

RECOMPENSE.

BY MARY RIGBY.

"AND you can never of course" said the great specialist slowly, "have any children." Ann Thorewold from her position on a slippery unyielding sofa looked up at him dazedly.

"No children!" When she of all women passionately adored babies, and the one aching yearning desire during her four years of happy married life had been to have a child of her own.

"No children, Doctor?" She echoed piteously, voicing the dread that had been uppermost in her heart for many months; the great man shook his head, "I am afraid it is impossible, Mrs. Thorewold," he said gravely, and drifted into technicalities. Some minutes later Ann made her escape and crept, like a hunted thing, down the steps and into her car.

"Home!" She said wearily to the chauffeur and leant back in the luxurious cushions, trying to accustom herself to this blow that had robbed her of all her dearest hopes, and praying for courage to tell her husband.

Jim, who loved children so tenderly, and who longed for an heir to inherit his comfortable fortunes and beautiful estate, how could she ever gather the courage to crush his longings to the ground and break his heart?

Ann's small hands clenched convulsively, and she bit her lips striving to choke back the sobs which threatened to overwhelm her. Her eyes stared blindly through the windows of the limousine; everywhere there seemed to be children! dimpled infants in prams, and rosy older babies clinging to the starched skirts of their dignified nurses. Only her own arms were empty, and in her breast that dull ache of unsatisfied longing;—"Dear God, help me," whispered Ann, and two tears stole down her cheeks under the lace veil.

The car turned suddenly at a cross-road, and sped silently down a quieter street, coming to a beautifully timed standstill at the door of a large unobtrusive sort of house, lying a little way back from the road. Ann got out, and let herself in at the door with her latchkey; inside—all was cool and quiet with the serenity of luxury, the monotonous tick of the large oak clock was the only break in the silence. Once in her room, Ann removed her hat and did aimless things to her hair. She sent away her maid and, after some hesitation, wrapped herself in a loose tea-gown, and sank into an easy chair, her eyes fixed nervously on the little jewelled clock on her dressing-table. In half-an-hour Jim would be home! He would leave his things in the hall and dash upstairs in his impetuous way to kiss his wife, and to hear what McHarvey the specialist had said.

For some time past Ann had not been well; and that coupled with a dread in her heart, had compelled her husband to reluctantly consent to medical attention; true—Jim had always made light of it; but Ann had noted the anxious fear at the back of his eyes; Poor Jim—and now she had to tell him the very worst! Ann's head sank suddenly down on her arm; it was a very

lovely head, crowned with golden hair, and set on a proud little neck any duchess might have envied, but Ann would have bartered it willingly; neck and all—for a human child of her own, a warm rosy baby to cuddle in her arms, a little head to pillow against her breast.

A door banged downstairs, and she started nervously, the colour draining away from face and lips; she heard her husband's voice and the sound of his footsteps coming upstairs. Ann rose from her seat, turning blindly to the window as if the atmosphere of the room was choking her; little beads of perspiration stood on her forehead. "I shall lie to him!" she said suddenly "I don't care, I can't bear it." A knock on the door interrupted her, and she called "Come in," in a voice that was strange to her ears. Jim Thorewold entered, and striding across the room enveloped her in his strong arms. "Dearest," he said huskily, "it's been a beast of a day! I'm glad to get back; let's have tea—" He kissed her, and crossing to the hearth touched an electric bell. His wife watched him, almost indifferently, visualizing for the hundredth time—the shapely head, proud firm carriage, the quick nervous movements that betokened a brilliant restless brain. Twice she assayed to speak, but dizzy heart-beats suffocated her.

"Such a day!" her husband rattled on; "Could'n't get Standish on the phone,—about those shares I told you of; got his partner though, says it's a chance in a thousand—Why darling!—" noticing for the first time her strained pallor and silence, "how seedy you look! Are you feeling bad? Oh, by the way—you must tell me about McHarvey, what did he say? not bad news I hope—" with a sudden presentiment of his wife's attitude,—“Ann darling—” he went over to her, and tried to read her eyes, his own face whitening, "Oh, no! Jimmie boy"—said Ann suddenly, in a high pitched voice she hardly recognized as her own, "not bad news—Oh no! good news—I'm going to have a baby"—Because her knees gave way beneath her she sat down suddenly in a chair; watching the wonder and happiness grow in her husband's face, and knowing herself to be the most wretched hopeless woman alive. There! she had done it! and God alone knew the outcome of her lie!

Thorewold's face was shining, and his eyes were wet. "A baby! Oh Ann—at last"—he whispered, holding her close to him, "perhaps a little son—yours and mine—" With shaking hands Ann tore herself from his clasp, "Oh Jimmie don't talk to me like that," she wailed, "I can't bear it!" She had a vision of his pale hurt face, then she collapsed in his arms in a passion of heart breaking sobs. "My dearest," he soothed, "there there—you're all strung up, and no wonder, I was a brute to bother you," "Jim," said Ann wildly, suddenly raising her head from his shoulder, "I'm going away, I've got to go away,—to somewhere quite—till it's over—you can't see me, no one must see me—the doctor said I must have absolute rest and quiet; Oh, you will let me go away, won't you?" "Of course, darling, if you wish it," answered her husband tenderly, "but I may come along and see you sometimes, may'n't I?" "Oh no—I can't possibly—I mean—it's absolutely forbidden," said Ann hoarsely, "Oh Don't you understand Jim? I must have absolute rest and quiet!" "Of course I understand, dear," but Jim's voice was puzzled.

and a little hurt ; " if the doctor says so, it must be so, still—I should have thought—" that one's husband—however, just as you like dear," he added, seeing his wife's lips tighten ominously. " Now, the best thing you can do is to lie down and try to get sleep ; we must take great care of you *Now!* " His tone of tender pride cut Ann to the heart, she suffered him to tuck her up in the roomy bed, and drawing the heavy curtains that shrouded the room with purple shadows, he kissed her, and left her.

The days that followed seemed to Ann to become part of a hideous nightmare, with the added horror of the knowledge that there was no awakening, her husband's tender care and pride, seeming only to fill her cup of bitterness to the brim. Ann was essentially a truthful woman, and the lies she was forced to utter filled her soul with nauseating misery. Several times, she was on the point of confessing everything, and praying for Jim's forgiveness, but the realization of the blow she would have to deal the man she adored withered the words on her lips. The only plan she could think of—a scarce-framed idea that had lain dormant in her brain since the beginning of her deception, was to adopt a child, and bring it up as her own. She wrote feverishly to the matrons of maternity homes, and in the end, in a fit of terrified abandon, arranged that one of them should meet her, and perceiving that she was a kindly soul,—disclosed the whole of her secret, and begged that she would help her. The matron was surprised and touched, and comforted Ann with the assurance that everything in her power should be done to produce a baby of the age and description required, and at the time arranged.

Ann thanked her, and when she had gone, fell on her knees, and prayed for guidance. The net of deception she was weaving threatened at times to suffocate her ; she felt that she would never now find the courage to confess everything to Jim, and that always—she would be forced to carry about with her the agonizing dread of discovery. " Oh, God forgive me—" sobbed Ann, " but I did it for Jim ! I did it for Jim. " After that her heart seemed a little lightened.

A few weeks later, a weary woman, with haunted blue eyes, left her home and fled to the country, accompanied by a kind-faced nurse. " I mus'nt falter now ; " thought Ann, with the courage born of despair. She bought yards of the finest materials, and gossamer lace ; she sewed with her own hands—tiny garments, all frills and flounces ; she wrote long letters to her husband, giving him account of what she was doing and feeling, till she almost came to believe that she spoke the truth. The nurse of course, had been let into the plan, and her understanding sympathy gave Ann comfort and relief.

One fine morning, in the late autumn, when the trees were red and gold, and there was a nip of frost in the air, Jim Thorewold was handed a telegram, which he tore open with shaking fingers, and read—" Come at once, a splendid boy, wife doing well, Nurse. " A few hours later, an impatient husband with a light in his eyes, flung open the garden gate, and dashed upstairs to his wife's room.

Ann was lying in bed ; her face flushed, her eyes wistful ; in her arms lay the dearest tiny baby with a crumpled pink face. " Ann my darling—"

said the man huskily ; the nurse, her eyes filling with tears, closed the door softly behind her, and left them together.

There is little more, now, to tell, except that miracles have been known to happen, even in these prosaic times. Master Jim Thorewold was four years old, and a fine sturdy youngster, when Ann again visited the specialist. This time—when the examination was over, he shook her by the hand and said—that only once before in his career, had he known such a thing to happen, and that she must allow him to congratulate her, as an extremely lucky woman. Something in the eyes of his patient softened the professional mask from his face. Tears were streaming down Ann's cheeks, but she was transfigured ; " Doctor," she said quietly, " I am a happy woman, God has forgiven me, and—if you can spare five minutes more, I should like to tell you—something." " Go on, Mrs. Thorewold," said the specialist gently ; when she had gone, he found it necessary to clear his throat, and blow his nose several times with surprising violence.

Ann Thorewold is the mother of three chubby children now, and the haunted look has completely gone from her eyes ; her husband is still unaware that his eldest son is an alien, and Ann will never tell him, she does not see the need of hurting him, and she is sure that God has pardoned and forgiven her ; What do *You* think ?

THE NURSING WORLD.

THE Central Midwives Board held a penal meeting on June 22nd, Sir Francis Champneys presiding, when six cases were considered and four of the midwives were removed from the roll. The monthly meeting was held on the same day. The Board expressed its hope that the Minister of Health would not limit his approval of the rules of the Board, as finally arranged, to one year, as such a limitation could not but fail seriously to impair the authority of the rules, on which the safety of the mothers and infants of the nation largely depended. The Board believed that the ground of the proposed limitation was only that the register of nurses is in preparation by the General Nursing Council ; it pointed out that the necessary alteration in the rules could be made at any time without delay, whereas the revision of the rules as a whole would take far longer. It was hoped, therefore, that the rules would be approved for the usual period of five years. The Lady Dufferin Hospital, Karachi, was approved as a training school.

FROM THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

Diploma in Nursing at Leeds University.—The Regulations for the Diploma in Nursing recently instituted at Leeds University provide that—

1. Each candidate who satisfies the examiners shall receive a diploma, and shall be styled a Diplomat in Nursing, University of Leeds.
2. Candidates for examination must have completed four years' training in a General Hospital recognised by the University for the purpose, and have received a certificate to this effect.