

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

THE STARS IN THEIR COURSES.*

This book belongs to the First Novel Series and the author has made a capital beginning. It has a well thought out plot, which is original and of sustained interest. Patrick Yardley is the child of a well-born mother who had married his bourgeois father to save the family estate. She left her husband and little son, when the latter was about five years old, for one of her many admirers.

"John Yardley had never loved his wife, Lady Anne, and he never forgave her. He had been proud of her beauty and long descent. But she had cheated him. He was John Yardley, the millionaire, a Minister too now, and a philanthropist of world-wide fame. This house belonged to him. The very portraits that looked at him with wondering proud aloofness belonged to him. He had seen that same aloof look often in Lady Anne's eyes, and he had seen it that morning in the child's.

"He shall go to the village school," said Mr. Yardley insistently to the portraits, and he looked from face to face clenching his hands. "I hadn't a fine gentleman's education, and neither shall he, though he is one of you."

And yet there had been a time when John Yardley had asked God passionately to let his son be the descendant of just such a race as this.

The boy Patrick at an early age disclosed the passion that had ruined his ancestors—that of gambling. His upright harsh father already biassed against the lad on account of his mother's sin metes him out great severity. He complained that "Patrick is not like other boys. His craving is for excitement—preferably dangerous excitement, and most of his thoughts begin and end with the stable."

The coming of Iky, Mr. Yardley's orphan nephew, to share his home, is the beginning of Patrick's undoing, for Iky gradually usurped the son's place.

John Yardley's death took place when both boys were in their early manhood. "He did not know that he had asked to see his son, did not remember the morning's agony of desire to speak to him. He lay and looked at him with the old instinctive dislike which was a seventeen years' old habit—and, as such, stronger than life and the shadow of death—and then turned from him to his nephew; and so he died, with his hand in Iky's and his eyes on Iky's beloved face."

And the only will that could be found left his property to his nephew.

The skill of the writer comes out in the drawing of Iky, who, though he is not a nice character, has some redeeming points; and when the real will turns up, does not hesitate at once to write to

Patrick the news which leaves him practically a poor man.

When he had first come into his inheritance, and was, therefore, a person of some importance, he confided to Patrick an incident in his life which, if disclosed, would place a bar to any position in society. Patrick, sore at his father's seeming injustice and heavily in debt, agrees with Iky to assume the onus of Iky's discredit in return for the settlement of his liabilities. In short, he sells his good name for three thousand pounds, but what mattered it when he was now an obscure person? Many complications arise out of this iniquitous bargain, and Patrick, in consequence, comes near to losing the girl he loves, and she comes near to taking the really worthless Iky instead.

An accident in the hunting field which nearly causes Patrick's death, and the blackmailing of the unfortunate Iky by a man who is in possession of his secret, brings about the *dénouement*, and Patrick comes into both his love and his property.

This is an eminently readable story, and we can heartily recommend it. H. H.

LULLABY.

How doth a mother lull her babe
As fades the sun-glow from the skies,
The old, old songs how doth she croon
O'er little Tired-Heart's closing eyes?
Ah! tenderly,—how tenderly!—
And gently as the breeze that dies
Among the tree-tops near the Moon,
—That little breeze at dusk that sighs,
That little breeze that dies so soon:
Thus tenderly, thus lovingly
She lulls her little babe

How doth a shepherd fold his flock
And lead them homeward everyone
Through shining pastures steeped in gold,
—Dyed golden by a goldier sun?
Ah! carefully—how carefully!—
He calls them over, missing none,
And leaves them not till all are told,
—Nor counts his loving labour done
Till all are safe within the fold:
Thus carefully, thus lovingly
He tends his little sheep.

And while she watches by her babe
And while he folds his sheep,
I sing my psalm and say my prayer,
And, singing, lay me down to sleep.
The stars slip out, the flocks steal in,
And He who doth the doorway keep
Of that safe sheepfold over there,
—Behind the sky so blue and deep,
Beyond, beyond the starry stair
—Lets all the little tired ones in,
. . . Lets all the tired ones in.

N.L. in *The Commonwealth*.

* By Hilda M. Sharp. (London: Fisher Unwin, Ltd.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)