

Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.

The French Military medal has just been conferred upon Mdme. Clémence Mercurin, cantinière of the School of Joinville-le-Pont, in recognition of her 26 years' service. This distinction, the *Gaulois* points out, is a rare one for women. In fact, only 22 women hold the decoration. The first to receive it was Mdme. Cros, who was decorated by Napoleon III. on June 25, 1859. Napoleon III. also gave the military medal to Mdme. Calvet in 1861, and to Mdme. Malher in 1862. All those who possess the medal are cantinières except Mdme. Mario Witte, who organized the ambulance work in 1871, and Mdlles. Weieck and Juliette Dodu, who were rewarded for their services during the Franco-German War.

The Women Journalists' Society have selected Mrs. Flora Annie Steel for their new President, an appointment which will be most popular. Mrs. Steel's wonderfully graphic books of life in India, are the result of twenty-five years residence in that Empire, and she holds decided views against forcing our Western habits and religion upon the Hindoos.

One of the most brilliant Papers read before the International Congress of Women was that in the opening session of the Professional section, on "The Study of Law for Women," by Miss Octavia Williams Bates, A.B., LL.B., LL.M., of the United States.

This able speaker stated that the number of women who study and practise law, in the United States, is constantly on the increase. The progress of the movement for the admission of women to Law Schools, Colleges, and Universities, was reviewed. The different methods which women, in the United States, employ to gain a knowledge of the law was described. Much stress was laid on the fact that women of large means find that some knowledge of the law is most helpful in the management of their business affairs.

The effect on the mind and character of this study was given due attention. The speaker claimed that simply as a means of intellectual discipline this study cannot be surpassed, and that the calm, cool atmosphere of judicial reasoning is a most healthful one for the mind. Not only is it of great practical benefit, but it also gives one an interest in the legal aspect of affairs. One is aroused to the importance of the great questions of the day. One's sympathies are enlarged. Life becomes the richer for one's self and for all with whom one comes in contact. The speaker dwelt upon the need of the development of a public conscience in women, and claimed that a more general study of the law by women would do much to effect this. No woman who has any bonds with the world of fact and law and rights can afford to be in total ignorance of the law.

A knowledge of the law by women will do much to solve the vexed question of woman's position under the law.

The need of women lawyers to help to forward the 'Woman Movement' was pointed out. The laws relating to marriage and divorce, the care and custody of children, dower and domicile, should be subjects for their especial study and criticism. Legislation on these subjects should be intelligently discussed and jealously watched. Women should be awakened to

an intelligent interest in the external laws that govern the most sacred relations of life, and should aim to give some expression in law to the feminine side of marriage, divorce, and other allied subjects, and help to formulate the laws that govern every relation of life and permeate every home like an intangible, invisible, ever-abiding presence, making for the well-being and the highest development of the members of that home, or sapping and poisoning the very springs of national life.

A Book of the Week.

THE PERILS OF JOSEPHINE.*

LORD ERNEST HAMILTON is a distinct acquisition to the ranks of sensational fiction writers. But he is something more than this; he can write with grace and distinction; and when he has acquired a little more finish he ought to do something really good—something as far beyond "The Perils of Josephine," as "Lorna Doone" was beyond "Clara Vaughan."

However, the tale, as it stands, is one to hold you from the first chapter to the last. Breathlessly, you wonder what really will befall poor Josephine next. This daring Lord Ernest writes, as did Blackmore in the already quoted "Clara Vaughan," in the character of a young girl. This is always a dangerous step for a masculine mind, and probably when he is more experienced, he will not do it again; and yet there are some parts of a woman's mind which he has really achieved and got hold of; and though his conception is not adequate, it seldom rings untrue.

Josephine lives at Chelmsford, in company of two dear old middle-class, loving aunts, full of the proprieties, but full of love for their niece also. One day, without any previous preparation, she receives an invitation to go and pay a six months' visit with her father's grand relations; for the orphan has blue blood on the male side.

She has never been to Solworth since she was eight years old, but she has some vivid memories of the place. "I knew there had been such a place, for I had been there for a whole delirious year, in those misty, bygone ages that in childhood lie at the back end of ten years. But I felt somehow that when I left it the place had been turned out like a lamp, or rather put away like a toy, to prevent it getting spoilt. It seemed impossible that it should have wasted its sweetness all these years without my being there to do it homage—a selfish idea, I suppose, and a very hard one to put into words, but I have always had it. I have had it too, about people I have worshipped passionately, an idea that they are not really a living part of the world except when I am with them. But these things concern no one but myself. One might as well try and make a water-colour drawing of one's soul, as put such things on paper."

It is a passage like this which makes me think that Lord Ernest Hamilton is going to "arrive"; not very profound perhaps, but vivid—unmistakeably vivid.

There are many faults of improbability in the tale. Josephine had pluck, but I think even a plucky girl would have fled from the house on finding Norman in her room at three o'clock; certainly it is almost beyond the belief of the most credulous that she would have continued to sleep in the same room, with no other precaution than removing the handle which opened the secret panel. The incident would surely have shattered her faith in everyone in the house, since Norman's mother

* By Lord Ernest Hamilton. Fisher Unwin.

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