

including the economical distribution of clothing, demands much careful organization, detailed work and devoted attention, free access should be given to a band of at least six accredited representatives of English philanthropic societies, who should be provided with permanent passes—have the authority of the High Commissioner for their work—be absolutely above suspicion, and be responsible to the Government, as well as to those they represent, for their work. Their mother-wit and womanly resource would set right many of the existing ills.

9. That the doctor's report on the state of health of the children in Bloemfontein Camp be called for and acted upon.

10. That the women whose applications are appended be at once allowed to leave. Their health is failing under the long strain. All three are good, respectable women."

Miss Hobhouse says:—I would like to add one more recommendation, which I consider of great importance, and which was unfortunately omitted from those sent to Mr. Brodrick.

11. That, considering the growing impertinence of the Kaffirs, seeing the white women thus humiliated, every care shall be taken not to put them in places of authority.

It is also stated that the Boer women resented being asked to influence their husbands to surrender. British women can well understand that feeling.

An erroneous statement is being circulated that Miss Hobhouse was sent out to South Africa by "the so-called Conciliation Committee." This is not true. She went in the interests of the Boer Women and Children's Distress Fund, an entirely non-political movement, of which Lady Farrer is chairman, and she has constantly refused to address meetings promoted by political organizations in this country, but she is of opinion that an exhibition of love and sympathy on the part of the English would do more to settle South Africa than the decrees of Government or the victories of armies.

## A Book of the Week.

### A PAIR OF PATIENT LOVERS.\*

Mr. Howells is one of the very few novelists who improve with keeping. His work was always interesting; it has now attained a pitch of high perfection, not only without losing any of its freshness, but also with a real and definite increase of power and grasp of subject, and vividness of presentment. The five stories which form the volume are all so charming that it is very difficult to point out the best; but perhaps the last is the most powerful, "A Circle in the Water."

That delightful couple, Basil and Isabel March, who once went on a celebrated wedding journey, come in narrators in the first and last stories; and Isabel is as capriciously illogical, as full of marvellous intuitions, as unexpected and as charming as ever.

Basil March is sitting by a woodland pool, thinking how curiously evanescent is human goodness, and how curiously never-dying, on the contrary, is human crime.

\* By W. D. Howells. (Harper and Co.)

"If fame ended, did not infamy end too? If glory, why not shame? What was it, I mused, that made an evil deed so much more memorable than a good one? Why should a crime have so much more lodgment in our minds, and be of consequences so much more lasting than the sort of action which is the opposite of a crime, but has no precise name with us? Was it because the want of positive quality which left it nameless, characterized its effects with a kind of essential debility? Was evil then a greater force than good in the moral world? I tried to recall personalities, virtuous and vicious, and I found a fatal want of distinctness in the return of those I classed as virtuous, and a lurid vividness in those I classed as vicious."

Such are his reflections, as he looks up and sees, on the other side of the pool, Tedham, the man who has that day emerged from ten years penal servitude—Tedham, the man who very nearly implicated him in his downfall; Tedham, who has come to appeal to him to help him in his yearning to behold the little daughter, who was eight years old at the time of his degradation. Basil's opinion, Isabel's opinion, and the opinion of Mrs. Hasketh, the aunt who has brought up the girl, make up as wonderful and perfectly thought out a little drama as one would wish to see. If it could be condensed into one act the thing would make a perfect little "curtain-raiser."

Then there is the "Pursuit of the Piano," droll, whimsical, delightful. One follows every emotion of the young man who first sees the piano on the van going to the station, and chances on it again so surprisingly in later stages of its journey. This young man falls in love with a name—Phyllis Desmond; Stephen Langbourne falls in love with "The Magic of a Voice." This voice, heard through the thin partition wall of a hotel, haunts his life, and charms his ear, and he does not rest until he has seen the owner, which does not happen without delay; and meanwhile, judging by the voice, he has built up a picture of her in his mind, singularly unlike the reality. The upshot of the dainty idyll shall be left for the reader to discover.

"A Difficult Case" is a dipping into deeper waters than Mr. Howells usually allows himself. It has a curious pathos in its extreme Americanism. The utter defencelessness of the American "Rixonite" preacher, when confronted with blank disbelief of immortality, on intellectual grounds, is a picture which the clergy of the United States cannot very well find flattering. Of course, as the minister in question was a "Rixonite" nobody will feel himself specially aimed at; but to the alien it is a curious study of the manners and customs of a wonderful, if not fully developed, nation. G. M. R.

## Coming Events.

July 15th.—The Duke of Norfolk attends the opening by the Lord Mayor, of the Hospital of St. John and St. Elizabeth, Grove End Road, St. John's Wood 3 p.m.

July 17th.—Annual Meeting, Registered Nurses' Society, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, 5 p.m.

July 20th.—The Bishop of Stepney presides at the Distribution of Prizes to the pupils at the British Orphan Asylum, Slough.

July 22nd.—The Duke of Cambridge opens the British Congress on Tuberculosis, St. James's Hall, Piccadilly.

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