

Mr. Stead called it the book of its month, but last things rarely are. It is called "The Open Question" by C. E. Raimond (Elizabeth Robins), and is an octavo of 522 pages in illuminated cloth, published by Harper & Brothers for a dollar and a half. It is a story of a Southern family living partly in a western town, partly in New York and Boston. Most of its members are poor and drag out a proud, weary existence on the memory of better days. One, the hero, after a loveless youth, travels in Europe, becomes wealthy, and does nothing in particular, good or ill. There are amusing and pathetic features in the long drawn out story, which is on the whole unlovely, with no large thought or personality in it. The hero is made to fall in love with a strong minded cousin, much younger than himself. There had been a great deal of cousin marrying in this exclusive Southern stock, until the race had deteriorated, and consumption had marked its members. Ethan and Val had been warned by Val's consumptive father, and had deliberately planned to marry, enjoy brief life, and then to die, that humanity might not suffer through them. I have known noble men and women, of consumptive and similar tendencies, refuse to marry, and lead self-renouncing lives for the same end. But this riotous pair, when the time came, launched a small boat after a storm in the harbor of San Francisco, and went to their godless death in the seas beyond the Golden Gate. "The Open Question, a Tale of Two Temperaments," is a heathen mixture of Greek sensuality and Roman self-sacrifice. God forbid that such should be an open question in a Christian land.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John Campbell". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the main text block.