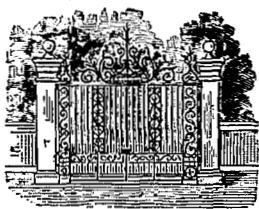


Outside the Gates.

THE CRY OF ISHMAEL AND HAGAR.



THE name that, in the NURSING RECORD of the 20th April, 1895, serves as a general type of our most painful social problem, is taken from the Bible.

To the Bible, and, in the first case, to the

very story from which this name is taken, I look for an answer.

In chapter xxi. 10, of Genesis, Sarah "said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son." And God sanctions the request, which "was very grievous to Abraham."

"Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of the bondwoman . . . of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation."

And later on (verse 19) the angel of the Lord comforts Hagar. "Fear not, for God hath heard the word of the lad where he is.

"Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand, for I will make him a great nation."

"And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.

"And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt." (That is to say, he married a native of the most highly cultivated and self-restrained nation in the world. Hagar and Ishmael lived 1800 B.C. at the time the shepherd kings ruled in Egypt.)

The mother, Hagar, decides for her son in this all-important matter. She is evidently the beloved and trusted guide and friend of her wild son. With that perfect style which has no equal the Bible shows us, with one touch, the dignified and respected position of Hagar, "And his mother took him a wife."

This in spite of his fierce restive instincts, for he is "a wild man, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him . . ."

To take Hagar away from the surroundings that cramped her, and bowed her down; that was the best thing for her, saved her morally and mentally. It is true she suffered. The suffering was her purgatory, and I think it is a type of the suffering such a woman *must* pass through before she can rise and meet the angel of salvation, who proclaimed to her that she was "*not to fear*," who showed her a clear stream of water, type, surely, of her woman's

dignity regained, of her son received to life, *by the will of God himself.*

The solution seems this—give to the wild natures the free and open space, fresh air, the realities of life, active work, and, above all, give them the strength of faith. In her darkest moments Hagar communes with the angel of the Lord.

Doctor Barnardo teaches his Ishmaels trades, and emigrates them to lands where they have elbow room. And they do well.

But I believe in all social diseases, that prevention is better than cure, that to do radical good we must "begin at the beginning" and strengthen the children. There is a good old-fashioned social panacea—and a *real* one, if people would look upon it as something more than a collection of Sunday stories and truisms. It lies in an honest study of the Bible.

We give the children many pretty lesson-books to-day; they learn history, and grammar, and geography by pleasant methods. One Book, above all others, we should make them love and honour in *truth*, not only in Sunday bonnets, but in joy and grief. *Teach the children.* Teach the girls that there is much we cannot understand, and must accept in humility, but that God, life, and love, are eternal truths—as true (in a far higher and more wonderful sense) as the life-giving oxygen of the air, which we cannot see, but without which we should die. And this brings me to Natural Science. It should be taught in every school, to every child, high or low—taught in a way that would let the concrete prove the abstract—in a way that will develop a natural reverence for natural laws, and above all for the Law-giver. Then we shall not find young girls, like Andrea, "shaking their fist at heaven," as they pronounce the name of the Deity (page 268 of the NURSING RECORD), failing at the very moment they might have proved what their education was worth,—as the authoress has very cleverly exemplified in the utter failure of Andrea's blundering sympathy.

Had Andrea had a better balanced mind, had she, above all, been less conceited, she would have acted differently. As it is, we are allowed to feel that her excitable language, and ill-advised act are the final goad that hasten the final tragedy.

We will imagine Andrea (who is a type) grown to womanhood, facing the "fiends" she is represented as contemplating, at the opening of the story. You see she is evidently quite convinced that hunger, thirst, and pain, are *fiends*. It has never entered her head that the angel may bear a sword. And I venture to conclude she has not grasped the rudiments of Christianity. In spite of her evident good-

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