

Book of the Week.

THE HEART'S BANISHMENT.*

Miss Ella Macmahon is to be congratulated upon an exceedingly clever study in psychology in this last book of hers. That she is a confirmed believer in the laws of heredity there can be no doubt, and she here presents us with a very curious example of two strong inherited temperaments at war with each other in the person of Frederick Vane.

Saddled in his University days with the nickname of "Johnnie," Vane strikes one from the outset as a most unlikely dignitary of the Church. Nevertheless, he fulfils the dream of his youth, and in due course takes orders. He has inherited from his grandfather, a very eminent divine connected with the Oxford Movement, what one might call a clerical disposition, and as a curate in the East End, Vane very nearly works himself to death. His health breaks down, and after a necessary rest he is forbidden to take up work anywhere except a quiet country parish. The comparative ease and idleness suit Vane's temperament very badly; his brain is too active to be sufficed by the enforced vegetation, and he falls back upon an old recreation to relieve the monotony of his existence. Before her marriage Vane's mother had been a well-known actress, at the same time a woman of a singularly spiritual nature. From her Vane inherited a strong dramatic tendency, which had some scope in his University career when he was a member of the Amateur Dramatic Club. Vane was then not so much an actor as an excellent stage-manager and critic, which fact gained for him the admiration and confidence of his special friend, Arthur Lawrence, a man afterwards destined to make his mark as acting-manager in a West-End theatre of his own.

But Vane's particular line turns out to be play-writing of such marked genius that he takes the theatrical world by storm. He works under the pseudonym of "William Smith," unknown to everyone except Lawrence.

From the moment Vane takes up his play-writing again there begins the warfare of heredity. He is a man who can do nothing by halves—an enthusiast. It is impossible to him to be possessed by more than one idea at a time, and his dramatic instinct gradually so absorbs him that he is forced to realise his duties as priest suffer not from neglect exactly, but from a decrease of interest wholly incompatible with the office. He is faced by the conviction that one thing or the other must be dropped, and for the issue of that struggle the book should be read throughout.

There is, of course, a woman in the case. With some skill the story of Vane's love threads itself in and out of the complications, and long before he knows it himself the reader is aware of the ruling motive in the man's heart. To describe this part of the book would be to divest it of a great deal of its interest, but there are some exceptionally fine passages in the interviews between Margot Sandars and Vane. The result of his courtship is anything but obvious.

* By Ella Macmahon. (Chapman and Hall.)

There are some very good things in the book that would bear quotation, but amongst the best, perhaps, is Margot's sentiment on matrimony. "Suitability," she says, "is the only reliable basis for marriage. . . . The mistake people will make is that they do not take that into proper consideration beforehand. . . . Just think of the wear and tear! Could anything stand that but suitability?"

E. L. H.

VERSE.

The sense of fellowship is grown
A radiant mystery.
The dusk is shot with light; the stone
Is light unto the eyes that see.

No more the wild confused main
Is tossed about with storms of fear.
The sea is singing; and the rain
Is music in the ears that hear.

—From "Poems" by
MARY E. COLERIDGE.

COMING EVENTS.

February 4th.—Infants Hospital, Vincent Square, S.W. Lecture by Dr. Ralph Vincent, on Malnutrition. 5 p.m.

February 4th.—Royal Ear Hospital, Dean Street, Soho. Lecture to Nurses on the "Structure and Functions of the Nose and Upper Part of the Throat." By Mr. Macleod Yearsley, F.R.C.S. 4.30 p.m.

February 5th.—Miller Memorial Hospital, Greenwich. Lecture to Nurses, "Electricity in its Application to Medicine and Surgery." By Dr. H. G. Critchley. 8 p.m.

February 11th.—Central Midwives' Board Examinations in London (at the Examination Hall, Victoria Embankment, W.C.), Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, and Newcastle-on-Tyne.

February 12th.—Post Graduate Lectures. Actions of Medicine, I. By Dr. F. D. Boyd. Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, 5 p.m. Nurses cordially invited.

February 18th and 19th.—Thirty-sixth Annual Central Conference of the Poor Law Authorities of England and Wales, in the Council Chamber of the Guildhall, the Right Hon. Sir Edward Fry, G.C.B., presiding. The Lord Mayor will attend in State, and open the proceedings.

February 21st.—Public Meeting organised by the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, S.W. Address by the Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, who will preside, 3 p.m.

A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

The watchwords for the coming year in every line of nursing work, whether educational or legislative, should be courage, co-operation, and persistence. It is when there is no specially exciting object before us that inertia increases, and the moment that we begin to drift we must go backward!—*American Journal of Nursing.*

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