The History of Sir Richard Calmady.*

Ever since the memorable appearance of "Colonel Enderby's Wife," Mrs. St. Leger Harrison has taken her place as one of our more serious fiction writers—one whose works are worth far more than the somehow superficial reading we accord to the mere possessor of red gold hair and blue eyes.

The self-sacrifice which animates the book raises the whole question,—Is everything under heaven, everything, good or bad, ugly or lovely, hideous, sordid, repulsive, or godlike, food alike for the mills of Art? Is Art justified in choosing a theme as the exclusive property of the French stage completely disallow. It spreads itself over the complete compass of two lives, so that there is never throughout a centre of interest; the period, the atmosphere, is always changing, making the book a chronicle, and not, properly speaking, a novel at all.

Considered as a story the book labours under an exaggeration of that defect which the severe canons of the French stage completely disallow. It spreads itself over the complete compass of two lives, so that there is never throughout a centre of interest; the period, the atmosphere, is always changing, making the book a chronicle, and not, properly speaking, a novel at all.

The hereditary curse, which used to be considered as the exclusive property of the Family Herald, has had quite a remarkable new lease of life of late among the literary novelists; and it is a family curse which works upon the innocent unborn child of Catherine Calmady. A far off ancestor betrayed a girl upon his estate, who bore him a son. Afterwards, when he brought home a wife to the house, the mother of his child appeared, to enter a protest. The boy, who was with his mother, climbed up on the steps of his unknown father's coach; he was pushed off, the horses started, and the wheels went over him, amputating both legs above the knee: whereupon the bereaved mother prophesied that all the Calmadys should meet with violent deaths, until a saviour should be born, half angel, half monster, who should never wear a shoe. He was to be fatherless at the time of birth to have neither brother nor sister, and to be the possessor of red gold hair and blue eyes.

Whether it is possible to know, as a matter of interest, what were the feelings and what the trials of the mother of such a being, what were his temptations and what his tragedies, he will have to struggle the character of Richard's mother is a masterpiece. The faults as well as the virtues of Catherine are chronicled for us, and we love her for them all. She should remain in fiction by the side of Rachel Esmond, as a portrayal of consummate skill.

The portrait of Richard is not so convincing; but then, one has never met anybody in Richard's circumstances. One of the reviewers, in a recent notice of the book, remarked that a deformed hero was a novelty of Lucas Malet's own invention. Some of our readers may recall the work of a very different type of writer—Miss Mulock, and her "Story of a Noble Life." The self-sacrifice which animates the hero of that simple tale would certainly never have occurred to Richard Calmady.

We have changed all that, and the modern way is to curse an untoward fate for our limitations, and like Richard to wring out all that the world holds for us, in defiance of law, or to submit like a dumb beast, with no voluntary surrender of the will. In all which respects the book is allegorical, though it is doubtful whether the author so intended it.

G. M. R.
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Hi Anne, interesting point. I suggest the following: "book x, chapter x, of The History Of Sir Richard Calmady. This is a librivox recording Book x (title), chapter x, (title). The project examines two examples whose protagonists are influenced by inherited curses: Lucas Maletâ€™s The History of Sir Richard Calmady and Thomas Hardyâ€™s Jude the Obscure. Following Sara Ahmedâ€™s Queer Phenomenology, the essay explores how these novels orient their protagonists in the world and asks: how do queerness and disability operate in these texts, making certain kinds of lives and movement possible while foreclosing others? Ultimately, the article demonstrates how, in these unique Bildungsromane, the inherited curse does not reinforce but works against a genre otherwise characterized