

granted on Mr. Trollope's word. The political intrigues which are the main feature of the book are skilfully interwoven with vivid pictures of social life in the upper crust of society. Mary Wharton, in another sphere, secures the reader's sympathy in spite of her perversity, first in insisting upon marrying the wrong man, and then in shilly-shallying about marrying the right one. The Duchess, Lady Glen, as she is familiarly called, finds her way to the universal heart, in spite of her giddy, thoughtless nature, so thoroughly warm-hearted, prettily impetuous, and vivacious she always is. The male characters are of the usual type, from the vacillating Duke, the Prime Minister, down to that chivalrous exemplar of the chief virtue we have mentioned, Arthur Fletcher. The scenes at Gatherum Castle, the Silverbridge election, and at Wharton, are all good, and the novel altogether is refreshing summer reading.

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OLIVER OF THE MILL. By Maria Louisa Charlesworth. Canadian Copyright Edition. Dawson Brothers, Montreal. 1876.

The number of Canadian editions of choice English works is a significant indication, not only of the enterprise of our publishers, but also of the growth of our reading public. The Canadian publishers of Mrs. Charlesworth's last work, "Oliver of the Mill," have done a good service to the country in giving a wide diffusion to a book so pure, so high-toned, so earnest, and teaching, in a fresh and vital way, lessons that all need to learn.

"Oliver of the Mill" is hardly to be read merely as a story, but rather as studies from life, showing the relation to human needs, cravings, and aspirations, of those great central truths which Christianity has most fully brought to light. There is no speculation, or reference to speculation, in it. Its phases of life are out of the region of "intellectual difficulties." The earnest and single-minded writer draws her teaching from those heart experiences which are common to all, and in which true religion finds its perfect work. The story is one of what is called "humble life," the fundamental needs, joys, and sorrows of which are, after all, so little different from those of a so-called higher sphere. The two Olivers, father and son, are the central figures, unless we add the Quaker grandmother, Mrs. Crisp, who is perhaps the most salient and best-drawn character in the book. Her outside severity, or rather rigidity, combined with real heart-kindness, is well marked, and the cause of the seeming inconsistency is explained in words which have been true of many an otherwise admirable Christian character:—

"Her opinions and feelings were many of them narrowed and stiffened by early pressure

from without, instead of being freely expanded from within. This want of early expansion of heart and mind caused her the loss of many touches of feeling and thought that would have moulded her strong nature with more beauty and delicacy. Yet, true in Christian principle and feeling, she lived to win the respect and regard of those who knew her; though her influence over others was not what under freer and fuller training it might have been." "It might be questioned whether Mistress Crisp was ever conscious of an error or mistake in herself; her upright, blameless life, her kindness and consistency, were faultless. It might almost have been wished that she could commit a fault and feel that she had; her strong nature would have been opened and softened by that sense of failure."

The two Olivers, however, are by no means so faultless, though we are shown how the discipline of life for each was at once the result and the corrective of their differing defects. The history of the younger Oliver's childhood is the most pleasant and life-like portion of the book, for the author's specialty seems to lie in drawing child-life, and the pictures of little Oliver, Baby Meg, and Aleppo the dog, are fresh and charming. The few outside characters—the Caxtons, Dame Truman, the village schoolmistress, Mistress Tibby, and the others who fill in the picture of rural life—are naturally sketched; while around all is the English rural landscape, the castle, the mill, the yellow harvest fields, the rich green woodland, the river murmuring over its stony bed, "hill-sides clothed in the massive foliage of summer, throwing out from their dark background the glory of harvest; or softer hill-sides, where the white flocks were feeding, and verdant pastures with cattle; blue hills in the distance, of which no details were seen, yet giving the beauty of form and hue."

One of the most interesting characters in the book is the old Jew pedlar, Benoni, and nothing is more touching in the whole story than the episode which shows his deeply-rooted and rigid Judaism giving way to the softer, warmer light of Christianity, under the influence of the simple, forgiving faith and love of a little child. Benoni's internal history is closely entwined with that of Oliver, as indeed it had been previously entwined with that of Oliver's mother, the noble and pure-hearted Naomi, whose early death seems to cast a hallowing shadow over the first part of the book.

"Oliver of the Mill" will hardly be as popular as "Ministering Children," the author's first work; but is both more natural and more readable than the one that followed it, the "Ministry of Life." It is by no means free from faults; its construction is rather involved, at least in the first part; there is a little too much formal, and sometimes trite, moralizing; and the treatment is occasionally awkward and