

"The streets seem very narrow," observed Olivia, "and exceedingly dirty," glancing at her tiny, slender shoes. "But I suppose they are interesting monuments? Historical buildings, and so on?"

"Frightfully historical," returned Sylvia, laughing. "Do have a tomato sandwich."

"Can you get me a list of books I ought to get?" pursued Olivia, fixing her grave eyes upon her hostess. "I have Baedeker, of course, but I want to study the place from an historical point of view."

Olivia in her turn finds, as she imagines, a kindred spirit in Hugh Alison, a novelist of some repute, who, attracted by her beauty, and amused by her unconscious pedantry, flatters her into believing that she possesses literary talent, and half in idleness and half in earnest succeeds in fascinating her for the time being, and awakening her imagination.

Up to this point the book is, for the most part, pleasant reading, and it is a pity that a disagreeable element should be introduced into it, for poor little Olivia falls an easy prey.

"Olivia sat with down-bent head, her thoughts whirling fantastically, grotesquely. Dick? But Dick was gone for ever. So vividly that his very voice rang in her ears. She remembered incoherent little phrases of his. And now there was another man who would say the same things, she supposed. And by this time she had learnt that it wasn't wrong to listen. If it were true she could only learn that way? But then she was a married woman." This is the prelude to a sordid intrigue of which Hugh Alison very quickly tires. It is altogether unworthy of the undoubted talent of the authoress. One must feel regret that the pen that can sketch so charmingly "the things that are lovely" should be used for any other purpose. In some subtle way we are made to feel that evil is called good and good evil—when necessary.

The *liaison* between Hugh and Olivia is not defended, for the simple reason that it did not succeed. But of Sylvia's contemplated union with Dick, her friend Mary, quite a normal married woman, remarks: "I am sure Sylvia will be very happy. I wish it were all different and simpler. But I am glad all the same."

These situations seem to have an attraction for Miss Syrett, for in another otherwise charming book of hers, about an otherwise charming woman, "Ann Page," we remember that, though for no apparent reason, she chose to dispense with the marriage ceremony, she was surrounded with a sort of halo.

This easy immorality, though not exactly recommended, or even approved, is accepted comfortably by apparently quite respectable people, in a manner that is profoundly disagreeable, and the volume that we opened with pleasurable anticipation we close with distaste, and a sense of promise unfulfilled.

H. H.

Coming Events.

May 27th.—Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute. Conference of representatives of affiliated Associations. Caxton Hall, Westminster.

May 28th.—The Lord Mayor opens new Nurses' Home, City of London Asylum, Stone, near Dartford.

May 31st.—The Rural Midwives' Association. Seventh Annual Meeting. 3, Grosvenor Place, S.W., by kind permission of the Lady Esther Smith. H. J. Tennant, Esq., M.P., in the chair. 3 p.m.

May 31st.—The Infants' Hospital, S.W. A Course of Lectures on Babies. V.—"Clinical Cases illustrative of various diseases and their treatment." By Dr. Ralph Vincent. Lecture Theatre, 5 p.m.

June 2nd.—The Society for State Registration of Trained Nurses. Annual Meeting. Chair, The Lady Helen Munro Ferguson. 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W., 4 p.m.

June 2nd.—The Lord Mayor presides at a Meeting to inaugurate the Jubilee of British Home and Hospital for Incurables, Streatham, Mansion House.

June 7th.—Territorial Force Nursing Service, City and County of London. Mansion House. Executive Committee, 3 p.m. Special Meeting, Grand Committee, 4 p.m.

THE WOMEN'S CONGRESS.

June 6th to 11th.—Japan-British Exhibition. Great Hall, Cascade Café.

June 6th and 7th.—"The Co-operation of Women in Local Government."

June 8th.—"A University Standard in Home Science."

June 9th.—"Woman's Suffrage" and "The Woman's Charter."

June 10th.—"National Health."

June 11th.—"Nursing." Chair, Her Grace the Duchess of Montrose. Red Cross Organisation: Sir Frederick Treves. The Trained Nurse's Sphere in Red Cross Work: Mrs. Netterville Barron. Territorial Nursing: Miss Haldane. Nursing as a Profession: Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. Social Service Nursing: Miss H. L. Pearse.

June 12th.—Hospital Sunday.

June 18th (postponed from May 28th).—Procession of Women Suffragists from the Embankment to Albert Hall, organised by the Women's National Social and Political Union.

Word for the Week.

EARTHLY SORROWS, TRANSIENT.

Then let the woes
And joys of earth be to the deathless soul
Like the swept dew-drop from the eagle's
wing,
When, waking in his strength, he sunward
soars.

SIGOURNEY.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)