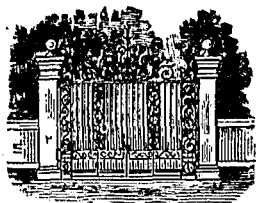


**Outside the Gates.****WOMEN.**

THE Hon. Ella Scarlett, M.D., is attending a course at the London School of Tropical Medicine, Seamen's Hospital, Albert Dock, prior to taking up her appointment as Medical Officer to the Imperial Household of Corea.

A well-known Bond Street jeweller says he has never before had so many requests from private ladies to buy some of their jewels, and these ladies are almost always the wives, sisters, or mothers of officers ordered abroad, who, at so short a notice, have not the wherewithal to provide the necessary uniforms and extra expenses.

At the next Earl's Court Exhibition, "Woman," Mr. Imre Kiralfy will replace the customary spectacle with a great cosmopolitan Beauty Show. His agents are at present going round the world choosing representative beauties of all nations.

We have referred to this "item of interest" in our correspondence columns in reference to a letter received from Fru Norrie, of Denmark. We hope Fru Norrie's protest will have some effect with the Ladies' Committee of this Earl's Court Show, who apparently have given the Director General of the Exhibition Company carte blanche, to judge from his letter, in which they are entirely ignored.

The Bill to amend the London Government Act, 1899, in respect of the eligibility of women as councillors and aldermen has been printed. The operative clause is as follows: "In sub-section 1 of section 2 of the London Government Act, 1899, the words 'provided that no woman shall be eligible for any such office' are hereby repealed, and instead thereof the following words shall be inserted: 'Provided that no woman shall be disqualified by sex or marriage from being elected to or from serving on any such council as alderman or councillor.'" Among the names at the back of the Bill are those of Mr. Courtney, Mr. Birrell, and Mr. John Burns.

In regard to the burning question of women and secondary education, Mr. Jebb has been pointing out the valuable and, indeed, indispensable aid which women conversant with educational matters can afford, especially concerning the education of girls, and referred to the recommendation of the Royal Commission that women should have a place both on the central and on the local authorities, and also to the opinion expressed in Parliament last year by Sir John Gorst, Vice-President of the Council, that the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education would not be complete without women. The Duke of Devonshire indicated that this Committee would be a body of very limited number, and that it was in contemplation that it should include some representation of women, as the advantage of their presence there was recognised by the Government,

**A Book of the Week.****THE WATERS OF EDERA.\***

If you wish to steep your soul in the profoundest melancholy, and to feel that there is no such thing as Evolution, but only Degeneration—that the world gets worse and worse, and that human beings increasingly oppress their brethren: then read "The Waters of Edera."

If the name had not been earlier appropriated, the tale might aptly be named "A Village Tragedy."

The village is Ruscino, in the valley of the Edera, in the Italy of King Humbert; and a miserable part of the world it seems to be.

The peasants are scarcely human beings at all: they starve, and hate and show all the vices of the most brutal savagery: they live as they lived three centuries ago, ignorant, superstitious, cruel, filthy.

Here is a description of one of their dwellings.

"This foetid place, where more than a score of men, women, and children of all ages, slept and swarmed through every season, and where the floors of beaten earth were paven with filth, three millimetres thick. The people were absent, but their ordure, their urine, their lice, their saliva, were left there after them, and the stench of all was concentrated on this bed, where the old man wrestled with death."

The hero of the book, if so he may be called, is one Adone Alba, son of Clelia Alba, and owner of the farm called Terra Vergine. Old documents, stored in the muniment room of the church, show that his ancestors were once lords of the soil: and it is presumably by virtue of this blue blood that he is by no means cruel to animals, and is actually in the habit of bathing in the waters of the beautiful Edera River.

He is a happy, and a devout young fellow until there falls upon his life the shadow of a terrible trouble. A financial company has procured an Act of Parliament, to divert the course of the river, and build a mill. Compensation will be given to the peasants, but we are given to understand that, owing to the corruption of all Italian officials, from highest to lowest, this compensation will be merely nominal.

The mere idea of such a proceeding drives Adone frantic. He is quite beyond the reach of argument: so is his mother. But the author manages to let us see that in her heart she sympathizes with them, and that, to her, the peasant who turns an uncultivated wilderness of beauty and wild blossom into a prosaic ploughed field, is a Vandal, a mere Utilitarian, who knows not the true inwardness of life!

But the real hero of the book is Don Silverio, the noble, cultivated priest, whom the Church has sent, for the chastening of his ambition, to minister among these poor savages.

Patient, loving, enlightened, frugal, ascetic, he labours for these people—helps them, bears with them. His pathetic attempts to reason with Clelia and her son, and his vain efforts to do something to avert the threatened calamity from the little valley, occupy the greater part of the book.

The one gleam of sunshine which breaks athwart the darkness of the book, is in the very last line of all. After all the bitterness of failure, after spending his last farthing on Adone's cause, and finding himself saluted "Judas!" by the youth for whom he had done so much: after realising that his people are turned

\* By Ouida. Fisher Unwin.

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