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A PRIMITIVE WOMAN

It would not need much touching up to make a film of "Tiger Woman," or the story of Betty May as told by herself, and published by Duckworth's at 10s. 6d. Honesty and pluck redeem Betty. Heartrending conditions at the start explain her. Born of a mother who worked twelve hours a day at a chocolate factory for ten shillings a week, and a father who took himself off after begetting four children, Betty slept on a heap of rugs, and looked forward to a weekly pot of soup from a grandmother, and occasional slabs of chocolate from the factory. The grandmother—a coster woman—taught her to drink. Her lovers, later, taught her to drug. Her own raw nature taught her every savage wildness.

Under it all, there is curiously the essence of the spirited child that nothing can utterly degrade or hide. With a different start for the child from the cruel slum and different surroundings from the cafés and night clubs for the girl, who knows. . . ? Not that the Café Royal in its days of Epstein and Augustus John did not rank pretty level with the Mermaid Tavern in its way; but the child had no daylight life to give her balance. Her three marriages, so casually entered upon, were not much good to her, in spite of the really forcible efforts of the husband who beat drug-taking out of her with a strap—but with no ill-feeling! Betty was the world's incurable adventuress, aesthetically a joy, pitiful enough from other aspects. As an Epstein model, the strong, amazing head is known. As an inmate of the more than queer "Abbey" of the story-book individual called "the Mystic" here, she is still in the picture—and "the pictures,"

There must have been something like genius in a girl who could actually get herself accepted by "county" in laws, and live the life of a country gentlewoman after the experiences of Betty May. Her quick self-extrication from every tight corner, her ferocity in attack, and her sudden childish docilities all show the woman-soul in the raw—an extraordinarily interesting and rare exhibit. The underworld may hold many of her. It is not often that one emerges, and certainly not often that one adapts herself to the conditions of half-a-dozen different strata. One can-

not soberly wish for lives like Betty's; at the same time, there are values apart from the strictly moral values, and among these she has her place.