

## Outside the Gates.

### WOMEN.

A Royal Commission, with Lord Gorell as Chairman, and including amongst its members Lady Frances Balfour and Mrs. H. J. Tennant, has been appointed to inquire into the present state of the law of divorce and of applications for separation orders, and of its administration, and to report whether any, and what, amendments should be made in such law, or the administration thereof. The Commission will have power to make an interim report. Let us hope that the scandalous inequalities of the divorce laws may thus receive attention and reform. At present a woman cannot obtain release from an unfaithful husband unless she is thumped as well!

A meeting was held at the Mansion House last week in support of the "Sisterhood" of the West-End Mission, in which Mrs. Price Hughes is such an earnest worker. The Mission organised twenty-one years ago, is to help the miserable, the helpless, the destitute, and the sick without distinction of sex, age, race, rank, or creed. The most successful rescue and preventive work is carried on in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly, Regent Street, and Leicester Square, which thoroughfares are visited nightly, while rooms in the neighbourhood are open to girls in need of help and protection at any hour both night and day. The "Sisterhood" also carries on a large crèche, or day nursery, in Soho, while clubs for boys and girls starting out in life have been organised, these clubs being used also, if necessary, as employment agencies. Mr. Hall Caine, in a letter of sympathy with the work of the mission, remarked that in dealing with this shadowed side of life they had first to recognise that the poor victims were living in a blind alley from which there seemed to them to be no escape; and that nothing but the tenderest and wisest, as well as the subtlest, sympathy would succeed in drawing them back into the light and current of the world.

The *Englishwoman* this month has reached an exceedingly high standard of excellence, and no doubt is now to be found amongst the current literature provided in the Nurse Training School Libraries. The paper on "Wage-Earning Mothers," by Lady McLaren, is pathetic and practical in the extreme, and sums up as foremost amongst the needs of poor women: A claim on the husband's wages, independent of his caprice; an intelligent Poor-Law authority; skilled attendance in child birth; an available supply of pure dairy milk; crèches for care of children during working hours; protection against all who seek to deprive women of a livelihood, whether they be trades unionists, philanthropists, or members of Parliament. And, finally, the Elective Franchise, which would raise women to the level of citizens, and make it for the first time the interest of the Legislature to consider the plight of mothers.

Lady McLaren says crèche institutions have been brought to great perfection in Germany, where child culture is taught.

## Book of the Week.

### THE TRAGEDY OF THE PYRAMIDS\*

It is not often that both sides of a question are given to one almost simultaneously for consideration; yet such is the case here. Almost at the same time that Mr. Hall Caine publishes his "White Prophet" in book form we have Mr. Douglas Sladen's powerfully written "Tragedy of the Pyramids," setting forth a totally different aspect of the situation in Egypt. What will be the verdict of the reader depends entirely on which aspect of the problem appeals most strongly to him. That the future of Egypt is assuredly one of the coming difficulties which will have to be faced, makes this book intensely interesting. In his introduction, Mr. Sladen puts his case strongly, but with masterly restraint. "The fact that I have written a novel on the coming revolution in Egypt simultaneously with Mr. Hall Caine, is not due to accident. When I had read the first two instalments of the 'White Prophet' I felt constrained to write a counterblast. As the father of a soldier, and as one who has spent six months on the spot studying the question, I felt bound to challenge the false light in which he presents the British army of occupation in Egypt to the public. I have made Ailsa Kennedy (the hero) a soldier first, I have made him sacrifice all that he desires most in life to his duties as a soldier. It is on this that the love interest of the book turns."

Lord Clapham, the British Consul-General, is supposed to have succeeded Sir Eldon Gorst. He is a man eminently unsuited for the post, a man with no strength of character, placed by an incompetent home Government to carry on their own policy of vacillation and compromise where a strong hand is needed. The General commanding the army of occupation is a man of very different metal, but powerless to stem the coming storm, his hands being tied, as the country is not under martial law. He and his wife are charming characters. The pictures drawn of the political and military circles are most interesting and varied; the fact that the trouble in Egypt is being augmented by the interference and encouragement of men quite outside the question is cleverly introduced; that such is in reality the case we need only to read our daily papers to know. The three British M.P.'s—Krafft, a German Jew; Dan Climo, the political agitator against the best interests of his own country; and Mr. Prestage, Liberal M.P., who comes to study the situation with an open mind—all play important parts in the story. The most active promoter of the revolution is Stephen Considine, an Irish American, nominally the head of a large business, known as the Hardware Trust, but in reality supplying Egyptians and Arabs with firearms and money; finally arranging with the Desert tribe of the Senoussi to march on Cairo with an overwhelming force.

There is only one Arab brought intimately before the reader, Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan, a man of rare beauty and fascination, but with a strange code of morals even for an Oriental. He is a lineal

\* Douglas Sladen. (Hurst and Blackett.)

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