

Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



THE QUEEN'S solicitude for her Army has been always warmly expressed, and her latest message in connection with the Benin Expedition is worded with her usual feeling. By command of her Majesty the following telegram was sent on February 24th to

Rear-Admiral Rawson, at Brass :—

"The Queen desires to express to Admiral Rawson her great admiration of the conduct of the brave men under his command, who must all have gone through such a terribly trying time in their march to Benin, which was so successfully captured.

The Queen feels so much for them all, and is most anxious to hear that the wounded, and, indeed, all, are doing well, for the climate, the privations, and the horrors they witnessed must have been most fearful. The Queen deeply grieves for the loss of life."

To this Rear-Admiral Rawson has replied to the Admiralty as follows :—

"BRASS March 1st.

Her Majesty's most gracious message received. Please convey to her Majesty the expression of our deep gratitude for her approval and sympathy. I am glad to report that sick and wounded are doing well."

The reports of the health of the young Empress of Russia are a matter of vital importance to Russian womanhood. We hear from St. Petersburg that she is already looked upon as the redeemer of her sex by the intellectual, and the poor and needy. Enormous forces of vested interests upon the part of the nobles and the Court ladies—the section which in the late reign held absolute and tyrannous sway—are already in active opposition to her liberal and progressive policy.

Our correspondent writes : "You made mention in the NURSING RECORD last year of the mill strike here. You may like to know that a paternal Government has now decreed that the hours in all mills all over Russia shall be eleven and a half hours on a full working day, and eight hours on Saturdays, and has also recommended a uniform time table for meals, &c. This last reform, however, is not compulsory. Last spring the mill owners were not allowed to make any concessions to their hands, and the workers returned to work with a fourteen hours' day."

The report was issued on Monday of the Syndicate at Cambridge University, to which it was referred to consider whether, and, if so, on what conditions, women should be made admissible to degrees in the University. A majority of nine of the Syndicate recommend that the Senate adopt resolutions in favour of admitting women to the degrees of B.A., M.A., D.Sc., and D.L., on conditions practically similar

to those which obtain in the case of male students. A minority of five dissent from this recommendation, set forth their reasons, and offer an alternative suggestion that the University should confer by diploma some title, not being the title of a degree in the University, on women who have passed a qualifying tripos examination. The majority of the Syndicate at Cambridge University are to be sincerely congratulated on the liberality and justice of their recommendations.

A Book of the Week.

"TROOPER PETER HALKET OF MASHONALAND."*

SAYS the *Spectator* in an able review upon this very book, "The introduction of our Lord into fiction is almost inevitably a blunder, and a very big one." I should prefer this sentence without the *almost*.

For a writer with the power at command which Olive Schreiner without question possesses, to emphasize her political views on the South African question by putting those views into the mouth of the Saviour, so as to make Him responsible for her opinions, is a terrible fault, artistically, morally, and religiously.

The pity of it is that the book needed no such adventitious strengthening ; it is strong enough, nay, it would have been far stronger, had the author left her indictment of the Chartered Company and all their works to sink into the reader's mind by the sheer force of its simplicity.

How much of truth there is in this indictment is a matter on which it is hard for us in England to pronounce ; it is seemingly a question with two very distinct sides, but, if half what the author of "Peter Halket" says is true, then our national responsibilities are indeed grave. And she speaks as one who knows.

Nothing could be finer, from a literary point of view, than the opening of the story.

Peter Halket is lost on the Veldt. He has got separated from his companions, and makes a fire on a small koppje to frighten away lions, and prepares to watch all night.

By-and-bye his watch is shared by One who comes to him through the utter darkness, unarmed and alone. Peter Halket has never thought much ; in fact, he is but a boy, not yet twenty-one. In the unutterable silence of the desolate Veldt, and the black night, his soul awakes.

This sounds likely enough ; to be quite alone with Nature is a sure way to hear the words of Nature's God. Olive Schreiner makes her Colonial describe the awfulness of the loneliness with marvellous force :—

"Man, have you ever been out like that, alone in the Veldt, night and day, and not a soul to speak to? I have ; and I tell you, if I'd been left there three days longer I'd have gone mad, or turned religious. Man, it's the nights, with the stars up above you, and the dead still all around. And you think, and think, and think ! You remember all kinds of things you've never thought of for years and years.

* "Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland," by Olive Schreiner.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)