

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

HILARY'S CAREER.*

In this novel we had the story of a woman of family and distinction married to a hard-headed business man of no breeding to speak of. They have but one child, the boy Hilary, every inch a Brandon—that is, he was more his mother's boy than his father's. John Martyn was the successful editor of *The Review*, dubbed by some a scurrilous rag. The paper was a thorn in the flesh of the well-bred Brandons. The Brandons for generations had been naval people, and young Hilary at the age of twelve had decided that it was the only profession for him, and Hilary's mother, secretly proud of the Brandon dominance in him, had rejoiced. His papers for Osborne had gone in. Then begins the tragedy of the tale. John Martyn changes his mind; he will not have his son more Brandon than himself; he shall be educated to succeed him as editor of *The Review*.

We were wrong in saying the tragedy began there, for previously he had confessed to his wife that her union with him was illegal, his real wife being still living.

"No one like you, Stella, for me. I had—the solemn truth—practically forgotten, and I thought her dead." He broke in on himself again with that sudden gusty fierceness, that somehow to her fancy brought youth back to his face.

"I've had you—I'm not going to regret it for anyone." There was no outward rupture. Stella continued under his roof and bore his name and kept her self-respect.

But even the debt that he owed her was not sufficient to move John's obstinate resolve.

So sheltered had Stella's life been that it was not till after a Suffrage meeting and her acquaintance with Sylvia Raymond, its attractive young leader, that Stella realised that she was the mother of a son, over whom she, not the father, had the power. But even this lever fails to move John, and they between them decide to lay the case before the boy Hilary, telling only what was absolutely necessary.

In the stillness of the night the boy visits his father's bedroom to tell him his decision.

Hilary came to where he lay and stood beside him in his little blue striped pyjamas.

"It's rather parky out here, dad," he explained. "Can I get into your bed?"

Not until he was comfortably settled did he begin. "You know, dad, mother would be so frightfully glad if you would let me go into the navy. Can't you really?" "Not even to please your mother," said John with a finality which Hilary at once accepted.

"Dad."

"What?"

"If I had chosen the business, you know, it would have broken mother's heart—to have me anything but a sailor—and you know you'd rather have anything than me break her heart." Hilary decided for both of them.

For a moment he stood quite still in the crook of his father's arm, until with a brief childish sigh he bent again to kiss him. Then crossing the room on quiet tiptoes he went away.

In the morning, when Stella came down to breakfast she was handed a sheet of notepaper, over which John had scrawled "The kid has chosen."

We heartily agreed with Aunt Clara when she asks Stella if she has thought that by giving Hilary a career she robs him of a father.

"You know, John isn't a bad father, nor even pig-headed about the boy except in one particular."

"Oh, no." She spoke eagerly for John. "And sometimes I have wondered if even a bad father isn't better than no father. There is something about parenthood that goes deeper than goodness or badness—its our earthly substitute for Divinity."

The most surprising feature in this work is that a woman so fastidious as Stella should accept with comparative calmness an intolerable position. John, with all his stupid obstinacy, is, however, quite a right-minded and likeable person, and we are glad to think it all came right in the end.

H. H.

LIMITLESS.

When the motive is right and the will is strong
There are no limits to human power;
For that great force back of us moves along
And takes us with it, in trial's hour.

And whatever the height you yearn to climb,
Tho' it never was trod by the foot of man,
And no matter how steep—I say you can,
If you will be patient—and use your time.

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

COMING EVENTS.

June 10th.—Annual Meeting, Colonial Nursing Association, Royal Colonial Institute, Northumberland Avenue, the Lord Ampthill, G.C.S.I., presiding. 3.30 p.m.

June 13th.—Duke and Duchess of Devonshire entertain Queen's Nurses at Devonshire House, London.

June 19th.—Monthly Meeting, Central Midwives Board, Caxton House, Tothill Street, S.W. 3.30 p.m.

A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

Happiness, grief, gaiety, sadness are by nature contagious. Bring your health and your strength to the weak and sickly, and so you will be of use to them. Give them, not your weakness, but your energy, so you will revive them and lift them up.—

Amiel's Journal.

* By P. Truscott. (T. W. Laurie, London).

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