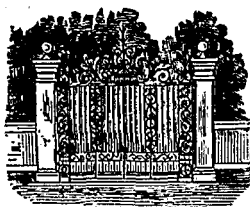


## Outside the Gates.

## WOMEN.



The Duchess of Connaught, who is an honorary graduate of the Royal University of Ireland, has promised to present to the Senate of the University a large-sized signed photograph of herself in academic costume, to be hung in the Senate Room.

We have somewhere seen, says the *Lancet*, the excellent suggestion that every girl, through her parents or natural guardians, should insist upon the acceptance of her intended husband by a responsible insurance company before consenting to marry him; and this is a requirement in support of which public opinion might without any great difficulty be enlisted. Medical practitioners might do much to promote a proper estimation of the facts among their patients.

*Truth* says:—"The decay of the dowager is a feature of the moment which is causing grave anxiety to those English men and women who look forwards. 'France needs nothing so much, to promote her regeneration, as good mothers,' declared Napoleon; will a philosophical Englishman soon exclaim: 'England needs nothing so much, to prevent her degeneration, as good grandmothers'?"

Poor grannies! They are a little skittish in their old age, with their baby complexions and muslin gowns! But why blame them? They are merely sowing their wild oats out of season. Think of their narrow, restricted youth, with its false ideals and "womanly" fallacies, and wonder no longer that in this more enlightened age they cut capers; it is merely the result of violated Nature—she who will be obeyed.

The cult of starvation is one of the latter-day fads. It is reported that a wealthy young woman, who lives alone in a handsome house in Chicago, was found in her home, weak, emaciated, and delirious, as the result of joining one of the newest cults. She almost starved herself to death by following its teachings, the chief of which was that only a few grains of wheat, with fresh air and pure water, are necessary to sustain life. Her teacher was a Persian, a prominent sun-worshipper, and he is said to have infused young women with enthusiasm for his creed, which taught that only by severe subjugation of the flesh could the spirit be freed.

We find nothing new in this teaching. Have not the lusts of the flesh and the aspirations of the spirit been for ever at war? It is not by the murder of the body that the spirit triumphs, but by inspiring its marvellous mechanism to accomplish triumph upon triumph in wresting knowledge from the unknown. We would that the spirit should give honour to its corporeal environment. Have we not the authority of the great Psalmist that "it is fearfully and wonderfully made"?

## A Book of the Week.

## RULERS OF KINGS.\*

It has been our lot to remark once before in these pages that Mrs. Atherton is a reactionary writer. In "Senator North" she set herself to enlist the sympathy of her readers for the elderly husband who wished to release himself from his elderly wife and marry a young woman. She sought to enlist our feeling on the man's side, when he had out-worn one woman in his service, to make us hold that it was natural that he should desire to seek other society.

Now, in this present novel, she shows us the triumphant reign of brute force, backed by vast wealth. Her new book might be called "The Gospel of the Almighty Dollar." Benson, in his "Relentless City," showed us the American plutocrat possessing himself of England. Mrs. Atherton shows him, with conscious pride, possessing himself of Europe, and ready to sacrifice millions of lives, and, incidentally, his own honour, in order that he may ally himself with an Emperor's daughter.

The drift of the story, when one discovers it, is quite stupefying. The book opens excellently, with a description of the lonely childhood of Fessenden Abbott in the Adirondacks. He has a father, who occasionally visits him; a sister Alexandra, of whom he has sometimes heard. This is all he knows. He grows up on a farm, works, fights, plays, has a tutor, and finally goes to a university, where, after the first year, his father forces him to support himself. When, at last, his education is complete, and he leaves his university with flying colours, it is to discover that he is the only son of the richest man in the world.

So far the story is excellent. The hero is a natural, interesting, unaffected fellow, and one hopes that he may yet hit upon a plan to remain a man, though a multi-millionaire.

But the form which his exercise of power does ultimately take is so brutal as to be staggering.

He falls in love with the Archduchess Ranata Theresia, daughter of the Emperor of Austria. Her father naturally thinks that a marriage between them is out of the question. But Fessenden is the owner of a terribly destructive secret: the secret of an explosive which could wreck an empire in less than no time. This secret he offers the Emperor as the price of his daughter, holding over his head the threat that, if he declines, the millionaire will promptly sell his secret to Russia, and so enable that Power to annihilate Austria!

Such is the new Yankee knight-errant. What does modern opinion say of the Crowned Heads of Europe, when to satisfy some private feeling they drag their subjects into war? Is a man less odious because he was brought up in the Adirondacks, and because the men to be sacrificed to his whim are somebody else's subjects?

It may be argued that Fessenden never meant to execute his threat: he knew the Emperor must give way. But all the ultimatums of history have been based on the theory that the other side would give way.

The perusal of such a book seems to show that the sooner American plutocrats are muzzled, the better

\* By Gertrude Atherton.

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