

"Between the Larchwoods and the Weir"

By DOROTHY SCARBOROUGH.

A WHOLESOME and happy book about nature and human beings is *Between the Larchwoods and the Weir*, by Flora Klickmann. It is a companion volume to *The Flower Patch Among the Hills*, by the same author, who has a country home, a tiny house and garden above the Wye, where she comes to rest from her editorial labors in London.

On one of the high hills that border the River Wye there stands an old cottage perched on an outstanding bluff with apparently no way of approach save by air-ship. Looking at it from the river bank by the weir (the selfsame weir beside which Wordsworth sat when he wrote his famous *Lines*), you can only glimpse the chimneys and angles of the roof, so buried is the house in the trees that clothe the hill slopes to a height of nearly 900 feet.

The cottage is not quite at the top of the hill; behind it rise still more woods, making the steep in early spring a mist of purple and brown and soft gray bursting buds, followed by pale shimmering green with frequent splashes of white when the hundreds of wild cherries break into bloom.

A darker green sweeps over all with the coming of summer, which in turn becomes crimson, lemon, rust gold, bronze green, copper and orange in the autumn, where coppices of birch and oak, ash and beech, wild cherry, crab apple, yew and hazel intermingle with the stately ranks of the larch woods that revel in the heights and give the hills a jagged edge against the sky.

The book is discursive and formless, holding to no set scheme, but giving descriptions about anything that strikes the writer's fancy, or narrating events taking place in the locality. The style is in the main entertaining, with occasional picturing beauty of description. Yet at times the reader feels a certain strain after effort, a too obvious effort on the part of the author to be lively or impressive. The finest carelessness of art is lacking.

Pictures of English country scenes, drawn with loving hand and colored with realistic tones, are given in these pages. Informal, humorous studies of character, lowly and high born alike, and pleasant satire on persons and situations appear as well, so that the reader has an impressionistic idea of the charming small place itself and the people who frequent it. The volume makes one long to run away to the Wye and to discover if everything there is as delightful as this writer seems to think.

The style of nature study in the volume may be illustrated by a passage about a temperamental robin:

"The robin can be a perfect terror in the way he seeks to dominate over the whole earth. It is a very large area that he marks off for his individual own and woe betide any robin who tries to defy him—unless he be the stronger of the two. One of our robins killed his own wife (we conclude, as she disappeared after a series of thrashings he gave her daily!) and then he injured the wing of one of his own youngsters because we had petted them and given them food inside the living room.

"The father used to hide behind a stone

"Tuck-Me-In Rhymes"



BOLD BUNNIES

Two bunnies bold went out one day
To hunt for little boys—

"THEY shot their guns and ran away—
Much frightened by the noise."

That's the rest of the rhyme the first half of which is illustrated above and the last half of which is illustrated with another irresistible pen and ink sketch in *Tuck-Me-In Rhymes*, by Enos B. Comstock, a volume designed for the private collections of people from three to eight years of age. Mr. Comstock's book proceeds entirely on the theory that one good

rhyme deserves another and that one good drawing deserves another. Some of the illustrations are tinted and of these we like best the picture of Teddy the bear who parts his hair in the middle. It is not so easy in the flood of children's books to find one for the very little men and women; but this is decidedly that kind of a book.

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BETWEEN THE LARCH WOODS AND THE WEIR, By FLORA KLICKMANN. Frederick A. Stokes Company, \$1.50.

"The Seven Purposes"

IN these revolving days nothing seems strange, not even the fact that the ouija board appears to be usurping the place of powers and principalities. In *The Seven Purposes* we find Margaret Cameron, whom we have come to know as a writer of gayly humorous stories, transformed into a medium and evidently enjoying herself in her new role. On the cover of the book, which is brought out very handsomely by Harper & Bros., we see the seven mystic circles. To many of us the utterances which make up Miss Cameron's volume will be chaotic and unintelligible, but the ouijas will know that the very chaos "grew from purposes born of the force beyond perfection."

All of these spirits are strangely alike. They have evidently been inoculated with a queer sort of philosophy about which they talk a great deal. One of the spirits in this book says that William James is responsible to a large extent for their vocabulary and this may explain why they resemble one another so closely. Who is it pray that has deprived them of humor? Miss Cameron didn't particu-

particularly those from Frederick, will be followed with wistful interest by that multitude now especially seeking fresh comfort through psychical revelations.

THE SEVEN PURPOSES. By MARGARET CAMERON. Harper & Brothers, \$2.

A Painter as Critic

By GEORGE GORDON.

SO much can be said in a few words that the necessity for writing volumes is not always apparent. Professor Neuhaus, for instance, devotes sixteen pages to the nude in art. All that he says was better said by Whistler in a sentence. "You cannot expect me to teach you morals too"; and the pupil who had been able to express only the hideous truth of the model, with none of the dignity of nature, was dismissed.

The volume lacks conviction. Writing of art patronage, he tells us that during the Renaissance painting suffered from the selfish interest of the church and the aristocracy. "We are almost forced to believe," he says, "that the artists took no interest in the many artistic suggestions which must undoubtedly have come to them in those days, from the many other varied aspects of life; one looks in vain for anything that might indicate that their Italy was populated by anything but Madonnas and saints." It is not wise to make such statements unless you know what you are talking about. What is probably the most famous painting of the period deals with neither Madonna nor saint, but with the Mona Lisa; Titian's portraits of his daughter are as typical of the Renaissance as any San Sebastian; the Venus of Botticelli is but one in a thousand. Indeed the very Saints and Madonnas are expressive of Italian life as then lived. In the shadow of the cross Cranach displayed the far flung fields of Tuscany and the peasants gathering olives.

I could go on for hours disagreeing with Professor Neuhaus—but to what purpose? He believes that it is possible by preaching to create an art loving people, that by association with fine things we learn to understand them—but then, as Whistler said, the policeman who guards the National Gallery must be the first connoisseur in London.

But what is perhaps most surprising is the banality of his prose. I always think of painters as masters of expression—Professor Neuhaus is an exception to prove the rule.

PAINTERS, PICTURES AND THE PEOPLE. By GEORGE NEUHAUS. San Francisco: Philopolis Press.

lary want to write this book, but she was driven to it by a certain very determined spirit, "Mary K." too insistent to be withstood. She dictates thus:

"Tell them that you are doing the people's work under secret orders and that they will perhaps know presently what it is. They will recognize it when it is given to them, except those souls not mentally free from fear." Miss Cameron believed her, but we don't. We are not willing to admit for a moment that we are mental cowards.

Even definitions lose their identity when they become associated with tyros in other world knowledge. That "personage" of Mary K.'s of which Miss Cameron speaks, for instance, has nothing of the flavor of fleshly humor. Some of the messages,

Fairy Child or Mortal Maid?

She had come to them, out of the night, as if in answer to their prayer for their long-lost wee one. Barefoot and rough-clad she was, but about her glowed a mystery and a radiant loveliness.

Then, one day, came the choice. The Marquis was heavy with drink and riotous living, but he was rich. Michael was young and his heart was pure. But he was a promised priest and bound by his oath to the Church.

A rushing wind swept through the door, and something brushed aside the blazing turf. When the light came again—

But it is too beautiful for us to tell here. You must read it for yourself in



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By Ruth Sawyer

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