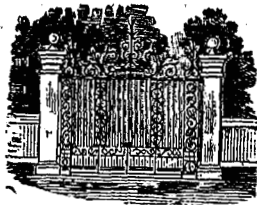


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



We are glad to note that the members of the Mothers' Union have unanimously adopted a resolution to start a campaign against the circulation of prurient and demoralising literature.

The King has been graciously pleased to award the "Kaisar-i-Hind Medal for Public Service in India" to Miss Cornelia Sorabji.

A public meeting arranged by professional and industrial women is to be held in the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, W., on Wednesday, July 7th, at 8 p.m., when the speakers will include Philip Snowden, Esq., M.P., Dr. Ethel Bentham, Miss Murby (Civil Servants), Miss Horniman (Founder of the First Repertory Theatre in the United Kingdom), Miss A. K. Williams (Public School Teachers), Miss Reddish (Member, Workpeople's Band of the Arbitration Court), Miss Roper (Women Textile and Other Workers' Representation Committee), and Miss Gore Booth and Mrs. Dickinson (Women's Trade and Labour Council), and Miss Janet Case, M.A., University of Women Teachers. Admission is free, and there are also a certain number of reserved seats.

Baron and Baroness de Forest have lent Spencer House for a meeting of the National Society of Day Nurseries on July 2nd, under the presidency of H.R.H. Princess Christian.

A Conference of the Women's Local Government Society was held on Tuesday at the Council Chamber of the Metropolitan Asylums Board. Mrs. Theodore Williams presided.

Mrs. Nott Bower proposed: "That the Conference urges those interested in the co-operation of women in local government to organise locally in view of the County Council elections in March next, and more immediately of the Town Council and London Borough Council elections in November; and to this end the Conference desires to enlist the help of friends in different centres in the provinces."

Mrs. Nott Bower said that there was an extraordinary amount of ignorance upon this point even amongst educated women. Some, when communicated with, wrote that they did not approve of taking men's work, and others that they were not interested in such things. It was not merely the welfare of their own homes that should concern women. Where they sat with men on a council it was the men who were the first to recognise how useful and efficient the work of women was. The resolution was seconded by the Hon. Mrs. Bertrand Russell, supported by Dr. Helen Boyle (Brighton), Alderman Mullins, L.C.C., Miss Keeling (Kensington), Miss Kennedy (Cambridge), and Miss Leigh Browne, and carried unanimously.

Book of the Week.

THE ROMANCE OF A PLAIN MAN.*

There is probably no spot in the United States which has produced so many notable and romantic figures, both in history and fiction, as Virginia.

Miss Glasgow has chosen Richmond as the scene of her story, and introduces the reader to all the various strata of society contained in that most interesting city. The old families, the real aristocracy of America, with their pride and reserve, and absolute contempt for the newer elements, forcing themselves into society through the sheer strength of financial success; in some cases the offspring of the despised "poor white trash," despised alike by the well-born dwellers in "uptown" Richmond, and the newly emancipated negro, whose pride in the old family he serves, is only equalled by his abhorrence of the low white.

It is into the midst of this latter class that the author takes her reader, and from it she draws her hero, the Plain Man, showing how indomitable purpose, and the true American spirit, can rise superior to all obstacles which may come in its way.

Ben Starr tells his own story, and very deftly has Miss Glasgow managed, so that at no time during the whole narration does Ben become wearisome, as is so often the case when the first person singular speaks. He is a very small boy, with an amazingly enquiring mind, when we meet him first, sitting beside his father, a stonecutter, asking endless questions whilst waiting for his supper. It is a wild stormy night. Suddenly there burst into the room, a lady and a little girl about Ben's age; the lady is running away from her brutal husband. Ben tries to make friends with the girl, but she scornfully refuses even to take a cup of milk from his hand, saying he is a "common boy." These words rankle: as soon as by dint of questions he discovers what they mean, he determines to cease being common. Shortly after this he attracts the notice of General Bolingbroke, who, speaking of himself, says, "Ten years ago I tried to save Johnstone's army, and to-day I am only a railway president—there may be more lasting honour in building a country's trade than in winning a battle." He is a fine figure, belonging to an old family, and yet possessing great business capacity.

Step by step we see Ben rise; he early realises he can do nothing without education. His first curriculum is peculiar; in a second hand shop he gets "Pilgrim's Progress," "Sir Charles Grandison," and "Johnson's Dictionary." Feeling that command of language is needful, he starts learning the dictionary by heart. Chance throws him once more across the General's path, who from that time proves his unfailing friend, gives him a place in his tobacco manufactory. Discovering the lad's thirst for knowledge, the General sends him in the evenings to Dr. Theophilus Fry to study with him. The doctor is another delightful and unique character study.

From time to time Ben catches glimpses of the

* By Ellen Glasgow.

(John Murray.)

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