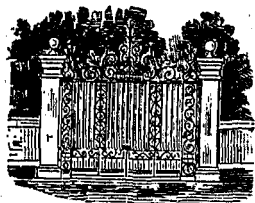


## Outside the Gates.

## WOMEN.



Mr. E. H. Pickersgill, M.P., does well to draw attention, in an article in the *Daily Mail*, entitled "Women Prisoners," to the unjust and ineffective constitution of the Board of Commissioners of Prisons, composed as it is of four men. During last session of Parliament he pressed on the Home Secretary the appointment of a woman as one of the inspectors of prisons, and also the addition of a woman to the Board. Mr. Gladstone assented to the former proposal, but declined to entertain the latter.

If it were suggested that in future women only should be appointed commissioners, the injustice and absurdity of the proposal would be at once apparent. But that proposal would not be one whit more unjust than the present practice, while it would perhaps be less absurd because the subject-matters concerned are largely domestic, and so fall rather within the special province of women.

Mrs. Fawcett, LL.D., points out that from the number of women in the United Kingdom who have received University education, it is found that over 800 women who have passed the degree examinations at Oxford and Cambridge, but are denied the degree of their own Universities, have taken advantage of the ad eundem degree offered to them by Trinity College, Dublin. This means that Trinity College, Dublin, has received fees approximating to £16,000. With characteristic generosity, the college authorities have ear-marked their receipts from this source, and intend to spend them solely for the benefit of their women students. The hospitality of Trinity College, Dublin, to the outcast students of Oxford and Cambridge ceased at the end of 1907. Henceforth those who desire the Dublin degree must matriculate and pursue their University course in Trinity College, Dublin.

The Fellows and members of the Royal College of Surgeons of England are being circularised as to whether or no women should be admitted to examination for its diplomas. In the meantime the council has decided to inform the Royal College of Physicians that, pending the result of this inquiry, they do not propose to take any further steps with regard to the petition from the London School of Medicine for Women.

Mrs. Charles Muller is very busy arranging the exhibition entitled "What to do with Our Girls," to be held next May in the Prince's Skating Rink, Knightsbridge, organised in connection with the Guild of Service and Good fellowship. Daily demonstrations of professions suitable to gentlewomen will be given, such as book-binding, printing, weaving, metal work, marqueterie, and sculpture.

## Book of the Week.

## NEPENTHES.\*

To those who care for mystical research, and particularly for Oriental problems in psychology, "Nepenthes" is likely to commend itself. It is certainly a most extraordinary book, and the veiled story running through it is quite out of the common.

The title Miss Hayllar has acquired from a Greek quotation, given in the prologue, with the usual disregard for the ignorant and unlearned in the original tongue. The majority of us, therefore, have to take it on trust that the quotation is, as Miss Hayllar assures us, "a very sweet line," and that the title is appropriate to her curious heroine. One is sometimes tempted to wish that some law in literary etiquette should demand footnote translations of foreign quotations. It is not everyone who can read Greek, or even Latin, for the matter of that.

In this case the absence of the translation greatly weakens the explanation.

"What does the word 'Nepenthes' put you in mind of?" asks the hero of the book, who is also the narrator.

"It was on the tip of my hasty tongue to say, 'of a prescription to cure the toothache, but by great good fortune there came into my head two lines from the Odyssey, and I uttered them,'" replies the listener.

Now, the listener is a person much to be pitied by the prosaic, though he himself utters no complaint. We discover by the end of the book that he sat from sunset to dawn, all through the chill and dampness of the night, on an outcrop of rock, under a tree, facing a lonely grave, upon the headstone of which was inscribed the one word, "Nepenthes." Meanwhile "the old poet" tells a detailed story with a self-absorption which apparently keeps both himself and his patient friend immune from all disasters one might have expected from such an imprudent course.

Bridge over this small defect with the familiar excuse of poetic licence, and one forgets the humorous suggestion in a really very pathetic and even tragic story. The lonely, unprotected figure of Nepenthes is by far the best character in the book: her dignity of reserve, the grandeur of her self-control are never failing. About the people who surround her there is often something unreal and rather incompatible with our knowledge of life and humanity in general. Much of the plot would serve excellently for a schoolboy's book of adventure. There is Hugh Fellowes, squire of the village, and widely suspected of being a wrecker; a certain Joe Ruggins, whose very name suggests nefarious deeds; a coarse-minded, rough village doctor, and other useful ingredients for stirring romance. Much of the story hinges round a wonderful chest full of treasure saved from a wreck, and belonging to the Hindu woman, named by her rescuer "Nepenthes." The setting is not a perfect one, but, throughout, the mysterious

\* By Florence Hayllar. (Blackwood and Sons.)

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