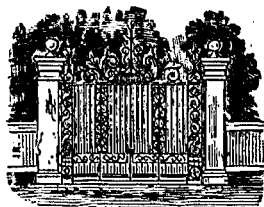


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



A JOINT COMMITTEE of women workers has met several times in conference during the last month to exchange ideas and make suggestions for the best basis on which to build up a National Council of Women for Great Britain and Ireland; the Committee consists of the Countess of Aberdeen, Lady Laura Ridding, Lady Westbury, Mrs. Creighton, Mrs. Fawcett, Mrs. Wynford Philipps, Mrs. Sharlieb, Mrs. Charles McLaren, Mrs. Broadley Reid, Mrs. Eva McLaren, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Mrs. Percy Bunting, Miss Ganes, Miss Lidgett, Miss Theresa Wilson, Miss Helen Blackburn, and Miss P. Hughes.

The Annual Conference of Women Workers will be held at the Public Hall, Croydon, on October 26th to 29th, 1897, when many interesting papers will be read. "The Medical Aspect of Temperance," "The Dangers of the Luxury of Modern Life," "The Prison Life of Women and Children," and "The Educational Side of Co-operation," are subjects of vital interest to the general public. "The Better Organisation of the Nursing Profession," by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, and "The Nursing of the Insane and Epileptics," by Miss Honnor Morten, will give trained nurses a good opportunity of discussing some difficult professional questions. Mrs. Creighton, the wife of the Bishop of London, and who would herself wear the lawn sleeves with distinction, were women admitted to holy orders, will preside at the forthcoming Conference.

The *Daily Mail* says:—"As the result of the recent Parliamentary evasion of the discussion on the question of Woman's Suffrage, and the scant attention paid by members to the demands of non-voters, a 'Male Electors' League for Woman's Suffrage' is being formed. The committee is of no political party, but its members are representative men in each of the three kingdoms. It is officially announced that 'this league of those who already possess the Parliamentary electoral privilege, has for its purpose the abolition of sex distinctions in the allotment and exercise of the Parliamentary franchise.' The league being composed of male voters alone, it is intended thus to bring to bear actual electoral pressure on members of Parliament or candidates."

Miss Gertrude M. Tuckwell is doing well to draw public attention to the fact that the Home Secretary has expressed his intention of not appointing a lady superintendent inspector to replace Mrs. Tennant (Miss Abrahams). Considering the able manner in which it is acknowledged that this lady performed her responsible duties it is a poor compliment to her work

that she should have no successor. We hope Sir Matthew White Ridley will reconsider his decision.

Lady Henry Somerset lately resigned her presidency of the British Women's Temperance Association, but by an overwhelming majority of the Executive Lady Henry Somerset has been requested to withdraw her offer of resignation of the presidency of the N.B.W.T.A. The small minority wishes it to be understood that they voted against the resolution embodying the request, not because they want her ladyship to resign, but as a record of their dissent from her views on the Indian Army Regulations Question. As the majority entertain practically the same views as the minority on the Indian question, the vote amounted to a declaration of unabated confidence in Lady Henry as the temperance leader of the B.W.T.A., on the understanding that temperance reform is the primary object in the constitution of that body.

The B.W.T.A. is doing invaluable work for the national good, and it is a thousand pities that any difference of opinion should have arisen on the question of State Regulation of Vice. We who differ from her on this burning question cannot doubt for a moment that Lady Henry Somerset was animated by the highest motives in writing the now historical letter to Lord Salisbury. But so deeply do the majority of working women feel on this question that we are convinced that should any attempt be made to trust this special form of legislation upon them in this country it would produce very serious results. Such legislation cannot touch the privileged classes, and the masses will have none of it.

A memorial signed by 61,437 women of the United Kingdom, addressed to Lord George Hamilton, as representative of Her Majesty's Government, was presented at the India Office on Saturday. It declares the unaltered and unalterable hostility of the signatories to every form of State regulation of immorality, whether embodied in the system which was known as the Contagious Diseases Acts or in any other form, including the slightly modified and more subtle garb of certain Indian Cantonment rules. It objects to the principle of all such legislation, a principle based on the assumption of the necessity of vice. It opposes the system in all its forms because it inevitably becomes, in regard to women, an engine of the most shameful oppression, removing the guarantees of personal liberty which the law has established, and putting their reputation, their freedom, and their persons absolutely in the power of the police; while in respect of those women who come immediately under its action, it cruelly violates the feelings of those whose sense of shame is not wholly lost, and further brutalises even the most abandoned. The memorialists, while deploring the existence of disease and favourable to moral methods of diminishing it, urge that no permanent diminution of disease will ever be attained by measures which do not strike primarily at the vice itself, and express the hope that the Government of our country will be withheld from the crime of ever again entering into any compact with evil by its attempted regulation.

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