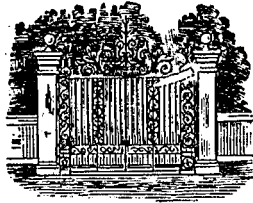


## Outside the Gates.

### WOMEN



The value of the work of women as health visitors has lately been strikingly exemplified in Limehouse, in connection with infant mortality. In 1900 this was so startling that the Board of Works in Limehouse proposed to appoint health visitors, but this fell through because the Local Government Board would not sanction their appointment. The same thing happened in Stepney three years ago, as the Borough Council declined to pay the whole salaries of the officers, which they would have had to do in the absence of the sanction of the Local Government Board.

The need for a health visitor was however so great, owing to the ignorance of mothers as to the manner of rearing babies, that a private individual agreed to pay the salary of such an officer for two years. At first the visitor was looked upon with a large amount of suspicion, but she conquered this feeling by her tact and ability.

Reporting on the result of the work of Miss Forrester, the visitor appointed, Dr. Thomas, the Medical Officer of Health for Stepney, says: "She visited and revisited the homes of 721 infants, 74 of whom died under the age of one year. The rate of mortality among infants she visited was therefore 102 per 1,000 births. This is very satisfactory when it is considered that this area was selected on account of its high mortality (the area was named Limehouse Fields), and that the infant mortality for the whole of the Limehouse district in that period was 185 per 1,000 births. A large majority of these infants were suckled by the mother, only a few comparatively being fed entirely by artificial means. On the other hand it is very difficult to find out from the parents to what extent breast feeding was supplemented by oatmeal, biscuits, soaked bread, or 'just a little of what we have ourselves.' As the result of continuous teaching by the health visitor there is undoubtedly less ignorance on that point and more knowledge of the value of milk as an article of diet for the infant. Most of the mothers believe that whenever the babies cry they must be fed. It is most difficult to make them comprehend that babies cry from other causes than hunger. The wasting diseases that are so common among babies in the East End, as well as elsewhere, are often due to the overloading of the stomachs with unsuitable food. The 'dummy' seems to be considered the panacea for all the trials and discomforts of infant life. It does not matter how dirty the wretched thing is, as soon as the child cries and the feeding bottle is not convenient the 'dummy' is used. The visitor spoke to the mothers and advised them to do away with the 'dummy,' and tried to reason as to the cause of the child's crying." Such an officer as a

health visitor, says Dr. Thomas, can be of real benefit in teaching mothers the proper management of infants and reducing high infantile mortality. Miss Forrester has been appointed for another two years in consequence of the success of her work.

Thus once more the value of women's work for the community is demonstrated, even under the disabilities from which they suffer owing to their disfranchisement. It was the late Miss Susan B. Anthony who said, "who can measure the advantages that would result if the magnificent abilities of these women could be devoted to the needs of government, society, home, instead of being consumed in the struggle to obtain their birthright of individual freedom? Until this be gained, we can never know, we cannot even prophesy, the capacity and power of woman for the uplifting of humanity. It may be delayed longer than we think, it may be here sooner than we expect, but the day will come when man will recognise woman as his peer, not only at the fireside but in the councils of the nation. Then, and not until then, will there be the perfect comradeship, the ideal union between the sexes, that shall result in the highest development of the race. What this shall be we may not attempt to define, but this we know, that only good can come to the individual or the nation through the rendering of exact justice."

## Book of the Week.

### THE SOVEREIGN REMEDY.\*

Mrs. Steel's new book, is on the whole, of considerable interest. We are not of those who consider that a writer must stick to his last to the extent urged by some critics; or, in other words, that, because Mrs. Steel has made India specially her own province therefore she must continue to write of the East.

But, nevertheless, we own to feeling that the special knowledge of India which this writer possesses has formed perhaps a larger share of her literary equipment than we might have previously supposed.

There is, we feel, a lack in this new story, a certain absence of decision in the touch, a tendency to overcrowd the canvas and to introduce side issues, which tends to weary the reader.

But the book possesses one good quality: it improves as it goes on. The scene is laid in Wales, and the local colour is good: but the opening chapter is forced, unreal, and might deter many a reader from going further. Two cyclists collide on a mountain road. As they were apparently both going the same way, this seems unpardonable. They discover that they are both called Edward Crutlenden: and on these grounds, proceed to swear eternal friendship, in a species of slang which only a lady novelist would attribute to them. One is rich, one poor. The rich one, to put himself on an equal footing, hides a hundred pounds worth of bank-notes in a cleft on the hill-side. Three people see him do this, his namesake, a Calvinistic preacher called Morris Pugh, and a doctor, Peter Ramsay.

The two Edwards proceed on their tour together,

\* Flora Annie Steel.

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