

## Outside the Gates.

### SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

#### HOBNAILERS.

If I was to tell you that the memory of a child of six, of an April day, was one of blue skies and fleeting clouds, of joyous lambkins, and "of buttercups and daisies; oh! the pretty flowers," you would smile content. It is so delightful, in the prosaic present, to have our youthful illusions confirmed.

But I have other memories of an April day.

The sky was not at all blue, and sulky grey clouds broke sullenly in cold pitiless showers, chilling one to the bone. Bleating lambs meekly trotted after their dams, and stood shivering under dripping hedgerows, trampling the dewy violets underfoot, and "oh! the pretty flowers" swayed forlornly in the riotous gusts of wet wind, and drooped and died.

A girl child of six stood ankle deep in slush, and peeped through a gap in the hedge—thereby obtaining a view of the cobbler's back garden—attracted by high words between that worthy and his spouse. The cobbler, commonly known as "Mester Gash," was an irascible cripple, who worked mostly in the front parlour, but was occasionally seen to hop about his bit of garden—his left leg, a stunted misshapen limb, hitched on to an old crutch. "Gash's wife" was a "poor critter."

So it seemed. High words sometimes lead to high-handed actions; and, upon this occasion, "Mester Gash" made the most of his prerogative as "lord and master" of the woman. First he cursed her, then hawked and spat at her, and, having with a masterly stroke deposited her limpperson amongst the cabbages, he clutched with one hand the garden fence, and, failing a spare foot with which to dance on her, he "basted" her vigorously with his wooden crutch.

The "poor critter" made no defence, and very little sound. Didn't the tailor's wife, "a nesty cock-eyed thing," reside next door, whose "usban" was known as "Shack Sharp"—a peripatetic party, who had never been known to use his needle for twenty years—and who did odd jobs in "Pode Squoir's garden," which did not bring much grist to the mill, and didn't the whole row begin "all along of Sharp's wife and them new pink ribbins in 'er go-to-meeting bonnet?"

Anyway, "Gash's wife" mingled her tears with the April floods, and, bespattered with red marl, gathered herself up, blew her bleeding nose on her pinny, shook her fist at the retreating figure of her "mester" hopping over the decapitated cabbage stalks, and—followed him meekly indoors.

Then the little spy on the other side of the hedge turned and fled, her fuzzy hair bristling like a wild cat's in the wind—she felt the cripple's crutch crashing through her skull, and firing her brain with red flaming rage—and yet she was dimly aware—hotly as she hated the cobbler—that she resented the impotence of the woman still more. The child had learnt that if she

trod on a worm it turned; was a woman a meaner thing in the scale of creation than a worm?

Years later, when the child had come to woman's estate, she found an answer.

The woman was governed by man-made Law—the worm by the Laws of Nature.

It was, therefore, with unfeigned satisfaction, that I read of the sentence lately passed on the actor, Edward Ratcliffe, in the New York Criminal Court, for beating his wife; he is to go to jail, with hard labour, for six months.—Good!

Edward Ratcliffe is reported to be "very beautiful," and is known as the "Matinée Girl's Mash." His wife evidently resents his mashing, and is wisely seeking a divorce. The prosecuting attorney specially called the jury's attention to the fact that Ratcliffe was an Englishman, and Judge Newburger, in passing sentence, said wife beating would not be tolerated in America.

Certainly it will not. Discussing the hobnailing question with an American woman, she gave me the reason—"Guess we Amurrican women would just lynch your hobnailers right away."

E. G. F.

#### WOMEN.

The Princess of Wales has consented to become a patroness of the depot for Greek Industries, recently opened in London, other patronesses being the Queen of the Hellenes and the Crown Princess of Greece.

Princess Louise (Marchioness of Lorne) has sculptured a very beautiful figure of an angel for the altar of the new Battenberg Memorial Chapel in Whippingham Parish Church, which is to be dedicated by the Bishop of Winchester, in the presence of the Queen and several members of the Royal Family, one day this month.

The annual council meeting of the women's branch of the Horticultural College, Swanley, was lately held by permission of Sir Edward Sieveking, at 17, Manchester Square, W. Mr. Rivington presided. Miss Goodrich Freer, the hon. secretary, presented a report of the work done during 1897, from which it appeared that forty-one women students had passed through the college during the year. A very satisfactory statement in the report was one that no student had left the college properly certificated who had not been able at once to obtain remunerative employment. Four students have obtained places at Kew Gardens, three at the Royal Horticultural Gardens, Edinburgh, one is employed by Lady Henry Somerset at her home for inebriates at Duxhurst, and others are engaged by the Metropolitan Gardening Association and convalescent homes and other public institutions. Letters from Lady Henry Somerset, Mrs. Garrett Anderson, Miss Dove, of Wickham Abbey, Miss Williamson, of Princess Helena College, and others, were read expressing high appreciation of the work of the

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