

Movement. Reports. Discussion. Recapitulation of all the Resolutions decided upon at the Congress. Afternoon: Exhibition. Evening: Farewell Entertainment.

W O M E N.

An application for election as a member of the Pathological Society of London has been received from a duly qualified lady, and the question of her eligibility is to be decided at the Annual General Meeting of the Society on May 19th. It is hardly expected that any opposition will be offered in these enlightened days. But there has been a good deal of narrow-mindedness and want of good fellowship recently shown by several Societies in their relations with women, so that a negative decision is just possible.

Lady Aberdeen has paid a visit to Quebec to attend the Local Council of Women. She was entertained by Lieutenant-Governor and Mrs. Chapleau. The report of the Council spoke of the agitation for female Factory Inspectors, which were promised, and the appointment of a Matron for female prisoners in the gaol. Lady Aberdeen, in a long presidential address, congratulated the Council, and spoke at length on the question of impure literature, of which, she said, large quantities still found its way into Canada. She announced that the Minister of Justice had decided, at the request of the Council, to amend the criminal law, so that booksellers in Canada could be punished for privately selling immoral literature. Referring to the International Council in London in 1898, she was sure that Canada would take a high place; her Council was so representative, and its members so essentially women first, who knew that the work of the Council did not hinder their home duties, but helped their right fulfilment.

It really seems at the end of this nineteenth century as if there were after all a place in the world for women. It is most encouraging to hear of the new industries and openings for feminine ingenuity and industry. The New York Central Railroad has two women agents along its route who fill their responsible duties—hitherto strictly relegated to men—admirably. Another American woman has just been married after occupying for seven years the post of Captain on a Mississippi steamboat.

Texas is still more advanced in its woman ethics. There, a woman has been chosen as the President of an important railway, while in West Virginia one of the most competent of the railroad engineers is of the feminine gender.

It is specially in the United States where there is not the huge under-growth of long-rooted prejudice to contend against, which is so continual a stumbling block to the progress of women in England, that women are able to engage in such novel pursuits. In Kansas, a Miss Snow runs a bank successfully, and no one expresses any astonishment, or dubs her "unwomanly." While in another part of the same State one of the leading ranches is entirely controlled by a woman.

Miss May Abraham, the Senior Inspector of Factories, is to be married to Mr. Tennant, M.P. for Berwickshire, a brother of Mrs. Asquith. Recently we congratulated the Home Secretary on his appointment of Miss Abraham as a Senior Inspector. We must now congratulate Mr. Tennant on his choice of Miss Abraham as a wife.

A Book of the Week.

"ILLUMINATION."*

THIS book was printed in America under the title of "The Damnation of Theron Ware." It is in many ways a remarkable book. Theron Ware is a kind of hysterical, methodistical "Robert Elsmere," who is possessed by the twin demons of doubt and an unlawful passion for an attractive and beautiful woman. It is possible, that if this volume had been merely the record of his degeneration, we should not have heard so much about it as we do at present. But besides the vacillating Theron and his long-suffering wife, the book contains two characters, that are so original and so powerfully conceived, and presented to the reader, that for their sakes the book deserves to be bought, and cherished among the best publications of modern times. The two characters to which I refer in these eulogistic terms, are those of Mr. and Mrs. Soulsby, the famous debt raisers, who came to help Theron Ware and his congregation out of their pecuniary difficulties.

The story begins with a description of the closing session of the Nedahma Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Bishop has come to read the list of ministerial appointments for the coming year. The expectation of the congregation of clergymen is described with great vividness:

"The effect of the faces as a whole was towards goodness, candour, and imperturbable self-complacency rather than learning or mental astuteness, and curiously enough it wore its pleasantest aspect on the countenances of the older men."

Prominent among the waiting candidates sat Mr. Ware, whose sermons had assembled big gatherings to each of his three Sunday services at Tecumseh, where he had been preaching during the sessions of the Conference; he therefore over confidently expected to be allotted as minister to that thriving town. His hopes, however, were doomed to disappointment, for he was appointed to an out-of-the-way little rural town called Octavious; and as he walked home with his melancholy wife he said to her with a sigh of resignation, "Come, let us make the best of it, old girl! after all we are in the hands of the Lord." "Oh don't, Theron!" she said hastily. "Don't talk to me about the Lord to-night, I can't bear it!"

Octavious turned out worse than even their gloomiest anticipations. Theron drifts with the life of commercial religious feeling during the first months of his ministry, then he foregathers with an agnostic Roman Catholic priest and an atheistic medical man, and after reading several books of modern German theological criticism, which they lent him, his faith becomes radically undermined, and bereft of all spiritual guidance he falls under the sensual influence of Celia Madden. The temptation of a man by a woman is never pleasant reading, and this episode in Theron's life is no exception to the rule, and his interviews with her are not recorded with any especial grace or subtlety of language to redeem their disagreeable features. I was about to lay the book aside wondering why it had captured the ungrudging admiration of so many eminent critics, including the late Prime Minister, when suddenly the Soulsbys came upon the scene, and weariness was changed to admiration and awakened

* "Illumination," by Harold Frederic. 6s. (Heinemann. 1896.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)