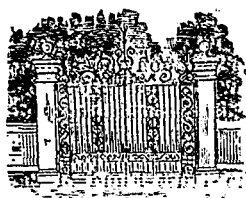


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



Over 850 delegates were present at the Annual Council Meetings of the Women's Liberal Federation on Tuesday, when a discussion took place as to whether Women's Suffrage should continue to be a test for Parliamentary candidates. Mrs. E. D. Fordham was of opinion that the Association had departed from its traditions by making Women's Suffrage a test for Parliamentary candidates. According to the Resolution passed at Cambridge in 1902, the help of the official organiser of the Federation is denied to any candidate unless he is a supporter of Women's Suffrage. She moved a resolution denouncing the test and an amendment advocating its suspension until after the General Election, "recognising that the maintenance of Free Trade is of supreme importance to the working men and women of this country."

Lady McLaren opposed the resolution. Mrs. Allen, speaking "as a working woman," put the Suffrage even before Free Trade. Miss Balgarnie thought there could be no compromise on the Suffrage question, and regarded the discussion as waste of time. The amendment was lost by 376 votes to 185, and Mrs. Fordham's motion by 531—174.

The desirability, says the *Times*, of removing the grille in front of the House of Commons Ladies' Gallery, urged by Mr. Schwann during the recent discussion upon the vote for the Houses of Parliament buildings, has been frequently discussed, but always with the same negative result. Mr. Herbert Gladstone clinched the matter in June, 1894, when, as First Commissioner of Works in Lord Rosebery's Administration, he told Mr. W. P. Byles that but for the existence of the grille the occupants of the Ladies' Gallery would be technically within the House, an arrangement contrary to the regulations. Mr. Byles wanted to know whether there was any rule preventing women from using orders for admission to the Members' Gallery; and, if not, whether instructions would be given that members' orders should admit persons of either sex. Mr. Gladstone replied that the exclusion of ladies from the Strangers' Galleries was based upon a rule enforced by successive Speakers that a woman cannot claim admission to the House as a stranger; and that a departure from this rule could only be made with the express sanction of the House.

In former times, between 1675 and 1778, the occasional presence of women in the Strangers' Galleries and below the Bar was permitted. On February 2, 1778, however, notice having been taken that strangers were present, those who were men withdrew by direction of the Serjeant-at-Arms. The ladies who filled the galleries were, at first, allowed to remain; but an order that they also should leave having been obtained, their exclusion was effected, although not until they had exhibited so persevering a contumacy that they interrupted business for nearly two hours. Since this episode ladies have never been permitted to sit within the House; and the grille was erected as a solution of the problem. According to the version of the 1778 disturbance given by Townsend in his "Memoirs of

the House of Commons," an interesting debate was expected, and strangers attended in great numbers. In the rush many ladies failed to secure seats, whereupon Speaker Cornwall, whose sense of chivalry was offended, ordered that the House should be cleared of all men strangers. This done, the ladies entered in such numbers as completely to fill both the galleries and the seats below the Bar. A member thereupon insisted that the House should be cleared of all strangers; but a violent and determined resistance was offered, and for nearly two hours the House was kept in a state of "the most extraordinary ferment and commotion." After this singular scene, females were rigorously excluded from the old House of Commons, the only relaxation being the admission of a privileged few to a cramped space above the ventilator in the ceiling.

A GENUINE BRIC-À-BRAC SALE.

What a difference there is in a well-kept piece of Sheraton satinwood furniture and the modern imitation. A perfect specimen may be seen at 16, Brook Street, Bond Street, during the sale, which will be held from May 15th to the 20th, for the benefit of poor gentlewomen who wish to dispose of their old family possessions.

This table is decorated with a wreath of pink roses on a dark band, a simple spray of these flowers forms the centre. The roses are painted by an artist. A set of chairs and two side tables, also in painted satinwood, once formed part of the Jones's collection.

Some good examples of *famille verte* (which is commanding extraordinary prices at Christie's) are to be seen, with a few bits of *famille noire*; most rare of all, a soft paste goblet has the famous black ground, the flowers on it in faint gradations of pink to apricot. Puce-marked Derby will have its admirers and compete for public favour with Swansea and soft paste Lowestoft. Chelsea, Worcester, Sèvres, and Dresden will be on view, enamelled saltglaze, Whieldon and Wedgwood.

Such a quantity of beautiful and useful services, which form delightful wedding presents. Then from the fine porcelain we can turn to web-like lace, Alençon, point d'Angleterre, or Vénise; also the delicate-worked muslin of the Empire period.

Dainty miniatures, étuis, snuff-boxes, watches and jewellery, prints, and innumerable other knic-knacks will be marked at prices to suit most collectors from 2s. 6d. to £100 or more. Historical relics have been rather at a discount, as dealers have racked their brains too much to invent stories to attach to their wares, but when wills and other papers are sold with a relic disbelief must vanish. No one will doubt the authenticity of the watch which Charles II. gave to Jane Lane when she helped him to escape after Worcester fight. It is a little gem in crystal and silver.

A Marie Antoinette étui, a lock of Napoleon's hair, and some Nelson relics are to be sold with their pedigrees. Lovers of genuine bric-à-brac will have the satisfaction of not only adding new treasures to their collections, but will feel at the same time they are materially assisting the most heartrending and distressing cases of poverty.

A lady brought to my house a few small possessions for the sale. When I asked: "Are you then so very poor?" she answered, "One day I shall be found dead from starvation. Perhaps a friend will say 'It is astonishing, I saw her walking a few days ago neatly dressed, looking well.'"

A. S.

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