

## Book of the Week.

### RING IN THE NEW.\*

Mr. Whiteing's new book has all his own charm with it, and something above his usual somewhat deficient power of construction. It is a great improvement upon the "Yellow Van," for it takes up and follows out that very enthralling topic, the life of a young girl, who has to earn her living in the London of the present day—untrained, unprepared in any way for the struggle—quick, bright, refined, intelligent, but by no means strong enough to compel fate.

Prue is a delightful little heroine, and our wonder is, not that Leonard loved her, but that he managed to wait so long before declaring his passion.

Sarah, the wonderful woman who goes from house to house, from flat to flat, putting in an hour's or half an hour's work at each, who is a member of a club, and in secret the proprietor of a gorgeous little flat, furnished with her savings—Sarah is perhaps the gem of the book. Her pathetic downfall—her mock marriage with a man who has already a wife and child, but covets the comfort and well-being of poor Sarah's luxurious home—is pathetically true to life.

Laura, too, the Christian Scientist, who insists upon everybody's claim and power to be happy if they only will it hard enough, is a most vivid and most true presentment. She represents the natural bent of the baffled, struggling atom in the ferocious injustice of the struggle for life. Mr. Whiteing, in recording starving Prue's hunt for buried treasure, touches one of the most pitiful depths of human weakness.

"Her new mood of envy and despair succeeded the earlier one of the belief in her sacred right to a good time. She was made for happiness and sunshine. Why were they withheld? It was a devil's world, a world of misery for the weak. Why wasn't she made wicked enough to be strong? She wanted to wound one of the dominant factions, that was all she knew."

How faithful a description is that of the prevailing frame of mind of thousands of women of the present day, thrust with no warning into the seething struggle, blindly taking up work for which they have no capacity, merely because they must earn or rot.

It is a bit pathetic to find Mr. Whiteing, in the character of his own hero, hailing the result of the late elections as the dawn of the Millennium! The Government which tells us that minorities must suffer! That bitter truth which we all knew so well. It may be urged that we women are not a minority; no, but we working women are—we women "whose men have failed us," as Mr. Whiteing rather tragically puts it!

The book includes a brilliant little portrait of Bernard Shaw under the pseudonym of Lucian, and one of its features is a little newspaper called the *Branding Iron*, whose aim is to give the news of the obscure part of humanity whose doings are not chronicled in the *Morning Post*, or anywhere except

in the *Police News*. We fear that so desperately cynical a way of recording news as that employed by the mysterious Leonard, would hardly find favour with those to whom it was intended to appeal. We are in deadly earnest, we toilers—we do not like sneers, even when they are evoked by the social system that made us what we are—not by us ourselves.

Mary Lane and her *Mystery Play* is a delightful sketch; in fact, the whole book is like a vivid lime-light thrown upon the thoughts and methods of some who are doing what they can to reform or, more humbly, to sweeten the sour old world through which their feet are passing. All honour to them, one and all, even if they have not the master-key with which Christian and Hopeful unlocked the dungeons of despair.

G. M. R.

## What to Read.

"Alexander Hamilton: An Essay on American Union." By F. S. Oliver.

"The New Russia." By Lionel Declé.

"Infant Mortality." By George Newman, M.D., D.Ph., F.R.S.E.

"The Bridal of Anstace." By Elizabeth Godfrey.

## Coming Events.

June 17th.—Hospital Sunday—Hospital Sunday Fund. Patron, his Majesty the King; President and Treasurer, the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor.

June 18th.—Jubilee Year of the London Bible-women and Nurses' Mission. Meeting in the Æolian Hall, 135, New Bond Street, W. The Marquess of Northampton in the Chair. 3.30 p.m.

June 19th.—Anniversary Festival of the Guild of St. Barnabas. Service at St. Albans, Holborn. 7 p.m. Annual Meeting and tea at Holborn Town Hall. 8 p.m.

June 26th and 27th.—Grand bazaar at the Albert Hall in aid of the funds of the Great Northern Central Hospital and for the establishment of a Convalescent Home. To be opened by Princess Christian.

June 27th.—The Duke of Connaught presides at a meeting in aid of the funds of the British Ophthalmic Hospital at Jerusalem, 7, St. James's-square. 3 p.m.

June 30th.—General Meeting and Social Gathering League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, at the Hospital. 3 p.m.

## A Word for the Week.

"But if you have learned to work in delicate veracity, stern against yourself, loyal to the perfection whose veils no man has lifted; if the fair vision of that perfection has touched you with loyalty, manned you with courage, and made you leap, glad to meet tasks which are set before you, what is this but entrance here and now into the Kingdom of God?"  
—President William L. Bryan, Indiana University.

\*By Richard Whiteing (Hutchinson & Co.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)