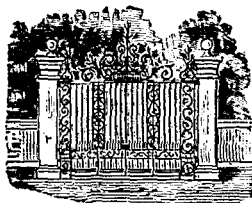


## Outside the Gates.

### WOMEN.



The meeting of the subscribers and friends of the Women's Local Government Society, held at 16, Carlton House Terrace, W., on Thursday in last week, by the kind permission of Lady Pearson, was jubilant over the new Qualification

of Women Act, the passing of which the Society had done so much to promote.

Mrs. Theodore Williams, who presided, said that the new Act had afforded women the opportunity of studying and understanding the work of citizenship under the authority of Government. It behoved them to avail themselves of this opportunity, and to use it for the benefit of the community.

The first resolution, moved by Dr. Shipman, M.P., was as follows:—"This meeting welcomes the new Act, which enables the community to be served on County and Borough Councils by women as well as by men, and urges women to make a study of the work of local authorities in their districts, and to organise locally with the object of promoting the candidature of suitable women."

Dr. Shipman said it was not only the right but the duty of women to serve on local authorities, a duty demanded by the needs of the community. By the recent Act women had recovered the ground they had lost in connection with the London County Council, on which Miss Cons, Miss Cobden (now Mrs. Cobden Unwin), and Lady Sandhurst had done such excellent work as long as they were allowed to retain their seats, so that ever since then the L.C.C. had been petitioning the Government in office to allow women to serve upon it. The resolution was seconded by Lady Knightly of Fawsley, and carried.

The second resolution, moved by Mr. Walter McLaren, seconded by Miss Margaret Ashton, and carried, was as follows:—"This meeting instructs the Committee of the Women's Local Government Society to use its best efforts to obtain legislation to remove the electoral restrictions which still limit the candidature of women under the new Qualification of Women Act, in order to render it as easy to secure the services of women on County and Town Councils as on Boards of Guardians." Much stress was laid by both speakers on the ineligibility of married women to serve on the local authorities, and Mr. McLaren's suggestion that the qualification for service should be a residential one, was generally approved.

Miss Ashton, who spoke well and strongly, showed that much of the work on County and Borough Councils is women's work; that these bodies dealt with such questions as housing, lodging-houses for women, and the women in the street, as well as education. It was important that women should be directly elected on to the educational authorities, as co-opted members merely held their seats at the pleasure of the men with whom they were working, and had no security of tenure.

## Book of the Week.

### THE CONVERT.\*

When a writer of such note as Miss Elizabeth Robins takes up her pen in defence of any burning question of the day, she does more for the cause than can a dozen mass meetings, for the pen is a sharper weapon than the tongue, and has access where the human voice can never penetrate. The power of literature is freely acknowledged, but there are those who walk upon such high intellectual plains that they scorn anything less than a volume of articles on the prominent topics of the day. Let it be said to these that there is no weapon so powerful, or so far-reaching, as fiction. Get your reader into a comfortable arm-chair, with a novel by an author of indisputable reputation, snugly satisfied that he is in for an hour or so of keen enjoyment, and you have him thoroughly disarmed, open to any blow you wish to deal. It is necessary, of course, that the book shall have a striking, but entirely guileless, opening, unlike the bald heading of an article manifestly written to confound or convert. The novel must have the orthodox methods most sedulously preserved, it is necessary that the poison on the arrow you toy with should not be visible, or there will be no slaying of prejudice with it.

Now, just in this particular Miss Elizabeth Robins shows her inimitable skill. "The Convert" opens with no parade of its purpose; we are simply introduced to a set of very normal, and exceedingly interesting people of our own world, and the desire to follow their fortunes, to unearth their life-stories, and understand their workings, is stirring our pulses before there is a hint of the *raison d'être* of the whole book. It is not until the reader is more than half way through that he realises the love story is most elemental, and scarcely worth consideration, but by that time his interest is so roused that he is bound to go on to the end for the sake of the author's real intention.

It is not for the amusement or edification of those already in sympathy with Women's Suffrage that Miss Robins has written "The Convert," but in order that the subject may be driven home into the hearts of those who, for the most part, from sheer ignorance of the real aims of the women devoting their lives to the cause, are entirely out of sympathy, or, worse still, condemn the movement unheard. To those who will not listen, she carries the message with a directness that cannot

\*Elizabeth Robins. (Methuen.)

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