

## Book of the Week.

### A MODERN CHRONICLE.

Mr. Winston Churchill (U.S.A.) has given us a remarkable book, a distinctive feature of which is an unusual power of portraiture. The people live and speak to us, and we are caught up into the atmosphere they create, be it ever so unfamiliar. In the heroine, Honora, we have the most striking instance. She is introduced to the reader as a beautiful distinguished child, living with Aunt Mary and Uncle Tom in St. Louis, "a somewhat conservative old city on the banks of the Mississippi River." In spite of their devotion to her, which she warmly returns, the narrow life in the quiet home wearies and frets the girl, who is blessed or cursed with "temperament."

We are made perfectly acquainted with gentle Aunt Mary and her husband, come under the spell of their peaceful life, share the joy of his flowers with Uncle Tom, at the same time that we are being infected with the restlessness of the young thing who "supposes it would be better to be contented where I am. But its no use trying—I can't."

"Sometimes when she looked in the mirror she was filled with a fierce belief in a destiny to sit in the high seats, to receive homage, and dispense bounties. . . . To escape—only to escape from the prison walls of a humdrum existence and to soar!"

When she is a tall slip of a girl of sixteen she takes to lecturing her devoted slave Peter, who, a man of thirty, is patiently waiting for the time when he shall woo her.

"You ought to dress as though you were somebody, and different from the ordinary man in the street."

"But I'm not," objected Peter.

"Oh," cried Honora, "don't you want to be? I can't understand any man not wanting to be."

Her opportunity comes—she is given a year at a fashionable boarding school, and from thence goes on a visit to a school friend in a luxurious country house.

Her beauty and charm bring lovers in plenty, but she chooses, curiously, a common-place, well-groomed and dressed, young financier, under the double delusion that she is in love with him, and that she will at last attain her ideals. We are enabled to get a glimpse of her state of mind when, on the day following her engagement, the "Viconte" also sues for her hand. She reflects regretfully that she might have been a Vicomtesse and lived in a castle.

"A poor Vicomtesse, it is true."

Judge then her feelings when, after her marriage, she finds herself established in a suburb in New Jersey. "Honora's house, the first on the right, was exactly like the other five. If we look at it through her eyes we shall find this similarity its chief drawback." The iron of the suburbs entered into her soul, added to which she gradually awakens to the knowledge that the man she has married is a mere money-making machine, so that when at last she becomes possessed of a house in New York it is

to her as the ashes of Sodom, and riches spell to her vulgarity. Surrounded by society of the worst taste, she listens to the pleading of Hugh Chiltern, well born, but wild and lawless, to divorce her husband, which, according to her maid is, in the Western States, "simple comme bonjour."

Her passionate determination to hold this man's love keeps the reader enthralled. The refusal of the neighbourhood which surrounded Hugh Chiltern's estate to recognise their union angers and embitters him, and his waning love leaves poor Honora more desolate than ever. Disaster, or Providence, perhaps, intervenes, and he is killed in a mad tussle with a vicious horse.

But in the end we are led to believe that this stormy life finds calm harbourage with Peter, whose faithful love remains unshaken through all. It is impossible in a short space to even allude to half the characters in this absorbing book, all of which are sketched with convincing skill.

H. H.

### WOMEN AND TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

The Women's Total Abstinence Union will hold a Public Meeting at the Caxton Hall, on the afternoons of May 4th and 5th. On the latter date Mrs. Servante, the President, will be in the chair at 3 p.m., when the seven Leagues affiliated to the Union will be represented on the platform, nurses by the Hon. Mrs. Eliot Yorke, deaconesses by Mrs. W. S. Caine, and midwives by Dr. Mary Rocke.

### COMING EVENTS.

*April 29th and 30th.*—Midwifery and Nursing Exhibition and Conference, Horticultural Hall, Vincent Square, S.W. 12 to 9 p.m.

*April 29th.*—Guy's Hospital Nurses' League. Annual Meeting and second Annual Dinner. Nurses' Home, 7 p.m.

*April 30th.*—Meeting to consider Memorial to Miss Isla Stewart, Clinical Lecture Theatre, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C.; 3 p.m.

*May 3rd.*—Guy's Hospital, S.E. Post Graduate Lectures, "After Treatment of Abdominal Operations." By E. C. Hughes, Esq., M.C. Nurses' Home, 8 p.m.

*May 3rd.*—The Infants' Hospital, Vincent Square, S.W. A Course of Lectures on Babies (price five shillings). I.—The Chemistry of Infantile Digestion. By Dr. Ralph Vincent. Lecture Theatre, 5 p.m.

*May 7th.*—General Hospital, Birmingham, Nurses' League. Third Annual Meeting at the Hospital, 3 p.m. Social Gathering, 4.15 p.m.

*May 11th.*—East End Mothers' Lying-in Home, Commercial Road, E. Annual Meeting, Mansion House, Lord Mayor in the chair, 3 p.m.

*May 12th.*—Guy's Hospital, S.E. Post Graduate Lectures. "The Mental Factor in Disease." By H. C. Cameron, Esq., M.D. Nurses' Home, 8 p.m.

### WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"With time and patience, the mulberry leaf becomes silk."

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