

**THE CHIEF
JUSTICE, A NOVEL**

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The chief justice, a novel by Emil Franzos & Miles Corbet

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EMIL FRANZOS & MILES CORBET

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Beinemann's International Library.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

THERE is nothing in which the Anglo-Saxon world differs more from the world of the Continent of Europe than in its fiction. English readers are accustomed to satisfy their curiosity with English novels, and it is rarely indeed that we turn aside to learn something of the interior life of those other countries the exterior scenery of which is often so familiar to us. We climb the Alps, but are content to know nothing of the pastoral romances of Switzerland. We steam in and out of the picturesque fjords of Norway, but never guess what deep speculation into life and morals is made by the novelists of that sparsely peopled but richly endowed nation. We stroll across the courts of the Alhambra, we are listlessly rowed upon Venetian canals and Lombard lakes, we hasten by night through the roaring factories of Belgium; but we never pause to inquire whether there is now flourishing a Spanish,

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an Italian, a Flemish school of fiction. Of Russian novels we have lately been taught to become partly aware, but we do not ask ourselves whether Poland may not possess a Dostoieffsky and Portugal a Tolstoï.

Yet, as a matter of fact, there is no European country that has not, within the last half-century, felt the dew of revival on the threshing-floor of its worn-out schools of romance. Everywhere there has been shown by young men, endowed with a talent for narrative, a vigorous determination to devote themselves to a vivid and sympathetic interpretation of nature and of man. In almost every language, too, this movement has tended to display itself more and more in the direction of what is reported and less of what is created. Fancy has seemed to these young novelists a poorer thing than observation; the world of dreams fainter than the world of men. They have not been occupied mainly with what might be or what should be, but with what is, and, in spite of all their shortcomings, they have combined to produce a series of pictures of existing society in each of their several countries such as cannot fail to form an archive of documents invaluable to futurity.

But to us they should be still more valuable. To travel in a foreign country is but to touch its surface. Under the guidance of a novelist of genius we penetrate to the secrets of a nation, and talk the very language of its citizens. We may go to Normandy summer after

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summer and know less of the manner of life that proceeds under those gnarled orchards of apple-blossom than we learn from one tale of Guy de Maupassant's. The present series is intended to be a guide to the inner geography of Europe. It presents to our readers a series of spiritual Baedekers and Murrays. It will endeavour to keep pace with every truly characteristic and vigorous expression of the novelist's art in each of the principal European countries, presenting what is quite new if it is also good, side by side with what is old, if it has not hitherto been presented to our public. That will be selected which gives with most freshness and variety the different aspects of continental feeling, the only limits of selection being that a book shall be, on the one hand, amusing, and, on the other, wholesome.

One difficulty which must be frankly faced is that of subject. Life is now treated in fiction by every race but our own with singular candour. The novelists of the Lutheran North are not more fully emancipated from prejudice in this respect than the novelists of the Catholic South. Everywhere in Europe a novel is looked upon now as an impersonal work, from which the writer, as a mere observer, stands aloof, neither blaming nor applauding. Continental fiction has learned to exclude, in the main, from among the subjects of its attention, all but those facts which are of common experience, and thus the novelists have determined

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to disdain nothing and to repudiate nothing which is common to humanity; much is freely discussed, even in the novels of Holland and of Denmark, which our race is apt to treat with a much more gingerly discretion. It is not difficult, however, we believe—it is certainly not impossible—to discard all which may justly give offence, and yet to offer to an English public as many of the masterpieces of European fiction as we can ever hope to see included in this library. It will be the endeavour of the editor to search on all hands and in all languages for such books as combine the greatest literary value with the most curious and amusing qualities of manner and matter.

EDMUND GOSSE.

THE CHIEF JUSTICE

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A NOVEL

BY
EMIL FRANZOS

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY
MILES CORBET



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WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1890

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