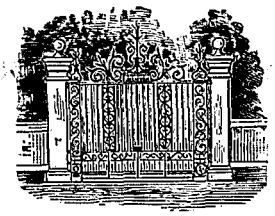
Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



The committee of ladies appointed by the Secretary of State for War to visit the Boer Concentration Camps and to co-operate with the local committees is composed as follows:—Lady Knox, who has had considerable experience of South Africa before and during the war, and whose ministrations to the sick and wounded in Ladysmith did much to alleviate their sufferings; Mrs. Fawcett, LL.D., who has taken a leading position in all movements for the improvement of the condition of women; Miss Lucy Deane, H.M. inspector of factories, who has had very large experience in special investigations and in inquiries into matters relating to women and children; Miss Scarlett and Dr. Jane Watherston, who are both medical graduates with considerable practical experience of work abroad (both are now in South Africa); and Miss Brereton, who has been in charge of the Yeomanry Hospital in South Africa, and who has had much administrative experience.

The choice of the women to act on this Committee is excellent, and we appreciate greatly the fact that a trained nurse is included—Miss Brereton was trained at Guys, and has been a sister of wards there.

Although the women of to-day are not to sit on the London Borough Councils—for the present, at least—in former times they have occupied even more important offices. Centuries before the time of Stuart Mill some British women certainly possessed political equality with men. Gurdon, for instance, in his "Antiquities of Parliament," records the fact that ladies sat in council with the Saxon Witas. In Wighfried's great council at Becconceld, in the year 694, the abbesses sat and deliberated, and five of them signed decrees of that council along with the King, bishops, and nobles. King Edward's charter to the Abbey of Crowland, in 961, was signed by women. In the reigns of Henry III. and Edward I. four abbesses were summoned to Parliament, while in that of Edward III. no less than ten peeresses received orders to take their seats. Nor are instances of women bearing the offices of sheriffs and justices wanting. Margaret, Countess of Thanet, held the shrievalty of Westmoreland and Cumberland in the seventeenth century. Among the Harleian manuscripts mention is made of Margaret, Countess of Richmond, mother to Henry VII., as a justice of the peace; also that a lady named Bartlett was made justice of the peace in Gloucestershire by Queen Mary. In Sussex a lady named Rouse sat on the bench at assizes and sessions among all the other justices, and was girded with a sword. All who are interested in this subject should read "British Freewomen," by Mrs. Carmichael Stopes.

Miss Clotilde Brewster, the well-known architect, enthusiastically asserts that the profession of her choice is the best, the most interesting, the most delightful career open to women.

A Book of the Week.

THE SERIOUS WOOING.*

This strange book is one upon which it is almost impossible to pass judgment, for the reason of its curiously temporary nature. We say of a song that it is "topical," and we know that the fact, while it makes the fame of the song during its vogue, is the very thing that consigns it to an early grave, in which its remains will utterly decay and disappear, and nothing will ever be heard of it again. It is this ephemeral quality, this topical nature of Mrs. Craigie's new book, which will make everybody read it this season, and will equally prevent its ever being heard of after. It is not only the direct allusions to passing events which produce the effect, though they, of course, help a great deal; next spring, the fact that people talk of being in Court mourning, and the death of Queen Victoria, will strike with a dreary out-of-date sensation upon the reader; and Mrs. Botha may be as defunct as poor deserted Mrs. Kruger has become.

But there is something more—a flavour, distinct but indescribable, which, even without "topicality," would date this book 1901.

In perusing it one has a fanciful idea that Mrs. Craigie meant it to stand as an example of the more unpleasant side of the society of to-day, so that, in future ages, one digging the little volume from the dust of the British Museum, might exclaim, "What, they lived so once in London?" and draw probably no less dreary a moral than did the poet of the passions of dead Venice.

These people are of two kinds—the world class who have learned to subordinate all their emotions all their desires, to the one great end of getting on in the world; and the emotional, who are ready to sacrifice everything, not merely the world, but their own spiritual side, to the free indulgence of elemental passion.

They feel, think, live on precisely the lines of the characters in Ibsen's dramas, though on a wholly different social plane, which matters very little. They have no sense of duty, no power of realizing another existence, beyond this; the whole point turns upon how to make the fullest use of one's capacities for enjoying this world. Can this be best done by obeying or by outraging Society? Such is the problem which the beings in a "Serious Wooing" set themselves to solve.

After all, perhaps the person in the whole book who comes nearest a sane view of life is the selfish, vicious Courtenay Ragot, who has never married, being the victim of "a fatal but most discreet attachment to an ignominious Miss Clotilda Parry. One little darling, Miss Daisy Parry, danced nightly at the Ganymede Theatre, and was supposed to be Sir Courtenay's only daughter." This discreet gentleman calls upon his erring sister Rosabel, who has decided that to become the mistress of Jocelyn Luttrell is the arrangement that will most conduce to her earthly joy. His bluntness shocks her.

"O, have ideals, have ideals!" she exclaims.

"I hope," he returns, "that you don't call this particular game ideal? The less names we call it the better. Luttrell is a bad lot. He has not behaved like a gentleman. Don't tell me there was any

* By John Oliver Hobbes. (Methuen.)

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