

already being attended in whole or in part by some fifty students, some of whom are University graduates.

In this country no one has as yet been enterprising or daring enough to start a women's daily newspaper, but such a paper is edited and published in Peking by Mrs. Chang, a native of that city, under the title of the *Pekin Woman's News*. As the wife of a Chinese official, the *Sunday at Home* relates, she spent several years in Central China, where she learnt much of the condition of the people. On her husband's death she returned to her native city, and, being intent on the progress of her country, decided to found a daily paper.

Book of the Week.

THE SUPREME TEST.*

It takes some courage to write a book, the hero of which has to appear consistently unprepossessing and unattractive from beginning to end. I venture to assert that few people would have had the strength to resist the temptation to follow the usual lines of fiction and develop the central figure in "The Supreme Test" out of all recognition, under the influence brought to bear upon him. Mrs. Baillie Reynolds prefers to be true to nature; she will not abandon possibility for the sake of a mere picturesque effect. As a result she achieves real art, her story gains a dramatic power enhancing both its humour and pathos. Wilmot Cunliffe is no figure in a pantomime transformation scene, but a man with a solid personality which, at the age of forty, no one could expect him to change. What does alter is his inner, unseen self: having a good moral foundation and a really strong intelligence, it is quite possible that all that was stultified in him by early environment should be developed into something definitely heroic: but the person of the man: his unattractive exterior, his pompous manner, his life-long habits, were no more to be changed than his eyes or his nose. It is perhaps rather unfair to him that the author should allow an exceedingly nice girl, employed in his household, to describe him as "like a dead fish." It may have been Frieda Medway's opinion, but Wilmot Cunliffe would have stood a better chance with the average reader had she been made to keep it to herself. This, however, is a small matter, and in the long run is even almost justified by the fact that, in spite of giving him the worst start possible, Mrs. Baillie Reynolds forces us to acknowledge his claim to a true and particular chronicle of his life and work. The book is worth reading on account of this character study alone: it has the added attraction of a heroine of quite as singular a type. One is bound to disapprove of Kythe West, equally it is impossible not to be fascinated by her, just as everyone in the story coming into contact with her is fascinated. She is too illusive to be summed up in a few words: one needs to follow her through her various escapades and adventures to grasp the author's full intention with regard to her. Her great friend Frieda

* By Mrs. Baillie Reynolds. (Hutchinson.)

is a well-chosen contrast. Too charming herself to be described as a foil, Frieda fulfils that mission in Kythe's biography.

We are told that there have been other victims to Kythe's charms: in addition to Wilmot Cunliffe, we are introduced to only two—Ivan Earncliffe and Anthony Verinder. Of the two Ivan Earncliffe is the type that would figure in the average novel as a very creditable hero: the question kept deftly hung in the balance for us throughout is this: "which will Kythe West prefer?" Tony Verinder has certainly no pretensions to being heroic, there are points in the tale when one is tempted to think he and Kythe are well matched: but for the most part one has a keen desire to save her from him. She plays with fire, and her fingers are scorched: perhaps she deserved it: and yet did she? It is a point each reader will have to decide for himself.

A word should be said in appreciation of the clever picture of the Cunliffe household, it is very well done. It may be argued by some that it is exaggerated, but those whose experience is wider will realise that Mrs. Baillie Reynolds knows better, she has drawn, not on her imagination, but from life.

The book deserves hearty recommendation as a unique bit of work, refreshingly unconventional in matter, manner, and method. E. L. H.

Verses.

"As the old year sinks down in Time's ocean
Stand ready to launch with the new,
And waste no regret, no emotion,
As the masts and the spars pass from view.
Weep not if some treasures go under
And sink in the rotten ship's hold;
That blithe bonny barque sailing yonder
May bring you more wealth than the old.

"Throw overboard toil misdirected,
Throw overboard ill advised hope,
With aims that your soul has detected
Have self as their centre and scope.
Throw overboard useless regretting
For deeds that you cannot undo,
And learn the great art of forgetting
Old things which embitter the new."

ANON.

COMING EVENTS.

December 25th.—Christmas Day. Distribution of gifts to hospital patients.

December 30th.—Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, W.C. Christmas Entertainment for In-patients, 4—6.

January 5th, 1909.—Charing Cross Hospital. The Nursing and Resident Staff At Home, 7.30—11.

A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"The very best of us leaves his tale half untold, his message imperfect, but if we have been faithful, then because of us, someone who follows us, with a happier heart and in happier times, shall utter our message better and tell our tale more perfectly."

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