

Affairs in Egypt are beginning to look interesting, and although it is not possible to get much information at present from the Government, it would appear that the advance of our troops in the Soudan means more than a frontier war or colonial conquest. It will affect our relations with several other European powers. In France the effect appears to be to draw out a desire for a further alliance between that country and Russia. Altogether the situation of England, at the present time, is exciting and interesting.

WOMEN.

The registration of the British Produce Supply Association marks the practical outcome of the movement which the Earl of Winchelsea has been carrying on for some time past. The success of the step will depend largely on the women of the country. If the housekeepers of England rally to Mrs. Alec Tweedie's standard—"The Women's British Produce League," concerning which a letter will be found in our correspondence columns—the English farmer may be saved. But otherwise the scheme cannot succeed. It seems like one of "life's little ironies" that the women who are denied the human right of voting can hold in the palms of their hands such a far-reaching issue as the salvation or ruin of the agricultural interest of the country.

There is a most interesting interview with Mrs. Alec Tweedie, and an admirable portrait of her in the *Cable* of March 14th.

The University Association of Women Teachers is insisting strongly on the necessity for establishing a register.

The annual report of the Countess of Dufferin's Fund shows that a million women have altogether been treated in the Hospitals, and that the value of the buildings administered by the fund is over twenty lakhs of rupees.

Oxford has covered itself with disgrace, and has earned the title of a "fossil University" by its action with regard to the admission of women to its degrees. It remains to be seen whether Cambridge will show itself more progressive. So far, Cambridge has done well in opposing the proposed constitution of the Syndicate formed to consider the subject, and it has been re-formed. As it was, no man was on the Syndicate who took his degree later than twenty years ago, and the younger men contended that modern thought was not represented by men so old. They have carried their point, and some progressive men have been put on this Syndicate. The Master of Trinity, Professor Sidgwick, and Professor Jebb it is hoped will preserve the honour of their University, and show that the centres of learning are not influenced by petty sex-jealousy.

Mr. W. H. Besant, of St. John's College, Cambridge, a brother of the well-known novelist, has issued a circular suggesting that the much-vexed question of women's Degrees could best be settled by petitioning the Crown to grant a Charter for a Women's University, with powers to grant Degrees; but we have no fear that the women will agree to such a fatal policy.

A Book of the Week.

MR. CUMBERLAND'S BOOK ON SOUTH AFRICA.*

NOW that most people are interested in South African affairs, the little volume recently published by Mr. Stuart Cumberland, the well-known thought-reader, will be received with much curiosity. The interest of the book is purely ephemeral, for it is written in a jerky, free and easy style that is not engaging; in fact, to put it shortly, the book lacks distinction. Almost every chapter is headed with the words "What I think" of so and so, and such a place, or town. Out of eighteen chapters there is only one that has not this beginning, which of itself is enough to prejudice the mind of any reader. But nevertheless when once the book is taken in hand, it will be recognised that there is something to be said after all for the egoism of the words *What I think*, for it commits no one but the writer, and the reader will thus comprehend that the views and opinions expressed in its pages are the views and opinions of one man only.

The first chapter deals with Cape Town, which seems to have impressed Mr. Cumberland somewhat favourably. The old Dutch settlers had something artistic in their natures, and appear to have left many old-world touches in the architecture, gardens, and vineyards around the town.

Of Mr. Cecil Rhodes, the author writes that "he thinks in Continents," and that a personal knowledge of the great man only added to the fascination that, together with the majority of the British race, Mr. Cumberland avows that he has always felt for him. Every one who reads this chapter on Mr. Rhodes and his policy (as well as the subsequent chapters on President Kruger, Mr. Barnato, Dr. Jameson, and all the other personages about whom we have heard and read so much lately), will doubtless wonder how far Mr. Stuart Cumberland's remarkable talents as a thought-reader have enabled him to arrive at any true conclusion as to their respective merits and policies.

Mr. Cumberland has evidently been under the influence of Mr. Rhodes's personality, which, as far as one can gather from recent historical events, has always exercised such a powerful influence over all men (I believe not women, for Mr. Rhodes is not a great appreciator of women's society) who have come in contact with him.

If Mr. Cumberland has an enthusiastically high opinion of Mr. Rhodes and Dr. Jameson, he makes up for it by his thoughts on President Kruger, who, according to him, is shrewd, slovenly, and a humbug of the first water. Apparently President Kruger never uses a pocket handkerchief, never brushes his clothes, and in spite of his salary of £7,000 a year, and allowances, is the worst dressed man in all South Africa. Nothing could well be more repulsive than Mr. Cumberland's graphic description of the want of manners, and dirty habits, of the President of the Dutch Boers. In a supplementary chapter on the Boers themselves, he leads one to think that they are worthy of their

* "What I think of South Africa. Its People and its Politics," by Stuart Cumberland, with numerous original portraits and maps. (Chapman & Hall, 1896.)

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