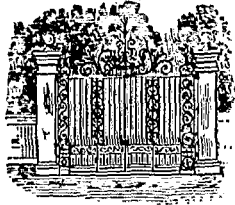


## Outside the Gates.

## WOMEN.



In honour of the visit of her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, Indian ladies of some of the highest families, who have never come out from the sacred precincts of the zenana before, will personally welcome her Royal Highness and take part in the ceremonial.

Sir William Crookes, during his visit to South Africa with the British Association, paid a visit to Kimberley, where he gave a lecture on "Diamonds." *Reuter* reports that, describing the working of the diamond mines Sir William said that the scene below ground in the labyrinth of galleries was bewildering in its complexity, and very unlike the popular notion of a diamond mine. All below was dirt, mud and grime; half naked men, dark as mahogany, lithe as athletes, dripping with perspiration, were seen in every direction, hammering, picking, shovelling, wheeling the trucks to and fro, keeping up a weird chant which rose in force and rhythm when a greater task called for excessive muscular strain. The whole scene was more suggestive of a coal mine than a diamond mine, and all this mighty organisation, this strenuous expenditure of energy, this costly machinery, this ceaseless toil of skilled and black labour, went on day and night just to win a few stones wherewith to deck my lady's finger! All to gratify the vanity of woman!

Accounts of the admission to the bar of Australia's first lady barrister have been received in this country. Her name is Miss Greta Flos Matilda Greig. Many ladies were present in court for the ceremony. After her admission with a number of male candidates, the Chief Justice, addressing Miss Greig, conveyed to her the congratulations of the Bench, and expressed the hope that she would be as successful at the Bar as she had been as a student. Miss Greig rose and bowed. Later in the day she made her first professional appearance, in an application on behalf of a branch of the Australian Women's Association.

September 15th is the seventy-sixth birthday of a very great man. General Porfirio Diaz has been President of Mexico for thirty years, with a short interval of four years, when he was out of office. We understand his life is being written by Mrs. Alec Tweedie (Hurst and Blackett), whose former book, "Mexico as I saw It," had such a large sale three years ago. Mrs. Tweedie was in Mexico last winter again as the guest of the President, and is compiling this life with his sanction, and from authentic diaries and documents he placed in her hands for the purpose. It promises to be a remarkable volume about the life's history of a man who was born in obscurity, lived a wildly exciting life as a soldier, played an important part in the history of Maximilian and Carlota, and has now assumed the position of a Perpetual President, and brought his country from chaos and revolution to peace and prosperity.

## A Book of the Week.

## KNOCK AT A VENTURE.\*

We are grateful to Mr. Philpotts for giving us this collection of short stories, which embodies varying kinds of interest—some tragedy, some pathos, some humour. This is the more noteworthy and surprising, because the local range of the stories is even smaller than is Mr. Philpotts' wont. Dartmoor is not a very large theatre; but when the scene is narrowed down to Postbridge, reiteration seems almost inevitable.

There is, however, no reiteration, save that of a certain motive, which is beginning to be characteristic of this author to a degree which shows some sign of growing tedious. This motive is that of the rustic beauty with two strings to her bow. When the three actors in this oft-told tale are all natives of the Philpott district, and racy of the soil: when they all say "Iss fay," and "hon do be so butivul as the morning 'pon Darty Moor," there is not very much room for varying their stories. In fact, the first of the series, "Mound by the Way," reads like the first block-in of an idea which the author has elsewhere expanded into a longer story; and the same motive is repeated in at least three others in the volume before us.

But the workmanship of all these stories is very fine. The utter naturalness of the "sawls" who frequent the "Ring o' Bells" is almost without a parallel in contemporary literature. We feel that we know them all. Their motives, their small greatnesses, their great meannesses, their troubles, their ambitions, their peculiarities, all show them the work of a master hand. We confess to a personal weakness for the story of Corban, the "ram cat" who was shot, and for whom another exactly similar animal was hurriedly substituted, to allay the frantic wrath and grief of the old man who was his owner. The girl who successfully perpetrated the pious fraud was delighted to see it so successful, until her lover, whom Corban's decease had threatened to divide from her, came home for a day.

"It's a ewe cat," he said dejectedly.

"Hurry on the wedding; an' God send her don't have chets 'fore we'm married, else Postbridge won't hold your dear father, nor Darty Moor neither!"

Perhaps the most original vein of pathos is to be found in the "Traveller's Tale," which tells how a Dartmoor lad, stranded in Martinique, is heard to speak in the West Country accent by a Frenchman, whose aged Devon-born mother, years ago, married a French prisoner at Princetown. For years this wonderful old lady had experienced a profound nostalgia which she was too old and too infirm to gratify. The Dartmoor lad discoursed to her in the tongue of her own land. We take leave to doubt the reality of the poetic flights in which he indulged; but anyhow, he succeeded in making Madame Damian happier than she had been for years, and when he came home for a holiday, he told the story at the "Ring o' Bells."

The story of Minnie Merle and Elias Bassett is a charming setting of a Devon legend. The whole collection is artistic, symmetrical, and fascinating.

G. M. R.

\* By Eden Philpotts. (Methuen.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)