

Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.

"No soul can ever truly see
Another's highest, noblest part,
Save through the sweet philosophy
And loving wisdom of the heart."

Friday, the 28th inst., is a momentous day for the women of this country, as Mr. Stanger's Women's Enfranchisement Bill is down for its second reading in the House of Commons. Let us hope that no unworthy Parliamentary tricks, as on former occasions, will be permitted to wreck it. Long continued injustice breeds bitterness, and bitterness between the sexes is as unnatural as it is demoralising to the higher forces of species. Nothing sound can be born of the slave mother once she resents her degradation.

The recent appointment of Mrs. Pillow, a lecturer on health subjects, as almoner of the Charing Cross Hospital is the last link which completes a long chain of organised medical relief. Mrs. Pillow not only has to satisfy herself that all applicants for free treatment as out-patients are really too poor to obtain treatment in other ways; she also ensures, as far as possible, that the case of every poor patient is followed up by charitable organisation. She co-operates with private practitioners, the Charity Organisation Society, the Invalid Children's Aid Society, district visitors and nurses, church and religious societies, and the metropolitan medical dispensaries.

There is a familiar ring about the following true little story, although it emanates from the United States:—

Mrs. Sarah S. Platt Decker, President of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, is a rare story-teller, and the situation is well portrayed in the following incident, which she tells herself. Her name had been attached to a petition to the City Council of Denver, but she had failed to indicate her occupation. Upon this point a man was sent to her home to inquire.

"What is your occupation, madam?" he asked.

"I am a housekeeper, sir," she replied.

"Well, that doesn't count," said the man, promptly.

"Well, I am both father and mother to my family," she announced.

"That doesn't count neither," he replied, firmly.

"Well, I transact all my own business," she said, briskly. "I collect my own rents and manage all my own affairs." (Mrs. Decker has a private fortune that it would keep the ordinary man busy to take care of.)

"Have you got an office down town?" inquired the man.

"No," she said, "I transact all my business from my desk here in my home."

"Ah, that doesn't count neither," the man replied, obdurately.

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Decker at last, "I am President of the General Federation of Women's

Clubs, an organisation of over 800,000 women, and I attend to all my own correspondence," confident this time that she had provided something worthy the name of occupation; but that man just took out his memorandum book and said: "Well, I'll just put you down as not doin' anything."

Book of the Week.

"THE BLUE LAGOON."*

Here is a book that is entirely out of the common. It is just a little bit of Nature caught and bound between two covers. The love story of the young pair of savages is the simplest and most primitive in the world. It is an episode in the book—not the story itself.

The tale, given crudely as a resumé of the plot, might strike the majority as unattractive, fit only for the lovers of "Swiss Family Robinson," and stories of that type: it must convey an entirely wrong impression, just as, perhaps, the opening chapters themselves may be a trifle misleading.

When the sailing ship *Northumberland* takes fire and has to be abandoned in the Pacific Ocean it falls to the lot of one Pat Button to save two little children, a boy and a girl, in a small dinghy. In a dense fog he loses sight of the long boat and the quarter-boat, both crammed with seamen; the fate of that portion of the crew has a description to itself that is enough to make one's blood run cold. As in the "Crimson Azaleas," so in this book Mr. de Vere Staupoole proves himself to be a pastmaster in narration—he can depict beauty of the most fragile and delicate kind with a touch that moves one to see it; while ugliness and horror under his pen have the magic that makes itself felt.

For the inimitable Mr. Button and his two charges there is, however, no horror, and no ugliness. The man is a lazy, easy-going Irishman, supremely good-hearted, and so desirous that the children should not be terrified that he is actually not frightened himself. His philosophical attitude meets with its reward when he presently lands his tiny craft upon one of the small Pacific Islands, and there placidly takes up his abode. The Island abounds in natural fruits, the sea is full of fish, the new inhabitants the only human beings upon it—fare sumptuously. The climate is glorious.

The children, who are cousins, have lost their father and uncle, Mr. Lestrangle, by this unlooked-for adventure, but they are very young, and the philosophy of Mr. Button sustains them against any poignant grief. Indeed, Mr. Button, as a teller of tales, is a most delightful being. He is not precisely the sort of nurse-maid every mother would choose for her children, but he proves very adequate for this situation. It is quite a personal affliction when the poor good soul falls a victim to "the devil's cask," some years after the settlement of the party on the island. Here again we feel the weight of Mr. de Vere Staupoole's power, and

* H. de Vere Staupoole. (Fisher Unwin.)

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