

petition, signed on behalf of the Council, praying the House of Commons to pass a Bill to enable women to become members of County Councils."

"Women are wanted on the London County Council, especially on the following committees:—

"Housing of the Working Classes Committee.

"Improvements Committee.

"Industrial and Reformatory Schools Committee.

"Parks and Open Spaces Committee.

"Theatre and Music Hall Committee.

"Public Health Committee.

"Technical Education Board.

"Asylums Committee.

"Baby Farms.

"There are 8278 women lunatics in the asylums under the control of the London County Council, and no woman on the London County Council to watch over their interests.

"Women electors of London! You number nearly 100,000—do not be indifferent! Only give your votes to those candidates who declare themselves in favour of 'The County Councillors (Qualification of Women) Bill,' and who will promise, if elected, to sign a petition in its favour."

This is sound advice.

The temperance world, and, indeed, the woman world at large, has sustained a severe loss by the death of Miss Frances Willard the temperance worker and orator, which occurred last week in New York from influenza with gastric complications. Humorous, forcible, fluent, and full of spirit, she always was a most popular and attractive speaker on both sides of the Atlantic, whilst the earnestness of her addresses, and the conviction with which they were delivered, compelled the attention of her audiences. To her friends she was always a charming, original, and altogether delightful comrade. The World's Women Christian Temperance Union, of which she was the founder and president, has sustained a loss which it is difficult to estimate, and in these days of avarice, self seeking, and selfishness, the world can ill afford to lose one whose life was a perpetual lesson in self sacrifice.

### A Book of the Week.

"THE TRAGEDY OF THE KOROSKO."\*

NOT so very long ago, Mr. Conan Doyle, if I remember rightly, gave utterance publicly to a belief that style was a very much overrated thing, and by no means a quality that every novelist should strain every nerve to attain. And, hitherto, this author's books have read like the work of one who held such opinions: there has been no deliberate selection of the best possible word in the right place exactly, none of that remote, exquisite flavour, so easy to recognize, so hard to describe, which turns a mere tale into literature. "The Refugees," though a very able book, failed because it just fell short in this particular. But lo! Mr. Conan Doyle seems one born, as Ruskin said of Sir Joshua Reynolds, to teach "all error by his precept and all excellence by his example!" For against his will he has produced what is, in its way, a masterpiece.

"The style of 'The Tragedy of the Korosko' is as far above that of 'Sherlock Holmes,' as 'The Master of Ballantrae' was beyond 'She.'"

\* "The Tragedy of the Korosko." By Conan Doyle. (Smith, Elder & Co.)

The tale reads, from end to end, like the chronicle of an eye witness, not in the least like an invention. This is the effect the author has intended to produce upon his readers, and he has produced it.

The "Korosko," "a turtle-bottomed, round-bowed" Nile steamer, carried a crew of tourists from the first to the second cataract. The list of passengers, and the way their several characteristics are hit off is sheer genius. They are of various nationalities, various creeds—there is not one exceptional person among them. Miss Adams, the elderly American spinster, who has never been from home before, and is "busy bringing up the East to the standard of Massachusetts," has a niece, Sadie, who is both pretty and popular; but nobody could call her a prodigy in any sense of the term. M. Fardet, the Frenchman, is an atheist, a good sort of fellow, but with strong views as to the deep machinations of the English, and the injustice of their holding Egypt. Colonel Cochrane is a typical English soldier; the young men are types of Oxford and Harvard. The Belmonts are Irish, and Roman Catholics; Mr. Stevens is a Manchester solicitor; and Mr. Stewart a fat dissenting minister from Birmingham. The heroic element, as may be seen, was wholly wanting in this collection of people.

And it is to these modern, comfortable tourists, these people wrapped in the security of the present day, that there comes the lightning-flash of a terrific experience. That is the author's great idea. He suddenly takes his fellow-travellers out of all civilization, away from every decency of life—plunges them into extreme danger, suffering, and privation. This is the touchstone. How will it affect the dispositions, the tempers, the courage, of this miscellaneous collection of souls?

Marvellously is the question answered, though there is throughout not one strain on one's idea of what is probable; not one "high-falutin'" sentiment, not one exchange of reality for romance. Confronted with the alternative—apostacy or death—not one of them flinches; even the Frenchman, with no faith at all, cannot stoop to buy his life at the expense of his honour, but it is with a humorous and entire appreciation of the irony of his position as a Christian martyr! One of the finest touches of all is towards the last, when Mrs. Belmont falls upon her knees in prayer, in face of the last dire extremity of separation from her husband. The men cry frantically to her not to do the very one thing that must most incense their captors, but Sadie and her aunt fall on their knees, too, and the men, in half defiance, half to show themselves as brave as the women, kneel also.

"After all," said the Colonel, "it is stupid to pray all your life, and not to pray now when we have nothing to hope for except through the goodness of Providence." He dropped upon his knee with a rigid military back, but his grizzled, unshaven chin upon his breast. The Frenchman looked at his kneeling companions, and then his eyes travelled on to the angry faces of the Emir and Moolah.

"Sapristi!" he growled. "Do they suppose a Frenchman is afraid of them?" and so, with an ostentatious sign of the cross, he took his place upon his knees beside the others."

Not one of all these people but owns afterwards that "it was good for them to have been in trouble."

That the stress of adversity is the touchstone of character, is the keynote of a most remarkable book; a book that ought to clench Mr. Doyle's reputation, for it is on a higher level, all through, than anything he has yet done.

G. M. R.

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