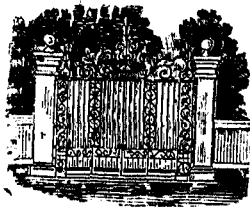


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



Miss Mason, the first woman inspector in any Government Department, has been presented, on her retirement, with her portrait as a national testimonial, and last week was the hostess at Mr. Harris Brown's studio in the Fulham Road, where the portrait was on view. Miss Mason has 25 years' experience as Chief Inspector of Poor-Law Children, and her splendid work in this capacity is widely recognised. Her term of service began when Mr. Balfour was President of the Local Government Board, and she has worked under a dozen presidents, including Mr. John Burns.

Touching on the question of the "Vote," and the economic position of nurses, Miss Dock writes:—"The vote from which I hoped so much for you is deferred, evidently in a manner to make the heart sick. But, of course, we must not, and cannot, despair; only it is really a hard mountain to move, this mountain of economic and legal inferiority of position. Added to it, to make it worse, this silent, undying antagonism between higher spiritual nobility of thought and purpose; and dense, brute, selfish determination to dominate and crush out the higher. Well, well! I fear I am gloomy. You need cheer and inspiration from without, not gloom and hemoanings. Love and loyalty to you all, splendid fighters for the right."

Book of the Week.

LETTERS TO MY SON.

There are mothers and mothers, some full of the love and wisdom which increase with increasing years, and some who never seem to understand what motherhood means. Nurses and midwives meet with all kinds, but even they are apt to forget that motherhood begins long before they are called into the field of action, and that mothers have hopes, fears, longings, and anxieties which, unless they are of a very sympathetic and understanding nature, they are apt to overlook altogether.

For this, amongst other reasons, they should read "Letters to My Son," written by an anonymous, expectant mother, and published by Chapman and Hall, the first of which explains why they were written:—

"Little son, these letters are for you, so that if I should not live to see you grow up, if I should have to leave you before ever your eyes look at me or your voice cry to me, you should know how much I loved you, and you would be able to come to them for the comfort I would have given to you if I had lived.

"There will be times, both as a boy and as a man, when it will seem as if an end had come to every-

thing, and there is not one person on earth who can help. It will not be true, for while life and reason last the end does not come. But when it happens, child of my heart, come away to me and we will talk it out together. We will be foolish together and wise together, and at last strong together, because when I was in the world it seemed as if there was no furnace that I did not have to tread; and even though it blistered and seared, yet it taught me to know all the pain—and all the joy—that the earth holds.

"Oh, little thing; if your mammy has to leave you, and by any chance gets to heaven, they won't keep her very long. She'll always be leaning out of a top-storey window trying to catch sight of her baby as he goes out for his walk, or else forgetting to do her singing while she worries about his gaiters being long enough or his vests warm enough. Heaven and earth will have changed places then, and I shall be on the wrong side.

"But I shall have had you all the beautiful time you were coming.

"God bless you, little precious."

And so for this son, whom, perchance, she may never see, the mother-to-be writes her letters, loving, tender, and wise. "On a Discovery"—the discovery that after seven long years the gift of motherhood was to be hers—"On Fathers and Mothers," "On Anger," "On Religion," "On Respecting the Body," and others, twelve in all.

This is how she writes to her son:—

"I want you once and for always to get it out of your dear little head that Oliver and I are Grown-ups, with capital G's, therefore incapable of understanding the joys and pleasures and pains that belong to you as a child and a boy. Oh, beloved, we aren't *really* old, although Oliver rides a horse without a groom at his bridle, and I haven't worn pinafores for quite a long time. But our hearts ride their ponies and tear their pinafores just the same as ever, believe that." And again:—

"Oh, little thing, as you lie beneath my heart, I would think great and tender things, that you in the quietness of your growing time may grow as great and loving as I myself would like to be."

So she pens the letters to her baby, this mother whose "heart goes out in a great longing to live" because there are so many things she can do for husband and child which they cannot do for themselves.

It is the glory of midwives that through their agency the maternal mortality rate has been appreciably reduced. Yet it would seem that many expectant mothers are haunted by the fear that as the new life which they desire to shield and guard comes into the world, their own will go out, and that indeed the chances are about even. What is the fact? In cases attended by midwives working in connection with the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute, the maternal mortality is something less than one per thousand. Cannot midwives do something to lessen this fear of death on the part of expectant mothers by proving to them how great is the ground for anticipating life?

P. G. Y.

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