

pleasantly, and instantly, without any warning, there came into Archie's mind the remembrance of the words his hand had scribbled with the signature 'Martin.'

Very soon afterwards the two little brothers, dead and living, were in communication with each other at irregular intervals.

"Lovely to talk to you—can't to mother" wrote little Martin.

Mr. Benson does not pretend to explain the reason why these innocent and perfect spontaneous communications between the two children should have resulted in such terrible consequences to Archie during his early manhood. If it had been the deliberate act of an adult to use his powers of communicating with the spirit world we could understand that punishment would probably follow.

Archie outgrows his childish delicacy and becomes a very desirable and handsome young man. During all these years he had no message from Martin till one day he had a curious dream of a beautiful statue out of which wriggled loathsome reptiles. This was followed by writing, again traced by his own hand, which contained a warning from his dead brother. The warning related to his growing attachment to Helena Vautier, who was as false as she was fascinating. Apparently, he did not connect this message with the girl, or refused to acknowledge it, and his attachment to her grew rapidly. Though Martin had warned him that he "could not get through again," messages purporting to come from him continued to arrive, and these gradually altered in character, counselling Archie to evil and vicious practices. The gradual lowering of the standard of the young man's naturally healthy and fastidious nature and instincts is described. Helen Vautier's deliberate jilting makes him reckless, and his whole nature becomes a distorted counterfeit of his former lovable self. This makes, of course, painful and repellent reading, but it contains a sound warning against the indulgence of illegitimate occult practice. Archie's wilful unkindness to dear old Blessington is one instance of his changed character. There are many passages which picture him in a revolting light. The book closes by holding out some hope that Jessie's strong, faithful love may be yet the means of delivering Archie from the awful thraldom into which he had sold himself.

H. H.

#### COMING EVENTS.

June 30th.—Royal British Nurses' Association Annual General Meeting, 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W. 1. 3 p.m.

July 1st to 3rd.—National Conference on Infant Welfare as part of National Baby Week Celebrations. The Kingsway Hall, Kingsway, London, W.C. President, the Right Hon. Christopher Addison, M.P., M.D., President of the Local Government Board. Apply for information to the Secretary, 4 and 5, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not in any way hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.*

#### THE COLLEGE CONFERENCE.

##### "RECIPROCITY ALL ON ONE SIDE."

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—It is not often that the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING lets its readers down, but in your last issue you advertised a Conference to be held at Manchester under the auspices of the College of Nursing, Ltd. As I found I could take in Manchester *en route* for London, I attended the meeting on the 19th. I may be mistaken, but I have always understood a Conference to be the meeting together of people interested in some common subject for the fusion of ideas, brought about by free discussion. If that be the real meaning of the word, then you misled your readers, because one could not call the repeated reiteration by a troupe of College matrons a fusion of ideas, and free discussion on the ethical papers was debarred. The Chairman—the Dean of Manchester—had evidently been warned that to permit of free discussion on College ethics would be riding for a fall, so instead of discussion following Miss Gill's logical though narrow paper, Miss Lloyd Still led the company with monotonous tone and melancholy matter back to the good old days of Florence Nightingale. The matron of St. Thomas' was against progression, swept away the idea of an eight hours' working shift as "impossible," regardless of the fact that it has been proved workable by our advanced Colonial sisters. Then, instead of free discussion, the Dean spoke, happy in the thought that he was both speaker and chairman! Immediately afterwards Miss Sparshott was presented with a bouquet by her fellow-matrons and accorded a vote of thanks for their entertainment. The gloom cast over the meeting by Miss Lloyd Still's pessimistic paper was broken by Miss Sparshott, when accepting the bouquet, she deplored the fact that Sir Cooper Perry had gone off with the taxi, and she doubted her ability to carry to the Infirmary her bouquet, which, as a novelty, was presented in a vase of water! Then, after refusing a request for discussion, the Dean and the Matrons precipitately left the platform.

I am, &c.,

J. B. M. PATERSON

(Late Sister, Guy's Hospital).

[The same policy of preventing free speech was adopted at the College meeting at Liverpool last year.—ED.]

#### IN SELF DEFENCE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I am glad to see that "Politician's" letter has aroused interest amongst nurses, and since the greatest stumbling blocks in

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)