7. Proposed by Mrs. Heywood Johnstone.
Seconded by Mrs. Percy Boulnois.

"That the National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland will co-operate to the best of its power in assisting Mrs. Heywood Johnstone's inquiry into the training and supply of midwives for the poor throughout England and Wales." (See Midwives' Act, 1902.)

We regret to see the most important report, that from the International Council of Women, placed at the end of a tremendous agenda. Experience shows that at the fag end of such a day's work delegates will be in no mood to appreciate International matters at their true value.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the Rector of St. Andrews University, has promised a gift of £1,500 for a union for the women students attending the University. The authorities have purchased St. Kentigern's Hostel for the purpose.

A Book of the Week.

LOVE AND THE SOUL HUNTERS.*

In the forefront of Mrs. Craigie's new book is placed the following quotation from the prophet Ezekiel :—

"Thus saith the Lord: Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive that come unto you?

"And will ye pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley. . . . To slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear your lies?

"Wherefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold . . . I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, even the souls that ye hunt, to make them fly."

The pertinence of this motto to the story is the problem that is set the reader; the present reviewer is obliged to own herself unable to perceive its special force. The story is the falling in love of a discrowned princelet—a second son "at that"—with Clementine Gloucester, a young English girl who is too proud to be his morganatic wife. Prince Paul is the usual male butterfly of the lady novelist, frankly and undisguisedly sipping at every flower, until he meets the woman who really sways his heart. This he believes himself to do in the person of Clementine, who is introduced to the reader as reading "Peer Gynt" aloud to two cousins, who, judging by their subsequent remarks and conversation, must have been profoundly bored by the entertainment. Clementine herself, though she leads off in such a satisfactory manner, does not, we are bound to own, show any other sign of being intellectual. Had she been so, she would probably have preferred the rock-hewn Felshammer to the namby-pamby princelet. Felshammer at least showed the depths of his feeling for her, whether for good or evil, by waylaying and doing his best to murder the man who had been not only his friend but his master—the man to whom he was bound by every tie of honour, loyalty, and affection. Felshammer did this; and Felshammer confessed it to the man whose life he had attempted. To the supreme effort of that confession the gilded hero had no more to reply than that they must never meet again. The mind dimly recalls a scene in one of the finest novels of the last decade, "By Order of the Company." There we have the same situation treated, also by a woman's hand. The servant, for much the same reason, attempts the life of his master. The subsequent career of that master and that servant, up to the final sacrifice, is real life. What is this curious glimpse of an unreal society which Mrs. Craigie gives us?

What proof had Paul given that he was in any way a different man from what he was when he calmly suggested what was practically dishonour to Clementine? We have only his own word for it, and we have no reason to think it reliable. We are tempted to believe that Clementine's crowning attraction in his eyes was her firmness, and that he had that "mark of the churl" described by Coventry Patmore; what he really cared for "was not the woman, but the chase."

The finest, incomparably the finest, scenes in the book are those between Felshammer and Clementine. There the writer is dealing with a real flesh and blood man, a man whose feelings are intelligible, and most poignantly does she succeed in conveying them. Prince Paul is in no way satisfactory, and that is the more disappointing because, at the outset, he does present possibilities; the first feeling of magnetic attraction between him and Clementine is well done:—

"All this time Clementine and the Prince were sitting side by side on the balcony while the brass band played vigorous airs from 'Rienzi' and 'Othello.' They had exchanged ideas and glances—long meditative glances which stirred, fascinated and absorbed them to the degree where self-consciousness ceases altogether. Their young, clear voices trembled; neither heard with any distinctness what the other said; her body, without her knowledge, swayed towards his; his towards hers; the secret forces of attraction had mastered their wills; they spoke lightly enough, they realised nothing, but the impelling deities were at work in a silent, invincible way. . . . When Clementine said good-night and went to her room she seemed to be moving on wings. The two other girls ate chocolates in their small salon and discussed the events of the evening, but she locked her door, and sat at her window, looking at the sky and meeting, in fancy, Paul's eyes again and again."

It would perhaps be truest to style this book a counterblast to the doctrine of heredity. There are two young and beautiful women in it, both chaste, both constant, both proud and faithful; both the daughters of infamous mothers.

The mother of Clementine, mourned by her as dead for years, is not only very much alive, but she is what the Americans call "around" constantly. Her poor-spirited husband, the incredible fool who is responsible for the other half of the adorable Clementine, lives in perpetual dread of her declaring herself. But La Belle Valentine, who has changed owners, apparently, several times, is by no means a bad-hearted woman. The Yankee millionaire, Cobden Duryee, who would marry her if only a divorce were possible, declares pathetically that Val has never had a 'air chance, or she would have been one of the best of women. The relations between these two are curiously convincing. The subject is a nauseating one, but touched upon in a manner that makes it simply the lightest of light comedy—one had almost said farce. The visit of the ex-queen, mother of Prince Paul, to the handsome woman without a reputation; her acceptation of an invitation to a supper party there, and her (implied) acceptance of a bribe of a parure of sapphires which she had been forced to pawn, which is returned to her by La Belle to pave the way for the marriage between Paul and Clementine—are truly up-to-date!

* By John Oliver Hobbes. Fisher Unwin.

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