

MISS GERTRUDE STEWART,

Secretary of the Women's Suffrage Society, is another indefatigable worker for the enfranchisement of women. She is young and enthusiastic, and has a very charming personality. I have been given to understand that numbers of gentlemen have been converted to Women's Suffrage through her agency, and, if this is so, she should be looked on as a very valuable ally, and doubtless she is,

"As she goes all hearts do duty,"

and as the said "hearts" are usually followed by the heads of their owners, their allegiance is quicker gained.

Miss Stewart is capable and business-like as well as charming, and her pen does good work. She has the ardour and hopefulness of youth, and it is all needed in Conservative England. May she continue to hold office until the object of the Society is gained, and may that day come soon!

(To be continued).

Book Notices.

A BOOK FOR TO-DAY.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN SEX:

Being a medical inquiry into the relations of sexual physiology to Christian Morality. By Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell.

"To know
That which before us lies in daily life
Is the Prime Wisdom."—

PARADISE LOST.

In a reverential spirit does the author of the little volume before me treat of her delicate theme. The book is written from the "standpoint of the Christian Physiologist," who believes that the "Supreme Authority is beneficent as well as powerful," and who consequently "seeks to find out the laws and methods of action by means of which human function may accomplish its highest use." But this task, the writer points out in her introduction, can only be carried out gradually. "Ultimate function is not revealed by structure, nor ultimate use by function;" "function" being defined as "the arrangement by means of which the independent life of the sentient being is carried on and maintained," and "developed function or use" as including the growth and improvement of the individual in relation to his fellows, and to existence outside his own personality. "It is a special work of the rational physiologist to discover the higher uses of our varied human faculties."

"We only see at present the beginning of this great work of applied physiology in enabling us to comprehend the full effects of food, air, exercise, climate, &c., upon human character. We possess only vague knowledge of the great facts of the hereditary transmission of diseased or healthy qualities or tendencies. We only faintly realise the transforming power of habit or mind in healthy growth and in morbid degeneration." "The union between the physical, moral, and intellectual elements of our nature can not be dissolved during lifetime." "The greatest present obstacle to progress is the ignorance of parents, and above all, of mothers, of many facts of physiology, and particularly of the fact of sexual physiology."

In chapter i., The Distinctive Character of Human Sex, Dr. Blackwell points out a fact not generally recognised, viz.—that in the human race the mind tends to rule the body, and "that sex in the human being is even more a mental passion than a physical instinct" Oblivion of this fact "blinds us to the imperative necessity of giving human education to this part of our nature," while from its very complexity it requires the widest range of knowledge for its healthy guidance. "The general structural resemblances between man and the lower animals affords no guidance to the education of this human faculty, for the differences between man and the lower animals are radically greater than the resemblances between them." Self-consciousness is pointed out as the most evident form of difference; and this self-consciousness is never entirely extinguished in the most corrupt man or woman. "The growing power of the mental element over sex in all the higher races of mankind is demonstrated by the ennobling friendships between men and women which increasingly brighten life in our own Anglo-Saxon civilization." In the affianced couple this mental or moral predominance is still remarkable. "The consciousness of spiritual attraction will sustain and guard through long waiting for more complete union." "It is the mental element dominating the physical impulse in man for evil which produces that monstrous creation . . . which is seen only in the man or woman abusing the creative power of sex."

Dealing with "Equivalent Functions in the Male and Female," our author exposes the fallacy of the supposition that the sexual passion is stronger in the male, and points out that Nature has made due provision for healthy independent life in each individual. Wise self-restraint and human advancement are shown to go hand in hand. This second chapter closes with the oft-repeated wish that parents and especially mothers were better acquainted with the laws of physiology,