

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE YOUNG DIANA."*

Diana May was forty years old. She had grown to that unromantic age under her father's roof-tree. She had been the bitterest disappointment to her vulgar father and mother. And yet, when at eighteen she came out, she was a graceful, pretty girl of the freshest type of English beauty. A love affair extending over seven years had ended disastrously for Diana, for her lover jilted her at the end of her patient waiting.

Diana, being of an affectionate and human disposition, felt keenly the indifference, almost bordering on hostility of "Pa and Ma," and was hurt to the quick at their allusions to her matrimonial failure. She decided at this juncture that, as she seemed in no way necessary to anyone's happiness, she might as well be free to live her own life. With this object in view, she went to her morning swim one day and did not return. All, apparently, that was left of her was a neat pile of clothes on the rocks. "Pa and Ma" wept crocodile tears, and Diana threw off their oppressive yoke for good and all.

She answered an advertisement of a Dr. Demetrius, in Geneva, who appealed to any "woman alone in the world without claim on her time or affections to assist a scientist in a very important and difficult work, which requires the assistance and co-operation of a courageous and determined woman of mature years." The advertisement cannot be answered by letter and the applicant is required to present herself personally and alone. Accordingly, Diana set out for Switzerland to interview this mysterious person. She found Demetrius to be a man of wealth and living in luxurious surroundings. He bound her to secrecy and to assist him in certain problems, of chemistry "which may cost you your very life!"

In return for these services she was to receive a munificent salary. In this strange household she was chaperoned by Dr. Demetrius' old mother.

She filled her obligations without question and drank the "drop" of liquid fire, which her master prescribed for her, without any clue to the effect it would have upon her.

She describes the effect afterwards:

"I feel as happy as a schoolgirl out for her first holiday. That's rather an odd sensation for a woman of mature years! Oh, I know what it is. It's the globule."

She laughed and clapped her hands.

"That's it! Doctor, you may thank your stars that your first test has succeeded. Here I am living! And *something* is dancing about in my veins like a new sort of air and a new sort of sunshine. It's a lovely feeling!"

But Demetrius had still further experiments to make before he brought his handiwork to perfection. His last potion rendered Diana unconscious for some days, during which period she was suspended in mid-air over a mysterious

pool and under a revolving wheel of fire. These uncanny arrangements are certainly a tribute to Miss Corelli's powers of imagination.

Out of her long slumber Diana awoke a radiant perfect being. "She was bodily, if not mentally a mere slip of a girl, slender as a rod, fair as a lily, radiating in every expression and movement with an altogether extraordinary beauty."

Old Madame Demetrius strikes the right note at the sight of the rejuvenated Diana, to whom she had become much attached.

"Do not touch me, please," she said, in feeble quavering tones. "I was prepared for much—but not this—this is the devil's work. Oh, my son, my son! No, no!" This, as Diana, with her beautiful smile of uplifted sweetness and tolerance strove to speak: "Nothing you can say can alter it. It is impossible that such a thing could be done without rebellion against the law of God."

Diana decides then to leave Demetrius' roof at once, as her contract with him had been fulfilled. She visits her parents and friends, but they regard her as a lunatic, and very naturally refuse to believe her identity. She has the satisfaction of revenging herself on her old lover, who is passionately attracted by her radiant appearance. She mocks him—"Yes, the poor 'old' Diana had feelings and emotions, but the 'young' Diana has none."

This is an undoubtedly clever and original book. The psychology of the woman after her rejuvenescence would have been more interesting if it had been treated in a more subtle and less hopelessly vulgar manner. Miss Corelli's admirers should be satisfied with this latest production of her pen, as it will certainly rank among the notable of her novels.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

January 24th.—Matrons' Council. Annual Meeting and Reception, Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, W. 3 p.m.

January 30th.—Royal British Nurses' Association. Lecture: "Ten Thousand Years of Civilisation." By Professor Flinders Petrie. (This lecture will be fully illustrated by lantern slides.) Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, W. 2.45 p.m.

January 31st.—St. John's House League of Nurses. General Meeting. 12, Queen Square, Bloomsbury. 3 p.m.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.
ENGLAND.

January 23rd.—Penal Cases, 10.30 a.m. Monthly Meeting, 3.30 p.m. (at conclusion of Standing Committee). 1, Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, Westminster, S.W. 1.

February 4th.—Examinations, London, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds and Liverpool. The Oral Examination follows in a few days' time.

SCOTLAND.

January 27th.—Examination, qualifying for admission to the Midwives Roll for Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen.

* By Marie Corelli. London: Hutchinson & Co.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)