

THE APOTHEOSIS OF "HUGHES."

The wise journalist stands on the kerb if he wishes to absorb the atmosphere of a movement presented in a passing pageant, and to pass the time of day as it were with the crowd. Little of its essence is thus evaporated in space. Seen from a window the Women's War Procession, which enlivened London last Saturday afternoon, was beautiful and impressive, but seen from the kerb it was a living thing—it was just patriotism *in excelsis*, patriotism as we women feel it, laurels and mourning for the Heroic Dead, acclamation for the valiant living, the demand for the strong man at the helm. Thus a hundred banners voiced the demand of the workers for "Hughes," the man of singleness of purpose and fearless policy—even the children flung wide their banners and cried, "Hughes come back for our sake." "The will of the people is Hughes on the War Council," which, being interpreted, means vigorous prosecution of the War, so that the blood of our people be not wasted; no pandering to Huns in high places; scatter their gold; down with them; out with them; no quarter for the coward, the parasite and the spy. From the kerb, as they passed in their thousands, all these things were stamped on the pale faces of the women doing men's jobs, or they flung them at you in speech in response to the wave of your hand.

What a pity a few of the Coalition were not on the kerb! Or are they still too obtuse to appreciate the Soul of the mothers, the wives, and the lovers of men? When the misgovernment of men makes it necessary for the saving of the Empire that our women shall go gagged into dangerous trades, to come out stained and withered—it is high time that "Hughes" and all he signifies to the people should be realised in high places.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"PENTON'S CAPTAIN."*

Those of our readers who read the poignantly pathetic tale of "Mary Dunne" will welcome another story from the same sympathetic pen, and we have confidence in recommending "Penton's Captain" to their notice.

A charming tale it is of the period of the outbreak of the war. Penton was a private soldier and Humphrey Maxwell was his captain. They both have a love story, and the romance of each is impartially told.

Lizzie was taking home the washing on a "pram" and tilted it into a hedge, from which she was unable to extricate it.

"Bother it," exclaimed Lizzie, her pretty pink and white cheeks flushed, her blue eyes—blue as forget-me-nots they were—filled with tears.

A young, beardless man in khaki helped her in her difficulty. This was Private Penton. It was not long before Lizzie had explained to him that

she was sixteen, that she was servant at Dickens, that she had been boarded out from the union. "Four shillin' a week was what they paid for my keep and my clothes were extra." As the young man remained silent, she tossed her head, her bright hair gleaming in the sun. She was beginning to resent Private Penton's disdainful attitude. That was the beginning of one romance. Captain Maxwell's was conducted as may be supposed, on different lines.

Henri, the young wounded Belgian officer, died in a hospital in the town where Maxwell was quartered. His sister arrived too late to see him alive. Maxwell, who was with him, promised to meet the young girl and see that she was protected. "Through the gathering mists René's eyes seemed to search his, there was a long pause and then with a mighty effort he turned towards the crucifix he was holding with his left hand, Humphrey laid his hand upon it."

True to his promise he met Jeanne and placed her with a lady selected by the Belgian Committee, and after a constant succession of humiliations from her well-meaning vulgar hostess, Maxwell, who by this time is deeply in love with her, offers her marriage.

"But I do not love you," she said, tremulously, "and, my God, how could I think of such things as love and marriage now? I, whose whole heart is full of mourning."

But she yields to Humphrey's entreaties and they are married. Penton by this time has been promoted to be Humphrey's personal servant, and though he was much injured that his master had not furthered his marriage, he is much mollified by Lizzie being engaged as servant to Jeanne, Humphrey's wife.

Penton is a very amusing character with his grandiloquent way of expressing himself. At first there was a passage of arms between him and old Nou-nou, the Belgian woman. "I cannot think, sir, it could be your wish I should do such a thing." But, as Jeanne said later, "Penton is doing it after all. I saw his face change when it was a question of Lizzie having an extra piece of work. He even scrubs with dignity," said Jeanne, laughing. "Your Penton gives much *cachet* to our house, Humphrey; I don't know what we should do without him." Penton and his master are ordered to the Front in due course, and later are reported killed. By this time Jeanne devotedly loves Maxwell, although he left her believing her unwon, and the shock of the news of his death is very severe. Late in the afternoon Lizzie contrived to creep into her mistress's room, and Jeanne, opening her heavy eyes, gazed at her for some time in dim wonder.

"Lizzie," she said, faintly. "What have you got on your head?"

"Please'm," said Lizzie, in a whisper, "it's a widow's cap. Oh, I thought I'd like to wear it, ma'am. I do feel as I am Phil's widow, and I thought I'd creep up and ask ye—I thought ye'd understand."

Jeanne sat up and stretched out her arms.

* By M. E. Francis. Chapman & Hall, London.

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