

Gifford would be like to prove, has still no mind for matrimony himself. However, after a time, he decides to go and inspect his winnings, and so appears in his guise of tinker, at Elizabeth's house. She knows the shame that has been put upon her, but has no idea that this is the man. The sequel should be read.

G. M. R.

### A Poem.

A fire-mist and a planet,  
 A crystal and a cell,  
 A jelly-fish and a saurian,  
 And caves where the cave-men dwell.  
 Then a sense of law and beauty,  
 A face upturned from the clod,  
 Some call it evolution,  
 And others call it God.

A haze on the far horizon,  
 The infinite tender sky,  
 The ripe rich tints of the corn fields,  
 The wild geese sailing high.  
 And all over upland and lowland  
 The charm of the golden rod,  
 Some of us call it Autumn,  
 And others call it God.

Like tides on a crescent sea-beach,  
 When the moon is new and thin,  
 Into our hearts high yearnings  
 Come welling and surging in.  
 Come from the mystic ocean,  
 Whose rim no foot has trod,  
 Some of us call it longing,  
 And others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty,  
 A mother starved for her brood,  
 Socrates drinking the hemlock,  
 Jesus on the rood.  
 And millions who humble and nameless,  
 The straight hard pathway trod,  
 Some call it consecration,  
 And others call it God.

—W. H. CARRUTH, *University of Kansas.*

### What to Read.

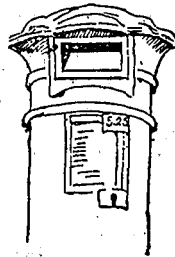
- "A New Paolo and Francesca." By Annie E. Holdsworth.
- "Amanda of the Mill." By Marie Van Vorst.
- "Cut Laurels." By M. Hamilton.
- "Lammas Grove." By Carlton Daw.
- "Aubrey Ellison." By St. John Lucas.
- "Before the Crisis."

### Coming Events.

March 25th.—Infirmery Medical Superintendents: Annual banquet, Sheriton Room, Trocadero Restaurant, 7.

March 25th.—Sessional Meeting of the Royal Sanitary Institute, Parkes Museum, Margaret Street, W. Discussion on Municipal Milk Depôts and Milk Sterilization, opened by G. F. McCleary, M.D., D.P.H., 11.30 a.m.

March 30th.—The Queen gives her patronage to a concert in aid of the Alexandra Hospital for Children, 35, Grosvenor Square, 3.30.



### Letters to the Editor.

NOTES, QUERIES, &c.

*Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not in any way hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.*

#### THE DRINKING MIDWIFE.

To the Editor of the "*British Journal of Nursing.*"

DEAR MADAM,—I notice that Mr. Sydney Holland has again made the assertion (in the *London Hospital Gazette*) which he made before the Select Committee of the House of Commons last year in relation to midwives, an assertion fraught with such ill consequences, if it were to receive acceptance, that I beg leave to put forward the other point of view.

Mr. Holland, in discussing the question of the State Registration of Trained Nurses, and propounding his views, which are sufficiently well known, says:—"People say 'doctors are registered, midwives are registered, why should not you register nurses?' I say the analogy is completely different.

"The midwife goes in for a special kind of work. If she is so minded, when she has finished, she may go and drink herself stupid if she likes. In her case, as long as she can do her job accurately and well it makes no difference. I do not mean, of course, to say that a drunken midwife is desirable, but what I mean is that she has her registration for doing one specific act."

I do not desire to "make the fur and feathers fly" over the Registration question at the present moment. I would rather find a point of agreement with Mr. Holland, and I find it in this, that however hotly he may deny to nurses the right to organise their profession, no one can doubt his genuine and sympathetic desire for the well-being of the sick and suffering poor.

To consider, then, Mr. Holland's assertion from the point of view of the poor. He contends that so long as a midwife can do her job accurately and well it makes no difference if she goes and drinks herself stupid when she has finished it. I contend it makes an untold difference. The midwife has an immense power for good or evil in the houses of the poor in which she works; she may lay the foundation of habits which will continue long after she has passed to other spheres of work. If she is in the habit of drinking herself stupid, she will inevitably expect a "drop of gin" while she is in the patient's house, she will tell the patient that a drop will be good for her and help to keep her spirits up during her hour of trial, and the prescription will extend to weakly babies also.

I am not writing without knowledge. As a midwife I know that an important part of one's work is to combat the all-too-prevalent idea that stimulants are a necessity to patients at such times. I may also say that at the St. John's House Maternity Home at Battersea, of which I was at one time in charge, and where, for various reasons, it was considered desirable that women with their first babies should be required to come into the Home and not be attended in their own houses, we were strongly urged by one of the clergy in whose parish our work lay to

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)