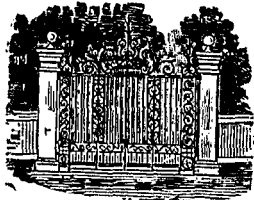


Outside the Gates.



WOMEN.

The Women's Freedom League is bringing out a new weekly paper entitled *The Vote*, the first number of which should appear in the beginning of October. Countess Russell, Mrs. Despard, Mrs. How Martin, and

Miss Marie Lawson will be concerned in its management.

One of the most eloquent speakers at the Jubilee Congress of District Nursing at Liverpool was the Hon T. L. Griffith, the American Consul-General. His speech, which is printed in full in the report of the Congress, is of interest just now owing to its reference to "The Maid," of whose beatification much is being heard at the present time. Mr. Griffith said:—

"I witnessed at Orleans the celebration in commemoration of the deliverance of the ancient city by Joan of Arc. The flower of the French army passed before me, the glorious sunlight touching sword and lance and bayonet tip until they seemed a shimmering fretwork of steel. Then came the city's rulers in democratic dress, and, following them, the dignitaries of the Church in purple and crimson and old lace, and a host of choir-boys singing "Glory to God in the Highest," and finally, in his splendid scarlet robes, the Cardinal symbolical of power and majesty and dominion.

"In whose honour was all this gorgeous pageantry? In honour of a simple peasant girl, who saw, or thought she saw, visions—it is perfectly immaterial whether she did or not—and who heard, or fancied she heard, voices calling to her out of the silences of the night, bidding her go forth and save France. Soldier and clergy and populace, Catholics and Protestants and Pagans, Jews and Gentiles, united in paying homage to the courage of a woman. Putting aside all questions of inspirations and politics and religion, it was a spontaneous tribute to the faith and heroism which made Joan of Arc her country's redeemer. I thought as I watched that brilliant spectacle in the shadow of the old cathedral that thousands of women in the twentieth century were saving England and America and Germany, and France and all the nations, in a different way it is true from the way that Joan of Arc saved France, but none the less effectively; aye, even more so, as they go forth, not clad in mail, but in Christian love, to help their fellow men.

"In the forefront of this divine army we see the radiant and triumphant figure of Florence Nightingale, and grouped about her holy standard the soldiers of humanity, in their attractive uniform, a uniform which commands respect and admiration and devotion wherever it is worn, because it typifies gentleness and sacrifice and courage."

Book of the Week.

A REAPING.*

That Mr. Benson is, or tries to be, an optimist no one reading this volume can doubt. He believes that this is a good world, full of good and beautiful things, and that the mortals inhabiting it should enjoy to the full of their ability, all that there is to enjoy.

"A world as God has made it—all is beauty,
And knowing this is love, and love is duty,
What further can be sought for, or declared?"
"And to that I say Amen."

Like all constitutionally very cheerful people, the hero, who is also the writer of the book, has fits of gloom and depression, against which the optimistic side of him does battle. Written almost in the form of a diary we find the book divided into months. Beginning in June, the reader follows the intimate workings of a man's mind for a twelvemonth.

In the strictest sense of the word, this can hardly be classed as a novel, and yet there is a more or less consecutive story running all through it. Of characters there are but few, but those few are so clearly presented that there seems no difficulty in realising them. The writer is, we find, married, innumerable little touches show that he is happily married, he and Helen have that perfect understanding of, and sympathy with each other, which alone can make married life what it should be. "Helen and I always make visiting arrangements independently of each other, unless we are both bidden to a house, to which we both want to go. But it stands to reason, so it seems to us, that husband and wife probably do not have the same friends. I cannot bear some of her friends, and she finds it almost impossible to tolerate some of mine, and with shouts of laughter, we agree to differ." Then again, "Oh, do take the brush, you made me send my maid away, so you must do it yourself." "Now, in my heart, I pity everybody who has not seen Helen with her hair down."

All through the book we constantly meet slight allusions like the foregoing, telling more explicitly what the inner life of this little family is, than the most elaborate details could do.

Helen's husband is an author, and it is to be inferred, a somewhat successful one, possessing a house in town, and another in the country; the family apparently gravitate between the two. There are only three members, the man, his wife, and his young cousin, a spontaneously charming youngster, working up for a post in the Foreign Office. It is through the medium of this lad, that much of the quiet humour, as well as the highest pathos, is reached. The lad is the very incarnation of joyous life, and being the only young thing Helen and her husband have about them, they lavish on him all the love they would have given to a child of their own. That there is no child is an almost acknowledged disappointment to them both.

In February a great sorrow comes to them. The delightful boy meets with a bicycle accident so

* By E. F. Benson. (Heinemann).

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)