

*(The Academy)*

No more startlingly original story has been published within recent years than *Beggars All*. There is so much power of various kinds—especially of character description—in this book, that its author may be welcomed as a most promising addition to the ranks of writers of fiction.

(From *The Queen*, London, with portrait of the author.)

Have you read *Beggars All*? is the question that has lately flown from one to another with the rapidity of influenza. If you had not read it, the conversation would lapse. Your companion might possibly add "a remarkable book," but he would not tell you in what way remarkable, and this silence would finally so whet your curiosity that you would ask for it at Mudie's, and see it taken away by your neighbour under your very nose; ask for it again, and not be happy until you get it.

*(The Anti-Jacobin, London.)*

Miss Dougall is to be heartily congratulated upon a first book in which the work is both strong and delicate, with no intrusion of amateurishness. "It's a poor thing," said Mrs. Foyser, "when the flavour of the vittles is in the cruetts," and though the writer of *Beggars All* is not afraid to spice her story, she does not depend upon condiment for the piquancy of the dish. The merely *outré* is at the command of the commonest order of inventions; it needs the forming and controlling instinct of the artist so to introduce it into an apparently ordinary life as to make it seem natural, if not inevitable. The character and the deed, which is apparently so foreign to it, are subjected to the action of imaginative chemistry, by the introduction of a third element of controlling circumstances, which puts them in perfectly natural combination. Hubert Kent is a masterly piece of portraiture; but, indeed, *Beggars All* is an unusually strong and impressive story throughout.

*(Saturday Review.)*

It is the history of mortal combat between a soul of good and a soul of evil, and till the last moment one cannot say which is going to win the day. Mortal combat between a soul of good and a soul of evil sounds heroic, but the best of it is that there are no heroics whatever. There are scenes of passionate intensity of feeling, clothed in the words, gestures, accessories of the simplest work-a-day life of to-day. Two souls more "domesticated," in the servants' registry-office sense, than those of Esther Thompson and Hubert Kent, could not be found, and yet the strife between them is that of the eternal forces embodied in angel and demon. Esther is beautifully nicknamed Star in her humble home, where the veritable peace of God reigns over the sharpest poverty—poverty polished to its acutest edge by charity. A star she is and radiates sweetness and gaiety. The way in which Star and Hubert are brought into each other's spheres is such that broadly stated would shock, but it is managed with a delicacy nothing short of exquisite; and from that on, the action and reaction, the mutual play of spirit upon spirit, the homely grace of the sweet little woman, and the crude, kind roughness of the untrained, unlawful man, are followed with interest, which deepens as it goes on. The story has tragical possibilities. The scene in which the two reach the height of their avowed contest, "I have it in me to be a magnificent villain," he sneered, nodding at her with bitter emphasis, is sufficiently strong for the deepest tragedy, yet the book is all round vivacious and bright. Nothing that is comical in people of ordinary life escapes the writer, and it is noted with quiet humor and no exaggeration. The two chief characters engross interest in themselves, but they do not all absorb it. Gilchrist is a difficult personage admirably presented. Richarda, who might easily fall into the worn comic cripple groove, is always amusing; the beloved Tod is just humourously hinted into the scene; the sweet old maid of forty, who has a fleeting dream aught the young doctor, and sees it pass without bitterness, is touched with quaint grace (we are told