

**Outside the Gates.****WOMEN.**

Messrs. Skeffington and Son have issued copies of hymns, with music, suitable for the eightieth year of the Queen's life. To the National Anthem is added this new verse by Martin S. Skeffington:—

Thou Who for fourscore years,  
In sunshine, cloud, and tears,  
Hast kept our Queen,  
Still be her guide and stay  
Through life's uncertain way,  
Till dawns the perfect day;  
God bless our Queen.

It has been decided to give the name "Victoria and Albert Museum" to the new building at South Kensington, the foundation-stone of which will be laid by the Queen on May 17.

In a recent sermon, preached in Westminster Abbey, and reported in the *Church Times*, Canon Gore drew attention to the position of women in the early Christian Church. St. Paul, in writing from Corinth to Rome, commended to the Christians in that city Phœbe, a deaconess, and from this fact he infers that there was already established—what beyond doubt was established a little later—in the Christian Church a regular female ministry; that side by side with the deacons there were already deaconesses. We find these a little later in the Christian Church, a regularly ordained order, ordained to an ecclesiastical ministry. That was rendered necessary by the circumstances of the time, because women, especially in many parts where the Gospel spread, lived in a much greater seclusion than was compatible with their being taught by men. They could not be prepared for Baptism in the open tanks or running water required the ministry of women. And so for the teaching of women, and the preparation of them for Baptism, and for other purposes, there was a female diaconate. There were deaconesses side by side with deacons, and they were recognised as a proper part of the ordered ministry of the Christian Church.

The deaconesses were—and so far as they are being revived in the Church, now ought to be—recognised as women who give themselves, like the male clergy, to the service of the Church; and they must be therefore simply at the disposal of the Church for those purposes for which the Church requires their services. They are to be at the beck and call of the Bishops as much as those who serve in the male ministry. That is the distinction between the idea of deaconesses and the idea of the nuns or sisters of mercy, or any other of those bodies who have devoted themselves in all sorts and kinds of ways to special Christian ministry.

After speaking of the high conception entertained by St. Paul of woman's vocation, the preacher continued: Now, you know the miserable stain it was upon our English Church that that large conception of woman's nature was for so long lost. You all of you have read Miss Austen's novels, and you know how, through those amiable volumes, that idea is all-pervading—that the woman who does not marry is to relapse

into a condition of old-maidship, which is a failure only another word for failure. Now, what a miserably narrow conception of womanhood! As if women had not variety of vocation as truly as men; as if they are not to seek their vocation as boldly and as truly as men; as if they should not be encouraged to think about how best they can employ their faculties to the glory of God and the good of man. May we not praise God that now again there is a growing largeness of conception about women's work? We ought, indeed, to encourage that largeness. No doubt home has a great claim, a primary claim. And when there are primary duties requiring to be done at home, towards father or mother, from any unmarried daughter, there no doubt they have the primary claim on time and faculties and energies. The man who neglects his own family, St. Paul says, is worse than an infidel. But how many women are kept at home for no good cause, with no real need for their service, cramped and fettered; with large energies and capacities undeveloped; because they have never been suffered to consider their vocation, as their brothers would have been encouraged to consider it, and so really to use their faculties as to make the best of themselves. And so let us recognise the grand largeness in that conception of women's vocation as of men's vocation.

**A Book of the Week.****WELL, AFTER ALL!\***

WE expect so much of Mr. Frankfort Moore nowadays, that to say that his new book in no respect equals "The Fatal Gift," is not by any means to condemn it as not worth the trouble of reading.

There is in it much of the writer's ease and brilliancy, but not much of his depth. Personally a great admirer of this author; it seemed to me as if I could detect the secret of the failure of his new book to achieve distinction. He was possessed by an idea which offered great dramatic possibilities; but he was not sufficiently in love with his idea to work it out with enthusiasm. The opening—the run on the bank—could not be better. One is stirred, roused, enchained; the character of Richard Westwood promises so well. He is such a gentleman, his cynicism is so superficial, his breeding and his courage so deep, his selfless love for the woman who loves his brother offers such delightful suggestions of the special kind of heroism we women love, that, when the exigencies of the plot require him to be killed off in the third chapter, just when we had begun to think of him as a study which would well repay our perusal, we resent it as an artistic outrage.

Then there is another serious fault. Clare Tristram is a mere shadow; the author was so bored by her, that, though she had to be there, he could not afford to waste attributes upon her; and her intercourse with Agnes never rings true; it is forced and unreal. This is all the more a pity because there are some such clever touches. It is shown so admirably that the feeling with which Agnes Mowbray awaits the return of the lover, who had been mislaid in Central Africa for nine years, is not really love of a man, but merely the constancy of a good true woman to her ideal. The fact that her jealousy is not in the least aroused at the first meeting between Claud and Clare, is one of the

\* By Frankfort Moore. Hutchinson and Co.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)