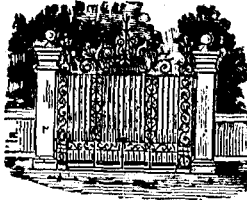


Outside the Gates.

MRS. PANKHURST ON PRISONS.



At the breakfast given at the Great Central Hotel, on the 20th inst., to the released prisoners from Holloway, Mrs. Pankhurst, who was accorded a great ovation, said that on her discharge the Matron had asked if she had any complaint to make, to which her reply was, "No, not from the personal standpoint; but a complaint against the system, which is self-condemned." The women who went to prison were not given to whining; moreover they knew that the authorities and the press would like to side-track the Suffrage movement on some question of reform. Nevertheless, as she had just come out of Holloway, she thought those present would like her to say something on that subject. The system must be self-condemned when it was realised that never was a drunkard who went to prison made sober, never was a fallen woman made moral, or a thief made honest. People went into prison feeling like human beings; its effect was to turn them into wild beasts. No wonder that they did not digest their food, that every one was ill for the first few days. If prison had this effect on those who only had to serve short sentences, and who were sustained by the sympathy of their fellow workers and the inspiration of their cause; if they began to dread coming out again and facing the world outside, what must it mean to those imprisoned for long periods, with no such alleviations? It was not until one was coming out that the wardresses and Matron began to address one in a human voice. They had a special prison voice—a voice of iron—and the prisoners got a special voice, too. If some of the wardresses, in spite of the system, were not kindly one would go mad.

The Chaplain had endeavoured to defend the system of enforcing silence as necessary. "For my part," said Mrs. Pankhurst to him, "the Middle Ages were more brutal to the body; they applied the rack and the thumb-screw, but they weren't doing it all the time. They hadn't invented the civilised torture of solitary confinement."

As an illustration of the humanity of some of the wardresses, Mrs. Pankhurst spoke of a poor young creature remanded for attempted suicide. She had a hunted look, and it was evident she had had a hard life. She shrank up against the wall, and refused to walk round the exercising ground till the wardress said to her: "Come and walk up and down with me." She did this for two or three days until, on the last day of that wardress's turn on duty, she was walking round like the rest.

"Some of you," said Mrs. Pankhurst, "have never known what it is to want necessaries. You cannot realise what a bitter struggle some people have before they give in; but if you go to prison and see these poor creatures you will know."

Her concluding words to those who had so far not

thought of their public duty were: "Rise up, ye careless women, and come and help. Help us to win freedom for women and for the human race."

Others, of the recently released prisoners spoke in the same strain. The first to speak was Mrs. Carwood, of Birmingham. She was followed by Miss Parker from New Zealand, who said she had no idea that the British Constitution was so peculiarly sensitive as to object to her walking in the same street as Mrs. Pankhurst. When she was arrested she had her back to the House of Commons. If her imprisonment did any good to the women of England then her five weeks in prison would be the sweetest in her whole life.

Miss Allen, an Irish lady, followed, who assured her hearers that, "If you make up your minds, and set your teeth, you can serve any sentence." Then Miss Keeble, who said that the wardress would say to her, "Fourteen, do try to look serious." She had come out of prison a double-dyed Suffragette. Prison was the confirmation ceremony of the Suffragists. She said also that in spite of the brave way in which her fellow prisoners had spoken she was bound to say that when she saw them in the exercise ground their faces were paler day by day, and the strained look in their eyes increasingly evident. The last speaker was Miss Whitworth, who spoke earnestly and well.

WOMEN.

Miss Adelaide Anderson, lecturing at the Bedford College for Women on "The Progress of Labour Legislation," said that the factory hands numbered 4,141,500, and those in workshops 655,900, while the women and girls employed were at least a million and a half of the total of 4,797,400.

The Barmaids' Political Defence League has addressed to members of Parliament a letter calling their attention to the power proposed to be given to Licensing Justices by Clause 20 (1) of the Licensing Bill, by which, it is argued, 100,000 barmaids and women assistants now employed might be "placed in an entirely precarious and insecure position, irrespective of any good conduct or misconduct on their part." The recipients of the letter are therefore urged to oppose this clause of the Bill by every means in their power in the House of Commons.

Book of the Week.

"THE MOON OF BATH."*

"The Moon of Bath" is a really delightful book. It has the quaintest dedication imaginable, "To the Blind Boy's Victims." But we venture to predict that it is not only the Blind Boy's victims who will be enthralled by its charm, and swept along from page to page by the unflagging interest. Happy the sick in mind or body who fall in with it for their recreation, for in the adventures of the sterling Tim Curtis there lies forgetfulness.

* By Beth Ellis. (William Blackwood.)

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