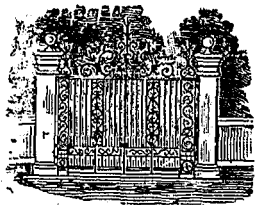


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



The Lady Mayoress's Fund for God's Poor has met with a satisfactory response. An interesting feature of the movement will be an invitation to the Mayoresses of the different London boroughs to co-operate. There have been donations from well-wishers of the fund in France, Italy, Switzerland, and Belgium.

The conviction against Mrs. Pankhurst and the Hon. Mrs. Haverfield for having sought to lay a petition before the Prime Minister has been upheld in the Divisional Court. The Lord Chief Justice stated that "the ladies have a right to present a petition to the Prime Minister." How this right is to be effectively exercised unless the petitioners, or a deputation representing them, are to be allowed to come into the presence of the Prime Minister, the Court did not explain. It now remains to be seen what will be the result of this Gilbertian pronouncement. Whatever party is returned to power at the polls in January, let us hope that a new era of political liberty is at hand for women.

The Albert Hall, London, is to be crowded to the roof on the 9th inst, to welcome Mrs. Pankhurst home from her tour in the United States and Canada. Her farewell meeting in New York provoked an extraordinary demonstration of enthusiasm for the Suffrage cause.

At a recent meeting of the Board of Governors of the Manchester Royal Infirmary the Committee appointed to report on the subject of the appointment of medical women to resident posts in the Infirmary, of course, presented one unanimously adverse to the admission of women to such offices. Manchester is essentially middle class, and the middle-class community is too essentially genteel to appreciate or respect the rights of working gentlewomen. We are not surprised that the men who drew up this discreditable report were not anxious to append their names to it. It was therefore circulated signed by the Chairman of the Board, Sir William Cobbett.

It is not worth while to waste space in printing the terms of this specious document, inspired as it is by sex prejudice. We agree with the *Manchester Guardian* that the unanimous front presented by the Board of the Royal Infirmary, Manchester, "does not mend matters, but only enlarges the scandal." Women are still burning with indignation over the Strangeways Gaol hose outrage on a defenceless woman prisoner, and expects little of a community which has not protested against, and removed from positions of public responsibility, the men who violated the elements both of justice and humanity.

Book of the Week.

POPPY.*

A powerful, well-written book, but not an altogether pleasant one. The description of life on the veldt and in the towns, the men and women who inhabit them, are vivid, arresting, and in some cases almost too lurid. The reader follows the fortunes of Poppy through all the various troublous episodes of her childhood and young womanhood with unbroken interest. She is the central figure of the story, and keeps her place as such all through, the many other well-drawn characters circling round her.

We first meet Poppy Destin at the age of nine, an orphan of Irish parentage, living with an aunt, whose most unwilling and badly-treated drudge she has become, looking after the children, and doing all the dirty work in the house. The child's life is one long story of hardship and oppression, whilst her naturally warm, impulsive nature craves for kindness and affection. This is in some measure given her by her cousin Ina, who, unfortunately, gets a severe chill and dies. Blaming Poppy for the child's illness, her aunt becomes so brutal that the girl runs away from what has never been a home to her, and where her only solace has been making little poems about everything to herself—mostly sad—the inborn artist soul in her, even at that early age, striving for expression.

There is a striking and pathetic account given of how she follows in the wake of some trekking waggons, finally too exhausted to go on. She is discovered by the mother of the party, a kindly woman, who tends her. When within two days' trek of Pretoria fear of being found by her aunt possesses her. She strays off, and after days of privation and wandering, she sinks half-fainting on the door step of a house, where the owner picks her up. "Who are you, child?" he asks. She replies with a line from one of her poems, "My soul is like a shrivelled leaf."

After a lapse of seven years, spent in travelling in Europe with her self-appointed guardian and benefactor, Poppy reappears at Durban.

Luce Abinger is a strange character, and one feels at times slightly overdrawn. A man of wealth and position, his whole nature has been soured by a terrible accident. A scar, evidently the work of a blow from a knife, runs from brow to chin, distorting his erstwhile handsome face. This disfigurement has so preyed on his mind that he cannot be a pleasant person to live with, though the devotion of his Kaffir and Basuto servants vouch for the fact of redeeming qualities.

Poppy, now a beautiful, highly educated girl of seventeen, naturally expects to be taken into society in Durban. Here she finds herself mistaken, and resents the fact. Luce, for a reason which the reader learns later on, keeps her carefully locked within the grounds of his beautiful house. The child, born and brought up all her early life on the veldt, pines for freedom, and eventually finds a means of getting out of the garden, un-

* By Cynthia Stockley. (Hurst and Blackett.)

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