

We hope the Government will stand firm against co-optation. No woman worth her salt should accept office on a County Council on sufferance. Let them be duly elected by the ratepayers, or let them stand out, and use their talents and time to more honourable purpose.

Book of the Week.

THE INVADER.*

Mrs. Woods is to be congratulated upon an exceedingly successful bit of work. The theme of "The Invader" is a most difficult one to treat, and in the hands of an average writer must have failed signally, but Mrs. Woods is not a mere average writer. Much as we should naturally have looked for from her, she has surpassed the most exacting expectations. The subject of the book is psychological. The interest centres round a double identity, The Invader being a second personality which enters into and possesses an exceedingly meek and good young woman given, in her natural entity, to deep study and extreme dullness.

The story opens with a scene in which the picture of Milly Flaxman's ancestress, the notorious Lady Hammerton, is under discussion, and it is discovered that Milly is exceedingly like her, but the portrait is vividly alive, the girl colourless, lifeless. For one moment that evening Milly attracts a certain amount of attention, a frivolous friend seizes her, fluffs out the soft amber hair, usually strained back and worn in a tight knot, and Milly, flushed with embarrassment, is posed against the picture. For the first time in their acquaintance Ian Stewart is startled into the knowledge that she is really more than ordinarily pretty. But, on his way home he muses: "Thank Heaven! As her tutor he could not possibly propose to her till she got through the schools, so there were more than six months in which to consider the matter." The romance, therefore, is not promising. But outsiders are persuaded that a match between the young Oxford Don and the girl who, having obtained a First in Mods, is working for a First in Greats would be most suitable.

Milly Flaxman is over-working, and that night an eccentric girl friend hypnotises her to make her sleep. The result is most bewildering. Milly awakens another being, as though possessed by the spirit of her one time fascinating ancestress, to the utter perplexity of all who know her. But because the phenomena is one with which few people have come into contact no one guesses what has occurred. It is found that Milly—or Mildred as she takes a fancy to be called—is really a most attractive person, and Ian Stewart no longer deliberates as to the advisability of proposing; he falls unmistakably in love. Throughout the story the delineation of those two characters struggling for the mastery in that one beautiful young body

is most wonderfully done. Pity for Milly, the dowdy student, interest in Mildred, the butterfly, vie with each other. First one dominates, then the other, the change always being preceded by a deathlike trance. The mischief that is wrought by Mildred—a veritable Undine—has all to be undone by Milly, the domesticated, who is married to the unsuspecting Stewart. Each time that Mildred makes her appearance she is stronger, her least desirable characteristics developing with startling rapidity, until she becomes so much the most dominant personality of the two that Milly is nearly choked out of existence. The first to realise that she is possessed is the unfortunate girl herself. She discovers the fact with horror. In her distress she eventually confides in her husband, and by degrees he, too, is forced into the knowledge. Then comes the pathos of the situation. Milly, devoted wife and mother of their only child, discovers that of the two Ian prefers Mildred, the Invader, who, for months makes use of that outer shell known to the world as Mrs. Stewart, and, ousting its original most decorous spirit, dwells there without conscience or moral sense. The miserable Milly returns each time to find herself implicated in all sorts of distasteful affairs. Upon her last re-appearance matters have been brought to such a point by the discreditable usurper there is no possible redress, no permissible way out of the dilemma.

Whether the theme can be credited as possible or not the book is of arresting interest from beginning to end, it grips the imagination, and gives the feeling that it has been written with the conviction that such things are, as indeed it is upon record that they have been.

E.L.H.

Coming Events.

June 21st.—Meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Council of Nurses, Hotel Normandy, 7, Rue de l'Echelle, Paris, 10 a.m.

June 29th.—Founders' Day Garden Party, Lady Margaret Hospital (Fruitarian), Bromley, Kent. 4 to 7.

June 29th.—General Meeting and Social Gathering of the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses, at the Hospital.

A Word for the Week.

Unity of Life means there is one Nature, one Principle, one Substance, and one Purpose everywhere. Call this God, or, if you like, a better name is the Perfect Mind; but know it as Universal Presence in which everything is contained.

No life is free, established, powerful that has not consciously touched that Universal Presence.

Fannie B. James.

* By Margaret L. Woods. (Heinemann.)

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