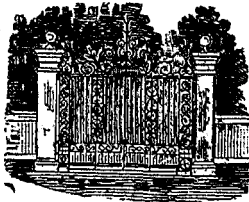


## Outside the Gates.

### WOMEN.



The Conference of the National Union of Women Workers opened at the Grand Pavilion, South Parade Pier, Southsea, on Tuesday. The Lady Laura Ridding is nominated as President for the

coming year.

The annual meetings of the National Council of Women were held on Wednesday and Thursday. Resolutions on the Parliamentary Franchise for Women, the emigration of women workers to British Colonies, and the importance of bringing children boarded out, and those in receipt of outdoor relief, under the care of ladies' committees or women officials, and the supervision of women Government inspectors, were discussed.

A sale of garments made in the Unemployed Women's Workrooms will be held under the auspices of the Central (Unemployed) Body for London from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, October 23rd, and Monday, October 25th, at 109, Clerkenwell Road (a few doors from the Holborn Town Hall). The proceeds of the sale will be devoted to the funds of the workrooms, and we hope that many people will take this opportunity of securing useful garments and assisting an admirable cause.

The paper to be issued by the Women's Freedom League, entitled, "The Vote for Women's Freedom," makes its first appearance this week. The editors are Miss Cicely Hamilton and Miss Marion Holmes, and the directors Mrs. Despard, Countess Russell, Mrs. E. How-Martyn, B.Sc., Mrs. J. E. Snow, with Miss Marie Lawson as Managing Director. We wish it all success.

## Book of the Week.

### THE SON OF MARY BETHEL.\*

From time to time a wave of allegorical teaching seems to possess serious minded writers. Some half-century ago Adams and Munroe were the leading exponents of this class of instruction. More lately we have "The Master Christian," and then Miss Graham's "Mary." Even Jerome K. Jerome has contributed something to this form of idea in his "Passing of the Third Floor Back." The broad-minded Dean Farrar, the brilliant Frenchman, Renan, and the German mystic, David Strauss, have all given the world their ideas on the Life of Christ, but here is something quite different. We find Miss Elsa Barker boldly embarking on an exposition of the re-incarnation of the greatest teacher the world has ever known.

The story begins in Vermont, U.S.A., at a village

\* By Elsa Barker. (Chatto and Windus.)

called Nashburgh. Jesse Bethel, a child of three, is a strangely beautiful, thoughtful little creature, given to a habit of silent dreaming, a habit which grows into constant self-communing not natural to most children. Step by step we follow his growing life, and step by step we see events borrowed from the happenings in a previous existence. The four Gospels are silent about the first thirty years of the life of Christ, with one exception, when he was twelve. In this work of fiction, however, the author deems it needful to describe many events in order to impress the wonderful personality and the growing power of the young carpenter. To any reader intimately acquainted with the original text, it feels rather like looking at well known objects in a glass which gives a distorted reflection.

One after another well known characters pass in review, under other names, and whilst re-enacting parts they played nearly two thousand years ago, all is so modernised as to be only vaguely recognisable. It is clear that only a mind with a strong religious bent could have written this book, and doubtless the author did it in all reverence. The character of Jesse is incomparably beautiful. His sweetness of manner and great personal attractiveness win for him many friends and followers, his teaching is always beautiful, if at times slightly vague and verbose. Sometimes one is startled by his utterances. "As he read and studied, four stupendous questions gradually took form within his mind, "What is God? What am I? What are my relations to God? What are my relations to my fellow men?" It is many months before he finds the answer to his questions; but suddenly, when once more meditating on these deep subjects, the answer to the first queries burst on him. "He sprang to his feet, and stretching out his arms to the universe, shouted aloud with joy and consciousness of power, 'I myself am God.'" He somewhat explains this amazing statement when instructing one of his disciples. "The God in you is your God, and the God in me is my God, but your God and my God are one, *the One*." At another time he says, "God is the Power, and I am the expression of the Power." Then again, "I desire no honour for myself; I am only the servant and mouthpiece of the Spirit." At a very early period of his life he finds the answer as to what are his relations to his fellow men. It is to spend himself for others, to teach them how to lead a higher, better, purer life. When his father, the old carpenter, dies, he supports his mother, giving her a wealth of love, and to all his followers the tenderest friendship. His missionary wanderings begin in the countryside surrounding his birth-place, and wherever he goes he acquires more and more adherents. In his early manhood he spent three months in New York. He realised the terrible need there was in that great business centre for regeneration, a place where the mighty forces of evil seemed so much more powerful than the forces of good. So, after some years, he returns to New York to preach his great Gospel of love and self-abnegation, and spiritual awakening. No need to ask how it would be received in a community so eagerly seeking after the good things of this world, filled with a smug content that an outward show

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