

"But do tell me what the doctor said. I should so like to know."

"It ain't worth repeating," said Billy, airily. "There ain't no argiment in 'Pooh, pooh!' and 'Pish!' and sweer words, and banging o' doors."

With which opinion I heartily agree.

But the only lion we could find was dumb and dusty, so we left him on the shelf.

E. G. F.

Book of the Week.

THE FLORENTINE FRAME.*

Here is a book to read for sheer enjoyment. It is an ideal "story book" because in it are all the qualities, in just exactly the right proportion, that a story should contain.

The part that the Florentine frame plays in the book is a very delicate and subtle one. Quite casually it is the means of bringing the man and woman together who were indubitably made for each other. It is a matter of curiosity on Chester Keith's part—he hears from his friend, Professor Fanshawe, that Mrs. Roscoe has a certain piece of Italian workmanship in her possession over which she exhibits a curious sentiment—the frame stands always on her writing table—it has done so for some sixteen years—waiting for something that she would consider worthy to be enshrined in it.

For some time it has been Fanshawe's greatest wish to introduce Keith, the struggling genius of a dramatist, to the widow of old Tom Roscoe, millionaire. Fanshawe wishes his protégé to be taken up and set on his feet by the woman who is a keen patron of Art, and something of a dabbler in literature herself. Scouting the old man's intention, nothing will induce Keith to avail himself of the chance. He is in the depth of despair over the rebuffs with which his play meets at the hands of the managers when the little incident of the Florentine frame acts as a ruse to bring him into contact with Isabella Roscoe.

To state the plot briefly and baldly, she is a woman of nine and thirty, with a daughter of seventeen, who has been her absorbing thought and duty heretofore. Chester Keith is twenty-eight. A minor character gives a very apt description of Isabella—"She doesn't take you by storm. She undermines you." It is not long before Keith is thus undermined. A great friendship springs up between the pair, founded upon their similar tastes—it begins according to the rules of Plato. It ends—"The effect you have on me is very curious," he said. "Even when I'm alone, I do my work as a person who whispers in someone's ear, I put the problem to you in my imagination, I bring you the thing when it's done, and I wait for your verdict. I may make faces, but I accept it."

But it goes no further—Isabella has come by some information that dams up the flood in her own heart effectually, and when the air is just electric with emotion, she tells Keith: "I take a sort of maternal interest in everything that concerns you." He jumped up with a sharp little

laugh. "Maternal is masterly," is his comment, "Yes, you—you are kind. Really extraordinarily kind—as the good surgeon is."

But what was a mother to do when she discovered that her daughter was deeply in love with the man who, in point of years was a fitting mate for her?

Genie is really a delightful "girl-study." Sweet, but spoiled, charming and refreshing—but a child, and the man craved womanhood.

The interference of Josephine Mathew is the culminating point. As Isabella's elder sister she sees fit to warn her against the blunder of marrying a man eleven years her junior. Mrs. Mathew sets before her sister the awful object lesson of a certain Cousin Minna, who has committed the folly of marrying a boy. It is not an analogous case in the least—but when, through Josephine's manoeuvres, the newly wedded pair come to stay in Mrs. Roscoe's house, and she is faced with the absurdities, she puts up the last barriers between herself and perfect happiness.

It is not till Chester Keith finds the Florentine frame, and in it, at last, a picture, that he realises the truth.

But what of Genie and her after-happiness? Is that where the pathos lies—or is it in the great sacrifice that would have bought it for her? It is difficult to determine.

E. L. H.

COMING EVENTS.

December 16th.—Meeting Central Midwives' Board, Caxton House, S.W., 2.45 p.m.

December 16th.—Meeting of Grand Committee, Territorial Force Nursing Service, Mansion House, 3.30 p.m.

December 18th.—A meeting of midwives to discuss the question of the Direct Representation of Midwives on the Central Midwives' Board. The L.C.C. Schools, Tower Street, 3 p.m. Tea, 4.30 p.m.

December 20th.—The Lord Mayor, accompanied by the Lady Mayoress and the Sheriffs, re-opens the Metropolitan Hospital, Kingsland Road, 3 p.m.

December 25th (Christmas Day).—Hospital and Infirmary Entertainments.

December 28th.—Prince of Wales' Hospital, Tottenham, N. Christmas Tree Entertainment, 5 p.m.

January 7th.—London Homœopathic Hospital, W.C. The Matron and Nursing Staff At Home. Music. Tea and coffee. 8 to 11 p.m.

January 12th.—Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. Lecture on Operations on the Stomach and Intestines. Preparations and After-Nursing. By Professor Alexis Thomson, F.R.C.S.E. Extra-Mural Medical Theatre, 4.30 p.m. Nurses cordially invited.

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

" . . . And who's ashamed to say that he believes in miracles? Miracles! Why, everything is a miracle. Life, Death, sunrise, the opening rose, the wind in the pines. Is Art no miracle? Poetry? Dear God!"

From *Open Country*,
By MAURICE HEWLETT.

* By Elizabeth Robins. (John Murray.)

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