

## A Book of the Week.

"W. V.—HER BOOK."\*

SOME time ago I reviewed in these pages a charming little book about a child, called "The Invisible Playmate," by Mr. William Canton. This book contained those delectable "Rhymes about a Little Woman" which have been so much admired by literary critics, and which have been so appositely set to music by Mrs. Raymond Maude, the daughter of (Madame Goldschmidt) Jenny Lind.

W. V.'s book is also by Mr. William Canton, and the tiny heroine of its pages is the Little Woman grown just a little bit older, into kinder-garten age. The charm of "Her Book," as well as of "The Invisible Playmate," is that W. V. is just an ordinary, average, little healthy human girl, whose doings and sayings are recorded not only with the pen and tone of paternal appreciation, but also with the heart and imagination of a poet. It is not every child who has a poet for its papa, and therefore the loving parents devoid of poetic insight would do well to peruse this charming little volume, for after reading it they cannot fail to appreciate and understand their own children's little plays and sayings better than before.

W. V. and her adoring playmate-papa wander about their suburban garden at Hampstead, and lo! it becomes an enchanted fairy land, and the little copse is turned into a haunted forest where oak-men come out of little doors in the trunks, and where "pappa-trees grew in the bosky dingles, on whose lower branches a little girl may discover something to eat when she is good enough to deserve it." Later on W. V. and her comrade hope to explore "the glade where the dog-daisies have to be chained because they grow so exceedingly wild," and to find the "blue thicket from which the stars come up into the dusk when it grows late."

W. V. went to stay with her friend Littlejohn, when her mother was ill, and regaled him with many fantastic tales, including one of the little girl who was just "scruciatingly good," and taught him an infinite variety of nonsensical rhymes and ridiculous pronunciations of which the following are given as specimens.

"Come let us go where the people sell  
Bananas and pears and pine-appel."

"Away to the market! and let us buy  
A sparrow, to make asparagus pie."

It is easy to imagine what a delightful rhyming father Mr. Canton must be to W. V.

A chapter entitled "Her Bedtime," gives the history of the daily coming home of father, his gossip with the child, who tells him all her doings at the kinder-garten school, and finally describes the little one saying her prayers and going to her cosy little bed. She prays God to make her as good as gold, and as she snuggles down under the covering of eider-down, whispers—"Now He will be wondering whether I *am* going to be a good girl!"

The Various Verses which pad up the rest of the book consist of episodes told in verse. They are

pleasant, easy reading, but they are hardly to be dignified by the name of poetry. In the verses entitled "Abba Father," the author pleads with the Almighty, and reminds Him that an earthly father from love bears with his child and stints not patience, and entreats Him to

"Bear with our foolish joys, our foolish tears,  
And all the wilfulness with which we pray!"

Greatly as I have enjoyed W. V.'s book and verses, I do not consider them as truly delectable reading as the previous volume already described. There is a fine artistic sense of the proportionate value of a child's sayings and doings, which is just a little wee bit wanting in this last publication, which is nevertheless attractive reading, and which, though at times touching and pathetic, misses being sentimental—a rare quality for a book about a girl-child written by an adoring father!

A. M. G.

## Review.

"OUR BABY":\* a book for Mothers and Nurses, by Mrs. Langton Hewer, is one of the best little hand-books for Mothers and those who have the care of children that we have come across. It is true that some of the information given is not known to all Nurses, unless they have gone through maternity work and have nursed in children's wards; but the book is specially designed for mothers un-instructed in the proper method of feeding and clothing children in babyhood. A few valuable hints are given on feeding sick children. Time was when, even in Hospitals, the great stand-by was milk and lime-water, and invention often stopped there, but we extract the following recipe for babies unable, through illness, to take milk.

Bread Jelly mixture—four ounces.

Raw meat juice—one ounce.

Cream—half-ounce.

Sugar—as much as will lie on a sixpence.

Milk and barley-water, or, where constipated, oat-meal water is recommended for hand-fed babies; and the diet of older children is discussed. No reason is given for the injunction not to let children under two years of age eat bread-and-butter, and it seems a little hard on the twelve-months'-old youngster who likes to have something to hold and to bite.

The moral training in the nursery is touched upon, and a hint is given to the mother, "if she be consumptive or markedly scrofulous," she must not suckle her child. One is afraid to be too moral nowadays—it savours of the New Woman—or perhaps Mrs. Hewer would have said that in such a condition of health she should not have children at all.

A further edition of the handbook is sure to be called for, and we would suggest to the writer that Thrush is always, not usually, "a sign that the child is out of health," and also that a dessert-spoonful of mustard is a pretty strong allowance for a baby's chest, and that spongeo-pilene is a rather clumsy application for an infant's little person.

\* "W. V. Her Book and Various Verses," by William Canton, 3s. 6d. (Isbister & Co., 1896.)

\* John Wright & Co., Bristol. Price 1s. 6d.

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