

reading of the Woman's Suffrage Bill, "which is a safe and sound measure, claiming for women, who are householders and owners, the Parliamentary Franchise," under a misunderstanding as to what the claims of women constitute. The Committee recall his words in 1884. When he was pleading the extension of the Suffrage to the "man-householder" he said, that the great grievance to be redressed, was "of those who have no voice at all in our present system; the grievance of many householders and fathers of families, who pay rent and taxes, who are bound to perform every political obligation, and who are nevertheless denied the first political right of citizenship," and says also that these words are equally applicable to women in 1897.

The Committee adds further:—"In these days of excessive legislation it is more desirable than ever that women should be able to protect their own interests, for, seeing that so recently as the Local Government Act (1894) all women-owners of property are *deprived* of their ancient voting rights, the unsatisfactory economic position of women also makes the question one, not only of justice, but of the highest expediency."

News comes from New Zealand that, in the Legislative Council Reform Bill, a clause will be inserted to provide for the opening of the Council to women.

It is said that the experience of the working of the Women's Suffrage in this country has justified the enthusiasm of its early champions.

A correspondent in New Zealand, writing to the *Sydney Telegraph*, says:—"We have discovered that it is the cheeriest, pleasantest thing in the world to be united in this way with our womankind; we have learned to admire their energy, their capacity for order and organisation, and their good sense; and we are grateful to them for the touch of refining grace with which they have purified our politics."

A Greek girl volunteer named Helen Constantinidis has left Athens for Epirus as the leader of a body of 1,700 irregulars.

A resident of Stretham, Ely, says, in the *Daily Chronicle*, "that it would be interesting to know if 'gallant little Wales' stands alone in the matter of possessing lady churchwardens. Wales does not stand alone in this matter, for Miss L. Yarrow, of Thetford, Ely, Cambs., entered on her fourth consecutive year of office as churchwarden of the above-mentioned village on Monday, April 19th."

Fräulein Possanner, of Ehrenthal has, after great difficulties, obtained the recognition of her diploma of Doctor of Medicine of Zurich. In order to do this she has been compelled, in accordance with a ministerial decree, to pass all her examinations at the University of Vienna. This is the first instance in which a woman has been raised to the degree of Doctor of Medicine of this University.

A Book of the Week.

"PATIENCE SPARHAWK AND HER TIMES."*

THIS is a book which is worthy of very careful consideration, for it has been evidently carefully written, and its author has an object in view. What that object is is stated in the preface, which is dedicated to M. Paul Bourget; but, had the dedication not so explained matters, it might have been very reasonably supposed, that the book's purpose was to show the utter worthlessness of New York people, or indeed of American society at large. The book is simply full of that new ingredient, which fills our fiction increasingly—a blank, unqualified materialism. Not only has Christianity ceased to appeal to the more modern class of American humanity, but the idea of any kind of God seems to have gone with it. The only idea seems to be to get as much fun out of life as you can, totally regardless of anyone else, of any sense of duty, and entirely ignoring the bare idea of self-sacrifice.

Miss Atherton labours hard to make a heroine of these views interesting; but I must confess that, in my own case, the attempt was a failure. Patience seems to me to have been a preposterous egotist, vain, shallow, and perfectly selfish. That she was pretty, and fascinated men easily, is her highest recommendation. This wonderful young person—who remarks, by the way, that "Jesus Christ fails to satisfy the intellectual needs of the present day"—marries a beast, merely because his sex exercises for a few days, some animal attraction upon her. But the idea that she, in consequence, owes any sort of duty to the man, who loves her from first to last, is as far from her mind as it is from that of Miss Atherton. The wretched man dies from an overdose of morphia, and when he is in the agonies of death, Patience gets into bed, covers herself up snugly, and goes to sleep. When she finds herself accused of murdering him, she is much more surprised than I was; in fact, she is just the kind of person who would have done it; there is no motive that would have restrained her.

The jury convicts her, as certainly any reasonable jury would have done, and she is sentenced to be "electrocuted."

The whole description of American prison routine and methods is evidently carefully studied, and gives the idea of being taken from the account of an eyewitness. The death by electricity seems to be the most merciful that could be devised. In America it is apparently the custom to allow the whole press to witness executions, and we are given to understand that the full details of Patience's end will be dished up as the cream of all the society papers in New York. If this is so then our neighbours are a step lower than even ourselves in the vileness of their tastes.

Patience falls in love with the counsel for her defence, and he, I regret to say, manages to save her from the fate she so richly deserved, and snatches her out of the very chair of death, with the electrician waiting to switch on the current. It is sad to

* "Patience Sparhawk and Her Times," by Gertrude Atherton. (John Lane, The Bodley Head Vigo Street.)

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