

# The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

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## Disengaged Mothers.

ONE of the arguments long used by opposers of the "new woman" movement (and not yet laid aside!) is that the mother who reaches outside of the round of domestic duties—in the ordinary meaning of these two words—cannot but neglect her home and her children.

It has been hard for us who know better to teach these kindly critics otherwise, because, alas, while we have been able to point to model homes that have furnished woman's cause with public advocates, we have not been able to deny the existence of the neglected homes on which wives and mothers have turned their backs that they might reform the world.

That Mrs Jellyby still walks the earth and drags along her miserable, unwilling children in the wake of her pompous stride, we cannot deny.

"We don't like her, but we must recognise her. She is a type. But thank God there is another type and we believe in the "survival of the fittest." We believe Mrs Jellyby will decrease, and the true type increase and multiply upon the earth until woman's advancing status is wholly justified in the eyes of honest but prejudiced critics.

All that is wrong with Mrs Jellyby is that she is self-centred, self-existing, self-admiring. And all that is wrong

with the mothers who have brought reproach upon woman in public life is this same self-ness of position and purpose.

Florence Winterburne, a bright contributor to leading journals on certain phases of home and child life, in an



MRS. STEVWRIGHT.

article on "The Real Home," says:—"Harmony presupposes a certain lack of egotism among the members of a family. No one must be wholly occupied with his own concerns or absorbed with his own development. Especially must the mother be, to a

great extent, disengaged. If there is a being in the world who must, in order to fulfil her natural duties, care more for the happiness and welfare of others than her own, it is the mother of a family. If she is wrapped up in pursuits that relate only to herself and that are apart from the general interest, it is as if the sun, upon which humanity depends, should begin to absorb his own light and heat upon the plea of self-improvement."

To be, "to a great extent, disengaged," does not mean to be occupied only in the domestic round, standing idle in intervals of duty, till the next call comes. It does mean that the wife and mother must stand in such delicately adjusted relation to the calls of home that she shall answer them un-faithfully, while at the same time she may serve large so-called "outside" interests, and do no violence in dropping them when the home call comes.

How well the white-haired women in the ranks of the W.C.T.U. know what this subtly propounded problem means. But *they know*—and so do thousands of other women—women who have served at counter, in office, on platform, with needle and pen and brush, and scrubbing brush, women who have been bread-winners, world-moulders, loyal wives and truest mothers, faithful all around, and for ever denying and rebuking Mrs. Jellyby and all her kin.

It is the motive that makes the difference. Given a woman whose heart