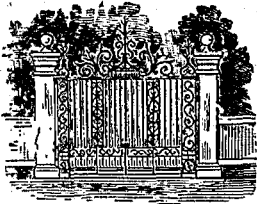


Outside the Gates.

W O M E N .



SOME very interesting points for discussion have come up—as they generally do—during the Annual meetings of the Women's Liberal Federation, which have been held at Westbourne Park Chapel under the presidency of Lady Trevelyan.

The Council was nearly unanimous that all restrictions as to labour should apply equally to men and women, and condemned the attempt in the Coal Mines Regulation Act to debar women working, as at present, at the pit brow.

A very popular resolution was the one by Mrs. Brownlow, in favour of equal remuneration for men and women when the work accomplished was identical.

On the temperance question there was perfect unanimity. A resolution regretting the absence of any mention of the question from the Queen's Speech, and urging the Government to afford facilities for the passing of private Members' Bills, was moved by Miss Balgarnie and carried. Resolutions in favour of the prohibition of the sale of intoxicants to children, in favour of inebriate homes under Government control, and against the multiplication of drink-selling clubs, were also carried.

Miss Balgarnie moved, and Mrs. Wynford Phillipps seconded, a resolution in favour of the amendment of the Divorce Act of 1857, so as to place women on an equal footing with men. After several strong speeches in its favour the resolution was carried unanimously. A rider pointing out the injustice of making the wife's domicile depend on the husband was also carried.

In a discussion on Prison Reform, Mrs. Amos said: "In women's prisons much reform was needed. Pressure must be put on the moral nature of the women; the less they were able to punish, the more they must use influence to reform. Much might be done if wise and discreet women visitors were admitted to the prisons. Mrs. Pelham and Mrs. Thomas urged the appointment of police matrons, and Miss A. Slack gave an interesting account of many prisons which she had visited, and particularly denounced the demoralising method of employing prisoners at cranks or other machines which produced nothing. A resolution in favour of prison reform was carried.

"Out of evil good may sometimes come." And this may be the case with regard to women and the Education Bill. As the Bill now stands, women cannot be representatives of Education because they are not eligible to sit on County Councils.

Now it is not at all likely that women will be content to have their right denied to a voice in the education of the children of the State, so that one effect therefore, of this Bill, tending as it does to supersede School Boards, for which women are eligible, by

County Councils; for which they are not, will be to vastly strengthen their just demand to seats on County Councils.

The new Vagabond Club gave a charming dinner to some women writers on Monday night. Dr. Conan Doyle, who was in the chair, made an excellent speech, in which he said that "Literature was the one profession in which men and women competed on absolutely equal terms." Mrs. Annie Swan and Mrs. Fenwick Miller also spoke. Mrs. Annie Steel and "George Egerton" were among the guests.

The Ladies' Night at the Royal Society on Wednesday, the 10th, produced a brilliant gathering. The exhibits were mostly the same as at the former soirée, but included in addition a display of the beautiful apparatus intended for the Faraday-Davy research laboratory which Mr. Mond is fitting up for the Royal Institution at his own expense.

Miss Clara Barton, of the American Red Cross Society, who is superintending the distribution of aid to the Armenians, recently wrote to a Boston paper that "it is very difficult to find physicians to go into the 'interior.' No one can wonder at this, with the most mixed and deadly of epidemics raging unchecked, added to the memory of horrors yet fresh in every mind. Still, effort, persuasion, and money do find and obtain them; and our hope is that, by the aid of medicines, disinfecting appliances, nutritious food, and such delicacies as we can get to them, at length they will bring this scourge to an end, and by the help of the seed, farming, and artisans' utensils, which we are getting to them with all possible haste, to get once more among these wretched people, in some sections at least, some gleams of hope and some means of self-sustenance; otherwise their very existence is a mere matter of time, and that not long."

A Book of the Week.

"WEIR OF HERMISTON."*

THE last words of the romance of "Weir of Hermiston" were dictated on the very morning of Robert Louis Stevenson's sudden seizure and death. Some of the critics of the day seem inclined to rank this fragment of a story as one of the best (if not the very best work) that this charming writer has given to the world. Mr. Sydney Colvin, writing of this posthumous publication remarks:—"The fragment on which he wrought during the last months of his life gives to my mind (as it did to his own) for the first time, the true measure of his powers; and if in the literature of romance there is to be found work more masterly, of more piercing human insight and more concentrated imaginative wisdom, I do not know it."

The Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Hermiston, better known in legal and criminal circles as "Hanging Hermiston," must have been a terrible husband for his poor frail wife to possess. Stevenson records of her that "She withered in the growing, and (whether it was the sins of her sires or the sorrows of her mothers) came to her maturity depressed, and, as it were, de-

* "Weir of Hermiston," an unfinished romance, by Robert Louis Stevenson. (Chatto and Windus, 1896.) Price 6s.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)