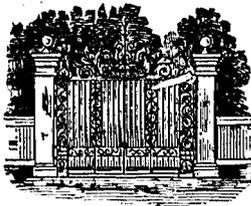


Outside the Gates.

Book of the Week.

WOMEN



The Women's Clubs are all waking up, and swept and garnished present a very bright and home-like appearance to the members upon their return from the holidays. At the Lyceum in Piccadilly work is getting into full swing and the various Advisory Boards are preparing pleasurable programmes. Already a Journalists' Dinner, to be given on November 5th, with Miss Hepworth Dixon in the Chair, promises to be a very brilliant affair, the hostesses will include a number of our most prominent women writers, who may be known at a glance, as each will wear a black and white rosette.

Then the Society of Women Journalists' have their notices out for their Annual Meeting and At Home on the same day, and amongst the readers of Papers, announced in the autumn programme two are sure to attract large audiences. On October 12th Mrs. Flora Annie Steel will discuss "The Office of the New Broom," and on October 20th "Style the Right Word in the Right Place" by Miss Ella Curtis ("Blue Stocking" of the *Lady's Pictorial*) is sure to be popular.

Mrs. George Cadbury will preside at the opening of the Conference of the National Union of Women Workers of Great Britain and Ireland at Tunbridge Wells on October 22nd, and on the programme the names of many old favourites appear. Lady Laura Ridding, Mrs. Creighton, Miss Clifford, Mrs. Henry Fawcett and Mrs. Mirrless are all to take part in the various Sessions, and the *jeune fille* is to receive marked attention in various papers. Some very able advocates will deal with the burning question of Women's Suffrage.

The National Council of Women will meet on October 23rd and 24th to receive reports and discuss the three Resolutions selected by the Executive Committee, the most important of which is to be proposed by Mrs. Creighton and seconded by Mrs. Percy Bunting, in the following terms:—

"That the National Council of Women wishes to express its deep sense of the need for the Amendment of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, especially with a view of —

- (1) Raising the age of consent (to 18),
- (2) Extending the time limit for bringing a charge in court,
- (3) Abolishing the clause (section 5, Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885), known as 'the reasonable cause to believe' a girl is under 16, and
- (4) Having incest made a penal offence."

THE GUARDED FLAME.*

The "Guarded Flame" seems to me to be unquestionably the most remarkable book—I had almost said the only remarkable book—of the present season. Mr. Maxwell is to be reckoned with as an author of power and of originality. In this striking story he has pursued a definite idea with a degree of certainty, an extent of knowledge, and a determination to be thorough, which must make writers such as Mr. Hichens look to their laurels.

It has been very amusing to notice the amount of ruffled feathers which Mr. Maxwell has produced by his lightly touched-in description of the professional nurses in the course of the story. On seeking for a reason why this little chorus of protest should have arisen, I find it in the extraordinary realism of Mr. Maxwell's writing. In reading of these nurses we feel that these nurses really existed; and, as is justly observed by a correspondent this week, doubtless they did exist. One feels sure that Mr. Maxwell drew his nurses from life. What then? Nothing is proved, except that there are such things as nurses who grow case-hardened, nurses who nurse as a means of livelihood and not from pure joy in ministering to the sick. Mr. Maxwell nowhere says that they neglected their duties† or were incompetent, only that they looked after their own little comforts, and that their small minds failed to realise the greatness which lay shrouded in cottonwool and bandages upon the bed.

The same kind of protest is often made, if one writes a book and introduces an unworthy clergyman. There is probably no class of men in England in which the average of morals and attainments is higher than among the clergy. But there are many clergy who have no personal vocation, many who are a disgrace to their calling. It would perhaps not be too much exaggeration to say that, if you took the working women of England in classes, you would find in the nursing profession a higher average, both of skill and of personal character, than in any other. But for all that, there *are* such nurses as Mr. Maxwell describes, and no sensible person will question it.

The "Guarded Flame" is the flame of the genius of Richard Burgoyne. In reading the account of the great man's household, one is forcibly reminded of a little book which came out this spring, "Home Life of Richard Spencer." The ladies who wrote that book, and who lived with Herbert Spencer for a period of years, were ultimately shocked and pained to find that the author of "Synthetic Philosophy" was, after all, very small-minded in points where one would have expected him to be great—that his views on the subject of £ s. d. were even sordid. The mind of Richard Burgoyne has no such hiatus. It is planned throughout on the grand scale. His epitaph is condensed in Browning's immortal line:

"This man determined not to live, but know."

Personal life has been sacrificed by the great thinker. He lives for mankind, not in any sense of the word for himself.

* By W. H. Maxwell. Methuen.

† Our Reviewer overlooks the fact that one nurse was asleep on duty.

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