

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"TO LET."*

As a writer of fiction, Mr. Galsworthy needs no commendation from us, and except that he adopts the tiresome custom of carrying on the histories of his characters from one volume to another we have nothing but praise for his work.

The Forsyte family are evidently deeply interesting to him, as indeed the details of their daily lives become to the reader, and if we had only Mr. Galsworthy to read, we should not lose touch as we do in the interim of the publication of their sayings and doings. However, we learn from the author's note that with this volume "The Forsyte Saga" comes to an end, and in spite of our grouse we are sorry to say good-bye to that very individualistic family.

"To Let" presents as complicated a muddle as it has probably ever been the misfortune of a family to solve. Soames Forsyte, married to a French woman, Annette, with whom he had very little in common, except that she was the mother of his charming and adored daughter, Fleur, had been married before to Irene, who early in her married life had resented bitterly his "ownership" of her, and had run away with his elderly cousin, Jolyon, whom she married when the divorce was pronounced. She was, despite her wrongdoing, ideally happy with Jolyon, and is described as a delightful woman. There was one child of this union, Jou, a good-looking attractive boy.

Neither Fleur nor Jou were aware of their various parents' matrimonial complications, and, needless to say, the two families never met or recognised the existence of the other.

However, the perverseness of Fate threw Jou and Fleur across each other's paths; and, both being exceptionally attractive, they immediately fell head-over-heels in love with one another. Here was an *impasse* indeed.

Fleur's father had idealised his daughter, who was in reality quite a modern young person. The present-day girls gave him the shudders when he thought of her coming into contact with them with their perpetual smoking, their "So longs" and "Old Beans."

Sitting in the drawing-room of his old aunts (now dead), he reflected that there was nothing like it left. No, his old aunts, if they never opened their minds, their eyes, or very much their windows, at least had manners and a standard and reverence for past and future.

A letter from Fleur to her cousin respecting Jou reveals something of her character. "There's a feud between our families, which makes it really exciting. Yes! and I may have to use subterfuges and come on you for invitations. My father doesn't want us to know each other, but I can't help that. Life's too short. We often talked about love being a spoil sport, but that's all tosh,

* By John Galsworthy (William Heinemann, London.)

it's the beginning of sport. I perceive all sorts of difficulties; but you know when I really want a thing I get it."

Fleur was a young person of resource, and it must be confessed that she made at the outset most of the running.

She contrives an invitation to the house where Jou was staying, and after their first lovers' walk she urges him to "get a little away from me, and look sulky." Jou heard her clear voice after entering the house in explanation of their delay. "O, I'm simply *ravenous*. He's going to be a farmer and loses his way. The boy's an idiot."

Consternation, of course, reigned in both families when the young lovers declared themselves.

Jou, who is by far the finer character of the two, is told by his parents of the impossible relations between the two houses, and realises to the full the position of his mother, whom he worshipped. His father's sudden death confirms his resolve to end a situation that must finally be intolerable to all concerned.

The book illustrates forcibly the selfishness towards their offspring of men and women who wantonly break their marriage bonds, and we echo Fleur's passionate cry, "It isn't fair," and her unreasoning cry, "What do we care about the past. It's our lives, not yours," is very natural.

Soames raised his hand to his forehead, where she saw the moisture shining. "Whose child are you? Whose child is he? The present is linked with the past, the future with both, there's no getting away from that."

H. H.

OUTSIDE THE GATES.

The wedding presents of Princess Mary and Viscount Lascelles are now on view to the public at St. James's Palace, and they will remain on view as long as the public show interest.

A shilling entrance fee will be charged, but all this money will be given to charity. Princess Mary has not yet decided which charity or charities will benefit.

We advise our readers who intend to take a peep at these gifts not to miss the three magnificent antique silver-gilt rosewater dishes given by members of the Cabinet, and selected by Marquis Curzon of Kedleston.

Viscountess Rhondda's petition to receive a writ of summons to Parliament went through the Committee of Privileges of the House of Lords "like a bird." The Committee decided in her favour, and this decision will presumably affect other peeresses in their own right, of whom there are about sixteen. Several have already announced their intention of taking their seats in the House of Lords. With women in the Commons the rights of peeresses in the Lords was a foregone conclusion, but it needed a woman of new blood to present the petition. Congratulations to Lady Rhondda!

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