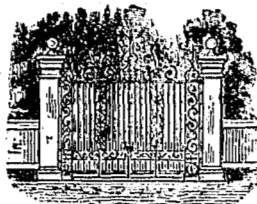


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



A YEAR ago, when the delegates of the National Councils of Women, affiliated to the International Council, assembled in London to discuss the organisation of the great Women's Congress to be held in London in 1899, some apprehension was expressed that a Woman's Congress in London (the most self-centred city in the world) convened at the very height of its season, was a very risky proceeding—and might spell failure.

As a member of the Preliminary Committee of Organization, we held that it was inevitable that such a Congress would be a stupendous success, and it is very satisfactory to find that our optimism has been thoroughly justified. Already so many eminent women in every walk of life have become members of the Congress that success is assured.

When it was suggested that £1,000 would be required to carry out the arrangements for the Congress in a manner worthy of our nationality, the question was asked from whence would come this sum for a woman's organization. But the sum has come, and with it the possibility of carrying out the great work for which the Congress was convened, in the most efficient manner.

But the enthusiasm and personal service, which has from the beginning been so freely given to furthering the success of the First International Gathering of Women in London, has compelled that success, and officers and members of Committees have brought more than gold (and that is conceding a great deal) to effect their end.

They have brought conviction, and earnestness of purpose, and devoted and untiring labour, and not even London, with its superabundance of folly can withstand such forces. The International Congress of Women will be the most forceful event for good in the world's history in this last year of the dying century, and the harbinger of a sweeter century to come.

We rejoice therefore, that since the last meeting in Chicago in 1893, we have been able to keep our readers well informed of the work of the International Council of Women, and that now that the Quinquennial is to be held in England, they are already in warm and active sympathy with its aims, and are preparing in large numbers to attend and enjoy its festival. Every individual member has something of good and of value to bring to this inspiring International Meeting, and be assured that as we give, so shall it be rendered to us again a thousand-fold.

Six months ago we were asking, will the Congress be a success, shall we have full and appreciative audiences. To-day the question is becoming a burning one—How shall we find room for all those who are eager to be present and take part in the Congress? The tickets of membership are selling by hundreds.

The International Office is besieged by all sorts and conditions of women, deeply interested in the great event, and without one paid advertisement in the press, and very few generous notices, the whole women's world, here, there, and everywhere, is on the *qui vive* about the Congress, and mean to be "in it," if it expires in the effort.

WOMEN AS ALDERMEN.

The hearty thanks of women, and, indeed, of all those who value the services of women in the body-politic, are due to Mr. Courtney, M.P., for his action in the House of Commons, with regard to the London Government Bill. When the House, on Tuesday last, proceeded to consider the Bill, as amended, Mr. Courtney moved the insertion of words at the end of Clause 2 providing that "no person shall be disqualified by sex or marriage for being elected, or being an alderman or a councillor." Mr. Courtney pointed out that the councils would have to take over the work of vestries, upon which women were doing good work, particularly in matters of inspection and sanitation.

Mr. Boulnois, who followed, said his object was to prevent women being on these new bodies at all, and enquired "what women knew of building and road-making."

Sir Henry Fowler, who supported the amendment, was of opinion that this question required to be dealt with rather more straightforwardly than had been the case in the House up to the present time. It was very desirable that the whole question of the qualifications of women to serve on public bodies should be threshed out. No one who had served on a school board would deny that the presence of women on those boards had been of the very greatest value to female education. He did not think a school board was properly constituted unless there were women upon it. With regard to women as Poor Law Guardians, so long as pauper children and pauper women existed, it was a necessity that there should be women in a position of responsibility and control to look after their affairs. Sir Henry Fowler, however, would make prohibitive the admission of women to the position of mayors, magistrates, archbishops, police, generals in the army, or members of Parliament.

Mr. Labouchere opposed the amendment. It was, he said, the thin end of the wedge. It would lead to women sitting in that House. Let them be firm, let them be men. Women did not want to be on councils, except some who did not seem to have been successful as members of their own sex. He hoped the House would put its foot down, and declared that in the great councils of the nation, in municipalities, and similar bodies, there should be men, and men alone.

Upon the division of the House, the numbers were ;

For the Amendment	196
Against	161

Majority for 35
The announcement of the figures was received with loud cheers.

We congratulate the House on the decision it has arrived at, despite the cheap rhetoric of Mr. Boulnois and Mr. Labouchere. As an inhabitant of the parish of Marylebone, we are specially grateful that the unjust and ungenerous views expressed on this occasion, as upon all others in which the interests of women are concerned, by the man who is unfortunately our Parliamentary representative have not prevailed.

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