

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

GOOD GRAIN.*

The great recommendation of this novel is that it won the £500 prize in the competition for the best first novel, offered by Messrs. John Long, Ltd.

It is the story of a young boy, brought up as a fisherman on the Cornish coast till he was twenty years of age, when he was discovered by Geoffrey Tremayne, who was by nature and profession musician and composer.

"Geoffrey Tremayne stood on the beach and watched the mountainous waves. Exactly at what moment it was he never knew, but gradually he became aware that somewhere a voice was singing. Every now and again, when the wind died for a moment, it sounded loud and clear. It was a human voice, singing in the darkness like some spirit of the storm—singing something full of light and melody. Yes, there was a boat drawn up on the shingle about a hundred yards away, and by the moon's dim light he could see there was a man bending over it, engaged apparently in either mending or cleaning it."

When the figure stood up he could see it was that of a young man in a rough blue jersey and trousers such as fishermen wear, bareheaded and barefooted.

"Where did you learn to sing like that? I could hear you at the other end of the beach."

"I never learnt to sing, of course." The boy seemed amused at the idea. "I just can sing, that's all. I've sung all my life."

After some further conversation, in which Tremayne learns that the boy's name is Julian Cassilis, and that he has doubts as to whether the old people with whom he lives are his parents, he bids him "Good-night."

He shook hands with a firm grip, as if he were accustomed to it, and he looked his new acquaintance full in the eyes as he did so.

"An extraordinary youth," said Tremayne as he went indoors; "never the son of fisher folk, unless he is a throw-back. More likely a seadrift from some wreck. There must be many on a coast like this."

He forgot about the storm thinking about his new discovery.

Briefly Tremayne, who was a very wealthy man, practically adopted Julian, and started him on a first-class musical training.

Julian took to luxury as a duck takes to water.

He liked the suite of rooms in the hotel, the many books and pictures, the gorgeous flowers. He liked the clothes Tremayne's tailor made for him, he liked the epicurean meals with his new guardian in the hotel restaurant; he absorbed all his new experiences, and expanded with the coming spring."

There was an indefinable something about this boy which had forced Tremayne's action, but

the most curious part was that Julian himself did not see how extraordinary it was. To him it all appeared to have happened naturally, and Tremayne had taken him out of a wrong groove and put him into a right one.

It was at Hendley Vicarage, where Geoffrey Tremayne placed him with a tutor, that he first came into contact with the girl who was destined to play so great a part in his life.

He had been there six weeks. It was May, and he found Eve in the Garden of Eden.

"It was a golden day, and walking in the meadow beyond the orchard at the foot of the vicarage garden Julian rescued a black kitten from a may tree, and so doing met Iris Stapleton.

She stood in the long grass among the buttercups, in a background of may trees in bloom: a pretty girl in a white dress, with a peach bloom skin and golden brown hair. She said, 'Thank you; that was kind of you to rescue my kitten,' but did not add that, seeing him in the distance, she had climbed the wall from their garden, and had encouraged the kitten to go up the tree on purpose."

From which incident it may be concluded that she was a somewhat indiscreet girl, and later her indiscretions landed both her and Julian into the worst possible situation.

Geoffrey Tremayne eventually made this girl his wife, without suspecting the intimacy between her and his ward, though curiously it was afterwards disclosed to him by Julian, which points clearly to the sex of the author, as Julian always retained his devotion to Iris.

The last half of the book tells of frequent misunderstandings between Tremayne and his young wife, and his suspicion of and ultimate rupture with Julian, both of whom, however, were loyal to Geoffrey after the inevitable separation of the marriage.

The conclusion of the book is not so convincing and more commonplace than the opening, but the writer is to be congratulated on her first venture in fiction.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

November 26th.—Meeting Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses. Council Chamber (by kind permission of the British Medical Association), 429, Strand, W.C. 2.30 p.m.

November 26th.—Royal British Nurses' Association, 194, Queen's Gate, S.W. Lecture on "Russian Central Asia," by Miss Christie. 3 p.m.

November 29th–December 4th.—Birthday Week. Imperial Nurses' Club. *November 29th.*—Annual meeting, 137, Ebury Street. 3.30 p.m.

December 9th.—Trained Nurses' Annuity Fund. Sale of Work to be opened by Her Royal Highness, Princess Christian. Royal British Nurses' Association Club, 194, Queen's Gate, S.W.

December 10th.—League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses. General Meeting, Clinical Theatre, St. Bartholomew's Hospital. 3 p.m. Social Gathering, Staff Nurses' Sitting Room. Music and Tea.

* By Emmeline Morrison. John Long.

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