

dead. He has been wounded twice, and is a wreck from malaria and rheumatism. One wonders how he can go on living at all—many people would go mad for much less.

On Christmas morning everyone was rushing round with their little presents for the patients. The routine for present-giving is as follows:—

You shake hands and say, "Christus ce rode." Christ is born to-day. The answer is, "He is born indeed." Then you offer your little present, which is received with a smile and word of thanks; but it is not considered polite to look at the contents while the donor is still in the room. In each ward a tiny cup of Serbian coffee is offered to each guest, the most delicious stuff in the world, like Turkish coffee, but not so thick.

Those people whose business takes them the round of the hospital have, under penalty of being impolite, to drink a cup in each ward. Sister Russell, who is very popular here, and went round to wish everyone a Happy Christmas, was compelled during her peregrinations to drink nine cups of coffee, two medicine glasses of sour wine, and a thimbleful of rakia or Serbian cognac, rather a potent mixture when taken so early in the morning.

Now I have to drive two of the Powers out to dinner. At Nordovo I have horrible qualms lest I shall kill or maim either of them for life. It is a truly awful road to Silberovo—ruts, holes, hills as steep as the side of a house, and part of the way along a stony precipice overlooking the lake. Also, I have only driven once before in daylight, and it is a pitch-black night. However, here goes. Much love from

VERONICA.

MAY.

Scent of lilac and of May;
Cuckoo-call throughout the day;
Chestnuts' bridal-bells' array
Pinky-white along our way.
Dainty, perfumed May!

Meadows starred with mauve and gold;
Song of thrush and blackbird bold;
Nightingales when shadows fold
Tenderly the day that's told.
Merry, singing May!

Honeyed breezes gently blow;
Hawking swallows darting low;
Lazy, tinkling streamlets slow
Join the river's soundless flow.
Buoyant, sunny May!

Silver-blue the midnight sky;
Waxing moon is riding high;
Posy-orchards shimmering lie;
Lofty tree tops softly sigh.
Balmy, slumbrous May!

MENA BIELBY.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE THREE BLACK PENNYS."*

The title of this powerful and remarkable book does not refer, as might be supposed, to the copper coinage, but to three generations of a family of that name, who for centuries had been Iron-masters in Pennsylvania. Not the least attractive feature of this book is the blending of the roar and music of the industry with the compelling romance and love passages which were the inseparable part of the disposition of each Black Penny as he in turn comes before the reader's vision.

"Howath," said the elder Penny of his son, centuries ago, "is a black Penny, that is what we call them in our family. You see the Pennys some hundreds of years back acquired a strong Welsh strain. I take it you are familiar with the Welsh—a solitary living dark lot. Unamenable to influence, reflect their country, I suppose. In the Penny family, he went on to say, the strain "sinks entirely out of sight for two or three or sometimes four generations, and then appears solid in one individual as unslacked as the pure original thing."

The object, then, of this book is to portray three of these types in their successive generations, and not as Gilbert Penny had remarked in the generations immediately succeeding each other.

This gives the book one of its characteristics which alone would make it unusual, for it embraces a period of something near two centuries.

Howath, who lived in the early part of the eighteenth century, was the son of Gilbert Penny, who was the first of his name to settle in Pennsylvania, and had become part owner of the iron furnace with David Forsythe, a Quaker merchant of importance.

Howath's mother is described as "essentially lady." The Court had been her right by birth. Her description is that of a charming and somewhat elusive personality. Her defence of her son, in answer to his father's somewhat disparaging remarks as to his dark origin, strikes quaintly on a modern ear. "You must not figure to yourself," Mrs. Penny's even voice admirably cut in, "that the black is a term of reproach. I think we are both at times, both at a loss with Howath, he is so different from us, from the girls; but he is truly remarkable."

It was the advent of the Winscombes on a short visit that had called forth these remarks on Howath. They were newly from the atmosphere of St. James's—an old man and his fashionable young wife—she had charge of the Princess Amelia's stockings. She tells Howath, in an intimacy that ripened rapidly, something of her early life. "Well, it was always Court, in France and in England. Always the Court. Do you know what that means? . . . Champagne and music, and scent and masques. I was in it when I was fourteen, and I had a lover the first year."

* By Joseph Hergesheimer. (London: Heinemann.)

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