

together in droves, and are dispersed in the cities of Europe by the impressari to whom they are sold for purposes of industry, of mendicancy more or less veiled, and for purposes of even darker import. It is asserted that the French law of 1892, which renders illegal all work exacted from children under thirteen years of age, is dodged by the "padrone" by false certificates, and by the declarations of the children, exorted for fear of subsequent consequences, that they are "quite happy." The *Lancet* pertinently inquires, "Ought not the home authorities to be more vigilant? How about the police, who so lightly concede passports to the "padrone" and his "troupe"? How about the harbour officials who look on at this yearly shipment of human blood? How about the parroci (curates) who instead of invoking the blessings of the Church on the little "emigrants," ought rather to enlighten and admonish the ignorant, avaricious parents, as to the fate in store for their offspring? English mothers will add: Are Italian women made of stone, that they permit such infamy for a day?"

The appointment of Mrs. Price as Relieving Officer at Oswestry has been confirmed by the Local Government Board—at last! This is good news for women. Hampered as they are by so many disabilities, and hotly as every attempt on their part for appointment to public offices is contested by the other sex, every fresh victory brings a reflex benefit to other women.

The Women's Industrial Council are about to establish a Charwomen's Society. If the Society is able to supply competent charwomen it will earn the gratitude of good housewives, who suffer much from the incompetence of the average untrained applicant for work in this capacity.

The Queen of Roumania has been elected an Honorary Doctor of the Philosophic Faculty of the Budapest University. This is the first time that such a distinction has been conferred upon a woman.

M. Bourgeois has presented a Bill to the French Chamber inspired by the case of Mdlle. Chauvin. It is to enable women, provided with the diplomas of licentiate and doctor of laws, to practise at the Bar.

Women are slowly obtaining a few rights in France. A short time ago they were permitted to act as witnesses in a legal sense and to sign wills and other legal documents. They are now to be allowed to take part in the administration of the charities and hospitals in Paris, being made eligible for the higher council of the Assistance Publique. This concession has been extended to the sex who have contributed most largely to the charitable funds, and have taken part in the house-to-house visitation, after a report by Dr. Napias, who eulogized the work of women in connection with the administration of charity in England and the United States. It is to be hoped that the effect of introducing women to the management of the Assistance Publique will be to relieve it of some of the red tape with which it is hopelessly bound up, and which prevents it from rendering prompt relief in necessitous cases. Paris has no other system of organized poor-law relief than this huge department provides.

A Book of the Week.

"TORN SAILS."*

IN these days of complications, of epigrams, of paradoxes, of problems—moral and sexual, the Welsh idylls of Allen Raine are like showers on a parched soil. Nothing is further from the mind of this author than the "erotic, neurotic, Tommyrotic" school of fiction.

There is an essential simplicity and a great peace brooding over the Welsh village and its inmates.

The plot of the tale is old—old as human society. Gwladys Price, the village beauty, marries Hugh Morgan, but loves Ivor Parry.

The thing comes about in the unnecessary, stupid way in which such things do come about. Hugh Morgan has loved Mary Vaughan—or Mari Vone, as the author prefers to spell her name—for fifteen years. However, they quarrelled, and the engagement was broken off. When he is seized, as a middle-aged man, with an extravagant passion for the lovely Gwladys, he goes to Mari Vone for advice. He is the "Mishteer"—the landlord of the village—and Gwladys' mother is, naturally, carried off her feet. Ivor has not spoken; Gwladys thinks he does not "mean anything"; and so things are settled.

But now Allen Raine makes a great and noticeable departure from modern methods. She shows us that these four people—the ill-assorted couple, the woman who loved him, and the man who loved her—were all right-minded, noble people, eager to do their duty, resolved to do it, *coute qui coute*.

And so they work out their own salvation; for self-sacrifice, so this author evidently holds, is never quite without its recompenses. In spite of the glamour of the "might have been," life is still worth living to the man, or the woman who is living for another.

The main charm of the narrator is extreme delicacy, as in the short scene where Hugh Morgan, whose noble mind is just beginning to be tainted with jealousy, is the unseen spectator of a meeting between his wife and Ivor Parry—their first meeting (except in the presence of others) since the marriage. Before all things, Hugh Morgan had been a "just" man, and there was growing in his heart, where at first anger and suspicion had held their own, a strong feeling of admiration for these two—his friend and his wife—who had met under his own eyes, where nothing but their honourable natures restrained them, where they thought no eye was upon them to mark a loving look, no ear to hear a tender farewell, no tongue of scandal to blame them, and yet had come forth immaculate, spotless, blameless from the trial. He doubted whether he himself would have passed scatheless through the temptation, and the nobility of his soul responded to the perfect freedom from guile which he had seen in the interview between Ivor and Gwladys."

For the final happiness of Ivor and Gwladys, the author apologises at the last page, with the plea that "happiness, though long delayed and waited for, is sometimes found, even on earth." A plea which after all has some truth in it.

G. M. R.

* "Torn Sails." By Allen Raine. (Hutchinson.)

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