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"Whirlpools"

By Henry Sienkiewicz. Translated from the Polish by Max A. Drezmal. Published by Little, Brown & Co., Boston. Price \$1.50.

It would be better for the reading public generally if a greater proportion of the books published were of the character of those produced by the author of "Quo Vadis," "With Fire and Sword" and "Pan Michael." They are the sort of books in which the reader can take a lively interest and from which he can obtain some beneficial mental stimulant, even if he fail to like the subjects with which they deal, the characters they portray or the general treatment of the story. They are the result of earnest thought, they have a definite literary style and they arouse the mind, and in all of which particulars they are a long way re-

moved from the category of the average "best seller."

"Whirlpools" is not a "Quo Vadis," but it is a strong book, full of keen character study and deals with features of Polish life and Poland's troubles in a manner to excite profound interest. It is woven about a love story that is decidedly unusual in its treatment, and altogether is well worth while.

A Polish author in nine cases out of ten is first of all a patriot, and usually writes with a purpose. Similar incentive has greatly enriched the world's literature and probably to this characteristic is due the almost uniform excellence of Polish novels. The principal character in "Whirlpools" is Ladislaus Krzyckj, a young land owner, who falls in love with a Miss Anney, who makes her appearance as an English woman, but proves later to have been in her girlhood a peasant on his father's estate with whom Ladislaus has had meretricious relations. The death of an uncle

ious relations. The death of an uncle leaves Ladislaus as the trustee of an adjoining estate, which has been devised for a peasants' agricultural school, as well as of a specific bequest for one Hanka Skibińska, afterward found to be Miss Anney. Other leading characters are Gronski, an aged friend and adviser of the family, and an inveterate philosopher; Laskowicz, a tutor in Ladislaus' family, who turns out a socialist leader, and Marynia, a young musician and relative with a heart full of love for the people, and with whom Laskowicz is in love.

Laskowicz stirs up trouble among the peasants, who have been led to expect a material division of the estate among them. Marynia is killed in a raid resulting from Laskowicz' mischief making, and the latter commits suicide. Ladislaus and Miss Anney become engaged, but the former's failure to appreciate the nobility of character of the woman who has twice given him her love results in a rupture which leaves the book without the usual "happy ever after" ending.

If Sienkiewicz has one fault above any other it is that of being too wordy. His style generally is smooth, and Gronski's philosophy is keen and full of thought. In places the book savors too much of Zola. It adds nothing to its value to be told that one of its characters is unable to enjoy a good meal because he has catarrh of the stomach, however faithful the statement may be to unpleasant detail. Marynia is a sweet and lovable character, by far the best in the book. Miss Anney is admirable, but Ladislaus is a cad from the beginning. The delineation of his character, however, is a valuable study of one of the causes of agrarian unrest. Altogether Sienkiewicz is hardly fair to the socialists, but his point of view is rather that of the philanthropic noble than of the student lover of humanity, and if he makes too much of the worst faults of the proletariat he offers much just criticism of aristocratic intolerance.

"Whirlpools" is not a book of an hour, but one that deserves to live.

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