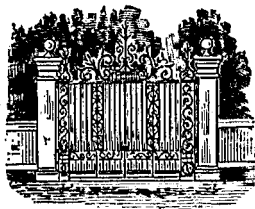


## Outside the Gates.

## WOMEN.



The strength of the interest which women reformers have succeeded in arousing in the Canadian Parliament on the subject of the prohibition of the import, manufacture, and sale of cigarettes was evident when a motion to this effect was recently adopted by the Dominion House of Commons. A strong deputation of women, accompanied by men representing all the chief reforming agencies of Canada, had previously waited on the Government. When the crucial moment came for the vote to be taken, many members who had previously refused to pledge themselves and were expected to vote against the motion rose and voted "Yea" amid much excitement. It is expected that a Government Bill embodying the terms of the resolution will shortly be introduced by the Minister of Justice.

It is announced that a new paper, the *Daily Bulletin*, owned, edited, and managed by women, will make its first appearance at Chicago on May 15.

The sufferings of women in India who are kept in seclusion "behind the purdah" must appeal to all of their more fortunate sisters who live under freer conditions. An article by Dr. Helen Bouchier in the *Morning Leader* is, therefore, of extreme interest in giving the opinion of a strict Brahmin on the custom of the seclusion of Brahmin women in Northern India, for in the South this is not the case. "It has become the custom," he said, "and you know how our people are bound by ancient customs. We have always had much respect for our women; we are taught that one of our greatest adepts before the time of Buddha was a woman. We are not at all favourable to the custom of shutting them up in zenanas. There are many of us who would be very glad to do away with it. I have talked to Brahmins here and in the North-West Provinces, and there are many who would rejoice to see it put aside, but no one dares to be the first. We all fear the loss of social position for ourselves and our daughters, the blame of our caste which we might bring upon ourselves. The risk is too great, and so we wait, and every man goes on doing as his father and grandfather did. No. It is from the English the change should come, Doctor Sahib—and that is the truth. The English have put an end to the suttee, although that is a more ancient custom and did not come to us from the Mahometans. When they did that, they should have made an end of the zenana also. They were strong enough, they should have put it down by law. We are not strong enough to make the change, but we should be glad to accept it, if it was forced upon us by the Government. They have interfered with other things. I do not understand why this one evil should always have been respected. Whenever a custom has displeased them they have set it aside. They have altered many things in India since the English Raj began. Why should the English shrink back before the abuse, the cruelty, and the wrong from which the women suffer who are shut away all their lives in the zenana? Why, indeed?

## FLOWERS OF THE SEASON

## CHAPTER IV.

## APRIL.

By Mrs. C. CARMICHAEL STOPES.

This is the springiest of spring months. Old Chaucer noted that the sweet showers of April pierced the droughts of March to the root, and awaked the flowers. Many that venture forth hardly in March bloom in lush abundance in April. The Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) is at its best, and may be regarded as the special flower of the month, as the Daffodil was of March and the Snowdrop of February. We hardly know the prime pleasure of picking them until in some open woodland we can kneel down among them and gather a bouquet before we rise again. Most ideal and beautiful of all spring flowers, the Primrose combines a delicate perfume with its delicate tints, and has been sung by many poets. Gerard mentions green Primroses in Yorkshire. Much later in the month—indeed, rarely until the very end of it—appears her brother, the Cowslip (*Primula veris*). The distinctions of this species are a thicker stalk, smaller corollas clustered, of darker tint, and more powerful fragrance. They sometimes bear a red speck on their petals, and in some places crimson Cowslips are found, but they are much more rare. There are several other varieties; but it is our common meadow Cowslip which is sung by the poets, adored by the children, and haunted by the fairies. Shakespeare says of the Fairy Queen, "the Cowslips tall her pensioners be." The rootstock of the Primrose is ground and used in a decoction as an emetic, and the flowers of the Cowslip give the best of the home-made British wines. The old herbalists ascribed to them many virtues. The decoction of the roots was thought to be good against stone and the gout, the juice of the leaves for the palsy, or for wounds, "sniffed into the nose it purgeth the braine and migraine." An unguent made with the juice of Cowslips and linseed-oil cures scalds and burns. A conserve of the flowers of Cowslips and sugar helps palsy, convulsions, and cramps; and "Primroses, sodden in vinegar and applied, heal the King's Evil and the almonds of the throat and uvula."

Another flower growing in the damp meadows is noted by poets, the Ladies' Smock or Cuckoo Flower (*Cardamine Pratensis*). It gained its first name through the snowy whiteness of some of its varieties (though others are of a delicate tinge of lavender); and its second name, because the old herbalists noted that it bloomed "when the cuckoo doth begin to sing her pleasant notes without stammering." Their pinnate leaves have been called the Bitter Cress; and they act as an antiscorbutic, like so many other of the Crucifere.

The Snake's Head (*Fritillaria Meleagris*) is more rarely found in similar wet meadows, from Norfolk and Bedford to Sussex and Hants. This strange plant has borne many names, "the checkered Daffodil," the "Guinea-hen flower," and "Fritillary," from its resemblance to a dice-board. It is fairly abundant near Oxford.

The Red Rattle (*Pedicularia Palustris*) blooms in the wet marshes. Its toothed and pinnate leaves wear

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