

On Tuesday afternoon the Earl of Selborne in a wise and sympathetic speech, moved the second reading of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill, which proposes to confer the Parliamentary vote on women possessing the municipal franchise. Lord Curzon, in a most reactionary speech, asked the House to reject the Bill. The debate was adjourned, and as we go to press its fate is still undecided. The Lord Chancellor effectively summed up the situation by saying that women's claim to the vote "must be conceded before long." The women's cause had been allowed to go too far for Lord Curzon's arguments to be effective. The Bishop of Oxford said that he could conceive no principle of Statecraft which justified withholding the vote from women. The occurrence of violence was no excuse for denying justice.

### BOOK OF THE WEEK.

#### "UNTO CÆSAR."\*

Baroness Orczy is too well known as a writer of historical romances to need any suggestion of ours that her new book should be read. The period is in the very earliest days of Christianity, and as we may infer from the title, the locality is Imperial Rome.

In graphic language we have set before us in the opening chapter the selling of the entire possessions of the late censor, Armenius Quirionius, not the least valuable of which possessions were his slaves.

"Thus, on this ninth day of September, a human load, panting under the heat of this late summer's sun, huddled against one another, pushed and jostled by the crowd, was exposed to the public gaze in the Forum, so that all who had a mind and a purse withal might suit their fancy and buy. Taurus Antonius, the præfect who presided over the sale, although a Christian we are told, felt no horror or contempt for the state of slavery—a necessary one in the administration of the mightiest empire in the world.

At this traffic of human life there arrives presently a litter gorgeously carved and gilded, draped in pink and gold. Dea Flavia was resting against the cushions. Dea Flavia, imperial daughter of Rome, what tongue of poet could describe thy beauty? What hand of artist paint its elusiveness? Have not the writers of the time told us all there was to tell and exhausted language in their panegyrics? The fair hair like rippling gold, the eyes now blue, now green, always grey and mysterious, the delicate hands, the voluptuous throat, the tiny ears ever filled with flattery. There were those who had dared aver that Dea Flavia's snow white neck had been more beautiful if it had known how to bend, and that the glory of her eyes would be enhanced a thousand-fold when once they learned how to weep."

It was by the thwarting of this imperial heathen beauty by the powerful Christian præfect that

\* By Baroness Orczy. Hodder & Stoughton, London.

her wayward fancy satiated with adulation, was captivated.

She desired to purchase the young slave girl, Nola; would offer any price to obtain her; but the child's widowed mother had saved a pitiful sum to buy her freedom. Saddest of all, the child herself would prefer the gilded cage to the poor hovel and her mother's love. Dea Flavia pleads with her to grant her whim.

"Hast a wish to spend the rest of thy days scrubbing floors and stewing onions in an iron pot? Wouldst like to recline on soft downy cushions, allowing thy golden hair to fall over thy shoulders, the while I, Dea Flavia, mallet and chisel in hand, would make thy face immortal by carving it in marble? The præfect Taurus Antonius hath said thine is a case for pity, then do I have pity upon thee, and give thee the choice of what thy life shall be. Squalor and misery as thy mother's slave, or joy, music and flowers as mine?"

Baroness Orczy describes, in the manner of which she is a past mistress, the gladiatorial combats, the diabolical decision of Cæsar, that the successful aspirant for Dea Flavia's hand shall be he who proved his valour in the arena. The character of Taurus is a noble and powerful one, and the struggle with his earthly and spiritual love is finely described. Dea Flavia tempts him by his burning love for her to betray Cæsar, and by union with her, to sit in his seat.

His arms were rigid and his fists clenched, even though she clung to him, her frail body against his, her head upon his breast.

"Wouldst lose the world and lose me?" she murmured. "The world is at thy feet, and I love thee."

"Dear heart, dear heart! Dost not understand that the sceptre would weigh like lead in my hands, and the crown bow my head with shame?"

The ears of Taurus had heard the words of the Galilean crucified on Calvary, and they were burnt into his soul. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

We recommend our readers to judge for themselves if Taurus was loyal to his dual allegiance.

H. H.

### COMING EVENTS.

May 9th.—General Hospital, Birmingham, Nurses' League. Annual Meeting at the Hospital, 3 p.m. Lantern Lecture on the "History of Nursing," by Miss Violetta Thurstan. 3.30 p.m.

May 18th to 23rd.—General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, S.W. Post-Graduate Week.

June 9th to 12th.—National Council of Trained Nurses. Annual Conference and Nursing Exhibition, New Central Hall, Birmingham.

### WORD FOR THE WEEK.

Wisdom is knowing what to do next,  
Skill is knowing how to do it, and  
Virtue is doing it.

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