

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

THE FORGE OF DEMOCRACY.*

This is a very powerful story of the war in which as may well be imagined, tragedy and romance are inextricably blended. An able writer such as Miss Gabrielle Vallings has unlimited scope in her subject, and truths, that are stranger than any fiction, have in this volume been once more vividly thrown on the screen.

The disastrous love stories of Madeleine Gault, a daughter of the English aristocracy, and that of Ottilie van Eynden, the daughter of the Burgomaster of Vervaine, are described with force and terrible realism and bring back only too well the horrors of the early days of the war.

Madeleine Gault, on the eve of the declaration of war, was on the point of becoming engaged to a German officer of the Household Cavalry, Baron Siegfried von Gorwald. She had been out for several seasons and—a woman of handsome appearance and strong personality—bitterly resented the slightly contemptuous attitude of her sisters, both well married, towards the fact that she had so far failed to secure a husband. The reader is first introduced to her as she is staring down the vista of Rotten Row.

"Her companion evidently appreciated that slightly magnificent arrogance which challenged the onlooker into admitting that she was a fine woman. He followed her speech with absorbed attention as his eyes rested on the generous curve of her shoulders and bust."

"I cannot understand it, Baron," she was saying with emphasis; "you did me the honour of telling me that you loved me. You asked me at the same time whether I cared enough for you to marry you and return with you to your own country." She goes on to say that she had been willing to sink her own nationality and to follow him wherever the exigencies of his profession might lead him.

"And now, after asking me to wait three weeks before announcing our engagement in order that you might comply with what you assured me was a mere formality—namely, the obtaining of your Emperor's consent—you come to me with the story that so far he has made no reply to your request and that until he does so your hands are tied."

As may be supposed, the request was never granted and Siegfried instead received orders to—ostensibly—return to Berlin, but in reality to remain in London under disguise as a spy.

Madeleine, who passionately loved her German fiancé, received the news that, without a word, he had rejoined his regiment with something like despair.

"Gathering herself together she passed up the stairs to her bedroom, gallantly held her head high, her tear-stained face set grimly, her tear-drowned eyes staring straight in front of her. In the merciful darkness of her room she fell full-

length on the floor, her arms outstretched, her whole person desperate in mute despair."

An extract from Siegfried's diary shows the relentless system which a man in his position was subjected to.

Devoted to Madeleine, he realises that she would have understood his patriotism in fighting for his country, but that she would never forgive him for acting as a spy. She meets him one day near the Tower and recognises him and under the impression that he has deserted for her sake, abandons herself to him for one week. When she discovers the nature of his calling she denounces him to the authorities and takes her own life in his lodgings.

"She saw vaguely a taxi draw up and three men stepping into it. One of them was von Gorwald—he was handcuffed."

"My God!" she cried, "I have done this! I—Madeleine Gault—I have killed him—Siegfried, the man I love."

She heard the voice of the city as it thundered in the night, and once more it seemed to her it claimed her, applauded, spoke with a friendly voice.

She understood that by the betrayal of her lover she had rendered justice to the spirit of nationality—that the City clamoured approval.

"I have paid! I have paid!" she cried tumultuously and triumphantly. "The debt of honour is paid to the full. I have blotted out the past. I am no traitor."

She no longer desired her place in the sun, her youth's fulfilment, but a place in that spirit-night, a tranquility among the dead, who, even as she, had fought and conquered. Then the shot came, the body dropped full length, lay still, as if tired, alone in the empty house.

We have no space to dwell on the tragic and infinitely pathetic story of Ottilie van Eynden, the gentle daughter of the Burgomaster, one of the victims of German lust, but we recommend our readers to read her history for themselves and see how out of her awful experiences her soul rose triumphant.

H. H.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN TRADE AND PROFESSION.

What is a trade or business as distinguished from a profession?

"I would define a profession as an occupation for which an individual fitted himself by a course of academic study by way of training his mind. But there were at least two other tests to be applied. One was that the members of any particular profession endeavoured to maintain a common standard, and had its own special rules and codes. And the other was that, although a profession might be primarily pursued for the purpose of gain, it was often not the only, or, indeed, the chief motive."—*Sir John Simon*, in High Court of Justice (Servants and Unemployment Insurance).

* By Gabrielle Vallings. London: Hutchinson.

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