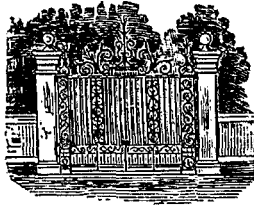


## Outside the Gates.

### WOMEN AND FREE TRADE.



A remarkable meeting was held on Thursday, the 12th inst., in the Manchester Free Trade Hall, when both platform and auditorium were packed with men and women of all parties opposed to the taxation of food. The credit of bringing about so imposing a demonstration belongs to the Women's Co-operative Guild, which represents 16,000 of the women of England. Women, who most feel fluctuations in the price of food, expressed their views in this remarkably striking way on the fiscal policy. The majority of the speakers were women, and it was a woman, Miss Alison Garland, who made the brightest and most effective speech. But all the speeches were good. They were preceded by some interesting letters and telegrams.

#### ENCOURAGING MESSAGES.

Many letters and telegrams regretting absence were received. Lady Aberdeen telegraphed:—"Greatly regret unable to join in the emphatic protest made by the women of England against the delusion of Protection."

Lady Henry Somerset was in hearty sympathy with the objects of the meeting.

Mrs. Fawcett wrote that protective taxes benefited the rich at the expense of the poor, and therefore must be resisted in the House of Commons, if they were to be successfully resisted at all. But women had no constitutional means of influencing the composition of the House of Commons. They must stand by and see the necessities of life taxed without being able to record a vote which might tell on the other side. The Protection women wanted was the Protection of representation.

The Hon. Mrs. Arthur Lyttelton's sympathies were wholly with the promoters of the meeting. That a question of that sort should be decided by men's votes only made one realise more keenly than ever the injustice of withholding the suffrage from women.

A letter was also received from Mrs. Bright M'Laren (sister of John Bright), who is eighty-eight years of age. "I rejoice," she wrote, "to think of your meeting in the dear Free Trade Hall, where in my young days I saw and listened to Richard Cobden and John Bright—the calm logic of the one, the inspiring eloquence of the other—and the faithful men who accompanied them. Women did good work in those days in the grand cause of Free Trade. Women can help to change things for the better again, if they are true to the powers God has given them. My spirit will be with you at your meeting to-morrow, and I believe, though unseen by mortal eyes, the spirits of some of the grand men of the old Anti-Corn Law days will not be absent. The eye of faith beholds them there, though men count them dead."

Mrs. H. P. Bright Clark (daughter of John Bright) hoped the meeting would be a great success. Working women depended more perhaps than any other people upon freedom of supplies.

Others who wrote were Lady Crewe, Lady Trevelyan, Mrs. H. J. Tennant, Miss Gertrude Tuckwell, Miss Bertha Mason, and the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild (representing 6,000 members).

#### A FREE TRADE RESOLUTION.

After a speech by Mrs. Bury, who said they were met under the auspices of an organisation numbering 16,000 women,

Miss Alison Garland (the Women's Free Trade Union) proposed—

"That this meeting of women declares its steadfast adherence to the policy of Free Trade, and condemns all attempts to revive the system of Protection, which would impoverish the people, enrich monopolists, corrupt public life, and embitter colonial and international relations; and seeing that women, both as workers and housewives, are so deeply concerned in this question, deploras that they cannot make their protest effective through being debarred from the Parliamentary franchise."

Mrs. Cobden Unwin, a daughter of Richard Cobden, who, in seconding the resolution, was received with cheers and the singing of "Auld Lang Syne," said a call from Manchester came home to her with peculiar force when she remembered how closely her father's early life was associated with the town. Mr. Chamberlain at Liverpool pledged himself that his proposals as they stood would not add one farthing to the cost of any family in the country. Would he come into that hall and repeat those words from that platform? They would tell him, in reply, that his taxes fell upon the raw material of the greatest of British industries—the British housewife's industry. She would tell him of the state of agricultural England before the blessings of Free Trade brought comparative comfort in the homes of the agricultural labourer. The poor, the labourer, the artisan, the small shopkeeper, and all with limited and fixed income would be the chief sufferers by Protection, because the smallest tax upon the necessaries of life meant proportionate reduction in the quantity obtainable in such households.

After enthusiastic support from both men and women of all political parties, the resolution was carried with much cheering.

## A Book of the Week.

### KATHARINE FRENESHAM.\*

We always expect from Miss Harraden certain valuable qualities—delicate finish, undeniable style, and great refinement. To these, in "Katharine Frensham," she adds a light-hearted spirit of fun, and a patriotism, and an optimism, which she has never before expressed so clearly.

The great achievement of the book is the character of "Knutty." This is the familiar name of Fröken Knudsgaard, a Danish lady, who was once governess to a little English boy called Clifford Thornton. Clifford, when he grew up, was a scientist, and one of those men whom the author most vividly describes as a "prisoner of silence." Such a man is almost certain to marry, and to marry unhappily. To marry, because his aloofness from the world and his personal freedom from vice cause him to idealise women; to marry unhappily, for very much the same reason.

\* By Beatrice Harraden. (Blackwood.)

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