

For our own part, we desire to see all who hold office in the government of this country take their seats, not by virtue of any hereditary title, but by the will of the people, who may be trusted to return those possessed of some sense of the responsibilities of their office. How many of the members of the House of Lords who object to women taking part in London's Local Government have ever visited the poor, or know anything of their practical needs? By what right then do they deprive the men and women who live in "mean streets" of the admittedly beneficial work of women in their Local Government, who do visit them, sympathise with them, and are prepared to work for their comfort and well-being? That the work of women is essential to the well-being of the country, was well pointed out by Lord Salisbury in his admirable speech in the House of Lords. Women have, since the days of Queen Elizabeth, taken their share in municipal government, and it is not likely that the country will ultimately submit to be deprived of their valuable services by so ignorant and quite obsolete a body as the House of Lords. It is undoubtedly the moral right of the ratepayer to return any person, man or woman, whom he considers most suitable, to represent him both on municipal bodies and also in Parliament, and it is an insolent interference with the liberty of the subject for the Lords to deprive the people of this just right; and we hope that the latter will realise the danger of such feudal autocracy.

And yet the question here intrudes itself, why are women in their present degraded condition, for in past ages, the ages of stress and storm, they occupied a much more independent position in the body politic. Is it a fact that women have become enervated by luxury, and that in order to attain physical ease they have sold their birthright of citizenship for a mess of pottage?

We women must realise that *we are ourselves to blame* for our present humiliating position. We are held in contempt because we are impotent, we are kicked out of municipal government because it is computed that we shall sink into obscurity, and shall not kick again, we are treated as fools, because by our own futile actions we are "written down an ass," by helping to send men to Parliament who vote against our enfranchisement.

Let women look the facts of the case straight in the face, and if the humiliation and the insult of the combined action of the Lords and Commons in refusing all personal and political rights to women does not arouse in them a burning sense of shame and indignation, then as a sex we are hopeless. But we have no such fear, and we have little hesitation in stating, that so keenly do numbers of self-respecting women feel their SHAME, that it will arouse them to energetic and combined action, and will do more to gain for them the just rights to participate in municipal and parliamentary government, than any other influence could do.

Neither prosing platitudes nor silence will gain the day at this crisis. Strong, firm, and forcible measures are necessary to combat great wrongs, and we women must be prepared to use strong measures, if we are to maintain a rag of self respect, and regain the position which we have lost.

## Poem.

### LONDON'S VOICES.

'Mid pine woods' whisper and the hum of bees  
I heard a voice that was not bee nor wood,  
"Here in the city, Gold hath trampled Good.  
Come thou, do battle till this strife shall cease!"  
I left the mill, the meadows, and the trees,  
And came to do the little best I could  
For these, God's poor; and, oh, my God, I would  
I had a thousand lives to give for these!

What can one hand do 'gainst a world of wrong?  
Yet, when the voice said, "Come!" how could I  
stay?

The foe is mighty, and the battle long  
(And love is sweet, and there are flowers in May),  
And Good seems weak, and Gold is very strong;  
But, while these fight I dare not turn away.

From "*Lays and Legends*."

By E. NESBIT.

## A Book of the Week.

### THE MARKET PLACE.\*

To those who understand nothing about dealings on the Stock Exchange, there will be a good deal of obscurity in parts of this book. But the exact method in which Thorpe brings off his marvellously successful gambling coup, is not after all of such real importance as the main fact, that this man, of lowly origin, the son of a city bookseller, himself a ne'er do well—"who has never done a stroke of honest work in his life," does, as a matter of fact, outwit the Jews and land a colossal fortune. The only person who remains entirely aloof and unadmiring, is his only sister, Mrs. Dabney. She has the bookselling business in the Strand, and though always poor, has managed to keep the wolf from the door. Her son and daughter she willingly surrenders to the care and generosity of their millionaire uncle; but for herself, she chooses to remain as she has always been, and heartily despises Alfred and Julia when they take to spelling their name D'Aubigny instead of Dabney, and her brother, when he drops altogether his first Christian name of Joel, and becomes Mr. Stormont Thorpe.

Lord Plowden is the only person, except Thorpe's broker, who has any idea of the way the squeezing of the bears has been worked. He invites the parvenu down to his mother's place in Kent, with the desire that Thorpe should forthwith ally himself to the family by marrying his sister. But Thorpe sees and falls in love with the beautiful widow, Lady Cressage, and by sheer strength of purpose he not only nets the fortune, but the lady also.

The whole story is curiously without a moral. Is it possibly written to show that these great fortunes can by no means be made with clean hands? If so, then the writer has stultified his own purpose by showing how exceedingly Thorpe prospered subsequently. He seems to be an exemplification of poor Becky Sharpe's immortal saying that it would be so easy to be good if only one were rich enough. The sort of goodness that comes easy to the rich is probably a considerable distance from the Kingdom of Heaven; but, then, there is no such thing as the Kingdom of Heaven anywhere on

\* By Harold Frederic. Heinemann.

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