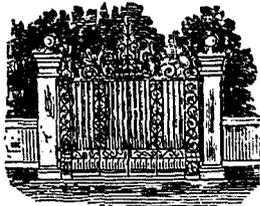


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



Amongst the shower of King's Birthday Honours we find the name of one lady, Miss E. A. Manning, Secretary of the National Indian Association, who has been awarded the Kaisar-i-Hind medal.

The debate on the Second Reading of the Local Authorities (Qualification of Women) Bill, moved by Earl Beauchamp in the House of Lords, and rejected by that Chamber, reveals a well-nigh incredible condition of mind in some of our hereditary legislators. The Earl of Portsmouth, for instance, gave as his reason for voting against the Bill that he had "no sympathy with political women. In his view a woman's politics should be the politics of her husband"!

Dr. Clifford Allbutt, who recently presented the prizes at the London School of Medicine for Women, said he thought the lady doctor had come to stay, and there was now no reason for defending a school of that kind. They were wise in having a school to themselves, but the time had now come when they must take a step forward and be members of the great colleges and guilds of their profession. There were large spheres where women could enter and men could not, and where men could not get the complete confidence of the patient that women could. He would be glad to see women belonging to such historic institutions as the College of Physicians and the College of Surgeons. It was an undoubted fact that at the Congress of Physicians men had derived great interest and instruction from papers read by women.

When in Berlin we inquired of the attitude of medical women towards the trained nurse, and received the reply: "Medical women have so far shown no sympathy with trained nurses. They use them, but have done nothing to improve their training or status. We find medical men much more intelligent on the nursing question."

Does not this agree with the attitude of medical women, with few exceptions, towards nurses at home? We remember Mrs. Fawcett, LL.D., some years ago taking exception to the constitution of the Royal British Nurses' Association because it included in its membership medical men and nurses, thus excluding medical women. This mistake was rectified later, medical "practitioners" being substituted for "men." But, as far as we know, no support or help has ever been given by medical women to nurse-members of the R.B.N.A. in their efforts to improve their education or status.

Mrs. Scharlieb, M.D., appears the only medical woman in London who is sufficiently in touch with the evolution of nursing to appreciate the significance of the present demand for adequate education upon the part of nurses and the justice of giving the public a guarantee that they are efficient.

A Book of the Week.

OLIVE LATHAM.*

Mrs. Voynich's latest tragedy is a work of great art. It contains all her highest work and her best construction. In point of interest it is beyond anything she has yet achieved.

Of course, all who read her books know by now that they contain unalleviated gloom. Life is a phantasmagoria of horror to anybody who thinks; the only way to escape it is by belonging to the numbers of those who are without experiences or sympathies—such is the idea underlying her work.

The heroine is a cold and fish-like person called Olive Latham, who is the elder daughter of a clever man who, like most other clever men, chose a wife who is an amiable fool. Olive becomes a hospital nurse; and when we are first introduced to her she comes home for a holiday, followed by a Christian Socialist parson, who, like all the other men in the book, is in love with her. The only reason for their love appears to be her lack of power to respond. When her father, shy and proud, but loving her so much that he feels he must make an attempt to interest her in himself, tries to confide in her, she gives him a bottle of pepsine tabloids to regulate his emotions.

It presently transpires that she is engaged to be married to a Russian Nihilist, who has been a refugee in England. She does apparently believe that she loves him, though this also would seem to be a kind of professional pity for his weak health. Presently, hearing that he is ill, she goes to St. Petersburg to nurse him, her family not being vouchsafed any explanation beyond the fact that a patient has sent for her. Vladimir Damarov is phthisical, and poor and proud. He is a member of a most undesirable family of Russian minor nobility. They live in squalor in a pestilential swamp, in a village full of people whose constitutions are all undermined, their morals as lacking as their health. One of Vladimir's brothers is a gambler, one a drunkard.

In these cheery surroundings Olive passes some months, then goes to St. Petersburg, where she lives in rooms, Vladimir being near, in another set of rooms. We read that Vladimir took her rooms for her; who paid for them does not appear. They are apparently waiting for the arrest of Vladimir, which is believed to be likely. The winter passes without news; Vladimir falls ill; then, when he is just out of danger, the blow falls. He is arrested, when at the very point of death, dragged to prison on mere suspicion, and there left to perish alone, without any kind of care, without food or water.

The description of what Olive goes through during the days when she tries to obtain news of him is the most harrowing reading that can well be imagined. Is Russia really like this? Are her officials devils, her prisons hell, her villages pest-houses, her law courts chambers of the Inquisition? Are her officers beasts of prey, who look on any virtuous woman as their natural booty?

Are these things really so?

If so, the sooner Russia, as now constituted, ceases to be, the better.

One feels inclined to wish that the Japanese could annihilate the nation entire.

By Mrs. E. L. Voynich. (Holtmann.)

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