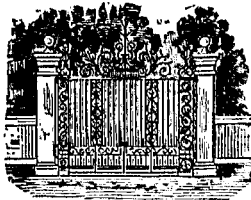


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



The *Saturday Review* discusses "women's fitness for political responsibility" :—

The difficulty is to prevent smiling at the ancient hypocrisies that year by year do duty as reasons why votes should not be given to women. They are propounded with gravity and seriously received by a House that is not giving the real issue any attention at all. Who could help being amused at a number of men engaged in trying to find an explanation of women's exclusion from political power, yet studiously ignoring the only and obviously true one? Man is a stronger animal than woman, therefore he was able to keep her out and thus to arrange things in the State to his own advantage as against hers; and, being able, of course he did it. No doubt women would have done as much for themselves had they been able, but Nature did not give them the chance. Nature made her the smaller of the two, and the smaller has had to give way to the greater. The germ of the whole thing is plain enough in the savage, who makes his wives do all the work while he idles. He does not make his women fight, because that would be giving his enemies an advantage. Moreover, if the women were killed, or seriously diminished in number, the men would have to work, which would be revolutionary. If the opponents of the women would take their stand simply on this superior strength of men, they would be on firm ground.

But democracy has shifted the whole political ground, and, as it seems to the *Saturday*, destroyed the case against women's suffrage.

Mr. J. Abercromby Alexander writes to the *Times* from Johannesburg on February 27th :—"I consider the time has arrived when the Young Women's Immigration Society in London should be informed that no more servants are required in the Transvaal. It is the voice of many here that their importation should be stopped for some time. It is very evident those girls are brought out here without a full knowledge of the position they are to fulfil. They are sent to situations 50 per cent. of which are to employers who have never before had a white servant in their houses—hybrid European and hybrid colonial families—they take them because they are cheaper than nativeservants, and also for once add a certain air of dignity to their establishments. It is degrading to think that the white are asked to work for £4 per month when the coloured races are paid from £6 to £10 per month. Can it be expected that those girls will long remain in such situations? Many have been in three situations within 12 months. Their next move is to go round the labour offices, asking for places in hotels, boarding houses, or tea-rooms. No more private service for us, is their cry. I have seen several batches arrive, and with confidence state that 50 per cent. of those girls should never have been sent out. More care should be exercised in selecting suitable women."

Under the presidency of Lady Mary Howard the women of Sheffield have set themselves the task of raising £10,000 in order to found a ladies' chair in the prospective Sheffield University.

Mr. George Meredith's Views on Women.

There is an admirable character sketch on the great novelist in last month's *Review of Reviews*, in which the writer says :—

"The chief point on which I found Mr. Meredith more constantly helpful and more inspiring than any other man was on the question of women.

"What Nature originally decreed," he said, "men are but beginning to see, namely, that women are fitted for most of the avenues open to energy, and by their entering upon active life they will no longer be open to the accusation men so frequently bring against them of being narrow and craven."

"He told me last year that he believed in women more than ever; that they had immense possibilities, of which they were becoming more and more conscious. For ages they had been compelled to be the mere bearers of children and the keepers of a comfortable home for men; but nowadays, the wider outlook that had opened before them had brought home to their consciousness the fact that these two things did not constitute the sum of the service which they could render to the race. Women, however, he said, had two great defects or faults. The first was timidity. They had been kept subjected so long that they were often greatly lacking in courage. The other defect was their liability to be carried off their feet by a great wave of emotion.

"Nevertheless," he said, "I am strongly in favour of women's suffrage. I would give them all a vote, and give it them at once. My political friends shudder when I say this, and ask me how I dare face the enfranchisement of a class which is liable to such sudden stampedes under the flush of a great emotion. . . .

"Anyhow, I am in favour of giving them all a vote. Until you throw open to women every avenue of employment in which they can use their faculties, you will never realise the service which they can render. Women would make excellent preachers and ministers of the Gospel. A woman has an excellent pigeon-holing mind, and, therefore, would make a good lawyer. She can argue a case with excellent subtlety and ingenuity, and is specially adroit in taking advantage of the weaknesses of her opponent. But, of course, I do not say," continued Mr. Meredith, "that women can do everything that men can do, but they should be allowed to find out by experience what they can do, and what they cannot; they should be encouraged to try, for, as I say, their great fault is timidity. They are afraid to venture. Most of my men friends, however, shrink from giving women this liberty. As I once wrote long ago, men have got past Seraglio Point, but they have not yet doubled Cape Turk, and this Turkish idea is very strong in the male breast. There is a curious antagonism between the sexes, which, although latent and unsuspected, is always present. It is due to the long ages during which woman has been subjected to the dominance of the man. There is a certain contempt on the part of man for the creature whom he has subdued and made a minister to his own gratification. Even among civilised races, where women are treated with all outward show of deference, there is always a subtle, underlying contempt, and this begets on the part of women a certain sense of resentment, which finds expression in many ways."

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