

There now seems a fair prospect that the Senate will ratify the vote recently given by the Italian Chamber, and that women who possess the requisite university degrees will thenceforth enjoy full legal freedom to practise at the Bar.

Mrs. R. E. A. Land, hon. secretary of the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire, Toronto, writes to explain that the object of the Society, which has 3,000 members, is to strengthen the bonds of Empire, to do patriotic work of all kinds within the radius of its membership, and to educate the people towards a realisation of what their responsibilities as British subjects are. The Order has chapters building or equipping hospitals in the North-West. A chapter in Quebec has been looking after the emigrants disembarking there, receiving and welcoming them to their new home and to the old flag. Funds have been raised for the care of the graves of the Canadians who fell in the late war and the erection of many memorials throughout Canada to their memory. A pledge is taken by the members of the Order to buy goods of British manufacture in preference to foreign, and prizes are offered for essays in schools. The Order is in alliance with the Victoria League in London and the Guild of Loyal Women in South Africa. It is hoped that the Order may be extended to other parts of the Empire.

A Book of the Week.

THE MAGNETIC NORTH.*

There is not a woman writer in England, not among English-speaking races, who ought not to cry "Hats off!" to this immense achievement of Miss Robins. A kind of breathless wonder is what we must feel when we lay down this extraordinary book. How has Miss Robins got her knowledge? Whence the power to make use of it as she does?

The gold-rush to the Klondyke! What does a gently-nurtured woman know about that? What can she know of snow-blindness, of starvation, of dog-teams, of ice-packs, of the blending of savagery and gilded vice in a mining saloon—stampedes, and strikes, and "riffles"?

But all this she does know; all this she makes us see; all this and more; the whole spirit of that weary land; the whole grim tragedy of the Long Trail; the terrific struggle for wealth, the yet more terrific struggle for bare existence; the strain of living month after month on short rations; the tortures of hunger, thirst, frost-bite, loneliness; it all arises before the eye of those who have never stepped forth out of their own comfortable places, who have never risked their all in that cold wild North, who have never tried and failed.

Miss Robins takes a little community of five men. Like the characters in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's wonderful "Tragedy of the Korosko," they are just average gold-seekers, thrown together by circumstances; and they arrange among themselves to travel in boats up the Yukon in autumn until stopped by the ice, so as to be ahead of the great spring rush next season. They get about 400 miles up, and then are forced to land and make a camp in which to winter. This camp grows to be known all up and down the Yukon as Big Chimney Camp. There are two of the five men who are the real heroes; and of the

* By Elizabeth Robins. (Heinemann.)

remaining three, Mac commands one's respect and affection. Even Potts and O'Flynn have their good points; but these are far below the level of the "Colonel and the Boy." The adventures of this little community during the winter are related at very considerable length—nearly 200 closely-printed pages; but never for a moment does the reader weary of this vital account of what humanity has to brace itself to bear under such circumstances. There are no very thrilling incidents; the adoption by Mac of a little Esquimer boy; the fraternising of the Boy with the Pymout tribe, and the relations of the party to the Jesuit Mission at Holy Cross—these form the chief features of a recital which from first page to last is simply enthralling.

It may sound as though the reviewer were growing hysterical, and had somewhat lost balance to make such a statement, but it is made fearlessly, nevertheless, that "The Luck of Roaring Camp" is not as poignantly touching as the first finding of little Kaviak by Mac; and that even the "Outcasts of Poker Flat" is not better than the experiences of the Colonel and the Boy, without dogs, on the Long Trail in winter. There is just one book to which one feels that Miss Robins may have been to a certain degree indebted, and that is Jack London's "Call of the Wild." There was the same flavour of empty vastness, of drear mystery, of the inner core and heart of darkness, and the woes of primeval man. There are countless pieces which one longs to quote, many passages which strike a note of depth most unusual in the present day. The final explanation between the Colonel and the Boy, after they have each discovered the inner littleness of their own natures, and the desperate ingrained selfishness which is engendered by the fight for existence, unalleviated by any outside influence. The gradual wearing down of nerves and tempers at Big Chimney, as the darkness broods over the fearful unknown land, and food grows less and less, is a most salutary object-lesson.

The book leaves one grieving for men, yet loving them, with a faint reflection of that love of souls which animates the Jesuit Mission there in the howling wilderness, "in the land all forgotten of God."

We offer homage to Miss Robins for a work of breadth, of depth, of finish; yet of that spontaneity which can touch the fount of tears. G. M. R.

What to Read.

"Reminiscences of the (American) Civil War." By General John B. Gordon, of the Confederate Army.

"In Old Alabama." By Annie Hobson. Humorous stories told by an Alabama negress.

"The Vineyard." By John Oliver Hobbes (Mrs. Craigie).

"Lucretia Borgia. According to Original Documents and Correspondence of her day." By Ferdinand Grigorovius.

Coming Event.

April 8th.—Conference of Members of Nurses' Leagues and Societies to discuss "Organisation with a view to International Affiliation," by the invitation of Miss Isla Stewart, Vice-President of the International Council of Nurses, 431, Oxford Street. Tea 4 p.m.; Conference 4.30 p.m.

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