

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

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MRS. FRANCES SWINEY.

"If I rise, I help to lift all about me; and if I fall I drag others down. Humanity is one."—*Henry Wood.*

It is doubtful whether greater good can be conferred by one human being upon another than by awakening to a sense of responsibility. Keep a man—or a race—in a position of slavery; feed, clothe, and house as a well-cared-for animal or as a dependent child; let him feel that Nature intended him to serve but as an unthinking beast of burden, without share in the higher, truer life of humanity, and that man will advance but little in intelligence, nor will he perceptibly aid the world's progress. But give even a child to feel that in him is power to be and do, and child and home and society will each gain. To the work of making woman cognisant of her own capacity has Mrs. Frances Swiney largely devoted, for many years, the powers of her able brain. The latest thought and findings of eminent scientists of the day on the woman question have by her been collated and made understandable to the average lay mind. Her book, "The Awakening of Women; or Woman's Part in Evolution," which was reviewed in this paper nearly three years ago, has been pronounced "the book of the age on the woman movement." The portrait and a few par-

ticulars concerning the history of the gifted author will therefore be warmly welcomed by many.

Mrs Rosa Frances Emily Swiney was born in 1847, in Poonah, India; her father being Major John Biggs, of



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the 8th foot, afterwards serving in the 4th Royal Dragoon Guards. He was a direct descendent of the sister of Sir Isaac Newton, whilst among Mrs Biggs' ancestors was the celebrated Bishop Hurd. Mrs Swiney's uncle, Reginald Biggs, was a well known New Zealand colonist in the time of the Maori war, and is mentioned in the late Mr Alfred

Saunders' "History of New Zealand," as rendering gallant service in conjunction with the friendly Maoris. In early life, Mrs Swiney developed a taste for painting, studying under James Danby, the son of the famous R.A., and taking 1st and 2nd prizes at exhibitions in Simla and Madras. Her intention was to take up art as a profession, but her marriage with Major (now Colonel) John Swiney in 1871, and residence in India, prevented further study. On her return to England in 1877, Mrs Swiney began to take an active part in public and political work, and also literary pursuits, writing for various magazines, and publishing a series of pamphlets in support of the Unionist cause, during the Home Rule controversy. For many years she was intimately associated with the Primrose League, but severed her connection with that society, "when it became a mere political tool of the Conservative Party, and in many vital particulars deviated from the basic principles of its originators." In 1896, Mrs Swiney, in conjunction with several other ladies, founded the Cheltenham Women's Suffrage Society, of which, from that date, she has been President. Since then, as lecturer, writer and organiser, Mrs Swiney has furthered, by all means in her power, the political enfranchisement of women. Her monthly contribution, "Women among the Nations,"