

Outside the Gates.

INTERVIEW WITH DR. ARABELLA KENEALY.

MISS ARABELLA KENEALY, the creator of "The Honourable Mrs. Spoor," which has reached its third edition in the first fortnight of publication, is in appearance a most unlikely person to have created such a character. But that is because we have not yet got rid of the notion that power of any kind is a purely masculine attribute.

Certainly Miss Kenealy does her share towards dispelling this illusion, for a more powerful book than "The Honourable Mrs. Spoor," with its keen analysis of character, its strength of description, its scathing denunciation of certain forms of evil, has never been written. And a woman more sympathetic and womanly it would be difficult to find.

"The Honourable Mrs. Spoor" needed some courage to publish," I remarked as I shook hands with the clever author.

"Certainly one shrinks from being regarded as dealing with 'nasty' subjects," she answered. "But I am a doctor, you see, and a doctor is able to deal with subjects which in other hands might earn that name. I regard 'Mrs. Spoor's' as horrible wounds in the side of our great

Mother Nature. And wounds need handling, cleansing and healing. My medical training has saved me from the false shame which sees 'indelicacy' in human facts, and 'nastiness' in wounds."

"Will it be trespassing if I ask you whether Mrs. Spoor is an actual person—somebody you have met?"

"She is and she is not. I could name the woman in London society who most nearly resembles her. But she is really a 'type' of womanhood spoiled by evil habit and evil association—a type of the woman who fills our streets, and who is a disgrace to our sex and to our civilisation. The standard of human purity has been raised century by century, on the

self-suppression and self-sacrifice of evolving humanity. The woman who tramples that standard in the dust is a traitor to humanity and to all those of her toiling brothers and sisters who have gone before and suffered for the right. She reverts to the condition of the savage, branding herself, as I wrote in my book, with 'the brand of the most primitively brutish female.'"

"How are the reviewers taking your book, Miss Kenealy?"

"With one or two exceptions—well. I do not see how anyone reading it could doubt my motive in writing it. And so far the reviews have been most encouraging."

"Do you think we shall ever get wholly rid of 'Mrs.

Spoor's'? Remember that hers is a profession which is always said to be as old as the world."

"So old that it is absolutely out of date. She is a relic of barbarism this 'primitively brutish female'; she is an anachronism in our nineteenth century of progress. She is not so old as the mastodon or the megalosaurus, and, like them, she should be allowed to fossilize; she is almost wholly the product of idleness—another primitive vice. In the not very far distant day, when all women work honourably, and when there is honourable work for all women, we shall turn down that page of our history which tolerated 'Mrs. Spoor's' with such a shudder as that with which we now repudiate the days of our cannibalism."

"You are hopeful."

"Hopeful? Why certainly I am. How can one be anything else with the truths of evolution behind us, and—what is still more important and interesting—before us."

Miss Kenealy rises as she speaks from an old oak settle with a look of ideal faith and hopefulness in the possible perfections of life, and as she does so the interviewer fancies that the eyes of a beautiful Irish grandmother—whose living picture Miss Kenealy is—beam down from a canvas above with a smile of approval from the evolution behind, towards the evolution of the future which her gifted descendant foresees.



DR. ARABELLA KENEALY.

From a photograph by Miss Alice Hughes.

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