

THE INVISIBLE KNOT.

Under the above heading the American Social Hygiene Association Department of Public Information, 105, West Fortieth Street, New York City, issues a telling leaflet in support of its campaign against venereal diseases.

"The Knout! The Scourge of Russia—the symbol of oppression—the breeder of revolution. The vast majority of Russians knew it; feared it—understood.

"But a far more terrible scourge, the invisible knout of the Russian people, is Syphilis—and this millions do not understand."

Syphilis is wide spread in Russia through lack of decent living conditions and a gross lack of personal hygiene.

The object of the leaflet is to impress upon the public in the United States the danger of infection, the necessity for scientific treatment and for the education of the public as to the way the diseases are contracted.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE OLD MADHOUSE."*

This book has a special interest, inasmuch as it is unfortunately the last from the pen of Mr. de Morgan, for he died when the story was nearing completion. Luckily for the public he was in the habit of discussing the progress of his books, and the characters, with his wife, who was thus able to write the conclusion that her husband had sketched out. Mr. de Morgan is a great loss, his style is absolutely unique, and he is able to clothe each incident with a wealth of detail that never grows tiresome, but on the contrary holds the reader absorbed.

The old madhouse, which at the commencement of the book had been empty for some years, took the fancy of Fred Cartaret and his fiancée Cintra. It was much too large for a young couple, but it was old-fashioned, and quite desirable, if it were renovated, which it sadly needed. Fred's uncle, trustee, and also former headmaster, Dr. Cartaret, must see the place and judge for himself. He was in Holy Orders, weighed eighteen stone, was a very dignified personage.

He left his sister-in-law's house in Maida Vale to return in time for the commencement of the school term, undertaking to view "The Cedars" *en route*. This he did, was traced as far as the old house, where he interviewed the caretaker, who left him for a moment to answer a ring; when she returned he had disappeared, and no trace of him was found for years. This is the central incident around which the story revolves, and which is elaborated to the finest point. Incidentally, there are the love affairs of Fred Cartaret and Cintra, of his bosom friend, Charley and his wife Lucy, and of that very nice girl,

* William Heinemann, London. By William de Morgan.

Cintra's sister Nancy, secretly designated by the young men as "Elbows." The two young couples had a delightful scheme of sharing the Cedars between them—at least at first it seemed delightful—but it fell through, as Cintra recognised that Fred's admiration for his friend's Lucy was rather warmer than she approved.

Unfortunately, his liking for her increased instead of diminished, and Cintra made other matrimonial arrangements and left Fred free.

Charles and Fred were more than ordinary friends, they were as Damon and Pythias, and the tragedy which closes the story is a sad one.

Though the book abounds in charming writing and happy description, it does not lend itself to extract, as passages taken from the context seem to lose their import; now and again one comes across a delightful word picture.

"A cat on the hearthrug that had slept through the conversation thought the silence a good opportunity to stretch itself and turn round. A dachshund that had been grilling inside the fender, came over suddenly as to a business appointment, smelt the cat carefully, decided no steps could be taken at present, and went back. A little quick-step gold watch on the chimney-piece kept well alongside the solemn pace of a neighbouring clock but made no effort to fall in and keep time."

Mr. de Morgan is whimsical above all things: "Professor Fraser, wandering downstairs in search of a parcel that ought to have come, found it on the hall table, and exclaimed against the vice of non-delivery of parcels immediately on their arrival."

His wife, extenuated Annette, saying what could her husband expect of an uneducated girl whose father was a pork butcher. The Professor said that nothing he knew of in the butchering of pork need prevent a conscientious daughter of one so employed from bringing a book to its reviewer.

Annette herself appeared, and excused herself on the ground that this was not a book, but a parcel. Not but what she was well aware of the contents, but a principle was involved. "Of course," said she, "if parcels with books inside was to count as books, she would know where she was another time."

But, as we said before, the central incident in the story is the disappearance of Dr. Carteret. What could have become of him. Well, read and you will, if you are a de Morganite, enjoy every one of the 365 pages, and on the last one you will find out.

H. H.

A SQUARE DEAL.

"Then these charity funds I heard Mr. Grant talking about—who wants charity? Why should we have to depend on charity for the necessities of life? The more you give people, the more discontented it makes them. The weak ones cry for more; the strong ones say: 'Be damned to your charity; what we want is a square deal.'"

—Harry Davis in "Baït."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)