

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## "THE LION'S SHARE."\*

Audrey at the outset of life made up her mind that, come what would, she would taste life, and from as many points of view as possible. She declined to be a monomaniac, no matter how attractive any state.

"Flank Hall is my Zoo," she is saying on the first page of the book. Flank Hall was her father's house, and it occurred to her that she was rather like an animal in captivity. She was lithe, she moved with charm. She had none of the preoccupations caused by the paraphernalia of existence. Audrey's father was a clerical old tyrant and she frankly hated him.

She confided her plans for emancipation to Miss Ingate, who was not young nor fair, and who was laughed at, beloved and respected; yet who sincerely believed that the corner of Essex where she was so much at home was different from and more fondly foolish than any other corner of the world.

Audrey asks her, "How were you treated when you were my age? Were you ever engaged?"

"Me? Oh, no," answered Miss Ingate tranquilly. "I'm very interested in them. Oh, vey! Oh, vey! And I like talking to them. But anything more than that gets on my nerves." My eldest sister was the one. She refused eleven men, and when she was going to be married she made me embroider the monograms of all of them on the skirt of her wedding dress."

"How strange!"

"Yes, it was. But this is a very strange part of the world."

Then Audrey tells her of her fixed determination to leave her home next morning with one hundred pounds she had confiscated from her father's safe.

This, she explained, was only half of Cousin Caroline's legacy to her, of which her father had declined to give her the "tiniest bit. So I've taken half."

Her father was killed in a motor accident before she had time to put this plan in operation. He left an immense unsuspected fortune, and Audrey, on her mother's death, which took place shortly afterwards, could sup her fill of life. She decided to set forth with Miss Ingate as her travelling companion. On the way to the station she startles her companion by displaying a wedding and a mourning ring on her finger, and displaying, by a peep at her hat box, a widow's toque and long veil.

"I look bewitching in them," said Audrey, relocking the case. "I've had more than enough of being a young girl; I shall arrive in Paris as a young widow."

"You ought to have told me before. But who are you the widow of?"

"Hurrah!" cried Audrey. "You are a sport, Winnie. I'll tell you all the interesting details in the train."

Crossing the Channel on their way to Paris they fall in with young Lady Southminster on her honeymoon. She had already fallen out with her husband.

"I only married him the day before yesterday. I used to make cigarettes in a window in Piccadilly. Beyond his inability to procure her a taxi the night before after the theatre, he had 'behaved splendid.' Now, however, he was seasick. 'A man that's so bad he can't come to his wife when *she's* bad, isn't a man—that's what I say."

"So that's marriage," said Audrey after she had gone.

"No," said Miss Ingate, "that's love. I've seen a deal of love in my time, but I never saw any that wasn't very, very queer."

Arrived in Paris, Miss Ingate was recognised by some American artist friends, and they threw in their lot with them. They were also militant suffragettes.

Mr. Arnold Bennett deals with the movement to a nicety. He seems, while evidently in sympathy, to have caught the humour that was so distinctive a feature in their operations. Audrey, with her appetite for experience, is by no means going to give herself exclusively to the cause; she has also other irons in the fire. Miss Ingate felt that at her age she could rest on the laurels of having once wheeled a barrel-organ down Regent Street.

The suffrage adventures in which Audrey takes part are amusingly described. Audrey's interview with a detective is very humorous.

"The vast majority of women are with us," said she.

"My wife isn't,"

"But your wife isn't the vast majority of women."

"O, yes she is," said the detective, "so far as I'm concerned."

"His wife is stout," Audrey decided with herself; "if she wasn't, she couldn't be a vast majority."

Audrey marries finally Musa the musician.

"What about your husband?" asked Madame Piriac.

"He'll keep," said Audrey. "He's had his turn, I must have mine now. I haven't had a day off from being a wife for ever so long, and it's a little enervating, you know; it spoils you for fresh air."

"I thought you two were happy in an ideal fashion," murmured Madame Piriac.

"So we are," said Audrey. "But I don't want to be ideally happy all the time, and I won't be. I want all the sensations there are, and I want to be everything. Musa understands."

H. H.

Sixteen Glasgow magistrates have passed a resolution calling upon the Government to yield to the "universal desire of the nation" that women shall be enfranchised on the same terms as men.

\* By Arnold Bennett. Cassell & Co., London.

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