

attended at the City Chambers on Monday last to receive this well-merited honour, in company with Lord Reay, and Lord Young who recently resigned a judgeship in the Court of Session. Miss Stevenson is the Chairman of the Edinburgh School Board, and a Vice-President of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses.

At the concluding Sessions of the Russian National Congress of Women, held at Moscow on the 20th and 21st inst., five hundred women of all classes were present at the final meeting. The meeting passed resolutions proclaiming the necessity for the political enfranchisement of Russia, equal rights for women and men, the cessation of the war, and national representation.

The meeting sent a telegram of congratulation to the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies of Great Britain.

## A Book of the Week.

### THE DISCIPLE'S WIFE.\*

Mr. Vincent Brown's first book, "A Magdalen's Husband," showed talent of no common order. It was not a well-constructed book, and had some of the faults of the beginner; but there was a ring of conviction about it, and an originality of thought and style, which could not fail to impress.

The "Disciple's Wife" is a more ambitious, but less satisfactory story. Much in it is admirable; much strains one's credulity to the breaking-point. The author is avowedly writing a novel to prove a point. His hero, Philip Durnford, is a Christian in the widest, fullest, deepest sense of the word; and Mr. Brown wants to show how the love of such a man will save a woman, even if she have gone down to the very deeps.

In order to do this, he has first to accomplish the very difficult task of marrying the high-minded, fastidious Philip to a girl who has had a *liaison* with a bad man, who has been to Paris with him, and has apparently not repented, but only yielded to the persuasion of one, Fabian Glynne, an old friend of her family, in leaving her life of sin. We must frankly tell Mr. Brown that it is incredible that such a man as Glynne would allow such a man as Durnford to marry Marie without being told of her past.

This, however, we must suppose; and when the story opens, Marie is installed as Durnford's wife, and her betrayer has appeared upon the scenes. Glynne is warned of this, and comes down to see what is happening.

Marie behaves in such a way, from first to last, that one wonders not only that Philip loved her, but that Glynne, or any other decent person, could even tolerate her. She makes no struggle with herself, but allows the odious Clonard to kiss and embrace her almost within sight of her husband; and her conduct is the more sickening because she is represented as being sincerely attached to the man she has married.

One is not able to feel one spark of pity or sympathy for her throughout. Her conduct is degraded, her morals non-existent, her dallying with sin simply disgusting.

There is in the book a woman called Bertha Zonal, the wife of a carpenter. Zonal has been unfaithful,

\* By Vincent Brown. (Duckworth.)

and Bertha not only forgave him, but nursed his victim in her last moments. This was no doubt a heroic thing to do. But the author, in the fervour of his admiration for her, and for Philip Durnford, succeeds in making them both so unreal that they are really at times a weariness to read about. This is the more a pity because the book abounds in good moments—chiefly stray reflections of the author, put with a force and neatness which cannot fail to strike. One of the best of these is the conversation on divorce quite near the beginning of the book. It is too long to quote in full; but in the following paragraph he seems to lay his finger on the very root and core of the matter in trenchant fashion:—

"It's downright nonsense, you know," said Durnford, "to suppose that anybody can injure a man's honour except himself. It can't be done. Nobody can tarnish or brighten my honour except myself."

"But we're speaking of the relations of husband and wife—"

"Well, if I am cruel to my wife, and selfish, and neglect her, I am dishonourable; I'm not fulfilling my bargain with her. If I am neither cruel nor selfish, and don't neglect my wife, and yet she forsakes me and is faithless, of course she dishonours herself, but I am not dishonoured by her dishonour. Or let me give you the alternative—your own view, logically carried out. If I am dishonoured by my wife's dishonour, then there must exist between us a bond so close that no legal process can sever it."

G. M. R.

## What to Read.

- "Russia in Revolution." By G. H. Perris.
- "Maid Margaret." By S. R. Crockett.
- "The Flute of Pan." By John Oliver Hobbes.
- "Lucie and I." By the author of "Celebrities and I."

## Coming Events.

May 26th.—Meeting of Provisional Committee, National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, 431, Oxford Street, W., 12 noon.

May 26th.—Annual Meeting of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W. Miss Isla Stewart will preside, 3 p.m.

### Agenda.

1. Minutes.
2. Opening remarks of Chairman.
3. To receive the Annual Report and Audited Accounts.
4. To elect the Executive Committee for the ensuing year.
5. Address by R. C. Munro Ferguson, Esq., M.P., on Parliamentary Procedure in Relation to the Passage of Bills into Law.

Other business.

Tea after the meeting by invitation of the President.

May 26th.—Annual Meeting of the Central Bureau for the Employment of Women, 133, Queen's Gate, W. Mrs. James Bryce in the Chair, 3.30 p.m.

May 30th and June 1st.—Select Committee on Nursing. Chairman, Mr. H. J. Tennant. House of Commons, Committee Room 17, 11.30 a.m.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)