

is satisfactory to find that so many women do both well.

We are glad to see that Miss Emily Hobhouse has aroused the conscience not only of the Government, but also of Society women in this country, for the Victoria League, of which the Countess of Jersey is President, and Lady Tweedmouth Vice-President, is now appealing for contributions to a "Dutch Women and Children's Fund." At the same time as Lady Farrer and her committee have been doing splendid work in this connection for months past, we can see no reason for the multiplication of societies—which means the multiplication of organizing expenses—for the same object, and we are of opinion that the ladies of the Victoria League would have been wiser to send their donations direct to Lady Farrer.

The Hon. Ella Campbell Scarlett, M.D., daughter of Lady Abinger, sailed last week in the transport *Assaye* for South Africa, having been appointed by the Colonial Office one of the doctors to the Refugee Camp in the Orange River Colony.

A most inhuman letter on the subject of the concentration camps for the Boer women and children appeared on Monday last over the signature "John Stuart" in the *Morning Post*. We must confess to surprise that any one born of woman could write it.

There is great rejoicing amongst the Norwegian advocates of the rights of women. "The New Woman in Norway," says the *Kleine Zeitung*, "has gained a glorious victory." For many years the Norwegian "Feministen" have been waging war against the use of the word "obey" in the marriage service of the Norwegian Church, and their labours are at length crowned with success, or at least with a partial-success. The Staatsrath in Christiania has ruled that the use of the word shall henceforth not be obligatory upon the bride, but "facultative." That is to say, the bride is to be free either to say that she will be "faithful and obedient," or simply to say that she will be "faithful."

A Book of the Week.

THE CRISIS.*

The American Invasion, concerning which the *Daily Mail* is now so feelingly discoursing, is certainly spreading into the regions of fiction. A goodly proportion of the stories which have lately delighted us are turned out in American workshops. The nation, gathering cohesion after her struggles, and breathing more freely now that her liberty can be questioned by none, is beginning to turn a portion of her mind towards the Arts; and of these, novel writing is the one which, so far, has been brought nearest perfection.

Leaving out giants like Hawthorne, vivisectionists like Henry James—now denationalized—and romancers like Poe and Oliver Wendell Holmes—look at one or two of the new writers. Think of those two wonderful stories, "By Order of the Company," and "The Old Dominion"; think of the delicate sweetness of Mary Wilkins, the dainty completeness of W. D. Howells; and one may realize something of the vitality of American fiction.

Curiously enough, the present reviewer, in

* By Winston Churchill. (Macmillan and Co.)

reading "The Crisis," was strongly reminded of Kipling's brilliant parable of "The Ship that found Herself." For this is the story of a nation in the making, of all the petty and various interests uttering each its cry, striving to become articulate, voicing itself at last in the great unity of the living Whole. In other words it is a story of the Secession War, still divided from us by less than half a century, yet seeming to frown from a good way back up the ages. It is so hard for English men and women to conceive that, in the year 1861, men and women were bought and sold at auction in the public streets of the country that boasted of her freedom.

The civil war is of course, to Americans, a tremendous theme; it is only natural that Mr. Winston Churchill should be moved frequently to the use of such language as we should describe as "tall." This must be excused; the young nations as individuals, take themselves very seriously, and after all what can be more serious than the spectacle of a people setting to work to teach themselves the art of war, having no qualifications whatever for the task save courage and determination, pouring out, through sheer ignorance valuable lives, like water, for the cause, buying a bitter and awful knowledge, through a bloody and cruel experience?

Save for this sin of "tall" writing, one has little but praise for the book, which should be described as a feat. The author, in an Afterword, tells us that he was born in S. Louis, where the action of the story is laid; and doubtless the prominent citizens are portraits, more or less, of men who really lived to feel the Union rocking beneath their feet, and to arm their sons against their brothers, their husbands against their fathers.

Two young men from the North arrive in S. Louis at about the same times. Eliphalet Hopper, the New Englander, comes of an Abolitionist stock; but the sight of the traffic in slaves awakes in him the desire to become a slave owner; he only longs for the time when he will be able to afford such luxuries. Stephen Brice, from Boston, has no such associations; his father, one of the best Bostonian families, has always considered slave-owning the prerogative of the free American. But the very first slave auction held in the street is enough to turn Stephen completely from the opinions in which he has been brought up. The heroine is Virginia Carvel, southern through and through, her father the best kind of typical Southerner. There is a fine love story running through the book, ending, perhaps, somewhat conventionally, in the appeal of the lovely heroine to Abraham Lincoln, for the life of—a gentleman whose name shall not be divulged. But the ability of the book is in the marvellously clear view given of the situation. To Americans it should become a classic; to English readers it is a most interesting presentment of a most interesting period; and making allowance for the author's point of view the picture of Abraham Lincoln is a delightful one. A little less exuberance would have made it really great.

G. M. R.

What to Read.

"A Civilian War Hospital; being an Account of the work of the Portland Hospital, and of Experience of Wounds and Sickness in South Africa, 1900." By the Professional Staff.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)