

The Blind Who See, by Marie Louise Van Saanen, is a disappointing book.

"The Blind Who See" It bears the stamp of careful craftsmanship, and the central situation, although somewhat well worn, offers certain specific details that are not without interest. But taken as a whole it gives the impression of insincerity; or rather, one lays it aside with a feeling that the author did not understand her own creations, and that the people in this story, if left to themselves, would not have acted as they did, but far otherwise. Here, briefly, is the central theme: Sylvus Leete is a blind violinist, who scarcely feels his affliction because his life is so abundantly filled with two great joys, his music and his wife. Nona, the wife, is young, ardent, thirsting for the material pleasures of the world, avid of admiration, unconsciously craving some more virile

element in her life than Sylvus's gentle, almost reverential worship. And this more virile element she finds in Allen Dietrich's rapid, masterful wooing. It literally sweeps her headlong in the tide of its passion, and Sylvus, pathetic in his blind helplessness, is forgotten. Dietrich bears her off triumphantly to Paris, and what becomes of the poor, lonely violinist, eating his heart out in his New York home, she does not for the time either know or care. The story is told with a certain pleasurable harmony of rhythm, a soft glow of verbal colour, a pervading atmosphere of music, literature and art,—and none the less, it is simply the story of a rather shallow young woman caught in the toils of physical passion and flagrantly breaking her vows and dealing a mortal wound to a husband too fine and too good for her to understand. As for the ending of the story, the wife's discovery that an illicit union founded on mere physical attraction soon loses its glamour, that idealised love such as her husband offered is of a higher and more enduring quality, that he still loves her and needs her more than ever, and that the one compelling, overwhelming emotion left to her is her desire for a reconciliation,—why, it is all very pretty, very sentimental,—and utterly false to life. Nona Leete is the type of woman who would leave her husband, she is the type of woman who would tire of her lover, but she is not the type of woman who would go back. She might take a second lover, or a second husband, but there would be no going back,—and when the author tells us that Nona did go back, it simply shows that the author either failed to picture the sort of woman she had in mind, or else did not fully understand her heroine's character.