

A Book of the Week.

A SERVANT OF THE PUBLIC.*

Mr. Hope's novel presents a very interesting study. It is as analytical as Mr. Henry James, and it is a marvellous study in realism. It is difficult to find a phrase in which to sum up the particular type of fiction to which such a book as this belongs. It has been spoken of as passion treated intellectually; but this is not so. The persons who move in the pages of this novel might be as brainless as chimpanzees, for all the use they ever make of their intellectual capacity. They care neither for art, nor literature, nor philosophy, nor science, nor poetry, nor domesticity, nor travel, nor religion, nor politics, nor anything else that one can discover. All the intellectual capacity of which they are capable, is centred upon the pursuit of their passion. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are the objects of their ambition, the things for which they live. Irene Kilnorton wants money, social position, comfort. Lord Bowdon wants that, but wants the love of woman also, and cannot manage both. Bertie Jewett wants wealth, Babba Flint wants wealth, Sidney Hazelwood wants wealth and fame, Ashley Mead wants passion, and Ora Pinsent wants admiration. Here is a set of people who do nothing all day long, any one of them, but in the pursuit of their particular molten image. A brave world, my masters!

Ora is the typical modern woman. She has no morals, she has not even any scruples. She has married a wretch who is unworthy to be called a man, simply because she could not see that he was what he was—her eyes were blinded by his own transient admiration for herself. She is the incarnation of the terrible "take-all, give-nothing" which is common enough, Heaven knows; but to what extent is it interesting to read of it?

We have some respect for the naked lust and primeval cravings of savage creatures—they are created animal, and the other side of them is too imperfectly developed for them to be able to hold the brute in leash. A far more revolting, sickening object for study is the man or woman who accepts intellect only as a weapon to heighten passion, to sharpen its dulled edges, to increase its gratification by judicious restraints and abstinences designed to stimulate desire.

Such, if we consider them carefully, are the characters who people Mr. Hope's book. They are non-moral, they are non-religious, they have almost arrived at Mr. Wells's horrible conception of the ruthless, non-moral intelligence which, he thought, would constitute the most awful development of life possible to conceive of.

Ora Pinsent is an actress. She has a hazy husband in the background. She is guilty of nothing worse than self-indulgence, because she would not like to have the cold shoulder turned upon her. Ashley Mead, the man who really loves her, is as far beyond her comprehension as the internal structure of a star would be. For Ashley, although he lives in her set and has accepted their standards and their motives, has in him something which is not a principle, which is no more than a survival from some ancestry which admitted moral responsibilities. He loves her, but there are things which he cannot stoop to do for her. The thing is far beyond her comprehension. A wistful wonder is the only response it evokes.

* By Anthony Hope. (Methuen.)

He finds himself obliged to leave off loving such woman; but he realises that the love he gave to her cannot be given again to another woman. The sacrifice offered to idols cannot be offered to the true god. Now we know that an idol is nothing in the world. . .

Ah! But it was to that idol that the libation was poured forth, the libation which represented the worshipper's patrimony. He has no more to offer at other shrines.

There is no resisting the profound depression which the reading of such a book engenders. Mr. Hope is a true pessimist. G. M. R.

The Skylark.

Bird of the wilderness,
Blythesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place—
O to abide in the desert with thee!
Wild is thy lay and loud,
Far in the downy cloud,
Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
Where, on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying?
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.
O'er fell and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green,
O'er the red streamer that heralds the day,
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, soar, singing, away!
Thou, when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather blooms
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place—
O to abide in the desert with thee!

JAMES HOGG.

Coming Events.

October 2nd.—London Medical Exhibition, Royal Horticultural Hall (five days).

October 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th.—Lectures on the Prevention of Infection, by Dr. E. Symes Thompson, at Gresham College, Basinghall Street, 6 p.m.

SOCIETY FOR THE STATE REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES.

October 6th.—A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses will be held at 431, Oxford Street, W., on Friday, October 6th, 1905, at 4.30 p.m.

Agenda.

1. Minutes.
2. To receive a Report from the Hon. Secretary.
3. Correspondence.
4. To nominate Vice-Presidents.
5. To receive applications for Membership.
6. To consider the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Registration of Nurses.
7. To consider Bill for the State Registration of Nurses.
8. To arrange for a Special General Meeting of members to consider the Report, the Bill, and suggestions of the Executive Committee concerning the latter.
9. Other business.

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