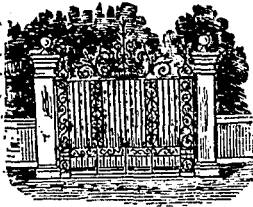


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



Her Royal Highness Princess Henry of Battenberg has promised to visit Sheffield in May, to unveil a memorial to Queen Victoria.

The Society of Women Journalists have arranged a most interesting programme.

On February 10th Mrs. Burnett Smith (Annie S. Swan) will read a paper on "The Personal Tie between Editors and Readers" at the new offices of the Society, 1, Clifford's Inn, E.C. On February 26th the President (Mrs. T. P. O'Connor) and members of the Society will be "At Home" at His Majesty's Theatre, when Mr. T. P. O'Connor will lecture on "Parliament and its Personalities." The chair will be taken by Mr. Beerbohm Tree at 3.30 p.m. precisely. Later in the season the members will have the delight of listening to Mrs. Perkins Gilman, U.S.A., who created such a tremendous impression at the Berlin Congress, on "Should Women Work," and amongst other interesting subjects Lady Frances Balfour will speak on "Women's Suffrage," and Mrs. Samson on "Specialism in Journalism."

Lady Colin Campbell has been appointed editor of the *Ladies' Field*, vice Mrs. MacDonald, resigned.

The February number of the *National Review* contains an article entitled "An Autocracy at Work," by the author of the famous article on the Tsar which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*.

The brutal murder of thousands of Russian men and women by order of the Tsar has had one useful effect—the people have been made to realise for the first time that an autocrat is inevitably the enemy of the poor and helpless; if they have learnt this lesson, the terrible sacrifice of human life will bear glorious fruit.

It is reported that hundreds of women have been arrested in Petersburg and other parts of Russia, many of them, ladies of refinement and education, have been dragged from their beds during the night and lodged in prison, from whence if they escape pollution and death, they will no doubt be deported to drag out their lives amidst the horrors of a Siberian penal settlement.

One wonders how long the so-called civilised nations will look on at the incarnate devilry of Russian rule, before uniting to sweep its tyranny off the face of the earth. The only army which is supportable with human liberty is an International Army of Guards of Liberty, who, at the trumpet call of the oppressed, would hurl themselves against autocracy and misrule, and maintain just and humane laws throughout the world.

"Do not marry unless you can support your husbands," said Mr. Ferris, formerly a candidate for the Governorship of Michigan, addressing the Commercial Teachers' Federation at Chicago.

A Book of the Week.

THE SECRET WOMAN.*

I have not seen it said in any of the reviews which I have read, but the conviction was forced home to me in reading this remarkable book—that it forms a strong argument for the Church of Rome—or at least, for the doctrine of Oral Confession.

The book provides that which is most vital to a book's success—namely, endless room for discussion.

The *dramatis personae* are, as always with this writer, natives of Dartmoor; people whose minds run in channels as deep as they are narrow, whose emotions torture them far more than they do those who are able to give expression to what they suffer.

The idea in the writer's mind seems to be much the same as that of *Æschylus*—that things are inevitable, and that our deeds are shaped by circumstances. "If you break the law, the law will break you," is the iron rule of Nature. To this is added the awful theory that you cannot help what you do.

Ann Redvers, a righteous, austere woman of middle age, suddenly discovers her husband to have been unfaithful to her, and, in a fit of wild jealousy and rage, pushes him down a well. The act is witnessed by her two sons, Jesse and Michael. Michael, the younger, the stronger and simpler nature, forces silence upon Jesse, the elder. They both lie at the inquest, and Ann starts to live her haunted life, a prey to such remorse and bitterness of soul as only so strong a nature could feel.

The situation is horribly complicated by the fact that Jesse is in love with the "Secret Woman"—with the girl who, unknown to all, is their father's mistress. One is reminded of the *Œdipus* in many ways. In ancient Thebes, the calibre of emotions and opinions must have been much on a par with the lives of the Dartmoor folk. One sees them enveloped in the spiritual darkness which Christ came 2,000 years ago to dispel, and which still covers them as a garment.

They find no way out of their miserable experience. One feels that confession would have solved the whole problem, and given release to those tied and bound with the chain of their sins.

The part of the book which chronicles the small-beer of the village rustics, is admirable. Old flock-master Westaway and Joshua Bloem, and William Arscott, are the creations of genius. The dialogues in the village inn, the debates of the jury at the coroner's inquest, all these bespeak the touch of a master hand. But, to the present reviewer, the brothers, Jesse and Michael, and the women, Ann and Salome, are not convincing. They are the puppets of Mr. Philpotts' ethical purposes, and though their creator manages them so deftly, his scheme forbids him ever to allow them to surprise you. They move only in the orbit indicated. Verily, he is the greatest writer of stories, who can make his character do what you do not expect, and yet what you afterwards feel to have been probable and convincing.

Mr. Philpotts has filled all the crevices of his book with descriptions of the land he loves. None of his characters can go indoors or out, without a detailed account of the twilight or the dawn, the storm or the calm, the summer or the winter, on Dartmoor.

* By Edon Philpotts. (Methuen.)

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