food, good clothes, and houses with drains that were not defective. There should be a Women's Health Society in every parish in the kingdom.

"Self-Help for the Poor Clergy," by Zara, is very appropriately dedicated to "The Clergy Women of the United Kingdom, whose heroic endurance of needlessly difficult life conditions awakens the liveliest sympathy." It aims at an attempt to relieve the temporal anxieties and financial difficulties of the poorer clergy by the help of their wives, and with this view it enumerates the various possible industries open to the poor parson's wife, such as the supply of poultry and eggs, butter, cheese, and fruit. Such industries, however, can only apply to the country parson, not to the poorly-endowed town vicar or curate.

The idea of a Women's Palace, in which to hold exhibitions, is a good one, and the preparations for such a show in Paris are rapidly approaching completion. No branch of feminine labour or interest will be neglected, and in addition to art sections, which will embrace not only painting and sculpture, but needlework, carving, and decorative furniture, there will be a perfectly-artistic reunion of "confections" supplied by all the great firms who have done so much of late years to render the attire of women more picturesque and harmonious. There will be the Galerie du Travail, devoted to the glorification of utilitarian labour, and the Domestic Salon—wherein wives and mothers may find all that modern invention has devised for lightening the duties of the home and improving the general knowledge of hygiene—will be made especially attractive.

The craze for old furniture has reached such a height that Lord —— has turned his wife out of doors to make room for a Louis XVI. cabinet, says *Truth*.

Might sans Right.

The sympathy of every woman we have spoken to is with the long-enduring workmen in Russia who are now bravely struggling for the inalienable rights of every human being, the right of freedom of personal action, the right to exercise their God-given faculties, the right to maintain themselves and their families in decent comfort. In this righteous struggle the question of funds is of the utmost importance, and already the question arises, how can Englishwomen help to replenish an already depleted exchequer? We do not doubt that what women's hearts have conceived, women's brains will find a way of accomplishing.

O Exiled Hearts—for you, for you—
Love still can find the way!
Hear the voices of the women on the road!

O Shadowed Lives—for you, for you—
Hope hath not lost her ray!
Hear the laughter of the children on the road!

O Gloomy Night—for you, for you—
Dawn tells of coming day!
O Might *sans* Right—for you, for you—
The feet of crumbling clay!
Hear the slow, sure tread of Freedom on the road!

A Book of the Week.

CAPTAIN AMYAS.*

Mr. Eden Philpotts' new book is out, and we hope to review it in these pages next week. But, before definitely going on to the new year's crop, one word concerning a writer to whom our pages have as yet done scant justice.

Dolf Wyllarde is in one sense a survival. She belongs to the decade when the problem novel was the order of the day. But though no longer in the forefront of fashion, the problem novel has at all times a fascination for the thoughtful woman. For the problem novel shows us, or tries to show us, truth in action. It professes to note the inexorable working out of certain laws to their conclusion, as exemplified in the lives of men and women.

One reason why the kind of novel in question has been decried is doubtless because it seems to many people that you cannot reach the root of the matter without grubbing in the dirt. Other people feel content to take the dirt that clings to the root, so that they get their specimen uninjured.

The truth that Dolf Wyllarde tries to show in "Captain Amyas," is that man is what woman chooses to make of him. Now this is true to an extent of which few dream. It is probably true to say that there never was a man whose fate did not depend upon some woman—his mother, his wife—or the other one. But Dolf Wyllarde makes her man the puppet of circumstances to an extent which urges us to rebellion.

Darcy Amyas is the son of a naval captain, a thoroughly sterling sort. He is brought up in Devon, by the sea. His own artistic, imaginative mother being dead, he is mothered by his father's second wife, common-place but excellent.

Darcy's whole taste is for the sea, and he goes into the merchant service. As a young man, he comes back to his native village to discover that the young girl whom he loved has fallen a prey to an unscrupulous man—the dissolute vicar of the parish.

Now, Darcy has had a clean up-bringing, and comes of a good stock. Yet Miss Wyllarde asks us to believe that this circumstance transforms him into a demon of lust, the like of whom we seldom read of, and hope never to meet.

It is fair to own that, at the time of his bitter disappointment Darcy has already had an intrigue with a married woman on board the liner where he was third officer. It is through her influence that he is made master of one of the most luxurious liners, and that he is able to lead his life of endless flirtation, successive *amours*, and intrigues.

Says Dolf Wyllarde in effect:—"Poor puppet, how could he help it? The fashionable woman tempted him, the little country girl disappointed him. What could he do, poor man, but go to the devil, and drag every woman with him that he could lay hands on?"

It is a version of life with which we quarrel openly.

"Man is man and master of his fate"

after all.

At last, Amyas finds retribution. He meets the woman he could respect, and she will have none of him.

"The women he had wanted—and won—had been somewhat of a type and had rarely left him to make

* By Dolf Wyllarde. (Heinemann)

previous page next page