

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## "ACHIEVEMENT."\*

Those who have not as yet read "Richard Furlong"—noticed some time ago in these columns—should hasten to do so before reading "Achievement," which is the sequel to the above-mentioned. Those who are fortunate enough to have done so, will hail with pleasure Mr. Thurston's last novel, for "Dicky" is a person all must wish to meet again.

Dicky, the son of a miller, ran away from home, to express himself in painting pictures. He lodged at a general shop in a poor quarter of London, and at twenty-two years of age married Constance, the daughter of the shop.

Thus much for the uninitiated: "Richard Furlong" closes with the death of Constance at the birth of her child. "Achievement" opens with the account of her funeral. There is nothing usual in this book.

"Robbed suddenly of the woman he loved, the meaning of his work seemed gone. She had not understood it when she was alive, but now that Constance was dead he was reaping the knowledge of all that she had meant to his vitality. As the clergyman walked away, he came quickly to Mrs. Baldwin's side: 'Look after the child,' he said, 'I am going away.'

" 'There ain't no stopping Dicky,' declared Mrs. Baldwin. 'I know him when he gets his mouth like that. I remember when he was tryin' to make 'is printin' machine out of the washin' mangle.' "

Dicky's bruised heart turned instinctively to his home at the mill, in Gloucestershire. On the road there, he stopped one night at the "Fox," where he and Constance had stayed in the early days of their brief wedded life.

" 'Where's your wife this time?' the landlady asked, suspiciously. 'She's dead,' said Dicky, simply, and judging the look in his eyes she forgat the worldliness of her suspicion, and believed him.

" 'Poor boy,' she said."

She put a whisky bottle, full of hot water, in his bed that night, and herself turned down the sheets.

"She asks him, 'Why did you come 'ere? Only distressin' yourself, ain't yer?'

" 'Well, I suppose I am,' said he. 'Still I expect I want to distress myself—I don't know.'

" 'Well, that's a silly thing to do,' she said. 'What do yer want to go and do that for?'

" 'I don't know,' he said."

Yet the reason is doubtless clear enough. To touch emotion at whatever cost is as instinctive in him as the will to breathe. He plays with fire all his life, conscious, no doubt, of the good to be

achieved, yet burning his fingers, risking his soul in the furnace.

Truly, Dicky had his share of experience in these matters. The pleasant young Mrs. Flint, who kept his father's house, loved him, and as a consequence Dicky once more returned to his town life. It was then he first tasted the absolute freedom of youth, for Dicky was at this time only twenty-three.

It was in a poor, bare studio of his very own that he painted his famous picture, "Jade," the model for which, in his search for experience, he had met late one night in the street, and who persuaded him that she had been locked out of her place of business. She shared Dicky's studio for some time, he giving up to her the partitioned corner which served him for a bed-room. Dicky was Dicky, and no harm came to either. But the title of his picture, although it referred to her ornaments, had a more sinister application. The manner in which he approaches Mrs. Samby, his charwoman, on this subject, is delightfully told.

" 'Am I to call her miss or ma'am?' she asked, pitifully. 'Call her miss,' said Dicky, 'and don't be an old fool; she's as straight as you are, Fanny.' "

It was after this that he loved and was beloved by the beautiful Lady Diana Charteris, wife of dissolute Lord Freddy.

Alas! Dicky, in a moment of passion, answered his insults by silencing him for ever. Dicky dies by his own hand.

Every person in these pages is a creation, every page a study. We envy those whose pleasure in the perusal of "Achievement" is still to come.

H. H.

LINES TO A PHYSICIAN, EQUALLY  
APPLICABLE TO A NURSE.

And last, not least, in each perplexing case  
Learn the sweet magic of a cheerful face,  
Not always smiling, but at least serene  
When grief and anguish cloud the anxious scene,  
Each look, each movement, every word and tone  
Should tell the sufferer you are all his own.  
Not the mere hireling, purchased to attend,  
But the warm, ready, self-supporting friend  
Whose genial presence in itself combines  
The best of tonics, cordials, anodynes.

*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

## COMING EVENTS.

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

*April 15th.*—Monthly Meeting of Central Midwives' Board, Caxton House, Tothill Street, Westminster, S.W. 3.30 p.m.

## WORD FOR THE WEEK.

Sympathy is the key that fits the lock of any heart.

\*By E. Temple Thurston. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd.

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