

OUTSIDE THE GATES.

WOMEN.

The Queen has forwarded to the Children's Happy Evenings Association, of which her Majesty is patron, her usual gifts of games and toys, to be distributed amongst the children belonging to the association.

Young women artists have done quite splendidly well at the Royal Academy Schools this year, and at the annual prize-giving last Saturday night the President, Sir Edward Poynter, emphasised the fact that the success of women students in painting had clearly surpassed that of the men, and most of the principal prizes had been awarded to them.

Miss Margaret Lindsay Williams carried off the gold medal and Travelling Scholarship (£200) for Historical Painting, and the first prize (£30) and silver medal for design for Decorating a Portion of a Public Building, and Miss Gladys M. Clark Kennedy obtained the Turner Gold Medal and Scholarship (£50) for Landscape Painting.

To do anything superlatively well means the expenditure of energy and hard work—that is one reason we offer hearty congratulations to these successful girls. *What* a jolly Christmas holiday should be theirs. Think of the pride of their nearest and dearest! Let us hope that before long Angelica Kauffmann, popularly supposed to be the only woman R.A., may find this honour enjoyed by other brilliant members of her sex.

The Earl of Meath presented the badges at the Stretcher Squad Competition of the Women's Sick and Wounded Convoy Corps, which was held last week at the London Scottish Drill Hall, Major Waggett judging. After parading, the members showed their skill at signalling, giving first aid to the injured, and transferring them to an ambulance waggon and to hospital, and carrying them over obstacles, and at preparing improvised stretchers, and other similar tasks.

Lord Meath said it would be better for the nation if people thought more of their duties and less of their rights. He believed that within the next twenty years the country would have to decide whether it should remain a great Empire, or sink through its laziness and cowardice. He presented each member of the corps with a copy of "Essays on Duty and Discipline," and urged all of them to induce others to live up to the doctrine, "My country must be saved; I am only a unit."

It is reported that at the Municipal elections held at Los Angeles, California, thousands of women voted for the first time and were treated with great gallantry, in several instances fathers holding the babies while the mothers balloted. It is admitted on all hands that the women's votes carried in the candidate for the mayoralty, whose "clean" politics are likely to raise the social condition of the city.

EAGER HEART.

"He to the lowly soul
Doth still Himself impart,
And for His dwelling and His throne
Chooseth the pure in heart."

That is the lesson most beautifully preached by "Eager Heart," the Christmas Mystery-Play, which the Nurses' Social Union gave trained nurses an opportunity of seeing at the Passmore Edwards' Settlement, Tavistock Square, on the 8th inst. No one could watch the lovely story gradually unfolded without realizing the value of the eye as well the ear as a medium of religious instruction. In the Middle Ages this was well understood and it is much to be regretted that this method has fallen into disuse.

The time of the play is Christmas Eve, the place "everywhere," and the personages "Eager Heart," and her sisters, "Eager Fame" and "Eager Sense," the Holy Family, the three Kings, three shepherds, and a youth.

The Argument supposes the legend that every year, on Christmas Eve, the Christ Child makes a progress through the land, and the curtain on rising discloses "Eager Heart" in her simple dwelling reciting—

"To-night the weary world is hushed and still!
Out on the plains the shepherds watch; and we,
Dwelling in cities, keep our doors ajar,
Lest He should come this way, the royal Child
Two thousand years our King! Alas, to think
How many highways He must tread to-night,
Will know Him not, nor see Him as He comes!
My gracious King! Have Thou to-night sweet
rest,

Here on this lowly couch! O deign thereon
To lay Thine infant head! Mary and Joseph!
Come but your steps this way, behold the meal,
The little frugal meal I saved this morn,
With joys of fasting! O that I might be
Worthy, dear Lord, but once to shelter Thee!"

Eager Fame makes preparation at the Capitol,
Eager Sense spreads a banquet at the Palace,
They assure Eager Heart—

"Kings are not wont to come in these our days
To poor and beggared doors! This foolish freak
To sit at home, and wait Him in the house,
Is by gone fashion."

Nevertheless, she refuses to go with her sisters, and is going out to "mix her feet with those who throng His road," when a poor road mender, and a travel-stained woman bearing a little child wrapped in her shawl, beg a night's lodging. Only after a great inward struggle is she able to renounce her cherished hope of sheltering her Lord, in order to show hospitality to these poor wayfarers. When eventually the Pilgrim Star leads Eager Heart with the shepherds and kings to her own door, and she finds that she has given shelter not to nameless strangers but to "the Peace of all the world in tender likeness of a child" she prostrates herself in joy and adoration.

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