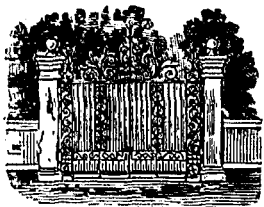


## Outside the Gates.

### WOMEN.



MISS CALLIS, who has been for seven years on the staff at Stockwell Training College, has been appointed by the Education Department one of Her Majesty's Sub-Inspectors of Schools in a suburban district of London.

To mark the appreciation of Miss Helen Gladstone's work for the higher education of women during her term of office at Newnham College, her pupils propose to raise a fund to provide a memorial of a permanent character.

Miss Eugenie Sellers, who is a great authority on Greek sculpture, has been honoured by the University of St. Andrew's with the title of LL.D.

The question of women's labour was considered at the recent Labour Congress at Zurich. M. Wiart, one of the Belgian delegates, introduced a proposal for the gradual prohibition of female labour in any of the great industries. This infamous motion, which was discussed at great length and with much animation, was negatived by 165 votes to 89. That 89 men could be found to support so unjust a motion is a warning which working women will do well to note.

We reprint from *Great Thoughts* a vigorous indictment from the pen of Mr. Rider Haggard against his own sex in their relations to womankind:—

"Why are women weak? Because men have made them so. Because the law that was framed by men, and the public opinion which it has been their privilege to direct, have from age to age drilled into them the belief that that they are naught but chattels, to be owned and played with, existing for their pleasure and their passion, and ranking in value somewhere between their horses and their oxen. Because men, being the stronger animal, have crushed and forced them into certain moulds, saying, 'Thus shalt thou be.' Because men have systematically stunted their mental growth and denied them their natural rights, and that equality which is theirs before high Heaven. Weak!—women have become weak because weakness is the passport to the favour of our sex. They have become foolish because education has been withheld from them and ability discouraged; they have become frivolous because frivolity has been declared to be the natural mission of women. There is no male simpleton who does not like to have a bigger simpleton than he is to lord it over. What would the empty-headed donkeys do if there were none emptier-headed than they to re-echo their brays? Truly the triumph of the stronger sex has been complete, for it has even succeeded in enlisting its victims in its service. The great instruments in the suppression of women, and in their retention at their present level, are women themselves; and yet before we go home and bully our wives and daughters, or to the club and sneer at the weaknesses and failings of those of others, let us be for a minute just. Which is the superior of the two—the woman or the man? In brute strength we have the advantage, but in intellect she is probably our equal, if only we will give her fair play. And in purity, in

tenderness, in long-suffering, in fidelity, in all the Christian virtues, which is the superior in these things? O man! whoever you are, think of your mother and your sisters; think of the eyes that first looked love upon you, and the heart that dreams it still; think of her who nursed you in sickness, of her who stood by you in trouble when all others would have none of you, and then answer."

## Book of the Week.

"OPALS." BY OLIVE CUSTANCE.

THIS little book of poems abounds in graceful diction. The writer seemingly is a severe self-critic, and will not allow herself to be slipshod. She is, apparently, a beginner, as far as publishing is concerned, and it is greatly to be hoped that, having made a beginning, she will go on. We have but few women singers, and should extend a cordial welcome to one who comes with such firstfruits.

Miss Custance here and there shows quite a noticeable share of that rare gift of saying much in one phrase which is one of the great weapons in a poet's armoury; as—

"There, in the rain,  
I see one stand;  
The leaves look fain  
To kiss his hand.  
Behind him slopes the furrowed lane,  
The sunlight breaks across the land."

"Behind him slopes the furrowed lane!"

The whole picture stands created for the mind's eye in that simple sentence.

Here and there our poetess shows a daring that is delightful. Who would ever have dreamed of trimming up, in poetic guise, that most prosaic of all articles, a pair of hair-curling tongs? The waves of a woman's hair must surely be natural for the old-fashioned poet. But we of the *fin de siècle* can change all that; only hear:—

"Fortunate fingers those, that hold  
The handles of the steels, that fret  
And dent each heavy tress of gold  
Till all the golden mass is set  
With waves bewildering,  
Where fire and dusk, together met,  
Rival day's sunseting."

That is very well done.

There are a few passages that make a direct appeal to the heart; such is this:—

"O friend! whose soul is swift to understand  
If life is difficult, and cold and sad—  
Some are together still . . . and some are glad  
And . . . to these few, God gives His fairyland."

If I may venture on a word of criticism it is that such passages are too few. I wish that Olive Custance would tell us more of what she *thinks*—she, who finds a voice so beautifully for what she *feels*. I want something more of her than shadowy regrets, than voiceless yearnings, than the vague aspirations of human nature in response to the mystery of nature around it. Every poet has a message: every poet is a prophet: let this poet rise and tell us what she has seen in the vision of life that has most certainly come to her. The really elegant verses which she calls

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