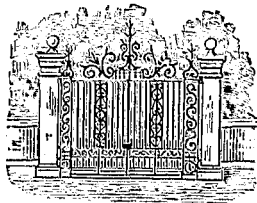


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



The Committee formed to perpetuate the memory of Miss Mary Kingsley, brilliant woman, intrepid traveller, great-hearted lover of the human race, could scarcely have devised a more appropriate memorial than the African Society which they have founded "for the purpose of investigating the usages, institutions, customs, religions, antiquities, history, and languages of the native races of Africa, of facilitating the commercial and industrial developments of the continent in the manner best fitted to secure the welfare of its inhabitants, and as a central institution in England for the study of African subjects"; in short, it attempts for the whole of Africa what Miss Kingsley spent the last eight years of her life in beginning to do for the West Coast. Her African life, grand in its fulness, its incessant work, its power of minute observation, its humour, and its simplicity, was supremely successful, just because she studied her surroundings from the point of view of the African. Her marvellous sympathy enabled her to put herself in the position of the native, to look at things with his eyes, to understand the workings of his mind. As a rule it does not occur to the Britisher abroad even to make the attempt to adopt this position. He takes with him his British customs, his insular prejudices, and crashes straight through the most sacred traditions of native races, if they come in his way, with obtuse unconsciousness. Nevertheless, he is of the dominant race, and he rules painstakingly, justly, and on the whole well. He commands the respect of the ruled. But

"East is East, and West is West."

As a rule the two are, we know, unassimilable; but the exception proves the rule, and when, at rare intervals, there arises one with the intuitive sympathy of Miss Mary Kingsley, the native is quick to recognise not only his ruler but his friend. With such natures he is plastic as clay in the hands of the potter, and the obligations of the Empire to such of its children for their part in bringing about mutual understanding between the rulers and the ruled are infinite.

It is greatly to be regretted that the Government has not allowed Miss Hobhouse to continue her work in South Africa. Much controversy has raged around her name, but the fact remains that the Government has appointed a Committee of women to visit and report on the condition of the Concentration Camps, and that forty nurses have now been despatched to work in them. This is the direct result of Miss Hobhouse's work, and no mean one. It is no slur upon the other sex to say that the work of women in the domestic affairs of the Empire—and the organization of camps for women and children must rank amongst these—cannot be ignored without detriment to the whole body politic. Miss Hobhouse has proved this, and, in our opinion, it would have been wise statesmanship to have appointed her to the place her work has earned on this Women's Committee.

Miss Violet Markham, in the current issue of the *Empire Review*, has an article on "British and Boer Refugees in South Africa." She asks that help and pity should be distributed to all alike, and that the claims of British refugees should not be neglected.

A Book of the Week.

COUNT HANNIBAL.*

Mr. Andrew Lang not long ago gave vent to the wish that Mr. Weyman would produce a novel once a week. The present writer feels that in that eventuality one would never read anything but the works of Stanley Weyman. No, let us say once every three months—about that.

We must be less enthusiastic than they were in the early days of the old century, when men used to gather round the publisher's office at promise of the appearance of a new Dickens or Thackeray. Our books come to us too easily nowadays; we allow the minions of Mudie to do the waiting outside; we remain at home until the cart discharges its precious freight at our doors, then we take up our "Count Hannibal," and if we are properly constituted persons we are unable to go to bed until we have read the last line.

No; certainly this book must not be recommended to nurses. How many dressings would go unchanged, how many moments for administering the drops go by, if the nurse were, like Mademoiselle de Vrillac, in the clutches of Count Hannibal de Tavannes?

Here we are in Paris—the Paris of the League. To it the doomed Huguenots are flocking, lulled to sleep by the marriage of the King of Navarre, by the false friendship and falser faith of the Medici. The very thought of the crime that has stained Paris is enough to make the senses reel; never, surely, in all her shameful record, did the inhuman city shed more innocent blood.

Mr. Weyman has brought all the powers of his mind to the understanding of the crisis. History is a tangled web to unravel, and the mysterious way in which religion and politics have mingled in all ages was never more apparent than in the sixteenth century. The author knows to the full that the divisions of the Court into Roman and Huguenot were largely political; that what men fought against was far more Roman aggression than Roman faith. The days of the novel in which all the Huguenots were suffering martyrs of blameless record, and all the orthodox were butchers, is gone by.

But—the *but* remains and ever must—put it how we will, history shows no more horrible page.

Marshal de Tavannes is historical; it is with his terrible brother, Count Hannibal, that this extraordinarily fascinating story deals. In all his work Mr. Weyman has evolved no heroine so wholly delightful, so deserving of all one's respect and devotion as Clotilde de Vrillac. From the very first one divines that a man who could see, almost at first sight, those deep qualities which go to the making of a great woman could not be all bad. There were certain things that the lawless, dare-devil Count could not do; and with the mutual comprehension of two fine spirits in encounter, Mademoiselle soon realized this.

* By Stanley Weyman. (Smith, Elder and Co.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)