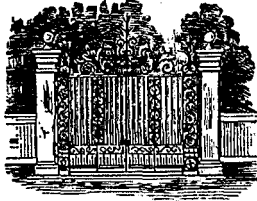


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



The sale of genuine bric-à-brac, arranged by a committee of ladies, for the benefit of poor gentlewomen who desire to dispose of old family possessions for their utmost value, without incurring publicity, is to be held this year from Monday, May 14th, to Wednesday, May 23rd, inclusive, at 16, Brook Street, Hanover Square, London, W. The opportunity afforded has, on past occasions, been much appreciated, and very successful sales have been held. Amongst the patronesses on the present occasion are Georgina Countess of Guilford, the Countess of Annesley, the Lady Muriel North, the Lady Margaret Campbell, Hon. Mrs. Errington, Lady Prescott, Lady Prinsep, Lady Roberts Austen, Mrs. Reynolds Peyton, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Mrs. Hume, and Miss Samuda.

Ladies who are desirous of selling genuine works of art submit them in the first instance to the committee, who reserve to themselves the right to judge if the articles are genuine and suitable for sale, and who, in conjunction with the vendor, fix the price at which all goods are marked in plain figures at the sale.

The sale is one which should not be missed by collectors, or by those in search of gifts which are sure to be appreciated, such as fine china, needlework pictures, lace, prints, silver and Sheffield plate, and bric-à-brac of all kinds.

Mrs. Homan, who for many years did excellent work as a member of the London School Board, and who for the last two years has been a co-opted member of the London County Council Education Committee, at a recent council meeting on education of the Women's Liberal Metropolitan Union, said that before she had anything to do with the London County Council she thought everything they did was perfect; but in her opinion it was not nearly as businesslike as the old School Board. Never in her life had she seen work go so slow as on their committees, and owing to lack of system work was slurred over. The trouble is, she thinks, that the councillors have tried to apply the same system and methods to education as they do to tramways and drains. They seem to forget entirely that they are dealing with human beings.

The Blackrock Urban Council have unanimously adopted a resolution declaring that the exclusion of their Chairman, Lady Dockrell, from the magistracy is an injustice. Lady Dockrell applied to be sworn as a magistrate by virtue of holding the above position, but has been informed by the Lord Chancellor's private secretary that "though the official position which you hold carries with it in the case of a man the addition of the dignity of a justice of the peace, the law has been so ungentle as to withhold the dignity from a lady."

Book of the Week.

THE ANGEL OF PAIN.*

The taste for the occult, which comes out so strongly in the work of his brother, the mystic Robert Hugh Benson, is present, though veiled, in the work of the author of "Dodo."

The book before us, like "The Image in the Sand," is an attempt to mingle the society and the sensational novel—to give us a picture of very up-to-date people, to whom somewhat surprising things happen.

The "Angel of Pain" is immeasurably superior to the former book, being written much more steadily upon its author's higher level. But somehow it is not convincing. There is a made-to-order flavour about it, in spite of all its cleverness.

We have the dear old lady, with whom Mr. Benson is always successful. Then we have Lady Ellington, the woman of the world. She is not so interesting as some of her kind in the hands of this writer, but she is boldly drawn, and no doubt true to life. But there is something very unconvincing nowadays, in the beautiful young woman whose mamma arranges a worldly marriage for her. One so far more often sees romance on the part of the elder generation, and uncompromising hardness and worldliness in the daughter. However, Mr. Benson compels his Madge to become engaged to Philip Home, a somewhat undemonstrative person with millions; and then to fall wildly in love with Evelyn Dundas, whose character is the leading note of the book. He is admirable throughout, the most charming, engaging, irresponsible, gay and debonnaire youth that ever pleased himself in the days of his youth, when the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh wherein he should say, "I have no pleasure in them."

Philip takes his jilting hard, and the pain which he then suffers moulds his character to higher things as nothing else could have done.

The tragic catastrophe of what happens to Evelyn is the part of the book one likes least. Mr. Hichens, in an incomparable novel, once gave us the woman who swayed the world with her beauty and lost it at one awful stroke—not merely losing beauty but becoming horrible to look upon. Mr. Benson now gives us the young Apollo to whom the same thing happens. Mr. Hichens saves his woman, through the love and strength of one man. But Madge is not strong enough to save Evelyn. As the "Image in the Sand" was also more or less obviously a leaf out of Mr. Hichens' book, it is a pity that Mr. Benson should a second time suggest that a portion of his inspiration is borrowed. But the fact remains, that if you have not read "The Lady with the Fan" you will be much more deeply impressed by "The Angel of Pain" than you would otherwise be.

The hint of the occult is supplied by Tom Merivale, who leads the simple life, getting nearer and nearer to the heart of nature and solitude, until he sees Pan and dies. The description of the place where, and the mood in which, he first hears the pipe of Pan distantly fluting, is a masterly little bit of description. So is the account of Philip's garden by the Thames.

* By E. F. Benson. (Heinemann.)

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