

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE HEADQUARTER RECRUIT."*

It is a rare thing to find a collection of short stories that is really arresting, but this volume can lay claim to both interest and originality. Many of them have a military flavour about them, and who shall say that romance is any the duller for that? The author of the "Dop Doctor" is not likely to produce anything insipid, and the range of subjects is as varied as any reader could reasonably expect.

In "Transference" it is shown how the dyspeptic can for the trifling sum of a few guineas hire good appetites and excellent digestions, so that occasionally they may taste the bliss of a good dinner. From the same source, it was also possible to obtain a guinea's worth of daughterly devotion to an old aunt from whom one had expectations. A dull bore had hired for one night the complete mental equipment of a good second-rate *raconteur* and professional diner out. In fact, any capacity, mental or physical, could be obtained as a temporary loan, for a fee paid in advance, at Professor Pliny's Institute.

"Full-sized James" is the story of a young man who was brought up in ignorance of his family history until his twenty-first birthday. He had been educated at Harrow, was rather a dab in English literature, and when choosing his profession had given his preference to the Bar. It was, therefore, a severe shock to this well-grown pleasant young Englishman when he learned that his father and mother were performing dwarfs in a circus.

"The Quality of Mercy" is a distressing description of a motor accident. In the confusion, and terrible disfigurement of the unhappy victim who was crushed by the magnificent motor car, it was supposed that he was the groom belonging to the smaller. It was but a battered huddled heap lying in the road. The girl in the magnificent car fiercely resents the suggestion that it shall be used to convey her victim to the hospital. Why should it? It was her own car, and she was on the way to meet her fiancée, who was on a walking tour.

"Could it be that that magnificent recklessly driven car had been the instrument of vengeance on the callous nature and the un pitying soul of a proud selfish woman who, hurrying on the wings of speed to meet her lover, had felled and crushed on the road no common hireling justly despised by her; no vulgar groom unworthy even in his mortal anguish of a pitying word or glance from her; but her own beloved."

"A Chintz-covered Chair" is an episode of the Rand in the late war. Mrs. Brocksman, a beautiful Englishwoman of forty, the widow of a Boer and the mother of a Boer, in arms against the British Army. She hides her stalwart son by making him sit on a four-legged stool.

* By Richard Dehan. Heinemann: London.

with his hands on a level with his head. Over all she puts the voluminous chintz cover from her high backed chair, and when in pursuit come Major Hawting and Lieutenant the Hon. Tommy Gregory, they find the mistress sitting very calm and upright on a high-backed chair engaged upon a piece of embroidery. The Major turns out to be a lover of her girlhood, and sending away his Lieutenant he implores her to give him a hope of winning her at last. But her cub of a son from under the chintz cover whispers if she consents he will shoot him dead before her eyes.

There are many more stories, we cannot say of like character, for they are very much un-alike, but they are all intensely alive and absorbing.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

February 7th to 11th.—The Medical, Nursing and Health Exhibition and Conference, Old Zoo Buildings, Glasgow.

February 10th.—League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses. Lecture on Florentine Painting. "The Age of Enquiry," by Mr. Beckwith A. Spencer, M.A., F.S.A., Medical and Surgical Theatre, St. Bartholomew's Hospital. 8.15 p.m.

February 11th.—Guy's Hospital Past and Present Nurses' League. Lecture: "The Feeding of Infants," by Dr. Cameron. Medical School Building. 8 p.m.

February 16th.—Irish Nurses' Association. Lecture "Poliomyelitis and Neuritis," by Dr. Purser, 34, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. 7.30 p.m.

February 18th.—Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. Lecture: "The Legal Responsibilities of Nurses," by Professor Harvey Littlejohn. Large Theatre on Surgical side. 4.30 p.m. Trained nurses cordially invited.

February 19th.—Kensington Branch W.S.P.U. "At Homes." Speeches on the Women's Movement in Relation to Modern Ideals and Progress. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick on "The State Registration of Nurses." Victoria Room, Royal Palace Hotel, Kensington. 3 p.m.

FEBRUARY.

A CLUMP OF BLUE HEPATICAS.

A little flower so lowly grew,
So lonely was it left,
That heaven looked like an eye of blue,
Down in its rocky cleft.

What could the little flower do
In such a darksome place,
But try to reach that eye so blue
And climb to kiss heaven's face?

And there's no life so lone and low
But strength may still be given;
From narrowest lot on earth to grow
The straighter up to Heaven.

—From *The Star Calendar*.

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