

the working classes can be taught the trade thoroughly in this country.

"Artificial flower-making is another eminently feminine occupation, yet we find the French firms are usually sent to for thousands of pounds' worth of flowers when, for instance, a magnificent effect is wanted for Drury Lane. In the Valley of Orchids scene, some few years ago, the exquisitely-made orchids were all made in Paris. Artificial flower-making as a trade is not taught systematically here, though I admit there are private schools, like that of Miss Prince Browne, but what an advantage it would be for girls in England to be taught as they are in France; if they are too poor to pay for learning the trade, they are paid a small amount during their apprenticeship, or period of learning; the work made at the school being sold.

"Lace-making is another example of a trade where the woman worker is handicapped. I was told at Nottingham, one of the centres of the lace trade in England, that there is no technical college that admits women. If a woman wants to learn lace designing she must go abroad, to Belgium or elsewhere. Although the plainer lace is made by machines worked by pantographs, the whole process can be (and is, in one factory, to my knowledge) done by girls and women, with the exception of designing, also of drafting. This has always been in the hands of the men; and there is a union for the drafters, which does not admit women.

"There could not possibly be a finer solution of the great and terrible problem of the unemployed than the founding of various well-organised schemes for reviving the old system of apprenticeship, and I, for one, devoutly hope that in any such scheme the female workers will not be left out. 'To recreate' (as a correspondent writes in a contemporary of December 10th) 'the London apprentice, with a pride in his workmanship,' would do perhaps more towards solving 'the alien immigration' question and the 'unemployed problem' than all the Mansion House Organisation Schemes put together. What we want is to realise, if ever so little, Morris' beautiful ideal in 'News from Nowhere,' where he speaks of 'a man putting forth whatever is in him, and making his hands set forth his mind and his soul'; there would then be some chance, perhaps, of our obtaining 'the freedom for every man to do what he can do best.'"

WOMEN.

In "Fifty Years of Fleet Street," the Recollections of Sir John R. Robinson, he tells several characteristic stories of the late Queen Victoria. One may be quoted:

"The Queen, who was impatient of the ordinary Evangelical phraseology, protested strongly when one of the Court ladies said, 'Oh, madam, how delightful it will be in Heaven to see the prophets and saints of the past; to see Abraham and Moses, and Elijah, and David.' 'No, no,' said Her Majesty emphatically, 'nobody will ever persuade me to know David!'"

Forty young ladies who had passed the Tripos examination at Cambridge or its equivalent at Oxford were recipients of ordinary degrees at the Dublin University last week. Cambridge and Oxford do not admit women to their degrees, but when women students have passed the examinations indicated they are eligible for the degrees of Dublin University.

A Book of the Week.

SOONER OR LATER.*

Miss Hunt is astonishingly clever. Her view of humanity is not a complimentary one. But probably one needs to be "shown up" from time to time, though it may be a question as to whether there should not be some limit to the savagery of our critics.

It may be doubted whether the world would have stood Hogarth's "Mariage à la Mode," in all its brutal directness, had it not been for the saving grace of humour which relieved the gloom. There was something in every picture, which took the mind off from the deadly central interest and allowed it some other channel. So it has been with all the other great writers who lashed the vices of their time. Dickens is the example that rises at once to the mind.

The thing one notices most vividly in our modern school of woman novelists, deliberately using fiction as the vehicle for the expression of their convictions—Olive Schreiner, Sarah Grand, Ouida (in the "Masareenes"), and now Violet Hunt—the thing which one profoundly realises upon reading their works is their total lack of humour, their profound seriousness, which forbids one's considering the lurid pictures they paint as intended to be in any sense caricatures or over-drawn.

In "Sooner or Later," Miss Hunt sketches for us a group of persons without religion, without decency, without honour, without natural affections.

One does not wish to use epithets inadvicably. But the word "foul" is the only word that rises to the mind in thinking of Robert Assheton and Montagu Minet.

The ultimate note of grossness might be reckoned to have been sounded in Frank Danby's "Pigs in Clover," where the heroine hears the former lover—the brother of her present husband—knocking, knocking at her bedroom door. But in that case, the woman killed herself to avoid the unspeakable circumstances. Miss Hunt gives us the following situation:—

Robert Assheton, married Don Juan, has made Montagu de Wrenne, an unmarried girl, his mistress. She marries Walter Minet, and Robert Assheton is a member of a house party in her husband's house. He comes to her room at night, but they are surprised. She lends him a white, hooded gown in which to escape as the family ghost. He passes from her room by the balcony, enters the next room, where is lying Rose Newall, a young girl whom he has rendered madly in love with him, and seduces her.

Are people really like this? Miss Hunt writes as though she believed that Montagu Minet and her set were the rule, not the exception, in our day. If it be so, we may rejoice to remember that those who indulge in such vice must kill themselves out by the working of natural law.

The most horrible moment of the book is reached upon the last page. Robert Assheton finds that he has, without intending it, made Rose Newall his legal wife. They, therefore, set up house together, with the ashes of their dead intrigue to warm the household hearth; and on the last page we are told that they are to have a child.

The child of such a man and such a woman! The child of lies and lust, perjury, and shamelessness! Comment is impossible. G. M. R.

* By Violet Hunt. (Chapman and Hall.)

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