

LITERARY NOTES

A BRIGHT STORY.

THE story of western colour, "Sowing Seeds in Danny," by Nellie L. McClung, is already making friends throughout the country. The author lives in Manitou, Manitoba, and has caught the spirit of the prairies with sympathy and insight. The chronicle of quaint little Pearlle Watson, who is naive and shrewd, without being offensively smart, is likely to become familiar to Canadian householders before Christmas arrives. We publish in this column a photograph of the author, by courtesy of William Briggs, publisher.



Mrs. Nellie L. McClung.

AN EVENTFUL CHRONICLE.

MISS CORELLI has written another book. This comes as no surprise to the public, for this English novelist with the Franco-Italian name has the fiction habit in an acute form. Miss Corelli is never dull. When she takes up her pearl-and-gold pen, the world may be assured that things will happen. Whether it be absinthe, alcohol or absentee landlords, Miss Corelli is magnificent in attack. When she exposed the evils and horrors of indulgence in absinthe, the reader's flesh fairly crept, even though he had not the faintest intention of dallying with the green fairy.

This time Miss Corelli is on the trail of the Drink Demon and in "Holy Orders" gives us a story extending over about five hundred pages which tells in reiterated condemnation that the British workingman is being poisoned by chemical beer. Mr. Minchin, the brewer, is the villain of the story, whose business is to destroy both soul and body, and whose pleasure is to smirk over the ruin he has wrought. The hero is a vicar, who in the village of Shadbrook finds that drink is degrading the people until there seems nothing but sordid brutality in the prospect. This young clergyman, Richard Everton, is almost saintly in his devotion to the cause of humanity and even forgives with readiness the murderer of his wife, because, forsooth, the criminal had been crazed by drugged beer. This is a height of magnanimity which the feminine reader may not value at its true worth. However, as the murderer is run over and killed by an automobile, in the course of his flight from the village, poetic justice is satisfied and a sensational trial averted.

There is a feminine villain who is far ahead of anything of the sort we have met in other modern novels. Jacynth Miller is the name of this monstrosity, whose beauty is described in terms which will surely turn Miss Laura Jean Libbey green with envy. However, the character of Jacynth, like that of King John in the old green-backed history, bears no redeeming feature. She is absolutely cruel, depraved and all the rest of the cardinal sins. She goes on the stage (in fact we fear she does the Salome horror) and finally attains unto a matrimonial alliance with an opulent Hebrew, whose aspirates do not keep pace with his aspirations. Jacynth is a sad flirt. She would even trifle with the affections of the vicar, but that gentleman is as inflexible as John Knox. This superlative enchantress takes a balloon trip with an exceedingly naughty gentleman who beguiles the aerial excursion by drinking deeply of brandy, with the result that he falls dead in the most inconsiderate fashion. The corpse remains undisturbed for some time but is finally toppled over and falls into Connemara County, Ireland. Poor dear Ireland! It has had many wrongs, but if Miss Corelli is to set the fashion for dumping dead inebriates from perfidious Albion on the head of the unprotected Irish farmer, it is time for every Son of Erin to protest, even unto the shedding of blood. The lady villain is engulfed by the Irish Sea, just as the rising sun is flooding the waves with splendour.

We are pleased to note that the brewer comes to a bad end, for the village finally turns against its destroyer and refuses to imbibe any more poisoned stuff. The villagers would have saved much time and expense by shunning the chemical beverage in the first place but of course they had to receive several awful warnings ere common-sense and conscience asserted themselves. Then a millionaire from somewhere in the States appears on the distressful scene and builds an institution which seems to be a combination of a coffee house and an Arts and Crafts school. Thus all ends hopefully and it is to be hoped that Shadbrook will live sober ever after.

In spite of Miss Corelli's melodramatic extremes, or perhaps because of them, this attack on what is properly described as Britain's curse may do the cause of temperance much good—and to that end, her violent attacks on modern pulpit and press, literature and art may be entirely justified. Toronto: William Briggs.

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