

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"SPRAY ON THE WINDOWS."*

There is something very attractive in the name "Ann" when it belongs to a young pretty woman with a personality. Mr. Buckrose's Ann holds the attraction as long as we are permitted the pleasure of her acquaintance. She never commits the *bêtise* of being ordinary. No, not when she is reduced to wheeling out her own perambulator. But, of course, when we first meet Ann we haven't got nearly so far as perambulators.

She, the daughter of a struggling doctor and a stepmother, whose one preoccupation during Ann's childhood was that Ann should be happy in spite of a stepmother, and a glowing horde of stepsisters, also that neither her conscience nor her neighbours should accuse her of being unfair—shortly, she spoiled Ann. As the sisters grew up she ceased to receive preferential treatment, and when she realised that life in her home meant very ordinary uninteresting life, and that she was like thousands of others, she began to feel actually defrauded. She came to the conclusion that a really suitable marriage gave a girl the best chance. She therefore proceeded to track a fashionable clergyman. He admired Ann, but married a widow with a toupée and a well-invested fortune.

Ann was indignant, as if in nursery days she had been refused a legitimate pleasure for no reason at all. When we first meet Ann she has left home and is in a little seaside lodging on the north-east coast, where she has obtained the post of secretary to a wealthy stout lady who is considerably under psychic influence. Her nephew and heir, Captain Barrington, is now Ann's objective. We protest lest our readers sum up Ann as a common vulgar little schemer. She is nothing of the kind. There is, and we realise it, that something sweet and virginal about her which saves her. Her landlady and her lodgings and surroundings are drawn with a most refreshing skill and humour, and are never overdrawn. We exactly realise Mrs. Walker, who was always tightening her white silk blouse into her trim waist.

It is she who informs Ann of the Captain's existence. Ann's pretty face glowed like it used to do as a child when there was a party in store.

"What is he like?"

"Well," Mrs. Walker pondered, "he is the sort I thought I should marry when I was eighteen and sat up at nights to rub my arms with glycerine. That's the sort he is. Not but what I'm not happy with William."

There was nothing silly or underhand about Ann, and when she saw him she at once determined to fall in love with him. A man of Captain Barrington's type, of course, misunderstood the girl's attitude, and his lovemaking had no definite meaning in his eyes. But with Ann to be kissed

*By J. G. Buckrose. Mills & Boon, Ltd., London.

meant one thing only, and on the first occasion that it happens she proposes to at once tell her employer of their engagement. Though surprised, the Captain has the grace to be ashamed of himself, and it was not at all difficult to love Ann. His aunt, however, objects on the ground that the readings of the horoscope showed that the marriage would be unhappy. This objection being more or less overcome, all went merry as a marriage-bell, and Ann's worldly prospects were all that that ambitious young person could possibly desire.

But after all she goes clean contrary to all her preconceived ideas of happiness, and falls in love with a small delicate man in the next lodging who has had two years in gaol for manslaughter—quite *justifiable* manslaughter—and is now living, shunned by his fellows, on his scanty income earned as manager of some brickfields. It was really unnecessary of Ann, but he appealed to the best part of her. She got up early one morning and eloped with him, and never regretted her action, in spite of the struggle of after coming poverty.

Captain Barrington always loved Ann in spite of her treatment.

There is a great charm in this book. Its light breeziness covers some very clever character sketches.

H. H.

AN EPITAPH.

These bones, this dust, were once (believe who can)
A living man;
What lived within this dust (believe who will)
Is living still;
These bones shall leap and walk another day
(Believe who may),
And, with belief,
Who may, will, can, go soothe some mourner's
grief.

("Words by the Wayside"),

JAMES RHOADES.

COMING EVENTS.

February 27th.—National Council of Trained Nurses' Meeting, 431, Oxford Street, London, W. 4 p.m.

April 13th.—Irish Nurses' Association, 34, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. Lecture on "Burns and Frost-bite." Dr. Mabel Crawford. 7.30 p.m.

NOTICE.

FRENCH FLAG NURSING CORPS.

Candidates for the French Flag Nursing Corps from the country can be interviewed by arrangement with Lady Barclay, 60, Nevcrn Square, S.W. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick will be at 431, Oxford Street, London, W., on Friday 19th, and Monday 22nd inst., from 2.30 to 5 p.m., to interview candidates. Candidates must be well educated, hold a three years' certificate of general training, and if possible, speak some French. Nurses who speak fluent French are required as Supervisors.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)