

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO—?"*

It is with a burning sense of shame that we contemplate the necessity that calls forth from the pen of Miss Robins such a book as this—for it deals in plain and emphatic language, yet with an admirable delicacy and restraint, with that foul blot on our civilisation—White Slavery. Alas! the heartrending history of little Bettina is no figment of an over-sensitive imagination, no clever creation to stimulate the taste of a public that is wearied with commonplace vice or virtue, but a record that is, we cannot doubt, true in substance and in fact, given by an authoress of the highest standing. For what reason? "That Betty *might do for others what no one had done for her.*" This work may be then described as an educative work, and should be read in all seriousness. It should rouse the women of England, old and young—it may be from prudish ignorance—it may be from culpable indifference—it may be from cold selfishness—it may be from obstinate disbelief—to a stern self-questioning, "Am I my sisters' keeper?" The tragedy of Bettina is told by her sister, her senior by two years.

"She is very fair, my little sister; I mean she is white and golden, and always seemed to bring a shining where she went."

"I have used the present, and then fallen to the past. I say 'she is,' and then 'she seemed'; and I do not know whether I should have written 'was' or 'seems.' And that, in sum, is my story."

Bettina and her sister are the children of a young, fragile and beautiful, but undeniably selfish mother; they lived in great seclusion in Sussex, and the younger especially was her mother's idol. These two young creatures had no outlook beyond the narrow one which mother-love and exclusiveness provided for them. "They kept three servants, and no accounts; lawyers' letters were put away." Their first glimpse into wrongdoing was when the young maid (Martha Loring), suddenly left. "Bettina and I went into the kitchen, to ask Mrs. Ransome what had become of her? She said, roughly, Martha had gone under. 'Under what?' Mrs. Ransome said, 'Sh!'"

All went well till the return of Lord Helmstone's family, whose daughter Hermione "put pink stuff on her lips, and darkened the under-lid of her green eyes."

She took a great fancy to Betty. From her and her friends pretty little Bettina, by nature a butterfly, soon learned her own power of fascination; and, as a natural consequence, came a distaste for the monotony, and a longing for pleasure.

Then came the invitation from Aunt Josephine, to be with her in London over the Coronation; and the fatal introduction into their peaceful home, by Hermione, of the little French dress-maker, Madame Aurore, who was bad as bad could be—but all the same, "would not run ze risk for

my liddle gal. Non!" She took a great deal of interest in Aunt Josephine, forgot to return the photograph that was shown to her; and, finally, when the dresses for the visit were completed, returned to London.

And the girls set out for the fateful visit; and at Victoria they were met by someone who professed to be Aunt Josephine, and who looked like her, *but was not her.* From that moment, the story defies description, and extract becomes quite impossible. It is with shuddering horror that we read of the house to which these innocent children were taken, described by one of its vile inmates, "as the most infamous house in Europe." This same man had, it appears, yet a divine spark in him, when, touched by their ignorance, he arranges within an hour or two of their arrival, for the escape of the elder. Terrified, the frantic girl makes her way to her aunt's house. "It is not possible," my aunt said; "this is England."

At last, the policeman asks, "where is this house?"

"It is—it is"—a pit of blackness opened. "I had never known the address."

Little Bettina is never seen again. The last glimpse her sister had of her was standing unsuspecting in that infamous drawing-room, flushed with vanity and excitement, "dancing a hand on her hip, playing the gallant. Such a baby she looked—and I had done her hair like that—singing her childish action song, 'What is your fortune, my pretty maid?'"

Will not God be avenged on such a nation as this? H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

January 31st.—Meeting Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland. Business Meeting 3.30 p.m. Tea 4.30 p.m. Address by Dr. Helen Boyle on Mental Nursing at 5.15 p.m. 431, Oxford Street, London, W.

February 4th.—Nurses' Missionary League. Lecture by Dr. H. Gordon Mackenzie on "The Relation of the World of Work to Modern Thought." 33, Bedford Square, London, W.C. 3 p.m.

February 5th.—The League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses Course of Lectures. "Eugenics, what is it?" by Bishop Harman, Esq., F.R.C.S., Medical and Surgical Theatre, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C. Tickets from the Hon. Secretary. 5.30 p.m.

February 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th.—Trained Women Nurses' Friendly Society. Meeting of Committee of Management, 431, Oxford Street, London, W. 5 p.m.

February 6th.—Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland. To receive an invitation from the Irish Nurses Association to hold a Conference in Dublin on June 3rd, 4th and 5th, of the present year. 431, Oxford Street, London, W. 4.30 p.m.

* Heinemann, 20 and 21, Bedford Street, W.C.

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