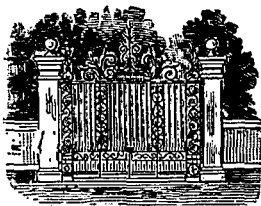


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



To Mrs. Roberts Austen—wife of Professor Roberts Austen of the Royal Mint—belongs the suggestion to hold an Exhibition of Women's Work in London, to commemorate the progress of women during the Victorian Era; and for some time Mrs. Austen has been in communication with those interested in the idea. We are informed that she had an interview with Mr. Imre Kiralfy last year to discuss this matter, and it is to be hoped that the Exhibition of Women's Work, which is to be held at Earl's Court in 1897, will realise the high ideal suggested by Mrs. Roberts Austen. It will be remembered that an inaugural meeting was held in London in 1894, at which the Countess of Aberdeen presided, to place this scheme before the public, and much interest was thus aroused.

At the Annual Meeting of the Woman's Industrial Council held last week, on the motion of Miss Honor Morten, the following resolution was passed: "That the Women's Industrial Council is of opinion that it is the duty of all Asylum Authorities to see that the attendants they employ are thoroughly trained in the theory and practice of their profession; and that the Council regrets to learn that the London County Council, in acknowledging the lengthy hours of attendants in Metropolitan Asylums, held out no hope of reducing the same." This resolution proves our contention that, before any steps are taken concerning the registration of Asylum Attendants, an exhaustive enquiry concerning the details of their work and training should be made by the Royal British Nurses' Association.

The report on the conditions, pay, and working hours of Hospital Nurses and Asylum Attendants, which is being compiled by the Women's Industrial Council, will not be ready for some time. It is expected to prove very interesting, and a most valuable contribution to our knowledge of women's industries. It has been in many cases extremely difficult to obtain the information from Hospital Secretaries and Asylum authorities. But the time has gone by when the things done in secret in Institutions can be long hidden from the public eye. And it is to a Council like this that we owe so much of the better spirit prevailing as to the treatment, the remuneration, and the general condition of women who work for their living.

The next written examination of Midwives by the Obstetrical Society of London will be held at 20, Hanover Square, W., on Monday, January 4th, 1897, at 8 p.m. The Regulations and Schedule for admission to the Examination can be obtained on application to the Honorary Secretaries. Candidates must have the Schedule filled in and returned to the Honorary Secretaries on or before December 21st, 1896.

A Book of the Week.

"THE HERB-MOON."*

EVERYONE who sees the title of this book for the first time will inquire, with natural curiosity, "What is the Herb-Moon?" Mrs. Craigie (alias John Oliver Hobbes) elucidates this important point on page 35 of her witty "Fantasia" on that theme: Susan, a sturdy country character, remarks:—

"When he [Mr. Robsart] marries, I hope it will be straight off, without shilly-shally. For there's nothing so wearing as the herb-moon."

"The herb-moon?" repeated Rose, stupefied.

"Ay! That's my name for one of those long courtships. Adam and I did all our courting in a fortnight: that's why we are happy. This walking out with each other year in and year out, till all your nerve is gone, and you are sick with talking, was never to my taste nor to my mother's before me. 'Tisn't natural, and I'm all for nature, I am."

Susan, throughout the pages of this book, is full of shrewd wit, and gives such constant utterance to smart and epigrammatic sayings that it seems almost incredible that a character (upon whom circumstances must have bestowed a more or less limited knowledge of this earth-life as a whole) should invent, and have educated brains enough to voice them all. The observant reader is somewhat tempted, during the perusal of these brilliant phrase fireworks, to wish that the authoress was a little less clever, for the brains that evoke these cynical, and entirely amusing speeches, are the brains of a brilliant woman of the world who has seen, read, and inwardly digested a great deal of experience of life in all its kaleidoscopic phases, and, in spite of the astutely-rendered dialect of her speech, Susan's mind is not that of a country-bred and reared woman. Compare, for instance, her remarks on men, women, and aggravating circumstances with, let us say, the immortal sayings of Mrs. Poyser in "Adam Bede." Mrs. Poyser's mind and heart, in spite of her sharp speech and acid intelligence, are yet the mind and heart of a Norfolk farmer's wife; but the wit of Susan, though undeniable, and much to be appreciated, is that of a subtly educated mind—at least, that is the impression that a first reading of the book has left upon your captious critic.

John Oliver Hobbes possesses a style that is almost peculiar to herself. Here and there, however, it is easy to detect the influence of George Meredith upon her pen. Such a sentence as the following:—

"He dived into her eyes with his own blindfolded, and felt no chill," reads to me like pure Meredithism, culled from one of that great writer's most peculiar chapters. I feel sure that if anyone only had leisure, the companion to that phrase could easily be discovered in one of his novels, but with the exception of a sentence here and there of a similar character, Mrs. Craigie's style is her own; and let any amateur writer beware of imitation, for it is only her brilliancy that makes it to be in the least worthy approval. Dull sentences built on the same jerky method would be simply unendurable. Brilliancy I recognise as I write the word is a very apposite adjective with which to qualify the peculiar qualities of John Oliver Hobbes' literary work. It

* "The Herb-Moon," a Fantasia by John Oliver Hobbes. 6s. (Fisher Unwin, 1896.)

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