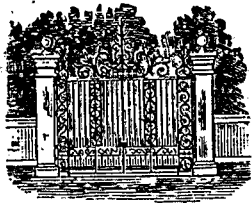


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



Women, as well as the community in general, are indebted to Dr. Shipman for moving the second reading of the Local Authorities (Qualification of Women) Bill, which was read for a second time on Friday night last week. The Bill, if it becomes law, will enable electors to place directly-elected women on the Education authorities, and to act as councillors and aldermen of County and Borough Councils and Metropolitan Borough Councils, in the same manner and on the same conditions as men.

Dr. Shipman said that the Bill was no leap in the dark, for women had sat on boards of guardians and on district councils, and the work that they could do covered a very large field. No restriction should be placed on the choice of a constituency, and the disqualification of women was an artificial restraint on that liberty of choice. It was said that woman's sphere was her home. Quite true, but it was not her only sphere, and the community should be at liberty to use the brains of all its members.

Sir R. Jebb seconded. He wished to add his testimony to the fact that the assistance of women in the discussion of educational questions had been and was of the greatest value. There had been great progress of public opinion on the question dealt with by the Bill; it was not a party question, and on both sides there was a considerable body of opinion in favour of the measure. There were few localities in which women well qualified in every respect could not be found to fulfil the duties for which it was proposed to make them eligible.

Sir William Tomlinson moved the rejection of the Bill, and denied that the business of county and borough councils came within the sphere of women's work.

Captain Jessel seconded the rejection, and quoted the opinion expressed by Mrs. Craigie the night before at the Hardwicke Society, that women's natures "did not contain the first elements of justice." She arrived at the conclusion that women were not meant to govern.

Colonel Welby supported the second reading, as did Mr. Bamford Slack, who said that Mrs. Craigie was a brilliant writer of fiction, but when she talked fiction he did not follow her. As to women not being meant to govern, he had only to refer to the potent influence of Queen Victoria in the affairs of the Empire. No party had done more to involve women in the turmoil of political life than the Unionist Party. He would far rather see them taking part in municipal affairs in a straightforward manner than see them work in the way that they worked on behalf of the Primrose League.

Sir John Rolleston thought the arguments against the Bill were sophisticated and feeble, Mr. Benn thought that the presence of women on public bodies would check corruption, and Sir John Gorst said that in attempting to control young children men were absolutely ignorant, and did the silliest and most stupid things unless they had the co-operation of women. From his experience of the good work done

by women on school boards and boards of guardians he saw no reason why they should not be eligible for membership of municipal and county councils.

Mr. Grant Lawson said he had always been in favour of women being admitted as freely as possible to administrative bodies. He was now very nearly a whole hogger.

Sir F. Banbury said that experience had taught him women were not economists; he was opposed to the admission on county and municipal councils of persons who might still further encourage habits which were already very extravagant. On a division being taken, 171 members voted for the second reading and 21 against. It being half-past five, objection was taken to the proposal of Dr. Shipman that the Bill should be referred to the Grand Committee on Law, and the House immediately adjourned.

We hope that the commonsense principles advocated by those who supported the Bill will speedily be carried into effect. The point of view supported by Captain Jessel is unworthy of notice except as it demonstrates the fact that whenever a woman is disloyal to her sex the opponents of admitting her to her rightful place in national affairs are ever ready to use her words to support their weak cause.

We note with pleasure an admirable leading article in the *Times* of Monday, in which the opinion is expressed that if the Bill meets with equal good fortune in the remaining stages of its passage through Parliament it will bring about a very useful and practical reform. It is pointed out that the claim of women to occupy the indicated positions has been greatly strengthened by the Education Act of 1902, by which the control of education was transferred to bodies on which women are not eligible to sit. The proposal, says the *Times*, to enable women to sit as full members of the Councils and to take part in all the business which these bodies are called upon to transact is a well-merited concession to the ability and modesty which they have invariably displayed in such public functions as have been open to them, and to which tributes were paid on Friday by most of the speakers who took part in the debate.

A Book of the Week.

THE CONFESSIONS OF AN AMBITIOUS MOTHER.*

Yet another book from America! This time a distinctly original human document. It is published anonymously, and the reason for this is not far to seek. The book frankly purports to be a *roman à clef*. The Royal personages in England are mentioned by name; the aristocracy very thinly veiled; and probably those in the know as regards New York Society would be able to "put a name" to the energetic, vulgar, cynical, pitiless, clever woman who here gives us her experiences.

Let us say at the outset that the book shows signs of bad workmanship. The author is by no means a mistress of English, and there are one or two bad slips. But, on the other hand, there is a collection of shrewd observations of life, and witty reflections, which would redeem a far worse book from the common-place. The interest lies, not in the sordid story and its self-revelation, but in these clever touches which abound. I prefer therefore to quote, and not

* (Heinemann.)

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