

## OUTSIDE THE GATES.

The Queen has presented to the London County Council a collection of albums, and unmounted photographs from India, the Colonies, and elsewhere, which will be of great interest to the children in the schools, particularly the residential open-air schools.

Members of the Nursing Profession share in the national joy at the birth of a second son to Her Royal Highness, Princess Mary, the Viscountess Lascelles, and respectfully offer to Her Royal Highness their congratulations on this happy event.

The Report of the Departmental Committee on Women Police (of which Mr. W. C. Bridgeman was Chairman), appointed by the Home Secretary, the Right Hon. Arthur Henderson, M.P., to review the experience gained in regard to the employment of women police in England and Wales, has proved the value of such employment in regard to the efficiency of the police force.

The Committee express the opinion that "at least as many women as were employed before the reduction in 1922 should again be appointed in the Metropolitan Police District, and when these numbers are reached, or sooner, if the necessity for the appointment is recognised, a woman should be attached to Headquarters to advise the Commissioner on matters connected with their employment." This opinion is supported by the statement that "the efficiency of the police service has been improved by the employment of police women."

The Committee make the following recommendations as to the conditions under which women police should be employed:—

"For the purpose of making the women as far as possible an integral part of the Force, they should make the declaration of a constable.

A Chief Officer of Police should be free to select his own recruits, but the assistance of an experienced woman would be of value in assisting him in the selection of candidates for appointment.

"Policewomen should receive the same training as the men, but, when practicable, a part of the training should be under women instructors.

"Officers should not be specially recruited, but promotion should be from the ranks after passing examinations similar to those required of the men.

"It will be desirable, when the women employed in the provinces increase in number, that a woman should be appointed to assist H.M. Inspectors of Constabulary to advise the Home Office and assist local authorities on matters connected with their employment.

"Policewomen engaged on patrol duty only should not be required to perform more than seven hours' duty a day, exclusive of the period allowed for refreshment, but when performing other duties as well, their hours should be the same as those of the men.

"For the present, women should not be regarded as substitutes for men, but ultimately it may be possible for men and women to be considered as interchangeable on certain duties.

"Women employed solely on clerical duties should not be regarded as policewomen."

A very important expression of opinion by the Committee is the following:—

"We think that every police authority should provide, so far as is practicable, for policewomen to take the statements of women and children who can give information or evidence where sexual crimes are in question, and, though we are satisfied that women can be usefully employed in the investigation of crime generally, we feel that their employment in criminal investigation beyond this particular

duty must be definitely left to the decision of the local authority according to local circumstances."

The views of Sir Nevil Macready, late Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, are incorporated in an appendix to the Report. In a letter to the Committee, this authority stated:—

"That the women police should have power to arrest is, I think, essential, but this power should be restricted by police regulations so as to avoid absurd situations where enthusiastic women might try and exercise their authority under impossible circumstances, such as, for instance, the tackling of a burly drunken man. Above all things, amateur and unofficial organisations should be suppressed in the same way that bogus policemen are dealt with by law. These organisations, in the past, not only hampered the recognised women police, but at times brought the Force into disrepute through their misplaced activities being mistaken for those of the official Force."

## BOOK OF THE MONTH.

### FREE AIR.\*

Some of us read "Babbitt" with great delight and appreciation, in spite of its ultra Americanisms, or maybe because of them.

"Free Air" comes in not a bad second, and the title gives a key to the feeling of breeziness which envelops the reader as one follows Claire Boltwood and her father in their adventurous tour in their Gomez-Dep roadster, seventy horse-power, through the Minnesota country.

The Boltwoods lived on the Heights, Brooklyn. Henry B. Boltwood, her father, was neither wealthy nor at all poor.

Claire had gone to a good school out of Philadelphia. She was used to gracious leisure, attractive carelessness, nut centre chocolates, and a certain wonder as to why she was alive. She wanted to travel, but her father could not get away. He consistently spent his days overworking and his evenings in wishing he hadn't overworked.

Claire's ambition had once been babies and a solid husband, but as various young males of the species appeared before her, sang their mating songs and preened their newly-dried plumage, she found that the trouble with solid young men was that they were solid.

Though she liked to dance, the dancing men bored her. The only man that disturbed her was Geoffrey Saxton. He did his own telling. He called—not too often. Sang—not too sentimentally. Took her father and herself to the theatre—not too lavishly. He told Claire—not too seriously—that she was his helmed Athena, his rose of all the world. He informed her of his substantial position—not too obviously. And he was so everlastingly, firmly, quietly, politely immovable always there.

Claire's father then got the nervous prostration he had richly earned. The doctor ordered rest. Claire took him in charge.

Before it had never occurred to her to manage her executive father save by indirect and pretty teasing. Now she bullied him. He saw grey death awaiting as an alternative, and he was meek. He agreed to everything. He consented to drive with her across two thousand miles of plains and mountains to Seattle, to drop in for a call on their cousins, the Eugene Gilsons. Back East they had two cars and a chauffeur. It would, she believed, be more of a change not to take a chauffeur.

They had the Gomez roadster shipped to them from New York. On a July morning, they started out of Minneapolis in a mist, and they stopped sixty miles northward in a rain, also in much gumbo.

Claire roused from a damp doze and sighed, "Well, I must get busy, and get the car out of this. One of the good

\* By Sinclair Lewis. Jonathan Cape, London.

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