

Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



ACCORDING to the last census, in the textile factories there were employed (1891) nearly 100,000 children under the age of 13 years, while in the cotton factories the number of children employed under this age was 48,000. It is a pitiable sight to see these young children in the weaving mills in Lancashire, large numbers being employed in the "steam infused sheds," against which at last the operatives of North-east Lancashire have struck. It is certainly time that some action should be taken to prevent children—or adults either, for that matter—working in these horrible steam-sweated places, where, half-naked, the operatives toil for so many hours, perspiring and exhausted from the awful heat and moisture of the atmosphere in which their work is done. The steam infusion *can* be largely modified; and the operatives are perfectly right to strike against the continuance of such an evil when the remedy is simple and easy.

Some very interesting subjects for debate are announced at the Pioneer Club during this session. One of the most suggestive is a debate by Mrs. Warner. "That a Woman Guardian owes her first duty to Women." Mrs. Ernest Fordham, who is so keen and clever a champion of women's interests, and the need of them in civic life, will plead the cause of the Woman Guardian with the eloquence and clearness which she has inherited from her father, Sir Walter Foster.

Another paper which should evoke a lively discussion is one entitled, "A Plea for the Old-fashioned Heroine," which Miss Adeline Sergeant has the hardihood to make before an audience of new-fashioned, advanced women. It would seem that we have so many modern heroines—in the sense of women doing fine work in the world—that it is hardly necessary to "look backwards," and waste our admiration on "old-fashioned" types.

The claim of "The Novelist as Teacher" is to be brought forward by Mrs. Leighton, with the Viscountess Harborton in the chair. This will be specially interesting; as the subject, no doubt, will be dealt with from the point of view of the "woman novel." The whole field of fiction is so rapidly being absorbed by women, that it is well for her to pause sometimes and consider what it is she is teaching.

In the paper read by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick before the British Association, she pointed out the enormous loss to the community entailed by the tremendous consumption of foreign butter, eggs, and poultry, of which we English are guilty. It is certainly true that the wives and daughters of our farmers are lamentably ignorant of the proper methods of butter-making, and of poultry-rearing. The average butter produced by the average village is absolutely uneatable. It is only when dairying is undertaken by large companies that the produce

is good or eatable. We are so tired of hearing of "foreign competition." Undoubtedly their competition in search of quality is extremely keen; and so long as we have not the enterprise to raise our standard, so long the markets will be flooded with admirable foreign butter, with which ours does not compare in excellence. The writer of this is speaking from some years spent in villages throughout England and Scotland, and her experience has been that it is impossible in these villages to get any butter which is eatable. It may not be generally known that Brittany or Normandy butter—which is practically the same thing—is the finest butter sold in the markets. The importation to this country averages from 300 to 400 tons per week.

It is an interesting question how long women will be fleeced and taken in by quacks who claim that their preparations will give beauty to the plainest, and charm to those most destitute of it. If women only knew a little more of chemistry and physiology they would cease to believe that a certain well-advertised Skin Food "removes wrinkles and all traces of age. It feeds through the pores and builds up the fatty membranes and wasted tissues, nourishes the shrivelled and shrunken skin, tones and invigorates the nerves and muscles, enriches the impoverished blood vessels, and supplies youth and elasticity to the action of the skin. It's perfect." Imagine a "skin food" removing wrinkles and all traces of age, and "feeding through the pores of the skin." How long will such quacks "feed" through the ignorances of women who believe such things, and who take advertisements at their own valuation?

A writer suggests that she would like to see "all the millions sterling that are to be swallowed by the Paris World's Fair of 1900 spent in sending school children to pass their holidays abroad. M. de Blowitz says: "The hundreds of millions which the Exhibition would cost would certainly be enough to pay for the Metropolitan Railway, a better water supply, new hospitals, and other necessary and permanent improvements."

Under the title of "A Terrible Story from Berlin," we read of a case of child-murder on the part of a mother who, distracted by the knowledge that her two children were the victims of an hereditary constitutional disease which had nearly blinded them, resolved to kill both herself and them, in order to save them from the prospect of a blighted existence. The woman was the respectable wife of a locksmith, and bore an extremely good character. She had for some time been in a condition of mental perturbation on the problems of heredity and harassed and tortured by the knowledge that the sin of the father was so sorely visited on her two wretched children. She succeeded in asphyxiating them with coal-gas, but was herself rescued in time for measures of restoration to take place.

At the trial most affecting scenes took place, both judge and jury being moved to tears by the sufferings which led the poor mother to believe that it was her duty to perish with her children, and the humiliation she felt at having "mothered" such disease. The jury unanimously returned a verdict of "Not guilty," which was warmly received by the public in court. "The Question of Conscience," which Dr. Arabella Kenealy

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