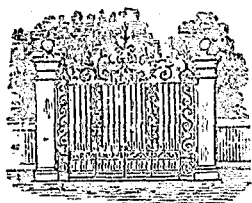


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



Once more the Women's Suffrage Bill has been talked out by Mr. Labouchere, who kept the House of Commons in intermittent roars of laughter for nearly an hour. Mr. Bamford Slack, who, on Friday in last week, moved the second reading, and referred to the gross abuse of forms of the House which had been witnessed that afternoon with the object of postponing an important measure. He pointed out that the enfranchisement of women was already accepted in British Colonies and was a necessary factor in social progress. While public opinion had changed towards the question in recent years, in the House of Commons the tendency had been retrograde and reactionary. In regard both to educational and municipal representation, they had lost ground. This would never have happened if the principle of the Bill he advocated had been the law of the land. It was wrong to force any reasonable responsible citizens to obey laws which they had no power of either sanctioning or protesting against, and the disfranchisement of women was unconstitutional, inexpedient, mischievous, and unjust.

Sir John Rolleston pointed out the urgency of the franchise to women working for weekly or daily wages. Seven shillings a week was the average wage of women in this country. To exact cheap labour from any section of the community was not for the good of the State.

Mr. Labouchere said he was entirely opposed to women's suffrage, tooth and nail. Women could not fulfil the duties of citizenship. Again, it was only a few women with masculine minds who took an interest in politics, or desired to have votes. Further, as numerically women were in excess of men, if the female franchise were established the government of the country would be surrendered to women.

Mr. T. H. Robertson (Hackney) proceeded to argue that women did not care about the vote, and talked in this sense, with a singular reluctance to put the question to the test until 5.30, when, by the rules of the House, the debate stood adjourned.

It is with satisfaction we record that when the result was made known in the lobby there was an indignant demonstration by representatives of the Women's Co-operative Guild and Women's Suffrage Societies. They were conducted by the police to a corner of Broad Sanctuary, where they forthwith passed a resolution "viewing with indignation and alarm the existing procedure of the House of Commons, which reduces legislation to a mere game of chance." The business before the House is greater than it can hope to deal with, and it is an outrage that its time should be wasted by members who merely desire to prevent a Bill being put to the test. The continual jesting as to the Women's Enfranchisement Bill on the part of certain members of the House is most insulting and unseemly. As a contemporary puts it, "it is a really serious subject, and the way in which certain members insist on making jokes in rather questionable taste whenever it arises does not add to the dignity of Parliament."

At a meeting of the National Council of Women of the Rhine provinces of Germany, after papers dealing with the education of working girls, the following resolutions were passed:—1. A wider education for the girls who left the common schools at fourteen or fifteen was urgently necessary for home making, and for reasons of general development and social responsibility. 2. Such education must be compulsory. 3. It should include three branches—a housekeeping and home-making; technical instruction for shop or business; general education. 4. Because of the necessity of wage-earning immediately after leaving the common school, this instruction should be given upon the hourly plan, and should last for a year. 5. Such schools should consist of affiliated departments; those for simple domestic economy and preparation for the less expert trades, and those for training for highly-skilled trades.

A Book of the Week.

SANDY.*

To say that "Sandy" is equal to its predecessors—"Lovey Mary" and the immortal Mrs. Wiggs—would be to say too much. In fact, Mrs. Rice's present book is separated from her previous ones by quite a wide gulf. Here she essays things she has not before attempted—love and tragedy—and the result is—well, certainly not failure, but only partial success. We have here the usual American theme—the marriage of a member of one of those inconceivably proud old families, with their incredibly blue blood, and an Irish waif of no family at all, who crossed the Atlantic as a stowaway.

"Sandy" may be a possible person; but he is not convincing to the English reader, though he is very pleasant to read about. The lady of his love is one Ruth Nelson, the last descendant of a family which has exhausted itself by vice. Her only brother is frankly described as a "degenerate"—diseased physically and mentally. We of the nursing world, with our bitter experiences of heredity, will foresee clouds upon the horizon of the married happiness of this unfortunate girl and Sandy; or, at least, upon that of their children. However, in the States apparently, these things do not trouble the young folks. As old Aunt Melvy says, "Mist' Sandy gwine in for de shorenough quality," and nobody seems to consider the darker aspects of poor Ruth's ancestry in the light of a drawback to their union.

The success of the book—that which makes us really feel that we are in the hands of the creator of Mrs. Wiggs—is the character of Aunt Melvy. She is the black cook in the household of Judge Hollis, the family which shelters and adopts Sandy. Mrs. Hollis is the typical American housewife, who washes her own dishes and rubs her own furniture, and is very severe upon her next-door neighbour, Mrs. Meech.

"I never saw such doings! They say she even leaves the dishes overnight. And yet she can sit on her porch and smile at people going by, just like her house was cleaned up. I hate a hypocrite."

Aunt Melvy's humour is scattered through the book in silver streaks. She has been all her life seeking religion, but will not own that she has found it, though she still lives in hopes of "coming thu." The moment

* By Alice Hogan Rice. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

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