

## The Women of Yesterday and To-day.

BY MRS. S. P. LEWIS.

RACHEL.

THE day was bright but chilly, a sharp wind whistled about our ears, after we had passed through the *Judenthor*, until we reached the magnificent grove of chestnut trees, under which lovers have exchanged tender vows, children played, and squirrels frolicked almost since Strasbourg became a city. We sauntered slowly along the sun-and-shadow checkered path, the autumn leaves crunching beneath our tread, and the ripe chestnuts dropping on our heads.

After leaving the grove, a short half-hour's walk brought us to the quaint and picturesque village of Bischheim, inhabited only by Jews, where our guide, an Israelite from Strasbourg, led us to a high-gabled, many-windowed house, festooned with ears of yellow corn and strings of apples drying in the sun.

This was the house in which Rachel Felix, the great Rachel, was born. Through that diamond-paned window the first shimmer of golden sunshine fell, making a halo about the baby head. Along these country roads, and in these sunny meadows, then as now the haunt of multitudinous geese, fattening for the *pâté de foie gras* of Strasbourg, the tiny, black-eyed, black-haired maiden, exacting, impetuous, passionate, like her race, played and wept, and lived her small life of alternate storm and fair weather. She was the daughter of a Jewish peddler, of Alsace, and was born in 1820.

While yet a little child, she, with her mother and sisters, followed her father's fortunes from town to town, contributing her share of work toward the maintenance of the family, by recitations and singing in cafés and other public places. On one of these occasions, she attracted the attention of Choron, the founder of the Royal Conservatoire, who, recognizing the wonderful gift stirring within her, installed her as his pupil.

She made her début in 1837, amidst such storms of applause as can only be provoked in the French capital. For eighteen years she was the queen and center of art, until Ristori appeared to share her glory. She visited America in 1856, where she took a severe cold after attending some fête at one of the synagogues in New York, and from which she never recovered. Her last stage appearance was in Charleston, as Adrienne, a play which seemed to be an epitome of her own life. Returning to the Continent, she was possessed with but one aim—one desire—which was to live, hoping against hope until twenty-four hours before the final struggle, which took place at Cannet, in 1858.

Going back to our lodgings, we sat looking out of our window over the city wall, trying to fancy the graceful, slender child entering those stern gates on her way to keep some holy day in the temple with her mother, or to the Freitag Markt with her father, until the early twilight darkened the room, and the sentry's bugle sounded for change of guard.

Six months later, we made another pilgrimage, but this time the wind, instead of being sharp and keen, was soft and caressing as the notes of a dove; a sapphire sky arched over our heads, instead of interlacing chestnut boughs; paved streets were under our feet, instead of dead leaves and yielding grass; and instead of lovers, children, and squirrels, we saw men and women crowding and pushing, each intent on his own thoughts and burdened with his own cares.

This time we were seeking the burial place of the

great tragedienne, and just within the small Israelite grave-yard attached to the great cemetery of Père-la-Chaise, we found it. Plucking a violet from the sod, we sat down to recall her life again, the splendor of her house and equipage, her dress and society, and yet the utter solitariness and sadness which were ever eating into her heart.

Her whole life was a consumption, her very vitality being a fire-brand which consumed her, but like a Venetian vase, frail as perfect, the transparent texture made the deadly fire within seem a blush of beauty when seen from without. She belonged to that class who taste the full sweetness of their fame—whose art, genius and works are but names to those who come after them, not influences and powers like the genius and works of artists and writers who leave something tangible behind them.

We remembered she was mean and avaricious, deceitful and sensual; we remembered, too, she had genius and grace and beauty; and though these latter can never atone for the possession of the former, still we could not forget the Master would only allow him who was *without sin* to cast a stone at the Magdalen. Thinking of this, and of our own short-comings, we turned away from her narrow home, and despite her glory and success we sighed, "Poor Rachel!"

## What Women are Doing.

Mrs. Sarah K. Bolton is the able associate editor of the Boston *Congregationalist*.

The most gifted of the younger authors in Holland is a young lady who writes under the pen name of A. S. C. Wallis. She has just published an historical novel of the days of the eighty years' war.

Mr. Gladstone's constant assistant is his daughter, who knows every book in his library and the contents of it.

The first women employed in the National Treasury were appointed in 1862. There are now 1,300 in the Departments of Washington, who receive salaries varying from \$900 to \$1,800 yearly.

The only sister of Edwin M. Stanton, and widow of a former attorney general of Ohio, is very poor, and has obtained a clerkship in the War Department.

The new Chapel adjoining Grace Church has been completed, and was occupied for the first time at the celebration of the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. The chapel is the gift of Miss Catharine Woolf, of Madison Avenue, this city, and cost nearly thirty-five thousand dollars.

Clara Barton has returned to Dansville Water Cure, too ill to work. The women of America should support Miss Barton in her effort to induce our Government to join the Red Cross League, the object of which is to reduce to a minimum the sufferings and horrors of war.

Miss Mary A. Holden of Providence, R. I., has left \$5,000 to the Hampton (Va.) normal institute, \$1,000 to the colored orphan shelter at Providence, \$500 to the international congress for the prevention of crime, and a portrait of Washington to Brown University.

Mrs. Debora K. Longshore has a good practice in Topeka, Kansas. She is a graduate of the Woman's Medical College, Pa., and practiced six years in Philadelphia before she moved West. She is a sister of Mrs. M. W. Hudson, of the *Kansas Farmer*.

Miss Miriam Hovey of Boston has offered \$10,000 at once, and more in the future, to Harvard University, on condition that it opens the doors of its medical school to women.

Postmaster-General Key, who is a moderate ad-

vocate of woman's rights, says that a large number of women have been appointed to small Government offices during the last four years, and that they do the business better and take more pride in office-holding than men.

Miss Angie King has been admitted to the bar of Rock County, Wisconsin, and has opened an office for the practice of her profession in Janesville, Wisconsin. Miss King makes the third woman lawyer now practicing law in that city, Miss Lavinia Goodell and Miss Kate Kane being the other two.

Anna Dickinson has made a great hit with her new lecture, "The Platform and the Stage." She has also completed a charming play, entitled "Aurelian," which may be described as a romantic and domestic drama, in an old Roman setting, minus the stilted and bombastic talk in which old Roman plays abound.

A Bill has passed the Ohio House of Representatives, rendering women eligible to the office of notary public. The question arose over a year ago, over the application of a lady of Cleveland, for appointment as notary. The Governor referred the matter to the attorney general, who reported that there was no law in Ohio qualifying women to hold such an office—whereupon a Mr. Dodds brought in a bill, and carried it through by a vote of 55 to 33.

The ten ladies who are county-school superintendents in Illinois have managed the financial part of their business particularly well. Not one cent of the large sums over which they had supervision has been lost, either through dishonesty or ignorance of business. In many of the counties, the school finances were in a state of confusion when the ladies came into office. They have straightened everything, and put all school affairs on the most prosperous basis. Several of these lady superintendents regularly hold meetings of their school officers, and talk about school work, with very useful results. These superintendents have also succeeded excellently in the legal part of their work, in school visitation, and in influencing and instructing teachers. Even those male educators who opposed the law making women eligible to this office now pronounce their work a success, after the five years' experience.

A New Decorative Art Association.—Some ladies of Philadelphia have formed a society under the name of the Fairmount Decorative Association, to which is to be added an Art Industrial School, with classes in art needlework, household art, elementary drawing, decorative pottery, painting on porcelain, and the like. Miss Elizabeth C. Field is the President; Mrs. Florence I. Duncan, Vice-President; Mrs. H. M. Crandall, Treasurer; and Miss M. C. Cauffman, Corresponding Secretary. The basis is very broad and sound, and the work done will doubtless be good.

"Ever so Humble; or, Home and its Decoration," is a very interesting and practical work, written by Mrs. Florence I. Duncan, for wives and daughters "who strive to make both ends meet." There is no touch of affectation or dilettanteism in it. The art is real, whether "high" or merely "decorative," and there is no groaning because a piano cannot be shaped like an amphora.

The Princess Victoria, of Baden, was at her recent confirmation required to write a short autobiography and proposed plan of life. Among other statements the young princess advanced the following republican theory—that princes must not conceive that they are placed in their high position because they have greater rights than other human beings, but that they may maintain an elevated standard of obligation, and set an example of fidelity to duty to the whole society of which they are members.