

OUTSIDE THE GATES.

WOMEN.

The following sympathetic message has been sent by His Majesty the King to the fifth International Congress for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, held in London during the week.

"His Majesty trusts that under Divine providence the labours of the delegates will be greatly blessed and aided, and desires to give expression to his true and heartfelt sympathy and that of the Queen in the international work for the protection of young womanhood. The King further desires to congratulate the National Vigilance Association and the International Bureau for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic on the success hitherto achieved, and bids them go forward with courage and energy."

We are very apt to think in this country of attempted systematic obstruction to the evolution of women, that because we are denied just legislation, the world really is at a standstill. Nothing of the kind; it is going whirling round all the time. Thus with woman's suffrage our efforts are not useless because our legislators are too obtuse to listen to reason. Other men of more liberal mind are carrying out reforms elsewhere and making it more and more impossible every day for our intolerants to bolster up their tyrannies for long.

The outlook for Woman Suffrage is just fine. Australasia has led the way. The map of the United States in regard to equal suffrage between the sexes is rapidly changing its colour. Of course the outlook has been black for generations. That stands for sex density, and there are still eighteen States where women do not count for anything but animal purposes. Then comes a glimmer of conscience and the women are permitted certain political privileges. In these eighteen States the tone is grey, but rapidly we are sweeping darkness off the face of the map, and where real democracy and Christianity have been established by the Parliamentary enfranchisement of women, where they exercise the power of the Vote, we have stainless white States, and there are already ten of them. In another decade the United States of America will have some right to claim to be a Republic. Equal political power will be exercised by all its men and women, and its children will be born free from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Then slavery in the Old World is bound to go or its kingdoms will crumble through dry rot, and be scattered to the winds of the universe, as all effete things are bound to be whirled away.

The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies are carrying out a Women's Suffrage Pilgrimage, culminating in an open-air demonstration in Hyde Park on July 26th. Information may be obtained from Miss P. Strachey, 58, Victoria Street, S.W.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"BY THE BLUE RIVER"*

The chief charm of this book lies in the atmosphere of the East, in which it is so successfully enfolded. Those who are admirers of this same art in Mr. Robert Hichens will compare without discredit "The Blue River" to the "Garden of Allah" inasmuch as that the writers of both do really transport their readers into the mystic, mysterious and inscrutable.

Frances Amory and her boy David, ruined and disgraced by the fraudulent transactions of their husband and father, a fugitive from justice, go for retirement from the world to a small property Frances owns at Oued Zerga, where she would see again the African stars those beloved and remembered beacons shining once more over her head. She and her unfortunate husband had tacitly agreed that some day he would join her there and once more gather up the broken threads of life together in this distant land. In the meantime she and David wait in uncertainty of his whereabouts and plans.

Frances had never before felt so completely removed and apart from the trivial current, the petty happenings of life. The deep silences possessed her with a feeling of absolute peace. She did not regret Belgrave Square, nor the gay boulevards of Paris. What she had sought in Oued Zerga she was beginning to find. Other women—the prosperous and happy ones—had blamed her in no slight degree for her husband's fall. Aubrey's hand which had given her so much happiness, had robbed her also of all joy. Already these things had lost something of their power to hurt and wound her. She realised this as she stood in the veranda of Oued Zerga on the first night of her arrival, and looked out at the star-filled sky, and at the plain guarded by mountains.

She went back to the house and saw Hafsi standing there. He thought she was trembling, this calm, serene-looking woman with the grave dark eyes.

"Hafsi," she said almost entreatingly.

"Yes, madame," he said.

Hafsi's face was strangely emotionless and controlled under the flaming folds of his turban.

"Do not shut—do not bolt the door, please. Leave it . . . open . . ." There was a queer little catch in her voice.

It was against the judgment and knowledge of the Oriental that this order was carried out, and it facilitates later the kidnapping of the boy David, who was looked upon by the surrounding Arabs as a marabout. David was a born religious and mystic, and the little picture of him in the following passage will convey to the reader something of his personality.

"Seated on the stump of an old tree was David. His back was towards them, and the sun dribbled through the foliage on to his dark uncovered hair. He was leaning forward a little, and on his hand

* By Isabel C. Clarke. Hutchinson, London.

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