

of her mistaken sense of duty, and she breaks it. The result is appalling: Strong, keenly disappointed, feels that he has been fooled, and from the depths of his big undisciplined nature he resents it. He declares that he will never forgive her, and is determined to have his revenge. The writing of this most difficult scene deserves special comment, it is so skilfully done that one is at a loss to know with whom one's sympathies should be—the goaded Osmunda, or the ill-used Strong. When they meet again, two years later, there is a great change in Strong, all the more intensified by the fact that Osmunda has not altered at all. The man, under cover of the bearing of a man of the world, is embittered and deteriorated, and he manages, covertly, to convey to the girl that it is her doing entirely. For this she has nothing but cold disdain, and when presently it comes to her knowledge that his threat of revenge has been no idle one, it is she, not he, who has the triumph. It is an exceedingly powerful situation. "What have I done?" he demands. "Just exactly what you intended to do—broken my spirit," she says wearily—and he has gained nothing.

It is the fashion of some to sneer at a book labelled "A Novel with a Purpose," but was there ever a great masterpiece of fiction written that had no purpose? It is quite possible that the unintelligent reader has missed its significance, but it has nevertheless been there, the keynote to the whole. In this particular book there is a very definite purpose, one which the author may be said to insist upon in all her work. It is a contrary doctrine to that prevalent in so much present-day fiction, in that it asserts that no human being is justified in becoming a worm trodden down under the heel of circumstance. Mrs. Baillie Reynolds will never belong to the morbid school of romance which denies to man the power of spiritual volition, and makes him considerably less than the beasts of the field in intelligence. The book is full of types of just the ordinary, every-day folk, who make up our world, and woven in and out of the main theme are perfectly possible adventures and events. The general characterisation is so good that we are all the time living the life with these delightful people. Dickie Catesby, with his innate comicality, even in pursuit of his love story, goes straight to one's heart. Cynthia de Burgh is deliciously, and unmistakably, American. The dry humour of Miss Hurst is most infectious, and the love of Diana Lavington for the unappreciated Strong is dealt with capitally. Our hopes rise high when Noel Hardisty comes into Osmunda's life, transparently the very mate for her intelligence. And not the least skilfully portrayed is Egbert, the self-centred cause of his sister's ultimate unique humiliation.

Everything contributes to the fact that it is an exceedingly well constructed, artistically finished novel, one to put down with a sigh that it is ended, to take up again with an interest that will always find something fresh with which to stimulate itself.

E.L.H.

## The Modern School Girl.

Make haste to school, my little child,  
Or else you will be late;  
Your books are all aseptic now,  
And here's your sterile slate.  
Your pencil has been boiled an hour—  
'Tis germless now, I hope;  
And don't forget to wash your desk  
With this carbolic soap.  
And lest about the schoolroom floor  
Some unseen microbes lurk,  
Just sprinkle formalin around  
Before you set to work.  
You'd better put, for safety's sake,  
Bichloride in the ink,  
And water that has not been boiled  
You must not dare to drink.  
Of course, when recess comes around,  
Some food you'll want to munch;  
So in this disinfected box  
Is predigested lunch.  
And since 'tis said that in a kiss  
Bacteria may dwell,  
I may not give you, as I'd like,  
A mother's fond farewell.  
Make haste to school, my little child,  
And leave my tender care;  
And may you still be safely kept  
From microbes in the air.

From *Life*.

## Coming Events.

December 12th and 13th.—Meeting of Central Midwives' Board, Caxton House, Westminster.—Penal cases. 2 p.m.

December 16th.—Queen's Commemoration Fund, —Queen Alexandra's Committee, Executive Meeting, Adeline Duchess of Bedford presiding, 26, Bruton Street, 11.30 a.m.

December 16th.—Hammersmith and Fulham District Nursing Association. — Miss Curtis, Superintendent, and the Nurses "At Home," Council Chamber, Hammersmith Town Hall, 4—6.30 p.m.

December 18th.—Meeting of the Executive Committee, Society for State Registration of Trained Nurses, 431, Oxford Street, London, W. 4 p.m.

December 19th.—Meeting of Central Midwives' Board, Caxton House, Westminster, 2.45 p.m.

December 25th.—Christmas Day. Distribution of Gifts to Hospital Patients.

## A Word for the Week.

"PER ASPERA AD ASTRA."

"Unto each man his handiwork, unto each his crown

The Just Fate gives:

Whoso takes the world's life on him, and his own lays down,

He, dying so, lives."

SWINBURNE

*Super Flumina Babylonis.*

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