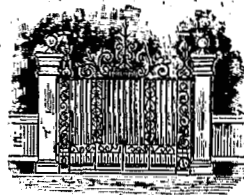


Outside the Gates.**CHRISTMAS GIFTS.**

PEOPLE are already busy buying their Christmas gifts, and it is an excellent plan to seek to do a double good in expending money for this purpose.

So many gentlewomen earn or supplement their incomes by dainty handiwork, which is offered for sale about this time of the year, that those desiring to help their poorer sisters can easily do so.

THE other day we paid a visit to the charming rooms, at 28, Brook Street, Grosvenor Square, where the Misses Woollan have on sale lovely bits of old furniture, china, minatures, and other artistic trifles; and where they have arranged, with delightful taste, much beautiful needlework, which they sell on commission for poor ladies.

WE were much charmed with the binding of little books, with bits of exquisite embroidery and gold braid, and also with the gay little boxes of every shape for sweets—covered and ornamented in the same way.

Here are to be found the most exquisite examples of ribbon work, made up in delicate shades in little bags for opera glasses, fans, and spectacles; and as blotters, picture frames, and boxes. These most artistic wares are fashioned by devoted mother fingers—the worker being the wife of a poor medical man, whose income is not sufficient to continue the education of an only son, and who is anxious to make money for this all important object. With what tired fingers many of these gay things may have been fashioned; one would not wonder to find their brightness dimmed with tears, but hope makes a brave heart, and if our readers are still on the look out for pretty and useful Christmas Gifts, they cannot do better than buy one of those so daintily decorated with such loving care.

WOMEN.

We observe, with great satisfaction, that at all the farewell banquets proffered to His Excellency the Earl of Aberdeen in the principal cities of the Dominion of Canada, that Her Excellency the Countess of Aberdeen was included in the invitation, and that the guests comprised women as well as men.

This speaks volumes for the enlightenment of public opinion which has taken place in Canada during the joint tenure of office of the late Governor-General and his wife. It would be well for English women to compare their political position at home with that of their Canadian sisters. It is reported that at the late banquet given by the Corporation of London to the Sirdar, which was made the occasion of the pronouncement by our Ministers of the Cabinet's imperial policy, that no women were invited, thereby demonstrating the fact that women are excluded from all participation in the nation's weal or woe.

Miss Ethel Charles has been elected as an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects after a severe professional test, which includes the designing

of a building of an important public character, specification, the manipulation of all kinds of building materials, estimates, style, and construction, and a knowledge of one ancient and one modern language.

We are glad to observe that women's work in India is receiving great encouragement from men with practical knowledge of native needs. Addressing a meeting of the Young Women's Christian Association a few days ago, the Bishop Designate of Calcutta, Dr. Welldon, said:—"Before it was his fortune to be called to India, he had thought much of the part that women could and must play in the evangelisation of the East. The two agencies to which he looked with the greatest hope for the salvation of India were education and the work of women. He hoped that every lady, not kept at home by urgent reasons, would at least entertain the thought of giving herself to the work abroad, and he trusted that when he went to India he would receive a large number of offers of personal service. There was a new spirit abroad in the world, one of duty and responsibility, and nowhere was that spirit more visible than with regard to India. No one could feel more strongly than he did the duty that this country owed to India. It was somewhat remarkable that so many persons who were going out there to hold official positions, and to have great influence, were new to the work; there was a new viceroy, a new commander-in-chief, a new financial member of council; and the entire episcopate, so far as it was recognised by the state, was also new; and he thought that at a time when Indian problems were assuming such importance, the presence of so many new men demanded a large measure of prayer."

A Book of the Week.

"NIGEL FERRARD."*

IN taking up a book by G. M. Robins, one does so in the certainty that the tone of it will be thoroughly wholesome, the English irreproachable, and the plot quite out of the common. In a former book reviewed in these columns, "The Silence Broken," the author showed that she had a strong taste for psychology, and a thread of the weird and mysterious runs through her latest book.

Gwen the heroine of the book is altogether charming. The story opens with an account of an operation performed under somewhat unusual circumstances. Gwen (a child of fourteen) is an unwilling and most inconvenient spectator of the scene which ends in the death of the patient, and the horror of the sight so affects the sensitive and impressionable child, that she loses consciousness, and subsequently, upon her recovery, has no memory of anything which has happened before the appalling tragedy which caused her illness.

Nigel Ferrard, who has performed the operation, allows himself, against his better judgment, to be a party to hushing up the real facts of the death, for the dead man is his cousin, and it is urged upon him by his colleague, Dr. Marchmont, that appearances are bitterly against him if an inquest is held, for he, an impecunious young doctor, not on the best of terms with his cousin, is his sole heir, and inherits a considerable estate and fortune. Nigel Ferrard was

*"Nigel Ferrard." G. M. Robins (Mrs. L. Baillie Reynolds) Hurst and Blackett.

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