

self-sufficient little son, Harold, also found his home there. It is the drawing of the various weaknesses of John's relations that gives to the book its very amusing character.

No one, down to the maids, escapes Mr. Compton Mackenzie's observant eye or his critical pen. John, packing with his valet-maid, Maud, for instance. "Do you think these suits are a success, Maud," he asked, perhaps a little too boisterously. At any rate, the parlour-maid's comprehension of valeting had apparently never been so widely stretched, for a faint corraline blush tinged her waxen cheeks.

"They seem very nice, sir."

John felt he had trespassed too far upon the confines of Maud's humanity and retreated hurriedly. Two hours later he was seated in the Wrotesford fly, swishing along between high hazel hedges of golden brown. "I shall have to see about getting a dog-cart," he exclaimed, when, after five minutes' struggle to let down the window with the aid of a strap that looked like an Anglican stole, he had succeeded in opening the door and nearly falling headlong into the lane.

"You have to let down the window *before* you open the door," said the driver reproachfully.

John's welcome by his numerous relatives after his prolonged absence in New York is rich in observation of the petty absurdities and idiosyncracies to which human nature in general, and John's relatives in particular are heir.

There was Hilda, with the tender resignation of widowhood, and her little prig of a son; there was his pompous brother-in-law, the vicar of a neighbouring parish, who had married his favourite sister Edith, whose little girl was perpetually whispering in her mother's ear; there was grand-mama, a vain old lady, who was intent on new caps; besides others in London who were mindful of him when at his flat. The importation of his secretary, Doris Hamilton, into this nest of harpies was, of course, not appreciated by them, especially as John's attitude to her was apparent to everyone but himself.

Miss Hamilton had helped him while at the flat in the intervals of the new play "Joan of Arc," to purchase his numerous Christmas presents and was to join him at Ambles the day after that festival.

It may be well imagined that John found it somewhat difficult to secure any tête à tête with his secretary and he prevents his relatives one by one in a masterly fashion from joining them in a proposed walk together.

Harold chimed in, "I've never been there yet. Mother said it was too far for me; but it isn't, is it, Uncle John?"

"Your mother was right. It's at least three miles too long," said John firmly, and having circumvented them all, in various directions, he asked:

"Well, if nobody wants to climb Shalstead Down, what do you say, Miss Hamilton?"

Later, as they were crossing the twenty-acre field, "You're a terrible fraud," she laughed.

"You've always led me to believe that you were completely at the mercy of your relations. Instead of which you order them about and arrange their afternoon and really bully them into doing all sorts of things they never had any intention of doing, or any wish to do what's more."

Her attempt to put the conversation on a professional footing was resented by John.

"Any way, you can't expect me to burst into blank verse the moment you arrive, like a canary that's been uncovered by the housemaid. I can't stand writers who always want to be literary. I have the temperament of a country squire, and if I had more money and fewer relations I shouldn't write at all."

John was not able to face the music, and he eloped with Doris Hamilton.

The book is composed of trivial family incidents, but it is very amusing and uncannily clever.

H. H.

#### CHILDREN'S HYMN.

Oh Saviour who blessed little children  
And drew them about Thy knee  
Still give us the same loving welcome  
And bid us to come to Thee.

We cannot press round Thee and touch Thee  
Nor look on Thy face divine,  
Like those happy children who knew Thee  
And heard that kind voice of Thine.

But always in faith we can see Thee  
Afar in thy home above  
Still mindful of earth's little children  
And keeping us in Thy love.

Dear Lord there are poor little children  
In sorrow and need to-day,  
Be Thou with the homeless and lonely  
And chasten their tears away.

And send us Thy beautiful angels  
Who love little children too.  
To keep us from harm in the day-time  
And guard us the long night through.

All we who are glad little children,  
Give thanks for our cloudless days  
And ask, gentle Saviour, to serve Thee  
And dwell in Thy care always.

C. B. M.

#### COMING EVENTS.

November 15th.—Meeting of the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses, Council Chamber, by kind consent of the British Medical Association, 429, Strand, W.C. 2.30 p.m.

November 15th.—Nurses' Missionary League. Sale of Work, 52, Lower Sloane Street. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

November 28th.—Trained Nurses' Annuity Fund. Sale of Work to be opened by Her Royal Highness Princess Christian, 67, Eaton Place, S.W., by kind permission of Mrs. Montague Price. 12 noon.

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