

She is a materialist; her idea of God, as she frankly tells us, is no better than the sum of good of which the human race can conceive. Consequently, she has only to provide for our conduct in this life; and to many of her readers this dwarfing of our high destiny, this transformation of the means into the end, this entire ignoring of the deadly consequences upon our characters, of selfishness, or "individualization," will deprive her suggestions of the greater part of their value. In considering what will be for the good of the race, she cannot take into consideration what to many of us are the most important issues, for she does not believe them to exist.

The fifth commandment she considers to be outworn; and her suggestions for removing the irksome restrictions of home life consist in no way in improving the conduct, but only the circumstances of the individual; and by improving his or her circumstances, she means, removing all that he or she finds tiresome. In order that mothers' work should be properly done, you are not to make better mothers, but to train other people to do their work for them, so that the mothers may be wage-earners with as few domestic hindrances as possible.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with these ingenious suggestions, the fact remains that they open out a boundless field of inquiry and study. One could write for hours upon themes so suggestive, so pregnant with interest for women. Enough has here been said, it is hoped, to make everybody read the book; and so will every reader become one of the army of women who are now by slow degrees combining and working to realize their ideal of womanhood.

A Book of the Week.

THE KING'S MIRROR.*

In his new book, Mr. Hope has left sensation and incident entirely out of the question, and gives us merely, as the title indicates, a study of character. It is a new *Eikon Basilike*.

Augustin, crowned king when a little child, brought up by a stern disciplinarian Styrian mother, and an odious governess, who whips him on his coronation day, inflicting thereby the most indelible humiliation—grows up without friends, almost without love, except such as his sister Victoria is able to offer him. The character of Victoria exhibits almost more talent in its author than the character of the king himself. Her marriage to the stolid William Adolphus, her gradual forsaking of what girlish ideas she once had, in order to be able to reason her brother into contentment with his own dynastic marriage—it is both excellent and convincing.

The young king has ideals, he is described by a foreign journalist on a visit to the capital, as almost mediæval in his high tenure of his kingly office. When quite a little boy, he is taken by his mother to see a lovely young American lady, who has married a subject of his own. She melts with pity and tenderness towards the forlorn little king; and her love, her caresses, are the first taste of real happiness to his baby heart. His singularly injudicious mother forthwith sets herself to arrange that he shall meet the charming lady no more; with the result that anybody

might have foreseen; that, as soon as he is anything like grown up, he falls strongly under her influence. He rescues himself in a manner which recalls to us Mr. Hope in his most exquisite moments. Thence, he proceeds to fight a duel with his best friend, over an actress, or singer, for whom he has hardly any feeling at all. Both these "affaires," indeed, are of the most pitiful description, and need all Mr. Hope's genius to enable us to go on sympathizing with His Majesty.

The position now is, that the young monarch, with his heart still to bestow, for no mortal could apply the name of love to his feeling either for Countess or Coralie, finds himself expected to marry his cousin Elsa. His first introduction to this young lady took place some years before, when she was rolling down the grass terrace in her father's garden. This action is so healthy, so entirely normal, and so interesting on her part, that one feels she might grow up into such a woman as should stir the lonely heart of the King, who by now has learned to wrap himself in cynicism. But Elsa appears, at the right age, drilled carefully by both her parents to the right point. She is young and beautiful; but she is ready to marry Augustin because she is told, and because she would like to be a Queen.

One feels vividly here, as in "The Prisoner of Zenda," how absolutely Mr. Hope holds the doctrine that a man's whole life is made or marred by his marriage. Had Elsa been a Flavia—Flavia as she was in "Zenda," not the miserable failure which dramatic exigencies required her to become in "Rupert of Hentzau," then the whole of the interest of "The King's Mirror" must circle round its closing chapters; but there is no such indication. The man who has never loved, who has never been sincerely loved, is left, in his loneliness and cynicism, married to a girl who has made up her mind to tolerate him, without knowing in the least what her resolution implies. This being so, "The King's Mirror" must be classed as one of the saddest books of the season. Sad with a blank, definite finality; a life that can never be complete; a tragedy.

G. M. R.

WHAT TO READ:

- "Biography of Archbishop Benson." By Arthur Benson.
- "The Commune of London." By J. Horace Pound.
- "The Life of W. M. Thackeray." By Lewis Melville.
- "In India." By G. W. Steevens.
- "More Pot-Pourri from a Surrey Garden." By Mrs. C. W. Earle.
- "Stalky and Co." By Rudyard Kipling.
- "A Corner of the West." By Edith Henrietta Fowler.
- "Terence." By B. M. Croker.
- "For Freedom." By Tighe Hopkins.

Coming Events.

October 10th.—Hospital Reform Association. Conference opens at St. Martin's Town Hall.

October 12th, and succeeding Thursdays.—A course of lectures at the Passmore Edwards Settlement, Tavistock Place, W.C., "How London is Governed," by Percy W. L. Ashley, B.A. 8.30 p.m.

October 26th.—Quarterly meeting of the Matrons' Council, at the Matron's House, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 4.30 p.m. The Executive Committee will meet at 4 p.m.

* By Anthony Hope. Methuen.

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