

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE TRIUMPH OF TIM."*

The vicar's name was White. In Little Pennington, however, everyone spoke of him reverentially as the vicar. Mrs. White died shortly after Tim was born; the vicar never spoke of her, not even to Tim. The room in which his mother's portrait was hung became an inquisitorial chamber. In it Tim was called to account for his incomings, outgoings and shortcomings.

His nurse would say:

"You are wanted, Master Tim, in your pa's study."

"Well, Tim, you are in mischief again; what are we going to do?"

This "we" was terribly disconcerting. It implied fellowship, the warming of a small heart's cockles, implying also a sense of responsibility.

To get into mischief might be, to a healthy boy, a ha'penny matter; to drag a saintly father into the mud of petty peccadilloes became an odious affair.

The atmosphere in which Tim was reared clung to him throughout his life, and though it did not save him from serious lapses, he never quite lost touch with it, and its influence brought him back to himself.

That he was impressionable is borne out by the prayer meeting he held with a village boy in the wood, following on a serious talk with his father.

Tim carried a brown paper parcel tied with string. Ernest Judd stared at it, interrogatively, with a hungry expression. It might contain cake, apples and roly-poly pudding. His face fell when Tim extracted a not too clean night-shirt and a yard of black riband.

"I shall go into the vestry and put on my surplice; you kneel down and pray."

"I'll be danged if I do."

"You kneel down and pray; open your sinful heart."

"Taint more sinful than yours."

"You kneel down or I'll have to punch your head."

Tim was trembling with excitement. Suddenly he remembered a familiar passage in the Old Testament.

"Take off your boots," he commanded, "and socks."

Tim did not remain sinless for any appreciable length of time, although that time lasted longer than was agreeable. For the remainder of the Lenten season he and Ernest vowed solemnly to give up biting their nails; but, as Tim remarked, "Didn't we just make up for it on Sundays."

Tim went to Eton, but the fact that he was a Tug instead of an Oppidan filled him with bitterness.

His boyish love for winsome Daphne would

have proved the inspiration of his life; and the girl, young as she was, would have been true to him but for her worldly mother. The anger that filled the boy's heart at her weakness in yielding to her mother, was followed by an unworthy episode with a village girl.

He had been expelled from Eton for breaking bounds at night. The old vicar, who was heart-broken, then revealed to Tim the secret of his illegitimate birth and the knowledge that he was not his son but the child of his wife, whom he had married to save from disgrace.

Tim's passionate remorse took the form of a resolve to go away until he could make good so far as was possible. He went to Southampton and worked his way before the mast to California. He married the beautiful daughter of a Spanish rancher. His passion whirled him to heights—and depths. Magdalena was a pure maiden. Must he tell her his sordid story, blacken the whiteness of her love? When he had finished, when he stood naked and ashamed before her, she burst into tears. But they were shed for him, not for herself. She said, brokenly, "Oh! you have suffered, you have suffered, but it is nothing—nothing; I shall make you forget Ohé! my love will make you forget Teem; ah! Dios! but I could strike Ivy; I hate her, because she hated you; and you have given her a child, and still she hate you; God of my soul! is it possible?"

Ivy, of course, was the village girl who had, properly speaking, led the boy Tim astray.

In spite of his enduring love for Daphne, he was ideally happy with his lovely little wife and child. But phthisis claimed them both, and Tim was once more alone. In his loneliness he turned home to the old vicar. "My boy; my dear, dear boy."

"Father!" Tim finds his illegitimate son at the vicarage, cared for by his foster-father. Tim saw that the vicar was counting his sheaves—the corn that had ripened, after long years.

H. H.

TO F. L. R. IN FRANCE.

You with the boyish laugh, the sunny eyes
That always smiled when danger threatened
worst;

Would you have had things ordered otherwise,
If death could be prevented, Fate reversed?

You were so bright, we brightened 'neath your
touch,

So all alive, your silence seems unreal;
Can it be true that you who felt so much,
Lie there alone and can no longer feel.

O comrade, though may be they call you dead,
To us who loved you, *that* you cannot be!
God grant when in my turn I too am sped,
Someone may find as much to say of me.

—*Soliloquies of a Subaltern, somewhere in France*

By ERIC THIRKELL COOPER.

*By H. A. Vachell. London: Smith, Elder & Co.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)