse upon her bed,

Breathes there a nurse, I now repeat,

Who wouldn't send her twenty feet,

Then back beneath the counterpane

With restful sigh doze off again?

(With apologies to Scott.)

E. E. THIRKELL.

In the JOURNAL OF THE LEEDS TOWNSHIP
INFIRMARY NURSES LEAGUE.

* By Jessie Douglas Kerruish. (Hodder & Stoughton, London.)

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