

The following letter has been sent to those members of Parliament who voted in favour of the Bill for extending the Parliamentary Franchise to women:—"We observe with much gratification that you recorded your vote in favour of the extension; the Parliamentary Suffrage to women, and hope that you will continue to do all that lies in your power to further this important cause." Among the signatures attached to the letter are the following:—Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, M.D., Alice Balfour, Mary Burt, Kate Courtney, Elizabeth Lecky, Eleanor Mildred Sidgwick, and Maud Selborne.

Another letter, addressed by leading women Suffragists to members, says: "Measures are brought forward year by year in the House of Commons, bearing on domestic, educational, and industrial questions on which women can bring special experience to bear. Moreover, we believe the interests of the community at large suffer from the present total exclusion of that experience from the representation of the country. We therefore trust the Bill will receive your support."

We beg to offer our warmest thanks, in the name of intelligent nurses, to Mr. Faithful Begg, who introduced the Bill, and to all those enlightened men who voted for its adoption.

We are informed that arrangements are being made to hold a large meeting in May, by the friends of Women's Suffrage, when the matter will be discussed by those who have done so much to gain publicity and support for the movement. This meeting should prove an immense success, and by the numbers of women present really interested in obtaining justice for women, the charge that "women do not care for enfranchisement" should be once and for ever disproved.

A drawing-room meeting, convened by Mrs. Roberts Austen, will be held shortly at the Royal Mint to forward the movement.

Dramatic Notes.

SHAKESPEARE AT THE MIDDLE TEMPLE.

ALMOST an historic revival of the "Twelfth Night" of Shakespeare took place last week in the magnificent old hall of the Middle Temple, under the indulgent patronage of the Benchers, and at the instance of a roving body of amateurs calling themselves "The Elizabethan Stage Society." That this revival was, in a certain sense, historic, arises from the apparently uncontested fact that this play was given in this identical hall in Shakespeare's own time, viz., on February 2nd, 1601 or 1602, as was discovered in 1828 from the MS. diary of a certain John Manningham, who was a student of the Inn at that time. Whether it was performed by a Cast composed of gentlemen of the Inn or of professional actors does not appear, so that in this, as in so many other cases, the personality of Shakespeare eludes our grasp. Being, however, then his most recently

written play, since, according to Mr. Halliwell Phillipps, it was first performed before the Court of Elizabeth by "The Lord Chamberlain's Servants," during the Christmas of 1601 or 1602, it seems well-nigh impossible that it could have been given at the Middle Temple so shortly afterwards, except with Shakespeare's sanction and under his direction. We fear, therefore, that the performances of last week, even if they offered an outward semblance to the manner in which the drama was mounted, and to the sort of stage upon which it was enacted, were yet very far from showing us how the piece was actually portrayed upon the memorable occasion alluded to. If, indeed, there be any one thing more certain than another in regard to the *original* production of Shakespeare's dramas, it is this, viz., that they were not merely delivered, as the poet makes his Polonius say, "with good accent and good discretion," but with all that force and fire, that life and energy, that earnestness and emotion, that depth and pathos, that art and subtlety, that power and poetry, that delicacy of touch, suitability of gesture, and naturalness of feeling, which, unhappily, were so conspicuous by their absence in the rendering afforded by Mr. William Poel and his company. That rendering, indeed, instead of being what we had a right to expect, considering the place and the occasion, a superb illustration of the great author's intention, rose very little, if at all, above the level of a commonplace recitation!

That such a play as "Twelfth Night" could be made uninteresting by a deprivation of scenery, or by a deficiency in enactment and defect in enunciation, is next to impossible. The Macdonald family, on a miniature stage in a private drawing-room, and the Bessie Company, under more difficult conditions, in the open air, showed some years ago how intrinsically able the piece was, so to speak, to carry its own weight and to bring conviction to the minds of an intelligent auditory. But this is not all we look for in the productions of a Society whose very *raison d'être* consists in a proposed attempt to show us how the incomparable works of the greatest dramatist of all time were *primarily* played! Our professional Stage, so far as Shakespeare is concerned, lamentably lacks, at the present day, the histrionic talent—not to say the genius—which is so essentially requisite for the due presentment of his marvellous creations, and it becomes therefore insufferably, as well as supremely, ridiculous, when a number of persons, who neither understand how to act his characters nor speak his lines, put themselves forward as would-be revivalists of a Stage of whose intellectual and dramatic strength they are in no sense the representatives, and the sole tradition of which they retain is its external simplicity!

E. G. H.

El Book of the Week.

"PHROSO." *

MR. ANTHONY HOPE'S thrilling tale, which has been running as a serial, is now published in volume form. It is matter for wonder that anyone could have borne to read such a story in small instalments, for it is the most romantic, the most hairbreadth, the

* "Phroso," by Anthony Hope. (Methuen & Co.)

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