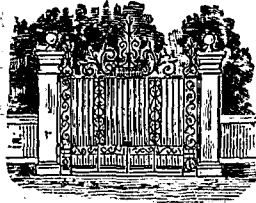


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE RECORD.



It is with keen pleasure that we welcome the first number of the *Women's Suffrage Record*, published quarterly, price 1d., by the Central Society for Women's Suffrage, 25, Victoria Street, London, S.W. It ought to receive wide support from all women who have this

cause at heart, for sixpence a year, including postage, is surely not much to pay in support of an organ for the Cause which is of supreme importance to women, and of vital importance to the nation. Upon our possession of the suffrage all other reforms for women depend, and, as Miss Louisa Stevenson has well pointed out, there is no security of permanence in any reform which has been gained for women without the firm foundation of the Parliamentary franchise.

The introductory remarks tell us that the issue of the first number of the *Women's Suffrage Record* is the outcome of a desire to keep all those who are interested in the movement in closer touch with the work which is being done for its advancement throughout the country.

"It is hoped that by means of this paper the growing interest in the question of Women's Suffrage may find united expression, and that it may serve as a means of communication between all workers for the cause who may hitherto have felt isolated from the general field of activity.

"The paper will contain reports of Parliamentary work, a record of meetings, lectures, and discussions on Women's Suffrage, and also reports of the work of Women's Suffrage Societies.

"News of the progress of the movement in our colonies and abroad will be published from time to time. Special articles will also be published bearing on the subject of legislation as it affects the position of women."

We entirely agree with the view expressed that organisation, not rapid or showy work, is the very essence of the movement and the keynote of success. "It is the training-ground for workers, the education of students of the question, and the one trustworthy and powerful means of advance. Let all who care for the Cause give some service in this direction, and also help to provide the additional funds urgently needed for carrying out the work rapidly and completely."

An interesting article on "The Coming of Woman Suffrage," by Mrs. Pember Reeves, shows the result of the passage of the Woman's Suffrage Act in New Zealand. "It is," says Mrs. Reeves, "such an old story in New Zealand, and such a matter-of-course story in Australia, that it is hard to realise now how little we hoped, and how much we feared, in the last days before the Suffrage was given us in New Zealand.

"Prophecy had run rife during the fight; of course, there was nothing that did not seem to be clearly known about women. Every speaker knew something different, and he knew it of all women.

"All women were Conservative by nature—the Conservatives would come in at the next election.

"All women were Prohibitionists—the Colony would be without a public-house in three years.

"All women were against the secular system of education in the Colony—denominational schools would be established, and the old system destroyed.

"All women would vote on one side about something emotional and silly, and the balance of parties be upset.

"All women would quarrel with their husbands.

"All women would vote exactly as their husbands told them.

"All women were a good influence, and would raise the tone of public affairs.

"All women would rake into unpleasant details in the lives of candidates, and good men would be worried out of public life.

"All women would become coarse and masculine."

One of the first results when the Act came into force was that women were puzzled and indignant to find that the men who had preached against their touching politics were now urging them to use the vote and hurry up about it!

"A very curious fact," says Mrs. Reeves, "about the new citizens of the State was that in nearly every case they took the matter intensely seriously. Some frankly said that they had never wanted a vote, but that as pressure was being put upon them to use the privilege, they meant to turn to and learn about it. We found we had to start a Women's Liberal Association on the spot in which to educate these conscientious souls. One woman whom I knew belonged to a Conservative family asked to join this Association. I suggested that we were not on her side. 'No,' said she, 'I know that. I think I learn most by hearing both. My husband talks to me about the other.' One woman, again, came to us late in the evening and said she had heard that ours was a place where you could 'vote against 'usbins.' Her husband, it seemed, had knocked her down and broken her jaw. It took some time to explain to her who or what we were, and she seemed rather disappointed with us, though she became duly enrolled and afterwards attended meetings regularly."

Summing up the effects of the Adult Suffrage, Mrs. Reeves says:—

"It was said that, as Woman Suffrage had done no just or obvious good on the instant, it had disappointed its friends. Those friends who had relied on Woman Suffrage to bring about a sudden change in public affairs were undoubtedly disappointed. Those who had only wished the Suffrage to be extended to women because they expected to see the Conservatives again in power; those who had expected to see every Prohibition candidate elected; those who expected to see denominational schools instantly established, were all disappointed. But those who had expected to see women and men sanely and seriously working together in the affairs of their country, and who were willing to wait while women accustomed themselves to their new responsibilities, were satisfied."

We note with pleasure the opinion expressed by the Rev. H. Russell Wakefield, at a public meeting in support of Women's Suffrage, that "personally, in sharing work with women, he had found them possessed of the very highest qualities, and that they had helped men out of a great many holes. When we were getting, as we sometimes did, into a groove on the London School Board, it has lifted us up to a higher

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)