

young students and midwives, who, in the intervals of her pains, eat fondants, and talk of the theatres. After her child is born, Esther's troubles increase. She goes as wet-nurse to a rich lady, and, meantime, her own child is being neglected and starved by an odious old baby-murderer who boasts and congratulates herself that her neglect has saved many a poor girl from the burden of having to support an illegitimate child. But Esther was not that sort. Though her poor baby was basely born, she had for him the true maternal instinct; and when she hears that he is dwindling for want of a mother's care and nourishment, she never hesitates as to her duty in the world. There follows a fine scene between Esther and the rich mother:—

"Mrs. Rivers incautiously let drop the word 'Bastards.' 'Say nothing against my child, he's human flesh and blood, and a good deal wholesomer flesh and blood than your little mite—he shall not be killed like the others. Mrs. Spires shan't have him, no, she shan't. I understand it all now. Fine folks like you pays the money, and Mrs. Spires and her like gets rid of the poor little things. Change the milk a few times, a little neglect, and the poor servant girl is spared the trouble of bringing up her baby and can make a handsome child of the rich woman's little starveling.'"

So Esther leaves the rich baby and flies to her own child in time to save its life from Mrs. Spires, who yet has a rough sort of sympathy for the girls whom she honestly thinks she benefits. She says, speaking to Esther:—

"There's that other baby in the far corner that was brought 'ere since you was 'ere by a servant girl like yerself. . . . If that child were to live it would be the ruin of that girl's life. . . . Esther looked at the poor wizen features, twitched with pain, and the far off cry, a tiny tinkle of tiny doom, shivered in the ear with a strange pathos."

How Esther fights courageously for her child, and the sad experiences she passes through as a maid of all works with the dragging expense of the child's keep upon her miserable wages must be read to be appreciated. After awhile she drifts into a good situation, with a kind mistress, and she is beloved by a stationer's clerk, who is a Plymouth Brother, and has received the same religious training as herself. She tells him her sad story, which he is brave enough to forgive, and all his family are kind to her. But just before their marriage the father of her child turns up again, and after much resistance, her old love for him revives, and she consents to marry him. For seven years she lives with him, and the story of their life, is told with consummate skill. They keep a public-house, where betting and gambling go on, and which, far more than the drink sold, helps to make their fortune. Esther hates the gambling, but she loves her husband and their child with dogged fidelity. Mr. Moore spares us nothing of the sorrows of gambling—the tragedy and the misery of the gambler's home, but he is too true an artist not to realise the spurious happiness brought into sordid lives by the excitement of speculation; for he says, after describing the bar of William's house and the bets given and taken upon a certain horse—

"Henceforth something to live for. Each morning bringing news of the horse, and the hours of the afternoon passing pleasantly, full of thoughts of the evening paper, and the gossip of the bar. A bet on a race brings hope into lives which otherwise would be hopeless."

There is a graphic description of Derby-day, and of the ensuing sorrow and gladness. Slowly, yet surely, retribution for their past misdoings overtakes William and Esther, and in their case, as in many others, "though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small." Bravely to the last Esther fights for her husband's life, as she fought for their child's; but he is taken and she is left alone to face the world again and fight for the education and maintenance of her son. The end of the story is grey, yet its sadness has a silver lining, which reminds me forcibly of the ending of one of Maupassant's novels, when he makes the profound reflection that "Life is seldom quite so good nor quite so bad as we anticipate."

In spite of the Mrs. Grundy-like behaviour of the above-mentioned circulating library, I am inclined to think that most thoughtful readers will agree with me that the world is the richer not the poorer for the publication of "Esther Waters."

A. M. G.

Reviews.

"Domestic Hygiene," by Thos. Dutton, Esq., M.D. (Kimpton, London.) This is a very useful book, and the stress which the author lays upon the necessity of a proper knowledge of domestic hygiene in the prevention of disease cannot be disputed. He certainly, in this volume, has treated the subject with remarkable completeness, varying in subject from the composition of the air to the building of a house, and with good chapters incidentally upon the diseases of children and the meaning and usefulness of trained Nursing. The book will well repay perusal, and is one which will be found useful by all who desire to obtain an elementary knowledge of a very important subject.

Inventions, Preparations, &c.

FLANNELS.

Our attention has been called to the various "Angola" and "Cosy Cotton Flannels" manufactured by C. Williamson of 91, Edgware Road, and we have had some of the samples carefully examined. They are made in colours as well as white; they are strongly woven, durable, and at the same time soft, while the prices are most moderate. These cotton flannels all measure a yard in width, and therefore cut to great advantage for night-gowns and other underclothing.

CHIROPODY.

It is an unfortunate fact that a very large proportion of Nurses, probably owing to their long hours of standing on duty, are martyrs to corns. In consequence there are numerous specifics which are widely advertised, especially in lay papers of which

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