

Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



THE announcement that the assent of the Governor of New Zealand—Lord Glasgow—had been obtained to the Electoral Bill of 1893, giving the franchise to the women of the Colony, was delivered by the Premier—Mr. Seddon—on October the 4th, in the House of Parliament at Wel-

lington; and we do not doubt that since that auspicious day every qualified woman has been busy registering herself, preparatory to recording her vote at the general election, which is about to take place.

A most enthusiastic and crowded meeting, in support of extending the parliamentary franchise to women, was held in St. James's Hall, on Friday last. The chair was taken by Mr. Leonard Courtney, M.P. (who married one of the nine brilliantly clever Misses Potter), and eloquent speeches were delivered by Mrs. Millicent Garrett Fawcett, Mrs. Wynward Phillips, and Mrs. Bamfield Slack. Mr. Courtney said there was now no "serious opposition to the movement." So it is to be hoped that the monster petition to be presented to Parliament in the spring, signed as it will be by thousands of women, may at last obtain for them the simple measure of justice which they demand. As all the women's political associations are combining over this movement, it will be a simple plan for them to obtain, *in writing*, a promise to vote for the Women's Franchise Bill from every would-be M.P. before they afford him any help in winning his seat.

The Central Conference of Women Workers, held last week at Leeds, proved a brilliant success. Mrs. Boyd Carpenter delivered the introductory address, and tendered to all present a warm Yorkshire welcome. Many valuable papers were read, and we are indebted to the *Leeds Mercury* for excellent reports.

Miss Maria Trench, author of "The Life of Father Lowder," in a paper on "Anglican Sisterhoods," describes their use and rapid development during the last half-century.

"Health Teaching in Towns" caused considerable interest, and Mrs. Alfred Osler, of Birmingham, dealt with the subject in a masterly manner; her paper was followed by one on "Health Teaching in Villages," by Miss Florence Nightingale, which was read by her sister, Mrs. F. Verney. What, the writer asks, was the existing machinery for promoting public health in what were called—with a grim sarcasm—our rural districts? Was health or sickness, life or death, the greatest miracle in the present condition of things? To some, the greatest miracle (repeated every day) was that we could live at all in the surroundings which our ignorance and neglect created. In the Act for the Housing of the Working Classes of 1890, everything was provided for except the one thing really necessary—the money to carry out the reforms. It was perfectly well known that if the provisions of the Act were enforced immediately and completely, about three-fourths of the rural districts in England would be depopulated, and we should have hundreds of thousands of houseless poor upon our hands. Where

even the law could and ought to be enforced, it was daily and persistently evaded to the great danger of public health. What then, ought to be the existing state of things? There should be independent medical officers of health—appointed by the County Councils, and removable only by them—who had been trained for this as a profession; sanitary inspectors, with a proper qualification, appointed with the medical officer's approval; district chief nurses (who must have received some training from a competent superintendent nurse) and health missionaries. There should be a pure and plentiful water supply to each village, gardens near houses, and allotments where refuse could be used for manure. Cottage-owners ought to be made amenable to sanitary laws, and compelled to regard the essentials for health as far as construction, &c., was concerned. How much the cottage mothers, if instructed by instructed women, could remedy or prevent many of the frightful existing evils! Health missionaries should be trained to teach the cottage mothers in their homes. This was the key of the whole situation, and to those ladies desirous of becoming health missionaries, lectures should be given by earnest medical officers. They should also receive instruction in classes. After a health missionary has become settled in a district, she would then be able to receive a Probationer, who, while attending the medical officer's lectures and classes, would find time to accompany the health missionary in her round of visiting. It would depend on the tact of the ladies whether these calls were acceptable to the cottage mother—if not, they must, of course, cease. There should be personal friendship between the lady lecturers and the cottage mothers. The test of success would be gaining the confidence of village mothers, and receiving invitations to help them; the lectures, would, indeed, be a dismal failure unless the cottage women supported the missionaries. When the greatest men of science devoted a large part of their lives to bring, in simple language, within the reach of all, the results of their deepest study, the women of the highest cultivation and of the deepest sympathy might well take up such work as the writer had endeavoured to sketch out.

In her paper on "The supply of Medical Aid to the Women of India," Mrs. Scharlieb, M.D., spoke of the higher importance attached in India to sons, and gave a description of the conditions of life in the Brahmin families, the patriarchal arrangements of the often beautiful houses, the children playing about them, or enjoying the mid-day siesta. There was little, however, she said, to break the melancholy and cruel monotony of a Hindoo girl's life. The ceremony of betrothal took place, usually, in the eighth or ninth year of the girl, and even among the Brahmins in infancy. This betrothal was looked upon as an absolutely necessary part of her life, since every Brahmin girl, according to the tenets of her religion, did not fulfil her destiny until she became a wife. While still a child, she entered the clan of her future husband, and, becoming the servant of her mother-in-law, began the cruellest part of her life after a comparatively happy if monotonous existence as a child. After the long and elaborate wedding ceremonies, the Hindoo girl did not converse with or allude to her boy husband, or even call him husband. She was simply

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