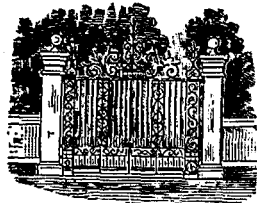


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



The Annual Conference of the National Union of Women Workers to be held in the Midland Hall, Manchester, from the 21st to 25th of October promises to be a very interesting meeting, and the delegates are sure of a most hospitable greeting from the members of the Manchester Branch. Education, Labour and Economics, and Philanthropy come in for a full share of the discussion. The Professions and Politics this year are accorded no place on the Programme.

The Annual Meeting of the governing body of the National Council of Women is announced to take place on Tuesday, 22nd October, at 2.30 p.m., and on the following morning at 10.30 a.m. Mrs. George Cadbury, the President, will preside. Here again the two principal resolutions refer to the education and work of the industrial classes—matters of the utmost importance—but we should like to see a fair share of time devoted to the well-being of other classes of women workers. We consider it a serious omission that in the Sectional Committees to which so much of the work of the National Union is deputed, the interests of professional women are entirely omitted. There should be a Professional Section, just as there is an Industrial Committee. A National Union of Women must include all classes or it fails to be national.

Mrs. Edwin Gray, of York, has been nominated as President, and we cannot imagine a more popular candidate. Mrs. Gray is what the Americans call a "lovely" woman—that is, a woman who has charm, beauty, brains, and *goodness*—and these are all very desirable qualities in leadership. Mrs. Gray is President of the York Branch, one of the founders of the York Health and Housing Reform Association, and a member of its Committee, a member of the National Housing Reform Council, a member of the Executive Committee of York's Women's Suffrage Society, and she has been a Poor Law Guardian for ten years.

Interesting and artistic work by which women can earn a living is not easy to maintain—at least we often hear that arts and crafts are overdone. Quite lately we came across a lady who has taken up china mending, and who, possessing the true eye and inspired finger of the modeller, is making a great success of this very difficult art. This skilled work is, we believe, now almost entirely in the hands of a few expert men, but it appears to us most suitable for women—only, they must be artists. There are plenty of botchers in every business.

Book of the Week.

THE COUNTRY HOUSE.*

As in "Sir Richard Calmady" and "Peter's Mother," we have here the story of a mother's perfect devotion to her son. The love story is of minor importance, a tawdry affair. George Pendyce, given to racing and betting, is, in common with most of the men she meets, fascinated by the beautiful Mrs. Bellew, a woman who lives apart from her husband, and is bent upon getting a divorce. But for this extreme course there is found to be insufficient reason, and the infatuated George so far dispenses with conventionalities that Jasper Bellew is enabled to turn the tables, play the part of outraged husband, and threatens to divorce his wife if George does not at once drop her acquaintance. This the young fellow refuses to do, being too deeply drugged by the woman's extraordinary charm to care how public the scandal may become. If these were the only characters in the book it would scarcely be worth one's while to read it, so little is one interested for their sakes in the solution of the difficulty.

But in the "Country House," the home of George's boyhood, there lives his mother, a woman whose beauty of character it is given to but few to realise; her husband is not among the enlightened. The description of the life of this mistress of the country house could not be surpassed, it is quite a little masterpiece in fiction; she is of so little account, so unconsidered, and yet so perpetually essential to the household from the hour when she awoke, with her tea "and from seven to eight made little notes on tablets," till 10.30 when she went to bed. "At 11.30 punctually the Squire woke her. At one o'clock she went to sleep." On Sunday mornings she would sit for an hour by the window in her boudoir before going to dress for church till the Squire would rouse her with "Now, my dear, you'll be late." She had sat there till her hair, once dark brown, was turning grey; she would sit there until it was white. One day she would sit there no longer, and, as likely as not, Mr. Pendyce, still well preserved, would enter and say, "Now, my dear, you'll be late!" having for the moment forgotten. The book is full of just such subtle little touches as this, which, without effort or strain, sum up a whole life's tragedy, or an existence of utter self-absorption.

Strange to say, among the few who appreciate Mrs. Pendyce is the undesirable husband, Jasper Bellew, and because of his regard for her he gives George his chance—he will withdraw the suit if George will give his word never to see Mrs. Bellew again. The young man's refusal, coupled with the fear of the scandal it would cause in the county, makes Mr. Pendyce so furiously angry that he determines he will leave everything that is possible away from George. "Until the heaven's fallen I'll have no more to do with him," thunders the father, now hearing also for the first time of his son's gambling propensities. Then the gentle spirit of the mother, that has smouldered so long

* By John Galsworthy. (Heinemann.)

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