

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"A YOUNG MAN'S YEAR."*

The young man was a briefless barrister of the Middle Temple. He had no powerful friends, and he was very poor. After his chambers were paid for and his fourth share in Henry the clerk, and his lodgings in Bloomsbury Street, there was not left much margin beyond the necessities of life, food, raiment and tobacco. He was a Lisle, and Godfrey Lisle was the head of the house, though only a distant cousin. He was also the squire of Hilsey Manor, the old family place, and a man of considerable wealth—together the Personage of the family.

So far Arthur had not made any effort to make his acquaintance although he had been in town some time. His remorselessly active imagination rehearsed for him all the aspects in which he would appear to the Godfrey Lisles—"a poor relation, a tiresome duty, a country cousin, a raw youth. Oh, in fine, and in the end a bore of purest quality and great magnitude. That, and nothing else the Godfrey Lisles would think him."

He had been amused and content hitherto with the Sarradet circle. Mr. Clement Sarradet kept the perfumer's shop in Cheapside, that had been established a hundred and fifty years ago. Something French survived in his cherished daughter, Marie, it was in manner more than in looks, she had a vivacity, a provocativeness, a coquetry, that had very nearly at the opening of this book, made young Arthur Lisle lay himself, his poverty, and his good breeding at her feet.

But before that came to pass something happened which eclipsed Marie Sarradet as the moon does the stars.

Bernadette, Mrs. Godfrey Lisle, tired of waiting for her young kinsman to pay his devoirs, called upon him instead. "When she was gone the vision of her remained with him, but vaguely and rather elusively—a memory of grey eyes, a smooth, rich, texture of skin, mobile, changeable lips, fair wavy hair—these in a setting of the richest apparel; an impression of something very bright and very fragile, carefully bestowed in sumptuous wrappings." Thus Marie Sarradet's hopes were overthrown.

"Bernadette has got a new toy." In this manner was announced the recent friendship between these distant cousins by marriage.

"I liked the look of him," said Judith. "Of course he was all of a flutter. Well, I think he ought to be. I wouldn't give much for a man who didn't get into a flutter over Bernadette."

"She's wonderfully"—Esther Norton Ward sought for a word—"radiant, I mean, isn't she?"

"And there isn't a bit of affectation about her. She just really does enjoy it all awfully."

"All what?"

"Why, being irresistible and radiant of course."

"I really do think that being pretty improves people," said Esther.

* By Anthony Hope. (Methuen & Co., London.)

Judith considered that men ought to be able to look after themselves—or keep away.

So we can see that our honest-minded young Arthur hadn't much of a chance.

Mr. Hope is a past master in creating pretty and charming women, and we feel that we have a quarrel against him, that he does not leave Bernadette at that.

Godfrey Lisle, is a dull, complete bore, and does not in the least appreciate his charming young wife. "A lover makes a woman very interesting to herself. He casts new light on familiar things, he turns disagreeables into tragedies, routine into slavery, placid affection into neglect. He converts whims into instincts, selfishness into the realisation of self." All this Sir Oliver Wyse did for Bernadette. It could not be denied that till his advent she had contrived to be fairly happy in spite of her marriage being a misfit; there was an obstinate feeling that she might manage to be fairly happy again if only he would go away."

We cannot help feeling that it was a great mistake he was not allowed to do so, for frail Bernadette throws her cap over the mill, and her charm is gone.

Honest Arthur is at first broken-hearted, his devotion had been devoid of all offence and it was the downfall of his idol.

But he is young, and the coveted briefs come along, and Judith is bright, and "in his heart he didn't want her sensible, her eyes would not be so bright, nor her cheeks glow with colour; her voice would not vibrate with eager joyfulness, nor her laugh ring out so merrily." But we much deplore the fate of Bernadette.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

November 12th.—Royal Sanitary Institute. Sessional Meeting, Town Hall, Ripon. Professor Kenwood, M.B., D.P.H., presiding. 10 a.m.

November 15th.—National Food Reform Association. First of a series of demonstration lectures, for social workers, on "War Time Cookery," by Miss Florence Petty ("The Pudding Lady"). Westminster Health Society's Offices, 60, Greek Street, Soho, W.C. Syllabus and full particulars from N.F.R.A., 178, St. Stephen's House, Westminster.

November 18th.—Central Midwives' Board, Monthly Meeting, Caxton House, S.W. 3.30 p.m.

November 23rd.—Irish Nurses' Association. Lecture on "Bone Diseases," by Mr. MacAuley. 34, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. 7.30 p.m.

November 23rd.—Royal Sanitary Institute. Sessional Meeting. Discussion on "The National and Social Aspect of the Lower Birth Rate." Opened by Dr. Louis Parkes, M.D., D.P.H. 4.15 p.m.

A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

A rose to the living is worth more than sumptuous wreaths to the dead.

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