

books of early days when the world was younger are far more informal than this one on "Eudocia."

For all that, there is excellent character drawing and a certain splendor to the story. Pictures that glow with rich colors and a pomp that stirs the imagination are a part of the book. And there are threads of plot and counterplot that weave into a puzzling pattern. It is not very long, and it is not likely that having begun it one will be satisfied to leave it unfinished. There is a fascination in seeing the clever meet their match, in watching them walk into hidden traps, that is hard to beat. It is a joy to watch the strong and wicked used against themselves, to have their own plots work against them. And the book is full of this sort of interest.

But it is hardly the kind of book we have the right to expect from Phillpotts, and that is the reason it is not being treated with greater praise by the present reviewer. There is a kind of hollow reverberation to it, a great to-do about a slight matter. "What's all the shootin' for?" you feel like remarking.

A good enough novel for some casual writer is not good enough for Phillpotts. Or, if good enough for him in some casual mood, then it ought not to be put forth with a certain assumption of importance, and yet this assumption is decidedly present in "Eudocia." A story of intrigue in a picturesque setting it is; but it is not a mirror into which we may look and find the reflection of mankind in all times, as it assumes to be.

A GOOD WOMAN'S CHILDREN

IN spite of the wide-spread theory that women do not appreciate irony it is only they who will fully understand and enjoy Miss E. M. Delafield's latest book "Humbug" (Macmillan, \$2.00). It shows a state of things uncommon, if not long since abolished in this country and, according to modern writers, slowly disappearing in England—the intrinsic falseness of much that has been heretofore considered necessary in the bringing up of children. Yet if our own education has been on entirely different lines from that of Lily Stellanorpe, still we of the older generation recognize many of the platitudes that were current in our young days, tho we may have been sufficiently fortunate to have escaped them.

The story deals with the life of Lily Stellanorpe and the insidious sapping of her mental force and integrity by means of the atmosphere of pious insincerity that surrounds her from her youth. At its opening Lily and Yvonne are the only children of Mr. and Mrs. Stellanorpe who are thus trenchantly described. "The mother . . . was a good woman, and had all a good woman's capacity for the falsification of moral values. Her husband was so constituted that it would not be unjust to describe him in identical terms." Yvonne, aged about ten, had nearly died in infancy of water on the brain and in consequence was very slightly deficient mentally. This her parents would never acknowledge, and consequently the poor child, subjected to the same tests and discipline as Lily, was unjustly treated, both in demands and punishments, an injustice which Lily, who loved her sister with a protective love, was the first to perceive and resent. When Yvonne finally dies the natural feeling of relief is of course suppressed, for Philip Stellanorpe "was unable to refrain from exacting the due meed of conventionality that he took for a tribute to Yvonne's memory."

And this insincerity pervades the Stellan-



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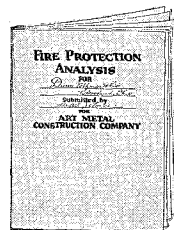
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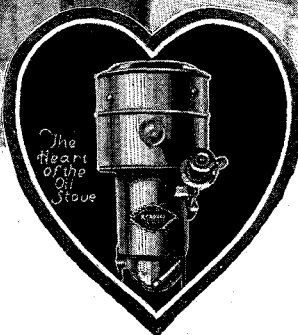
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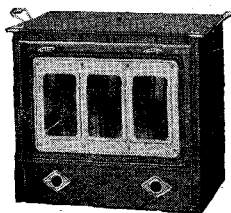
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REVIEWS OF NEW BOOKS

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thorpe family life. Nothing unpleasant is ever faced; the plain truth about any difficult subject is always evaded, and various shibboleths which no one has ever taken the trouble to investigate are handed out as unquestionable truths. When her mother is seriously ill Lily is sent to a neighboring convent, where a thoroughly artificial atmosphere prevails and where an attitude of false modesty, which forbids a recognition of the claims of the body, means an entire ignoring of the laws of hygiene, which has disastrous results on the children's health. Later, some years after her mother's death, Lily goes to boarding-school, one of the modern type, where the teachers were almost all selected for their skill in games and where, in consequence, the education was singularly inadequate. "History was imparted in the usual patchwork of dates, anecdotes and names . . . botany was an extra, natural history ignored, and plain needlework not taught. Mathematics . . . presented itself to the girls, as to the majority of feminine minds, as a compound of meaningless 'sums' that, if juggled with by a series of unrelated processes, might 'come out right' at the end. And so it goes. In every stage of Lily's life she seems to be surrounded by conventionalized humbug; she says what she thinks she is expected to say until all moral courage is gone and her mental integrity sapped. She looks with envy upon her young brother who has never been in the least affected by his father's mournful sentimentalities and who is a thoroughly modern small boy, cheerful, undemonstrative and self-sufficient. "He obviously did not believe that grown-up people were infallible. He held opinions of his own and expressed them freely. He was addicted to making personal remarks. He asked indiscreet questions."

When Lily is nineteen she is sent on a visit to her father's sister, Aunt Clo, a plain-spoken lady who has elected to live in Italy and who is one of the best characters in the book. For, plain-spoken as she is, Aunt Clo is a good deal of a humbug but as her pose is that of great honesty, she is more or less unconscious of it. She lives in a small village near Rome and during Lily's stay with her she hears continual refutations of many of the theories upon which she has been brought up, for Aunt Clo is extremely advanced and her opinions on marriage and various sociological questions connected therewith, and her frank discussions of the same fall upon Lily's timid mind like thunderbolts. Then comes the girl's love affair and marriage with a man a good deal older than herself. She doesn't know whether she loves him or not; she seeks counsel from various elders and gets no help or satisfaction from any of them, so finally takes the plunge and becomes Mrs. Nicholas Aubray.

What is the result? Well, it is very much like life—neither perfect happiness nor entire misery. Of course the story in the book is secondary; it is written with a purpose and scenes and incidents are selected with a view to illustrating the immense amount of humbug that has surrounded the conventional bringing up of a child up to this time, tho there is reason to believe that much of that has changed. Miss Delafield has brought to her task her acute sense of character, her satirical powers and her great skill in presentation which result in a most entertaining story and one which carries an important lesson.

A FEMININE HARDY

THAT incorrigible idealist, the compiler of the publishers' jacket, says, on the paper cover of "Joanna Godden" (Dutton, \$2.00), that its author, Sheila Kaye-Smith, is the foremost woman writer in England, and one is inclined to believe he is very nearly right. In the partition of that country by British novelists she has taken for her province the low marsh land in Sussex and Kent which borders the English Channel, a country largely given over to sheep-raising.

The story opens on the day of old Mr. Godden's funeral; on the reading of his will it is found he has left his farm of Little Ansdown to his daughter Joanna, a fine, capable, up-standing young woman of about twenty-three, who causes a distinct sensation in the community by deciding to dispense with the services of a bailiff and manage the farm herself. This extraordinary proceeding is the sole topic of conversation at the bar of the Woolpack Inn, and many anecdotes are related, typical of Joanna's character, such as a reminiscence of the time when she "hit Job Piper over the head wud a bunch of oziars just because he'd told her he knew more about thatching than she did." The fact is also chronicled that, having knocked his hat into the dyke, she bought him a new one, the whole proceeding being extremely characteristic.

The story follows Joanna's career for some fifteen years; her failures and successes as a farmer; her lovers and her friends, and her experiences with her sister Ellen, thirteen years her junior, whom she loves in a hot-headed, injudicious way, sending her to a boarding-school that she may be "made a lady." This is a process that, in English fiction at least, is sure to prove disastrous, and Ellen is by no means improved by her school career. When she comes home, a finished product, it is to look disapprovingly upon Joanna's taste both in dress and house decoration, and she has not enough love for her sister to make her overlook such errors.

During these years Joanna has had lovers, Arthur Alce, a neighboring farmer, having been the most persistent of all. But Joanna has her ideals; youth and beauty appeal very strongly to her, and she finally engages herself to Martin Trevor, the son of a broken-down and decidedly disreputable gentleman of the neighborhood. It is a dream of happiness while it lasts but Martin succumbs to pneumonia and Joanna is left bereft and unhappy, tho the duties of her busy life occupy her until her sorrow becomes less acute. Ellen in the meantime finds life at the farm deplorably dull, and looking around for some one to marry, her eye lights upon Arthur Alce. She rather despises him for his faithfulness to her sister, but he is well-to-do, and it would be a triumph to take him from Joanna, so she begins her work. Joanna is pleased at the prospect. Circumstances throw Ellen and Arthur together, and finally the latter, urged by Joanna, offers himself to Ellen, who accepts him.

As is often the case in real life, it is the selfish egoist who wins the prize while the impulsive, generous-hearted woman stumbles along through many pitfalls and disasters, finally reaching a development, however, which the other never attains. So it is with Ellen and Joanna, but it would not be fair to the reader to follow their fortunes any further. The book is essentially one of characters—the pages are crowded with them, and this it is that constitutes the author's claim to eminence.

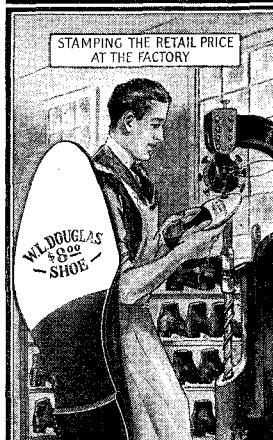
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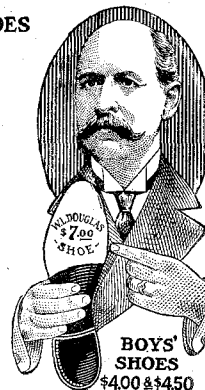
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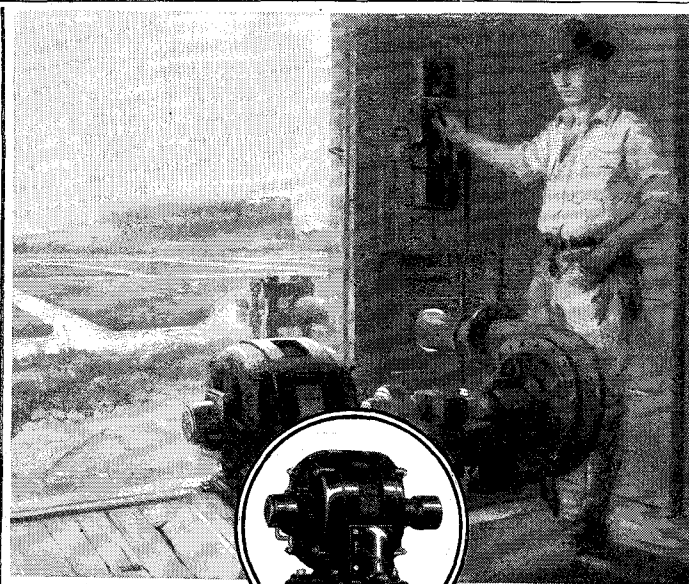
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