In the year 1842 young Richard Calmady brings home a bride. She is young, noble, lovely, and life to both is a dream of happiness. And it all began when Richard was thrown from his horse five months before the birth of his child, and though they amputate his leg above the knee he dies. The baby is born with abortive legs—always with no knees, and a pair of feet stuck on.

Of the medical question thus raised—that is, of the physical possibility of such deformity, in consequence of the mother's anguish of sympathy for her husband, the present writer cannot speak.

Whether it is possible that the intermediate portion of the limbs of a healthy foetus could disappear in the fifth month of pregnancy, is a question. If such a thing could happen, one wonders that it does not happen far more frequently. When one considers the shocks endured by women when in that condition, it would be a wonder that anyone comes into the world unmarked by maternal emotion of some sort.

But, granted that it is possible, and that such a monstrosity as poor Catherine's child were really born, the thing is so exceptional as considerably to deaden sympathy. No human laws can fit in perfectly with entirely unforeseen combinations of circumstances. But, if the reader wishes 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 find it all here. 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 portrait 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.

What to Read.

"Bagsby's Daughter." By Marie and Bessie Van Verst.

"The Fourth Estate." By A. Palacio Valdés.


"The Idler Out of Doors." By Walter Raymond.

"The Strange Disappearance of Lady Delia." By Louis Tracy.

"Marion Darche: A Story without Comment." By F. Marlon Crawford.

Malet Lucas. I found this book entirely fascinating, particularly because I did not expect such depictions of disability and sexuality in a book written in 1901. I’m looking forward to tracking down the rest of Malet’s novels, not only because of her unusual themes, but because of her beautiful and evocative language. This is one of my favorite books I have discovered this year, and I think it is a shame she is not well known. In fact, I was prompted to write a review because I hope more people will discover her work. If the review has intrigued you, please check out it on Proj.