

wearing of excruciating articles of dress may take rank among the Anglicans with fasting, inconveniently early and frequent Services, and the various other methods in vogue of physically and mechanically expressing religious emotion." Women should certainly be exempt from such penance, considering that they are at all times wearing "excruciating articles of dress"—called corsets.

One of the staff of the *Westminster Gazette* wore a hair-shirt for over four hours. He says it nearly drove him mad, and made him ill. There would be some interesting revelations were the whole of masculinity forced to wear corsets of the average tightness worn by the average woman—for one day only. Never again would a word be heard from these male victims of the beauties of "small waists."

The International Women's Congress, opened last Saturday at Berlin, has been most successful. The English delegates were heard with great attention. Miss Park read a most interesting paper on the Glasgow Day Nurseries.

Miss Clementia del Valesco, a young lady of great beauty, a favourite of New York society, and one of the wealthiest of South American heiresses, has just taken the veil and become a nun in the Dominican Order. The reception ceremony, at the convent at Hurst's Point, was attended by great solemnities, a large assembly of relatives and members of the fashionable world being present.

In Sweden the fact that so many women have taken to work is having the happy result of diminishing class distinctions, and raising the position of labour in public opinion. In Sweden, says Miss Adelborg, in the "Women's Industrial News," we have grown accustomed to seeing young women, even of the highest class, working, either in household employment, in banks, in schools, or at charitable work; and women, far more than men, seem to feel that any sort of work is honourable. Thus girls go out as clerks or elementary teachers, as gardeners or bookbinders, from families where the sons would scorn the idea of such employments, and if we can once induce educated, well-trained women to enter trades and factories so that they may become leaders, then questions about industrial laws for women, and about wages, will become comparatively easy of settlement.

There are in Sweden no separate industrial or factory laws for women, except that a woman under 18 must not work underground in mines or quarries. Women are much employed in Sweden in trades and factories. Statistics show that about 35 per cent. of the factory workers are women, most of these being in breweries, spinning mills, glove, paper, porcelain, and match factories. In trades fewer women are found, the proportion being about 8 per cent., of whom the greater part are employed as assistants to bookbinders and tailors. A great many women are shop-assistants or work in offices. Women cashiers are largely employed and much trusted. Statistics show an increase since 1885 of 17 per cent. in the number of men, and 35 per cent. in the number of women employed in business.

A Book of the Week.

"THE DREAM CHARLOTTE."*

THE "Dream Charlotte" was Charlotte Corday, as seen and remembered by an enthusiastic school-fellow, who was brought up at the same convent as the murderess of the tyrant Marat. The novel itself relates the life and adventures of this simple school friend of the famous Charlotte. This girl adored the memory of her brilliant and eloquent companion, and records naively her sayings and doings, and inspires her neighbours and relations by speaking of Charlotte's love and devotion to her country, and to the twin causes of truth and liberty. Charlotte herself never appears in the pages of this book, and only the account of her doings stray to Airelle's village home from time to time in a somewhat tantalising manner. It is easy to see that there is decided artistic intention in thus keeping the historical heroine so completely in the background, and in merely showing her influence upon a simpler and more domesticated nature. The intention is excellent, but somehow, to my mind, it fails to achieve the goal of all fictional writing—that of being interesting and suggestive reading—for we are constantly hoping to meet the real Charlotte face to face, and page after page is turned in pursuit of the tangible, but again and again our curiosity is baffled, and in the end the reader finds himself, or herself, frankly bored (there is no other word for it) by the phantom that eludes his literary pursuit. There are other characters in the book. Judith, an old Huguenot maid servant, is well conceived; but the meeting with her long-lost son is not artistically arranged, and the good taste of the description of the Communion Service when, after long years, mother and son are united, is a little questionable. Moreover, like many other theatrical religious descriptions, it fails to arouse sympathy in a reader whose taste is at all cultivated. The whole chapter is far more American than English in its tone. At the end of the story the news is brought to Arielle of Charlotte's assassination of Marat, and

"For a moment Arielle stood stone still—not a cry, not a feature betraying the passion of despair. No angelic messenger, then, had been her Charlotte; no Heaven-sent prophetess of just retribution. No softening of the tyrant's heart had prompted that strange journey; instead, a death-blow, but too surely dealt."

Charlotte's devoted friend suffered terrible sorrow and she stood remembering how, "linked arm-in-arm with her adored, high-spirited Charlotte, she roamed the convent pleasure-ground, their topic ever of grave impersonal things. . . . One picture succeeded the other—all fair, smiling, full of sunny promise, till she came to the last. . . . How the dauntless avenger of France—the descendant of her greatest poet—the beautiful daughter of Caen, had stabbed the hideous Marat to the heart; how serenely, as if bound to bridal altar, she had confronted her doom, unmoved alike by the garb of a murderess, the execrations of bystanders, the engine of death." Charlotte Corday was the Zael of the French Revolution, and the strange, inspired courage with which she slew the Sisera of her times will for

* "The Dream Charlotte," by M. Betham Edwards. 1896.

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