

## Outside the Gates.

## WOMEN.



Queen Margherita, of Italy, is bringing out a volume of Italian folklore, the result of her summer holiday.

Mdme. Carnot is about to be the recipient of a high honour. The Order of the Noble Ladies of Queen Saint Isabella of Portugal was founded in 1801 by the then Prince Regent, and has been very sparingly distributed in other countries. The Duchesse de Luynes is the only Frenchwoman on whom the distinction has, so far, been conferred. In giving it the King and the Queen have an equal voice. The ribbon of the Order is pink with a white stripe running down the middle, and the badge of gold bears an enamelled representation of the saintly Isabelle bestowing alms, with the motto, "Pauperum solatio."

Mrs. Potter Palmer, late President of the Board of Lady Managers at Chicago, has given 200,000 dollars (£40,000) to build a Woman's Memorial Building of the great exhibition of 1893. Many magnificent presents have been bestowed by the women exhibitors of all nations, so that mementoes of great interest will be collected in this building. The Baroness Burdett-Coutts has contributed models, albums, water-colour drawings, and two type-written volumes of Women's Work.

The suggested method of work of the Women's Suffrage Special Appeal Committee is as follows:—

The object of the Special Appeal Committee is to obtain the largest possible number of signatures by middle of January, 1894. This it hopes to achieve:—

- 1st. by supporters working individually among personal friends, fellow workers, etc.
- 2nd. by organising a systematic collection of signatures in every Parliamentary constituency in England and Wales. (It is hoped that similar arrangements will also be made for working the Appeal in Scotland and Ireland.)

To promote this systematic work and prevent overlapping, the committee hope to arrange a conference in each constituency between five or six women connected with the various Suffrage, Political, and Temperance Societies. The object of this small meeting will be:—

- 1st. to arrange the sub-division of the constituency for canvassing purposes: it will usually be found that the existing polling wards or districts offer convenient areas to be allotted to each organization.
- 2nd. to appoint ladies who will be the future medium of correspondence with the Appeal Committee, arrange the canvass in their own districts, receive and issue the collecting books and return them when filled to Miss JULIA CAMERON.

The Committee propose ultimately to notify the result of the collection of signatures in each constituency—as well as the general result throughout the country, and they hope the local representatives may in many cases see their way to appoint a joint deputation to lay these results before their Member of Parliament.

## Science Notes.

That tea and coffee may promote indigestion can no longer be considered news, but the proofs that this is the case have probably rested hitherto rather on personal experience than on laboratory experiments. A German chemist has, however, recently been investigating the effect of tea and coffee in artificial gastric digestion, adding infusions in such quantities as would probably be taken in the course of a meal. He finds that the amount digested without such additions being 94 per cent., specimens containing tea or coffee are digested to the extent of only 61 to 68 per cent. There is yet a loophole of escape for us, because physiologists, in dealing with experiments in artificial digestion, always emphasise the fact that the exact conditions of the normal living body can never be accurately reproduced. Our knowledge of the composition and quantity of gastric juice in the human being, for instance, is based on experiments with persons like the renowned Alexis St. Martin, the Canadian woodman, whose stomach was pierced by a musket ball, and who lived the rest of his life with an abnormal opening through the abdominal wall into the stomach. Such a person cannot with confidence be taken as a type. Again, in the case of the living stomach digested material is constantly removed by absorption, whereas when digestion proceeds in a glass vessel this does not occur. For purposes of investigation, two doctors of Guayaquil, Ecuador, recently advertised for a person who would submit to an operation similar in result to that accidentally performed on Alexis St. Martin, for a consideration of £1,000. Strange to say they received over a hundred offers.

By the use of the electric furnace, a French chemist, M. Moissan, has succeeded in volatilising copper, silver, gold, platinum, and other metals. The high temperature required is produced by the passage of the electric current between two carbon points, which are raised to a white heat thereby, as in the ordinary arc light. Silver is said to boil readily at this temperature, and the vapour given off condenses as globules, grey powder, and arborescent fragments. The two latter forms may be compared to hoar frost and the beautiful tracings of ice which form on the inside of a window during intense cold. Both these latter, and the silver forms also, are produced by a sudden fall of temperature, and the consequent solidification of vapour without a liquid stage occurring between the gaseous and the solid.

Perhaps M. Moissan is best known to the general reader of chemistry by his experiments with *Fluorine*, which he showed at the last meeting of the British Association. Fluorine has long been known as existing in different compounds, and one of these is used to etch glass. The distinguishing characteristic of the element is its extreme readiness to unite with other elements; it is no sooner expelled from one compound than it enters into another, and this excessive energy of combination for a long time defied all attempts to isolate it. If a compound of fluorine is decomposed in a glass vessel the fluorine unites with the glass. M. Moissan was the first to obtain free fluorine; he used vessels of platinum, which it attacks slowly, and fluorspar (Blue-john) which is not attacked at all because it already contains fluorine.

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