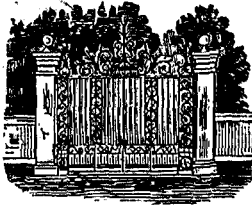


Outside the Gates.

A Book of the Week.

WOMEN.



The latest evidence of the esteem in which English nurses are held is that the nurse in attendance on the Queen of Italy and the little Prince of Piedmont, whose arrival has caused such rejoicing in Italy, is an Englishwoman. The room at Raconigi where the Prince was born was fitted up by British workmen.

An admirable way in which ladies who take an interest in their local hospital can assist its committee, and busy Matron and nursing staff, is by supplying and keeping in repair the linen, blankets, and clothing required for the use of the patients. A Ladies' Linen League, of which Mrs. Herbert Benyon, of Englefield House, near Reading, wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire, is the first president, has been formed for the purpose of supplying the garments, linen, and blankets required for the use of the patients of the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Ladies resident in Berkshire and the adjoining counties have already shown a keen interest in the undertaking.

Some ladies in Norfolk are taking an active interest in the new laundry which is needed for the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, and which, it is estimated, will cost £2,000. It occurred to Dr. Beverley that some of the ladies of the county might help, and, on mentioning the matter to Lady Leicester and Mrs. Gurney Buxton, they at once promised £100 each, and their example was followed by six others. It is now suggested that the whole expense should be defrayed by ladies in the county, and steps are being taken to enlist their help.

An effort is being made to solve the servant problem by the National Registry, Ltd., which has offices at Rugby Chambers, Great St. James Street, N.W. Some of the objects of the Registry are: "To establish domestic training-schools in various centres, and make domestic service a highly trained calling." "To point out the advantages of domestic service as compared with other occupations; to remove the stigma attached to what is often regarded as an inferior or degrading calling; and to attract desirable persons thereto." "To popularise domestic service and solve the servant problem." The Registry is formed on co-operative lines and is registered under the Provident Societies Act, so that both employers and employed may share the profits, which are limited to 5 per cent. Further profits will be utilised in supporting training-schools and domestic homes of rest, as well as in assisting distressed members and giving bonuses to officers and servants. The books of the Society will be open to the strictest scrutiny.

Mrs. White, a negress, has passed a creditable examination before the Louisville (Kentucky) Circuit Court, and has received the certificate permitting her to practise as a lawyer. It is believed that she is the first negress to be so honoured.

DOUBLE HARNESS.*

This book is a more ambitious effort than at first appears. It is a study—slightly cynical, but kindly—of the average marriage among average British gentlefolk of to-day. We have four couples. The Selfords bicker, but get on well on the whole. The Fanshaws are fond of each other; but she has no children, and has gone in for a fancy which is more than a flirtation. The Courtlands quarrel openly. Lady Harriet is a virago, a woman who cannot control her temper—and the consequences of this are worked out with a truly wonderful ability, which is perhaps the best thing in the book. It is around the fourth pair that the main interest of the story circles, and one hesitates to say that the record of the married life of Grantley and Sibylla Imason is entirely convincing. Imason is a banker, a very good fellow, rich; not very young nor romantic. He falls in love with a young girl—with Sibylla, who is romance personified. Sibylla proceeds to deify her handsome lover, to cling passionately to her ideals, to be disillusioned by force, as it were, and in spite of herself. Then comes havoc. Grantley cannot in the least understand her passionate outburst, he has no idea what she has to complain of; and when she banishes him from her heart, and insists upon living in his house as a stranger, he concludes she is sulking, and waits with patience and some irony for an apology which is not forthcoming.

Then comes Walter Blake upon the scene—handsome, idle, and as fond as Sibylla herself of the dramatic pose. The peculiar hold which this man exerts upon the mind of the young, headstrong, estranged wife is finely sketched out by Mr. Hope:—

"Whatever Sibylla's faults, levity was not among them, and danger, in Christine Fanshaw's sense—danger of a break-up of the household—there would probably have been none had not Walter Blake, after a lively and not very profitable youth, wanted to reform his life. He might have wanted to be wicked without creating any peril at all for the Imason household. But he wanted to be good, and he wanted Sibylla to make him good. . . . He, too, had a faculty—even a faculty—for idealising. . . . He was firmly convinced that he must be good, and that Sibylla, and Sibylla alone, could make him good. This was to attack Sibylla on her weak spot, to aim an arrow true at the joint in her harness. For (one is tempted to say unfortunately) she knew the only way in which people could be reformed and made good, and caused to feel that wisdom and virtue were not only better (which, of course, they felt already) but also more pleasurable than folly and sin. (People who want to be reformed are sometimes, it must be admitted, a little exacting.) This could be done only by sympathy and understanding. . . . What was wrong with Sibylla? In the end, that she was not wanted, or not wanted enough, that she had more to give than had been asked of her, and no outlet sufficient to relieve the press of her emotions. It was almost inevitable that she should respond to Blake's appeal."

It is a delicate touch in Mr. Hope's story that Christine Fanshaw, the woman who has come so near to wrecking her own life, should be the one to save

* By Anthony Hope. (Hutchinson and Co.)

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