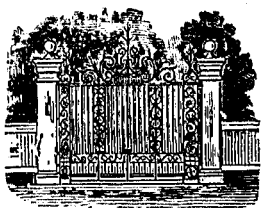


Outside the Gates.**WOMEN.**

THE annual meeting of the Society for Promoting the Return of Women as Poor Law Guardians was recently held, by permission of Lord Brassey, at 24, Park Lane. Mr. J. G. Talbot, M.P., occupied the chair. The report stated that, notwithstanding the loss of several women guardians by death and retirement, the total number had increased from 890 to 900, out of a total of 22,000 elected guardians. Of these 91 were on metropolitan boards. There were still over 300 boards of guardians throughout the kingdom on which there were no women. There was so much that was essentially "women's work" connected with the office of guardian—viz., the selection of nurses, visiting the infirmaries, supervision of the girls, inspecting the convalescent homes, helping in out-relief cases, and looking into the details of household management generally—that the committee felt that no effort must be relaxed on its part until there were at least some women on every board throughout England and Wales. Mrs. Creighton, in moving the adoption of the report, said that, though women guardians were yet so few in number, the work done by them in the past had been recognised as being excellent. In spite, however, of there being a necessity for more women guardians, it was better that the numbers should remain small than that there should be any lessening of the standard hitherto set up for women candidates. Mrs. Hazeldine seconded, and the report was adopted. It was proposed by Miss Louisa Twining, seconded by Mrs. McCallum, and agreed, "That this meeting deems it desirable that all who are interested in the election of women as Poor Law guardians, and who recognise the good work done by them, should seek out suitable women in their respective parishes and unions as candidates without considerations of party."

The annual meetings of the National Council of the British Women's Temperance Association will be held at St. Martin's Town Hall, Charing Cross Road, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, June 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. The annual public meeting will be held in the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, on Wednesday evening, June 2nd.

Mrs. Bishop (Miss Isabella Bird), the well-known traveller, has just reached London after an absence of more than three years spent in the Far East. Mrs. Bishop has during this time visited China, Corea, and Japan. She visited Corea no fewer than four times.

An earnest Kansas woman has written to the Governor of the State asking him to recommend the passage of a law prohibiting the manufacture, sale, and use of the corset, on the ground that it is more harmful to the human race than the cigarette. As *Punch* might say: "Of corset is."

A Book of the Week.**"THE LITTLE REGIMENT."***

THIS is a collection of stories by the author of "The Red Badge of Courage," and it is full of the quality of strenuous word-painting which made that book remarkable; but otherwise it will not do much towards enhancing the reputation of its author. Collections of short stories are always disappointing if one comes unexpectedly upon the fact that they are short. I began to read "The Little Regiment" under the impression that I was going to accompany the two quarrelling brothers through the book, from cover to cover, and the discovery that they were done with in the course of a few pages, was a distinct disappointment.

The two brothers are delightful; they live with all the vividness that Stephen Crane manages to impart to his characters, with a certain rawness or crudeness of vitality which, one may suppose, is characteristic of Americans. "An Indiana Campaign" and "The Three Miraculous Soldiers" have previously appeared in the English magazines, and are neither of them of any special merit. "The Grey Sleeve" has likewise appeared in the *English Illustrated*, and this is perhaps the prettiest story of all. The Northerners have sent a detachment of their men to clear a wood from which sharp-shooting has been going on; they find a house; they break down the door; and, inside, they are confronted by a young girl. The young captain and she stand facing each other, and Stephen Crane makes one understand, in the way which is peculiarly his, every impression, every emotion which passes through the two minds as they stand there. This story is very artistic in its reticence, and the author can be as reticent as any modern master of the art; but he does not always choose. Sometimes he goes to the opposite extreme, and makes one weary of nauseous detail, quite in the style of another school of moderns.

The impression left on the mind after reading a course of his battle stories is that the American Civil War was a long series of the grossest scenes of carnage, of the most savage, merciless and unnecessary slaughter that is recorded even in the history of savage races.

History leads one to believe this to be, in a sense, true; that is to say, the struggle was between men who were very brave, and at the same time totally unused to warfare. Their leaders did not understand how to protect their men, whole regiments were used for the carrying of a position which an experienced general would probably have left alone sooner than decimate his forces. Frantic personal courage and incompetent leadership seem to be the best ingredients for wholesale massacres. But if this really was so it seems hardly artistic to reproduce it so constantly, so unsparingly, as Stephen Crane does.

When one reflects that these men were brothers, that their near relations were often in the ranks of those whom their guns were blowing into eternity, that the quarrel was one which could seemingly have been easily adjusted—it makes one sceptical as to the value of any amount of seeming civilisation as an antidote to the wild beast element in man. G. M. R.

* "The Little Regiment," by Stephen Crane, author of "The Red Badge of Courage."

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