

and other relief, in the name of Queen Victoria. The interest and practical kindness evinced in this gracious act of sympathy from Her Majesty to a stricken people will be warmly appreciated by British women, as well as by their Greek sisters.

The Council of the City of Paris has decided, acting upon the advice of Councillor Blachette, one of the Municipal rulers, to employ young women as clerks in the offices of the Hotel de Ville. M. Blachette is of opinion that the deft fingers of women are well suited for such work as the counting and fastening of coupons. The decision of the Council has been received with much satisfaction.

Miss Florence Nightingale and the Matrons of St. George's, Westminster, the London, and Middlesex Hospitals, have signed the Women's Memorial to Lord Salisbury for the suppression of contagious disease in the Army. The Memorial is as follows:—

"To the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., the Marquis of Lansdowne, K.G., the Right Hon. Lord George Hamilton, M.P., and the Hon. A. J. Balfour, M.P.

We desire to express our anxious hope that effectual measures will be taken to check the spread of contagious diseases among our soldiers, especially in India.

We appreciate and respect the opinions of those who, notwithstanding the appalling statistics to which a competent committee, appointed by Government, has recently given authority, are opposed to us on this subject. We believe that they hold, in all sincerity, that the evil of rendering vice safer and the risk of degrading women outweigh all other considerations.

But, speaking as women, we feel bound to protest against these views. We believe not only that preventive measures, if exercised with scrupulous care, do not cause any real danger to women, but that they institute a valuable safeguard of women's virtue, and afford a great opportunity of escape from a life of vice.

We feel that it is the duty of the State, which, of necessity, collects together large numbers of unmarried men in military service, to protect them from the consequences of evils which are, in fact, unavoidable in such a community and under such conditions. And with the deepest earnestness we call on the Government to do all that can be done to save innocent women and children in the present and future generations from the terrible results of vices for which they are not responsible."

We observe that this memorial contains no allusion to the inspection and the punishment of male offenders, and we are of opinion that the working women of England will allow no law to be final which exempts men from compulsory inspection, if women are to be subjected to this degradation.

It has been strongly advocated that syphilis should be classed amongst the infectious diseases, that it should be compulsorily notified, and treated in special hospitals apart, just as other dangerous diseases are treated, that a clean bill of health must be given by the medical officers in charge before the discharge of the patients, and that any healthy woman infected by her husband should have power to prosecute under the criminal law. There can be no doubt that these opinions are widely and strongly held, and that they deserve very careful consideration.

A Book of the Week.

"SALTED WITH FIRE."*

A NEW book by the veteran author of "Robert Falconer" and "Sir Gibbie" is a welcome surprise, and it surprises the readers still further by its great freshness of feeling; there is hardly a sign, from end to end, that it is written by such an old man.

The story is a simple one, but in most respects well worked out.

We suppose that the plot is possible in the "Kail-yard," where the scene is laid, and where, as Messrs. Crockett and Ian Maclaren have repeatedly assured us, the sons of field labourers become "ministers," and probably, therefore, frequently marry in their own class. That the ambitious James Blatherwick should seduce poor little Isy in his student days, is comprehensible enough, but that he should subsequently wish to marry the cobbler's daughter, requires more telling than Mr. Macdonald gives it, to make it sound probable to an English mind. The theme of the story is the repentance of this same James Blatherwick, and we are introduced to some wonderful people, notably Peter and Marian, the father and mother of the said James. Of course the theme is not new, it is a variation of "The Silence of Dean Maitland," but it is new in treatment, and Mr. Macdonald keeps his action very wisely subdued, and free from melodrama. The "soutar" is the typical Scots religionist, absolutely convinced of his own perfect understanding of the Scriptures, and gently tolerant of the ignorance and arrogance of his "minister." He keeps away from church lest the ineptitudes of said minister should hinder him in his Christian duty of loving such a thorn in the flesh. He is a character with very fine points, and our author evidently thinks him altogether admirable. But he is not so real, nor so lovable as Peter. The Robertsons are so wonderfully good that they barely escape being unnatural. They do escape, however, and strike us with a ring of truth, used though we are to fictional characters almost incredibly bad. The scene in which Mr. Robertson brings home to his own house the wretched and despairing Isy, hovering on the verge of final ruin and degradation, is worth quoting:—

"The parson was a big man; he took her up in his arms, and carried her to a room they had always ready on the chance of a visit from 'one of the least of these.'

At the top of the stair stood their little daughter, a child of five or six, wanting to go down to her mother, and wondering why she was not permitted.

'Who is it, moder?' she whispered, as Mrs. Robertson passed her, following her husband and Isy. 'Is she very dead?'

'No, darling,' answered her mother, 'it is an angel who has lost her way, and is tired—so tired! You must be very quiet, and not disturb her. Her head is going to ache very much.'

The child turned, and went down the stair, step by step, softly, saying, 'I will tell my rabbit not to make any noise—and to be as white as he can.'

Perhaps the best and most natural thing in the book is the sudden change of front on the part of poor old Marian when she first understands the relation that exists between her son and Isy.

* "Salted with Fire," by George Macdonald. (Hurst and Blackett.)

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