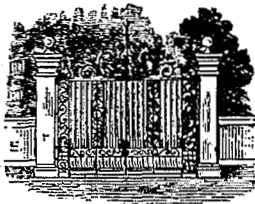


## Outside the Gates.

### WOMEN.



THE Annual General Meeting of the Central and Western Society for Woman's Suffrage was held last week at the Westminster Town Hall. Mr. F. Faithfull Begg, M.P., in the Chair. In his opening remarks the Chairman spoke of the General Election

which before long must take place, and reminded his audience that those in Parliament, or hopeful to be there, were much more amenable before an election than after it. It was a time, therefore, for women to make their influence felt. He believed that the granting of the Parliamentary Suffrage to Women was only a matter of time, for the arguments in favour of it had never been met, never could be met by any fairminded person.

The following Resolution was then moved by the Hon. Mrs. A. T. Lyttleton:—

"That this Meeting reiterates the demand made with increasing force for many years, that the Parliamentary Franchise should be extended to women. It points to the universally admitted facts that women exercise all the local franchises with credit to themselves and advantage to the country, and that both Political Parties seek eagerly for their assistance as organisers and canvassers at Parliamentary Elections. This meeting therefore declares that the professed desire of opponents to save women from participating in public life is either insincere or impossible of realisation, and that it will be to the advantage of the country that the Franchise should be extended to women without delay."

In proposing the resolution, Mrs. Lyttleton said that she attributed the constant denials with which the question of Woman's Suffrage was met partly to the indifference which prevailed. More energy was needed. A cause does not as a rule prosper unless advocated both from straightforward and also from interested motives. At present, Members of Parliament had nothing to gain by espousing the cause of Woman's Suffrage. They could secure the political services of most women without giving them the vote. No doubt, they argued as the Bishops argued recently in convocation with regards to the Church Councils. They held that women were already attracted to the Church, and would remain true to it whether they had votes or not, it was, therefore, politic to give the votes to men, in order to secure their interest. Again she recently read an article by a medical man in which he advocated the nursing profession as the only one suitable to women. She understood, nevertheless, that in the nursing profession the hours were longer, and the death rate higher than in almost any other. As a matter of fact, it was not a profession which attracted men in any numbers, and so it was left to the women, but it was easy to imagine if men had for years had the monopoly of it what warnings there would have been when women wished to enter the ranks. Nevertheless it was one of the finest professions in the world for cultured women.

The moral of all this was that women must be more troublesome if they wanted the vote, they must make it a test question. It was said that two classes of persons were opposed to Women's Suffrage—short-sighted Christians and long-sighted scoundrels. Mrs. Lyttleton concluded by welcoming the Chairman in his capacity of leader of the question in the House of Commons, and said that if women gained the Suffrage during his leadership, his name would be handed down to posterity as a benefactor of humanity. The Resolution was seconded by Mr. D. Brynmôr-Jones, M.P., who said that in a last resort government depended on the exercise of force, but the force usually used was that of public opinion. There is no doubt that this was ripening in favour of the movement. The question first of all was taken up by cultured women, now it was one of moment to all women, for this country is an industrial one, and the question of the Suffrage one which affects all workers, of whom women form a large proportion. What was the true function of women in the modern democratic state? No doubt the different position of women was one of the principle movements which made for progress.

Miss Florence Baggart, in supporting the resolution, powerfully urged the claims of women to the franchise, and said that the minds of men seemed at present to be in a state of praternatural suspicion as to what women would do with the franchise when they got it. There was "no animal so strange as man," as was instanced in the House of Commons only the other day, on the voting on the London Government Bill, when one notable man said "I go," and went not, and the other said "I go not," and went. Men said that they wished to save women from participating in public life, but this was impossible for they were there already. There was at present need for concentrated individual action on the part of women, not only on the part of thoughtless, but of thoughtful women, who put other political considerations before the suffrage. This was the worst form of political betrayal. They must be true to the suffrage before all.

Miss Frances Sterling also supported the resolution, and explained the working of the local associates scheme, which seems likely to be a force in the future. It is proposed that in each constituency a local hon. secretary should be appointed who should keep a list of every person in any degree in favour of women's suffrage. In constituencies where the plan has already been adopted the result has been most favourable, many new supporters being discovered.

The resolution, on being put to the meeting, was carried with enthusiasm.

The vote of thanks to the Chairman was moved by Sir Wilfred Lawson, who in the course of his remarks, said that it would be a happy and appropriate thing if, during the reign of the Queen, the Parliamentary suffrage were granted to women. We are of opinion that if Her Majesty obtained this justice for her sex it would be the brightest jewel in her crown.

In the last official report of the Berlin High School for Girls, parents are earnestly requested, when their children's health demands special consideration, to restrict in their first line all private accessory occupations, and, above all, nerve-exciting music-practising.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)