

## OUTSIDE THE GATES.

### WOMEN AND WAR.

One of the institutions to suffer heavily financially from the War is the London Institution for Lost and Starving Cats, 34-42, Ferdinand Street, Camden Town, London, N.W., the President of which is the Right Hon. the Earl of Haddington, K.T. The work of the society is heavier and its receipts almost nil, and it has no capital to fall back upon. Who can listen unmoved to the following appeal?

"The cats come in greater numbers, sometimes about 100 cats in one day. The Germans in great numbers have left their homes, and their cats and dogs behind to starve. . . All our pets have been destroyed to avoid cost of keep, but the rescue work of strays must be paid for. It is dreadful to have to ask for help for animals when our poor, and the nation, and dear soldiers require so much, but animals have rights, and animal lovers will feel for me when I plead for the crumbs from the rich man's table to help our poor little four-footed friends, whose greatest and last boon we can at least grant them—a peaceful end, death in sleep, in place of the horrors of desertion, misery, starvation, slow death, perhaps in torture and agony." The Hon. Manageress, by whom donations will be gratefully received, is Mrs. Z. C. Morgan.

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

### "THE WITCH."\*\*

Miss Mary Johnston in her new book has given her readers a story widely differing from the martial tales which have formed the theme of her recent works. True "The Witch" tells of stirring times, but the incidents recorded are enacted in England, and the period is the close of Elizabeth's reign and the ushering in of that of James.

Black magic, described by a pen like Miss Johnston, promises the reader a *creepy* hour, and those who enjoy such sensations will not be baulked.

It seems incredible in these days that the story of Joan Heron and Master Aderhold could be possible, but though the people are fictitious yet they represent other unfortunate people of those times who were sacrificed in like horrible fashion to the blind superstition and sour prejudice of the age.

Master Aderhold, a physician, and incidentally an agnostic, paid the price of his opinions, in the early part of his manhood, by loss of occupation, and consequent privation. But he was a philosopher and of simple habit, and after many vicissitudes earned a precarious living among the poor folks in the village adjoining Hawthorn Forest.

It was in a cottage on the other side that Joan Heron dwelt with her father, who did scrivener's work for a livelihood. Not long had she returned there, for she had had a long sojourn with her uncle, the huntsman, above the town—so much greater than the Hawthorn village.

It was there that pretty Joan had become accustomed to bright things, such as bustle in streets, music in church, occasional processions and pageants, fairs and feast days. The sour Puritanism had so far not touched her young life.

She sang as she worked a brave young carolling of Allan-a-Dale, John à Green, Robin Hood and Maid Marian.

"Look you, Joan. Goodman Cole and I have been discoursing. We were talking of religion."

"Aye," said Joan. She spread a white cloth on the table, and set in the midst a bow-pot of cherry-bloom. "Religion. Well?"

"You should say the word with a heavier tone," said old Roger. "Religion. Things aren't here as they were at your uncle's, rest his soul."

"Doth it help anything when I am sad?" said Joan, beginning to sing.

"Stop, child," said old Roger. "I'm in earnest, and so must you be."

"I like to go free, and I like not mim-mouth and a downward look. But I like not to bring trouble upon you, father; and I do not like either for them to set upon me for ungodliness, nor to have some cry fool upon me for a witch."

The little picture drawn of Joan would make it seem ludicrous that the term "Witch" could be dreamt of in connection with her.

She wore a small cap of linen and a linen kerchief, a grey-green gown that she had spun and dyed herself. She was tall and light upon her feet, grey-eyed and well-featured, with hair more gold than brown, with a warm, sun-flushed, smooth, fine textured skin, and a good mouth and chin.

Later, when the plague attacked the village, and numbered among its victims Heron, Joan's father, she was left unprotected and alone.

She was subjected to the unwelcome attentions of Harry Carthew. "A Puritan strict and stern, always with the minister, he walked with the Bible and by the Bible."

Joan tells him in no measured terms: "Thou hypocrite, thou pillar of Hawthorn Church. Thou plain and beast-like man who wanteth but one thing, and knoweth not love but lust."

It came about. A word here, a hint there, gathering like a cloud around her, and Joan was arrested on a charge of witchcraft, and Master Aderhold of sorcery.

Their daring escape from the prison, their wandering together for six years and growing love for each other holds the interest of the reader. Their re-arrest seems almost too terrible, and we leave them at the prison door.

"Now they had these last moments side by side. Their hands might touch, their eyes be eloquent. Fare-well—and farewell—and oh, fare you well love—my love." H. H.

\* By Mary Johnston. Constable & Co., London.

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