

was no subject on which women had more right to speak than education. It had been proved that they were much better adapted as elementary teachers of boys as well as girls, and the State had to some extent recognised the status of women by giving them votes as householders and ratepayers. No doubt it would be said that the Bishop of London was running the Churchwomen of the diocese in the interests of the Church, but they need not mind such criticism. Their real object was that the children should be taught to serve their country and their God.

Let us hope, therefore, that the next time the undeniable right of women to take part in the education of the people comes before the House of Lords that the Lords Spiritual will not be found voting with the sprigs of the Turf Club to deny to the mothers power to perform their duty to the children and their Creator.

"Behind the Footlights," by Mrs. Alec Tweedie, is now in the press. This time the volume is a travel into Stageland instead of over seas. It is a pot-pourri of first nights, theatrical parties on the stage, with peeps into green-rooms and dressing-rooms. It shows how to get on to the stage as a novice, and the experiences of some of the leading lights of the profession.

"Women only commit murder for two reasons—jealousy or shame," declared Dr. Josiah Oldfield at a meeting held in London to advocate the abolition of capital punishment. A resolution that capital punishment should be at least abolished in cases where women are concerned was unanimously passed. "If a woman desires equal rights in this respect with man," said Dr. Oldfield, "there is no reason why she should not elect to be hanged. The abolition I propose is merely a matter of option."

The *Daily Paper*, Mr. W. T. Stead's new venture, deals with women's questions in the most sympathetic and sensible manner, so unlike the majority of papers edited by men.

Reporting Mr. E. Wake Cook's eloquent lecture on the greatest of heroines, Joan of Arc, it says:—"Christ has been likened to Buddha, but no one has ever found a being to whom Joan of Arc, soldier and spotless saint, could be likened. Consummate generalship, statesmanlike insight, the ability to baffle a horde of priests and bishops seeking to ensnare her by words, were all found in a simple village girl. Even her written history is without parallel, for it comes to us with every word attested on oath. We know that it was necessary for the English, who were seeking to conquer France, to prove this saviour of France to be a witch, a heretic, and to have her burned. But surely there are few political and religious victims whose trial twenty years after their death has been re-examined, as Joan's was, by order of the Pope, and whose good name has been re-established as hers was!" From the point of view of a member of the London Spiritual Alliance, for which Mr. Cook was lecturing, there is no doubt at all that Joan was a human being so pure and so in tune with the spiritual world as to be in close communication with it. She was mediumistic in a high degree. The lecturer, in conclusion, dealt with her well-known career in France.

## A Book of the Week.

### TWELVE STORIES AND A DREAM.\*

The peculiar genius of Mr. Wells consists in this—that, to a quite extraordinary imagination, he joins a power of observation of detail which the purely imaginative novelist is, as a rule, quite without.

It is this attribute which invests with such a weird air of reality the wild upsettings of Nature's normal order which are continually presenting themselves to his fertile brain.

If we take what is quite the weakest of the present collection of stories—"Miss Winchelsea's Heart"—this power of describing the little nothings which make up our surroundings, the little touches which display character, is perhaps more startlingly displayed than in any other. The leading idea—that of a girl who is "refined" in the modern Board School-continuation style, without being well bred—is admirable. One hardly knows how it is done. Practically, the only difference between Miss Winchelsea, and those whose refinement is inherited and not acquired, is that she, dear little lady, is so anxious to be, and to show herself to be, refined; while to the well-bred woman the thing is instinctive, and needs no effort. The description of the party of tourists, the crossing to Calais, the fortnight in Rome, the impressions of the three girls, and the "refined" and really most highly-educated young man, is quite deliciously amusing. And the exceeding refinement of Miss Winchelsea leads her to refuse the eligible young man because his name is Snooks—a thing no Duchess would boggle at, but which would doubtless mean much to the middle-class mind.

The tale which may be set down as the cleverest—that is, the one most capable of producing a tremendous effect, if even for a few minutes, upon the mind of the reader—is "The Inexperienced Ghost." Clayton, who tells the story of his last night's experience to a circle of bachelor friends, is a middle-aged man of the ordinary kind. He owns to having drunk champagne and to several glasses of whisky before he went up to bed and met the wretched ghost meandering in the passage. He was there with the deliberate object of haunting.

"You haven't any claim on the place, have you?" asked the unsympathetic Mr. Clayton. "Weren't you murdered here, or anything of that sort?"

"None, sir; but I thought as it was old and oak-panelled—"

"That's no excuse," I regarded him firmly. "Your coming here is a mistake. If I were you I wouldn't wait till cock-crow. I'd vanish right away."

And then comes out the pitiful fact that the wretched ghost has forgotten how to vanish—has forgotten the way back to where he came from. Clayton gives his mind to helping him. It is, it appears, a matter of ritual—of certain passes to be made, certain gestures, certain motions. The inexperienced ghost began to practise. Clayton, to encourage him, practised too. The ghost at last divined what had been wanting in his own performance, did the thing over again, and—succeeded. He vanished, having, as Mr. Clayton said, "done his level best to give away the whole confounded barrier."

The bachelors are naturally sceptical. Clayton accordingly agrees to go himself through the whole of

\* By H. G. Wells. (Macmillan.)

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