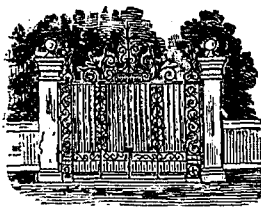


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



IT has been well said by an ardent supporter of Women's Suffrage that to attempt to gain other reforms for women before the Suffrage has been granted to them is like "dusting a room before it has been swept." We reprint the following letter,

on this most important matter, which has been addressed to the editor of the *Times* by Miss Louisa Twining, as being the opinion of a lady whose views must always demand respect and attention:—

SIR,—As an old correspondent of the *Times*, which has so often helped my advocacy of various reforms, I ask to be allowed to say a few words on this, the latest one (as I think) brought before the public opinion of England.

I am not a "new woman"; on the contrary, I am an old one, and I venture to think that I cannot be accused of urging ill-considered or rash changes in the social matters in which I have been privileged to take part. But I confess that I do feel acutely the position in which we women are placed in this matter of being denied the power and privilege of expressing an opinion, and voting for the members who are to act for us in Parliament. I cannot help asking, why are we to be classed with "paupers and lunatics" as incapable of giving a decision and a judgment on matters of vital importance to all of us, surely as much for women as for men? Is the fact realised that the classes I have named are those alone which are thus deprived of what seems to us a duty, as well as a privilege of citizens? But, if it is so decreed by the voice of public opinion, surely the only logical conclusion, naturally following from it, is that we should retire and abstain from politics altogether, and that our services should not be demanded on all sides, as they are at present, to work hard and zealously in favour of the election of members of Parliament. If we are unable and incompetent to form and register an opinion and a vote, it is hardly just or consistent that women should be asked to mix themselves up in politics, when all power in them is denied them. I can quite understand the opinion to which some still cling that women are only meant to be the house-keepers and the home-managers of their children and servants, but I am quite unable to understand or believe that a majority of the advanced thought in England advocates such a theory.

If women are to be excluded from politics as matters unfit and undesirable for their sex, let the fact be recognised uniformly and consistently, and not by the present arguments, which, I confess, appear to me to be not only utterly illogical, but insulting to the position of educated women in England, whatever may be the position assigned to them in other and less liberal countries of Europe. Trusting to your invariable kindness and impartiality,

I beg to remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant.

LOUISA TWINING.

A Book of the Week.

"BIJOU."*

MISS HALLARD, whose translations of short stories in the *Strand Magazine* are well known, has done into English the popular romance called "Bijou."

She has chosen a very difficult task. "Gyp's" style is so colloquial and idiomatic as to be a severe strain upon the translator, and withal it has a magic delicacy of touch which evaporates like perfume, and ceases to exist in the heavier atmosphere in which it finds itself. Miss Hallard's version is almost always easy, but it is hardly to be called distinguished. Here and there she seems to fail to catch the exact translation; is "light auburn" the English equivalent of "*blond cendré*?" If so I have always laboured under a total delusion concerning that exquisite, but anything but auburn shade of hair, for which Germans and French people have a name, but we have none.

The story is slight, but very clever. It is almost entirely written in dialogue, of pure narration there is wonderfully little. Bijou is the centre of a family group—a house-party at a large French château in the provinces. She is a perfect Hebe—a being breathing youth and fascination around her, the adored pet of the Marquise de Bracieux, her grandmother, of her cousins, her neighbours, and her whole *entourage*. The extraordinary talent of the writer is, that she makes her reader feel, through and through, the intense charm of Bijou, and allows her gradually to unmask herself.

She is simply one of those women who are not satisfied without exciting the passion of every man they come across. Bijou spares nobody—her cousin's husband, her best friend's *fiancé*, her young Giraud, the tutor—all must be enslaved. Intrigue, stratagem, every device is employed, and yet nobody, with one exception, conceives of Bijou, but as a miracle of artless sincerity, and child-like affection and candour.

By a series of adroit touches one sees how this girl, who seems so unconscious, notes everything; how nothing escapes her sharp eyes and ears; how every word is studied. Gradually one awakes to a loathing of her, which is as strong and sharp as one's feeling for a real, living person, as one realises how she was torturing Paul de Rueille deliberately, not unknowingly,—that she was aiming at the heart-break of sweet Jeanne Dubuisson, that she was tempting young Giraud to his ruin, and all the time she had made up her mind to marry the rich old Clagny, and possess all his fortune. Her way of assuring herself that she will possess it all is as subtle as anything in the book:—

"Well, it's like this, you know—grandmamma is very fond of me, and she thinks that, as I am thirty-eight years younger than you, you might die before me, and that after living for years in very great luxury, and letting myself get accustomed to every comfort, which, up to the present, I have not had, I might suddenly find myself very poor and very wretched at an age when it would be too late to begin life over again, and so I should suffer very much on account of the bad habits I had contracted, and which I should not be able to drop."

"You know very well, my adored Bijou, that everything I possess is and will be yours. My will is already made, in

* "Bijou," by "Gyp." Translated from the French by Alys Hallard. (Hutchinson and Co.)

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