

The *Municipal Journal* says: We are able to state that the Government has in hand the preparation of a scheme for dealing in a complete and comprehensive manner with the reform of London government. It is possible that the Bill giving effect to the Government's proposals will be introduced next Session.

So far as Poor Law administration is concerned, an even more drastic change is in contemplation. It is expected that the Boards of Guardians will be abolished, and that their work will be transferred to the borough councils, which it is hoped will be able to apply a uniform system of administration over the whole of the enlarged county.

This is an item of news of immense interest to women, and especially to Poor Law nurses, as the management of the infirmaries would thus be placed under the control of the borough councils. Thus the Bill which is to become law this session is only just in time, as it makes women eligible for election on to these bodies. Had Boards of Guardians been kept away before the Bill had become law, away at one fell swoop would have gone the power of women to work for the very poor in workhouses and infirmaries.

Book of the Week.

NEEDLES AND PINS.*

All who were interested in the fortunes of François Villon in Mr. J. Huntly McCarthy's popular novel, "If I were King," will welcome these further chronicles with pleasure. Nor will they be disappointed in their expectations. Unlike the majority of sequels, the story displays no falling off in interest or excitement. Its title is very fully justified for, without question, when this man marries his trouble begins, although no union has ever started with fuller prospects of joy, or greater promise that disillusionment would be impossible.

A great feature in favour of the story is its entire credibility, the falling out of seemingly faithful friends is brought about by such subtle degrees, there is no undue haste in the telling, it all happens so gradually, so naturally, that they themselves cannot have realised whither they were drifting until it was too late to take warning.

The dream begins in a golden glamour, too blindingly splendid, too rarified for mere humanity to sustain. The Lady Katherine of Vaucelles leads home her newly-made lord, a sometime member of the riff-raff of Paris, now honoured by King Louis, and gives him the freedom of her lands with lavish hands. It is she who has the worldly goods with which to endow him. He has nothing but his love, his recently-acquired title of Count of Montcorbier, and his poetical self to offer in return. At the outset of their romantic union it suffices.

* By Justin Huntly McCarthy. (Hurst and Blackett.)

But Katherine has not counted the cost. She belongs to one of the great families of Poitou, and she returns from Paris with François Villon full of confidence that he will be accepted among the nobility on the strength of her position and the King's favouritism. But she is barely a week at Vaucelles before she discovers her mistake: she and her husband are tacitly shunned and insulted, and to her dismay Villon apparently swallows the impertinence, and plays the coward. This is the beginning of distrust and contempt: poor Villon has his ideal rudely shattered, but acquitting himself with undoubted skill and manliness, he is taken back into favour. With a passionate desire to return to the beautiful dream existence he immediately blinds himself to the imperfection he has discovered, and sets himself to forget it. But the position is too insecure. The fact that he and his wife have been brought up in utterly different stations of life tells eventually, and accounts for a lack of sympathy between them which is the next cause of friction. François, who till such recent times has been compelled to live by his wits, has infinite pity for thieves, rogues, and mountebanks: the high-born lady has none, and his softness moves her to such contempt that his faith in her suffers another shock, on the head of which Katherine hears something about her husband that excites her jealousy, and she reaches a climax in which she can find nothing too bitter or too harsh wherewith to upbraid the unfortunate Villon. How he bears himself throughout: the difficulties that his impetuosity plunges him into: the tricks he plays upon his enemies, and his ultimate triumph, are all well told.

For a book of adventure, "Needles and Pins" is well written, and cleverly strung together, quite a story for an hour or two of recreation.

E.L.H.

The Sun's Roses.

The Sun dropped all his roses down,
Just at the close of day,
And every river, lake, and bay,
Looked up, and wished, in her sweet way,
Hers was the bright bouquet.

The roses fell a crimson shower;
The great Sun left the west;
One little brook her love unguessed,
Long after he had gone, still pressed
His roses to her breast.

ALICE E. ALLEN,
Munsey's Magazine.

Coming Event.

August 21.—Princess Henry of Battenberg attends the Annual Meeting of the Gosport Victoria Nursing Society, and afterwards presents certificates to the Members of the Gosport, Alverstoke, and Fareham Centre of the St. John Ambulance Association.

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