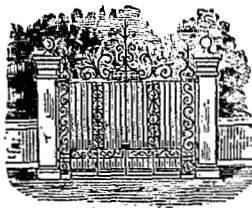


## Outside the Gates.

## WOMEN.



Earl Russell, whose matrimonial experiences gave rise to so much litigation, culminating in his trial by his Peers at Westminster, has introduced a Bill into the House of Lords for amending the Divorce Law. It proposes changes of a most far-reaching character. Husband or wife may present a petition on the grounds of adultery, cruelty, or lunacy. If either party has been sentenced to penal servitude for three years or more, if for three years they have lived apart and do not intend to resume cohabitation, or if only for a year should the respondent consent to a petition, then also an action for divorce may be laid. The case having been proved, the Court shall pronounce a decree, unless it is satisfied that there has been connivance or condonation. Co-respondents may be of either sex, and if he or she pays into Court the damages claimed the co-respondent shall be discharged from the suit. Petitions for judicial separation, restitution of conjugal rights, and jactitation of marriage are abolished. Appeals from the Divorce Court are allowed to the Court of Appeal and then to the House of Lords; and where the total joint income of husband and wife does not exceed £500 a year judges of the County Courts are given all the powers now exercised by the Divorce Court. If there be no appeal a decree of dissolution of marriage shall take effect in one month, a similar period being allowed in the case of unsuccessful appeals, after which the parties shall be free to marry again. There is a clause which says that clergymen shall not be compelled to marry persons who have been divorced; and another legalises marriage with a deceased wife's sister. It is, in fact, a Bill to make divorce easy.

Mr. J. Hudson, in *Gentleman's*, gives us one of the reasons for the wane of close friendships between men, the most potent of all is the emancipation of woman, which has made her more than ever before the companion and friend of man. The writer deals chiefly with the modern comradeship of husband and wife as distinguished from the easily-repudiated marriages of pagan times. He leaves it to be inferred that the new friendship is not restricted to the marriage-relationship. As a matter of fact, many of the friendships of to-day which would rank with that of David and Jonathan are between persons of different sex; and to the solid realities of friendship is added the glamour of chivalry.

So if friendship is spread out thin over a vast number of men, and the whole of the other sex has been admitted into the relation of true and equal friendship with men, we may take it that friendship is not really on the wane.

A woman writer has taken a survey recently of the novels written by women, and she says that, if she is to judge from what she finds therein, the only good husband is a dead husband. If the husband in women's-fiction continues to go from bad to worse as rapidly as he has been doing of late years, she is convinced that he will soon occupy the place in storytelling once held by the eighteenth-century villain.

## A Book of the Week.

## THE LADY PARAMOUNT.\*

Let us rejoice, and put from us all the pessimism of a decadent world, all the vexed questions of the struggling present, all the intrusive tiresomeness of the real, and sun ourselves in the ideal, which is within our grasp, for Mr. Henry Harland has written another fairy tale.

He has published it too—the clever creature—when all the world is palpitating with the promise of May; the time of the singing of birds is come, and in great old English parks, as the beech buds unfold, one can dream away the hours in company with Susanna and Anthony—with the inimitable Adrian Willes and the quite too indescribable Miss Sandus for chorus.

Mr. Harland will not only not trouble you with plots—what can he possibly want with a plot?—but he will even disdain to play upon your sympathies, farther than to make you endure a few such pangs as lovers feel, to enhance the splendour of the following moments.

He does make up his mind to give you one wet day; and, Oh and Alas! how your spirits will sink with the mercury, how woe-begone will be your outlook—how you will agree with the wail of the wondrous Adrian over such a preposterous happening as a wet and windy night in June!

"Can't anyone silence those stupid birds? How inept, how spiteful of them to go on singing, singing, in the face of such odious weather. Tell Wickersmith or someone to take a gun and an umbrella and go out and shoot them. And the wind,—the strumpet wind! All last night it gurgled and howled and hooted in my chimney like a drunken Banshee, and nearly frightened me to death. And me a musician. And me the gentlest of God's creatures—who never did any harm, but killed the mice in father's barn. I ask you, as a man of the world, is it delicate, is it fair? Drip, drip, drip, swish, swish, swash; ugh, the rain! If it could *guess* how much I despise it! Do you think the weather *knows* how disagreeable it is! We all know how disagreeable other people can be, but so few of us know how disagreeable we can be ourselves. Do you think the weather knows? Do you think it's behaving in this way purposely to vex me?"

So Adrian wails, and it may be at once confessed that, from first page to last, nobody has anything worse to wail over. Susanna, the Italian countess of Sampaolo, has scruples, because the real heir is not herself, but Anthony, who has been brought up in England, and taken the name of Craford, which was his grandmother's maiden name. So Susanna takes an alias, and comes in her beauty to settle near her cousin with the design apparently, of seeing how he will do. Of course, as we are in fairyland, Anthony proves as delightfully sympathetic a soul as even Susanna demands; and the dynastic claims are settled by a marriage. From the end of the first chapter you know, with no possibility of doubt, that this is what is going to happen. But this in no sense impairs the charm of the droll, tender, witty dialogue, the gem-like descriptions of scenery, the subtle indication of mood, the glamour which this most loveable of authors flings over the mind of his reader.

How one would have enjoyed making one of that party, listening to the soul of fat Adrian as it rolled

\* By Henry Harland. John Lane.

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