

University Settlement, Southwark, the National Union of Women Workers, and the Charity Organisation Society. Central courses are given at the Portman Rooms, and other courses will be given in different parts of London and in the country. Those recently delivered by Miss Sewell and Miss Miranda Hill have been very well attended. The intention of the committee is that these lectures should be of use to persons engaged in the work and duties of charity and the Poor Law. The titles of some of the lectures—"The Scope of Charitable Work," "The Need of Wisdom in Charity," "Thoroughness; Co-operation in Charity"—serve to illustrate this intention.

Miss Agnes Weston has so far recovered from her recent bicycle accident as to be able to leave the Portsmouth hospital.

### Bookland.

"LE SELVE," BY OUIDA.

THERE is no other writer who can give atmosphere—local atmosphere—like Ouida. Her description of *Le Selve* and of its people dwells in the mind with the haunting force of a thing seen, rather than merely a thing heard of.

It is hard to believe that, even in Europe, there are such places and such people. The opening scene, in which the old peasant is dying, and has been left quite alone by the inhuman wretches who are his children, chills the very blood by its simple directness and lack of exaggeration.

"I am cold, I am cold," muttered the old man; but no one heeded. Of course he was cold; people who were dying always were so. He shivered and shook under his cotton coverlet; and it was dark, so dark, they had left him no light; light burns oil, and what could he see, or hope to see? His eyes were already glazing.

How one understands the loathing of the young Russian, big with the love of humanity taught him by Tolstoi, who so strangely finds himself set down among these savages! Ouida evidently considers that these peasants of Northern Italy are, as a class, lower and more degraded than the Russian *moujik*, and she is very possibly right. The utter falseness and dishonesty, the total lack of even animal affection, are, it is to be hoped, not often found, even among the most degraded.

The story, as a story, is simple enough. The usual fate of the would-be saviour of society overtakes Cyrille; the creature he has tried to benefit try to burn him in his bed. They only escape success through the heroism of Muriella, the fine-natured girl who has silently given her heart to the young steward, and so thinks it no hardship to give her life also. Muriella is the only one of all the peasant clan who has the power of reflection, and thus she reflects on the lot of the women of *Le Selve*:

"Did you ever note the asses that come for the sand that is taken out of the pits?" she said, curtly. "They are put to their work when they are foals. They never reach their full growth. Their eyes are always sore. Their coats are always full of dust. No one ever cleans them. Their hoofs are dry and split. Their bones are through their skin. They get nothing to eat but mouldy straw and dead leaves. They are beasts of burden, and fed on blows. They have never a moment's peace. The women of the poor are like

them. They bring forth in hunger and pain, and what they bring forth is born to their burdens. That is why I will never marry, if that is what you mean."

"THE STATEMENT OF STELLA MABERLY," BY F. ANSTEY.

This curious book is certainly worth reading. The first edition was published anonymously, and anyone who read it then will be a good deal astonished at the author who now owns it. It is a description, from a girl's own lips, of a girl's own madness, she herself all the time not knowing that she is mad, but believing herself from beginning to end to be the victim of a fiend. There is an inherent improbability in the story. Even if the parents of a girl whose mother died insane, and who had herself given evidences of a tendency in the same direction, allowed her to go away from home and live as companion to another girl, they would surely, on her showing such strong signs of delusion and mania, have insisted on her returning home at once. If one is meant to suppose, as seems probable, that she herself strangled the little dog, then any reasonable being must have been convinced that she was not a safe person to have about the house. But perhaps Mr. Anstey means us to believe that she was not mistaken, and that a devil really did animate the form of Evelyn Heseltine? This may be so. Each reader must solve the problem for herself. It is a gruesome story, but fascinating decidedly.

G. M. R.

### WHAT TO READ.

"Musa Medica: a Sheaf of Song and Verse," by J. Johnston, M.D. Edin.

"Canada," by J. G. Bourinot, C.M.G., &c., Clerk to the Canadian House of Commons.

"Towards Khartoum," by Hilliard Atteridge.

"In Oor Kailyard," by W. G. Tarbet.

"Tatterley," by Tom Gallon.

"The Three Daughters of Night," by Derek Vane.

### Coming Events.

*February 5th.*—The Lord Mayor presides at a Meeting at the Mansion House in connection with the special appeal for £100,000 for the Charing Cross Hospital.

Miss Sophia Lonsdale, P.L.G., will lecture on "The English Poor Law," Room E, Portman Rooms, Baker Street, W., 11.30 a.m., and on the following Fridays.

*February 6th.*—Lady Albemarle presents the prizes of the London Volunteer Medical Staff Corps, at the headquarters in Calthorpe Street, 7 p.m.

*February 10th.*—International Sanitary Conference on the Plague at Venice.

Sanitary Institute, Margaret Street, W., "Sanitary Supervision of Shelters for the Homeless," by F. G. Waldo, M.A., M.D., D.P.H., Barrister-at-Law, 8 p.m.

*February 16th.*—Mr. Bancroft reads the "Christmas Carol" at Stafford House, St. James's, in aid of the Chelsea Hospital for Women, 3.30 p.m.

*February 26th.*—Third Sessional Lecture, Royal British Nurses' Association, 17, Old Cavendish Street, on "Home Sanitation" (with lantern illustrations), by Henry Kenwood, Esq., M.B. Edin., D.P.H. St., 8 p.m.

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