

the disposal of her own person, as regards her own thoughts and affections in the very highest sense of the word. When this is achieved we shall have travelled far towards a motherhood which realises the greatness of its vocation, and honours its part in continuing and ennobling our race, and which will welcome to its arms without a shadow of regret every new life entrusted to it.

"It augurs well that we have heard these words from Sir William Broadbent, and that there are other eminent medical gentlemen here with us who have expressed their sympathy with this Society; and I suppose we must look—I confess that in the past I have not been able to do so without some misgivings—to them to enforce that great law of nature to which Sir William Broadbent alluded—that the true mother will herself nourish her child. If a mother should shirk that duty it is a shame to her, and if any mother should be prevented from discharging it by poverty or hunger or overwork it is a shame to us as a nation.

"If we fail in our children what will become of our race? Not all the merchandise of the seas, whether we get it here protected or unprotected—or, as Mr. Rider Haggard has been saying, not all the wealth of the earth—can supply the place of our children.

CHILDHOOD'S BEST TEACHER.

"Then I think it should be understood that the true mother is the child's first teacher. It will learn the most from whoever loves it first, and we must insist that upon her rests the responsibility of that training of the heart besides which, as Sir Walter Scott said, all other training is moonshine. The Spaniards have a saying that 'an ounce of mother is worth a ton of priest.' Our mothers of to-day may be, perhaps, emancipated from the priesthood, but do they not need to beware of delegating to others duties and responsibilities which they are best fitted to carry out—even to professors, no matter how able or experienced, whether in religion, or science, or medicine?

"The mother for whom we plead and whom this Society will work to train, will herself be the chief instructor of her children, and will be the one whose example of unselfishness will afford the chief incentive to them to lead noble lives. And in their nobility of character and physique, in their devotion to duty, in their patriotism, and in their love of honour and truth, she will find, first by anticipation and afterwards by happy experience, the real joy of her life. Without this, to a mother, all worldly display, comfort, sensual gratification, and happiness of every kind, are as nothing. Let us show mothers placed in poor circumstances that a mother's instructed, unselfish love returns with a thousandfold of blessing to her own heart.

"You will not be surprised that I, as a Salvation Army Officer, will add that the mother, in order to realise this supreme idea of motherhood, will be one who, having received her children in the spirit of the Saviour's words, when He said, 'Whosoever shall receive one such little one in My Name receiveth Me,' and having trained them in that unselfishness and restraint which she has learnt from Him, will guide their feet to His throne in humble prayer and dedication, will let them hear from her lips the secret things of life, and send them forth forewarned and forearmed to meet the evils that are in the world, and to embrace a life of purity and devotion in the service of their God."

A Book of the Week.

THE IMAGE IN THE SAND.*

How many Mr. Bensons are there? This is the question which will rise to the mind of anyone who sits down to read this book.

Mr. Benson must surely be the offspring of that immortal phantom of Lewis Carroll's, who thought that "children would be happier if they were taught to vary." Mr. Benson has taught himself so diligently to vary that he runs a very serious danger of never being himself at all. His Protean habits may be the result of repeated efforts to find out which public pays best. The end may not improbably be, that he will be left without a public at all.

It is not too much to say that "The Challoners" was one of the very best of last year's books. It was followed by an empty and mediocre story entitled "An Act in a Backwater." The volume now before us strongly suggests that it was designed for a *feuilleton* in the *Daily Mail*!

On page 4 we are thus presented to the heroine:—

"A girl of not more than eighteen, tall and with the poise and carriage of a goddess. She had taken off her hat, which she carried in her hand, and the glory of her hair shone like a gilded halo round her head. It was pale gold in colour, of an extraordinary thickness, and growing low on her forehead, more than half framed the short oval of her face. Her eyebrows, unlike her hair, were very dark, and almost level above her eyes, which were pure violet, the violet of the flowers that bear her name."

And so on and so on for another twenty lines or more. Oh, Mr. Benson! Is it possible that the author of "Dodo," one whom we have hitherto credited with some sense of humour, could have penned *these lines*? They read like the first effort of a very sentimental young lady. Her eyebrows were "almost level." Ye gods! One of them, then, was only a little higher than the other. What character this must have given to the face!

But there were things about this young lady far more remarkable than mere beauty. She was a spiritualist, and spent an hour a day in meditation, with the object of communicating with her dead mother. Her hypochondriac father spent his life and fortune in pursuit of the occult, and they are in Egypt when the story opens. There are weird scenes worthy of Guy Boothby, and far, far inferior to Bulwer Lytton, in which an unspeakably evil spirit is let loose, and in the course of the book, the beautiful Ida finds out that there are dangers to be incurred in the pursuit of the occult, and adds a squint to the varying level of her eyebrows—a *tout ensemble* of which one cannot think without emotion.

For those who are going away for a holiday, and want something to make their flesh creep, we thoroughly recommend this story. It is not all by any means upon the same low level as the bit quoted above. At times Mr. Benson is unable to remember that he is trying to be Guy Boothby, and his old style comes creeping through the turgid atmosphere of the penny-a-liner like sunshine through a London fog. His own favourite middle-aged lady, witty, sane, and delightful, is there, and she and her Sussex garden are most refreshing. But the poor dear is always having

* By M. F. Benson. (Heinemann.)

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