

## OUTSIDE THE GATES.

It is not every day the proletariat can buy bargains from a Queen of England. Queen Mary visited the sale of work last Saturday in the grounds of Balmoral Castle, in aid of Crathie Parish Church Women's Guild and ex-Service Men's Club, and took up a position behind the counters. Here Her Majesty acted as a saleswoman, and of course there was a great demand on the part of the public to secure articles from Royal hands. The Queen also sold flowers outside the refreshment marquee, and remained altogether for three hours at the sale. We live in democratic days, indeed!

The King on Sunday unveiled the beautiful memorial of Inver granite erected near the entrance gate to Balmoral Castle in memory of the twenty-eight men from the estate who lost their lives in the war. It was a very touching ceremony, the Balmoral pipers played "The Flowers of the Forest," and the King laid a wreath of white heather on the memorial.

The Trades Union Congress is meeting at Southport this week, and union losses and unemployment are being seriously considered. The Right Hon. J. R. Clynes, M.P., had an admirable foreword in Monday's *Times*, which concluded with the following warning in referring to the programme:—

"Education and housing will take a front place. Labour considers that no saving on education could bring about real economy, and an ignorant democracy is the greatest danger to the State. The unblushing assurance of the Minister of Health that the housing policy of the Government is adequate has enraged many thousands of workers who, on returning from the war, find themselves without a home and with little prospect of getting one."

Bad housing conditions mean bad health, low morals and bad blood. No class realises this more than our Public Health and District Nurses.

The Prime Minister has consented to receive at the beginning of October a deputation organised by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship to present to him a memorial, signed by 222 members of Parliament and a large number of nationally organised associations, asking that the Government carry before the General Election legislation which will give women the vote on the same terms as men.

The English memorial to Saint Joan of Arc, which is to take the form of a canopied statue in Winchester Cathedral, will probably not be ready for dedication until next spring. All the money required has now been received, and the committee have, therefore, put the work in hand.

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

### THE HOLY TREE.\*

This charming book deserves all praise, depicting as it does human nature so truly, in such poetic language, and with such poignant sympathy. The loving heart of the young Irish girl, with its frailty and its deeply laid religious instincts, diverted from its ideals and forced into uncongenial marriage, is the theme of this most appealing romance.

It is written in musical dialect, not overdrawn or tiresome in any way, but with a lulling lilt that hypnotises the reader.

"What in the name of heaven is making them all so cantankerous, and it May Day and all?"

Ann Logan laughed the question at the row of lustre jugs hanging from the top shelf of the dresser, a slight twist in her smile, doubt in her soft voice.

"Going out in the rain in your new cotton? Every penny of thruppence three farthings a yard within at Brannigan's. Take it off, I tell you, and put on your linsey."

Mrs. Logan spoke in anger to the pot of Indian meal stirabout hissing on the open hearth.

"Let the girl be, woman. What's in a drop of rain? And it clearing, too. At the worst can't you give her the loan of your hood cloak?"

Old Pat Logan spoke in a quiet voice to the sea bellowing beyond the poplar trees at the end of the lawn.

The three of them—the laughing girl, the cantankerous, grasping mother, the saintly old man.

Ann had set her heart on going to eight o'clock Mass to deck the Mother of God, and it the holy month of May, with the finest flowers in the whole parish.

Before the day was over she had agreed to be sold to Joe, "a decent man," to save the roof over her old grandfather's head—he willing to give a hundred pounds to save them from ruin.

"Joe had all them virtues. He wouldn't let a thing go out of repair. God! if she only knew what to do! Selling her like a pig. And she'd never roam the Bruagh mountains now with the man of her dreams. It was often she had planned it, and they calling her from across the plain and she on the top of Knockbrack of an evening, a sort of purple haze on them that tugged the heart. And he'd feel the same. Not a rush on the roadside that they wouldn't make love out of. There'd be glens with green water rushing down them singing what was in her heart and his. And the walk home under the stars. She pressed her face against the grass and wished she was dead. The very thought of Joe left her as desolate as the flat under a sleet storm in winter. Maybe love was only a dream and poets' talk. She could stifle down things. She must get away from herself. Couldn't them blackbirds shut up?"

\* By Gerald O'Donovan. (Heinemann.)

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