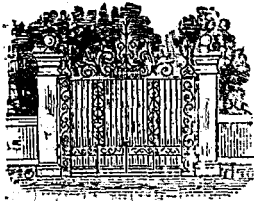


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



The motion of Sir Charles McLaren on the Women's Suffrage Question in the House of Commons last week aroused a great amount of interest. Nobody at Westminster remembers so many letters about a single night's business as were received from constituents or their wives on this question. A word of admiration is due for the admirable way in which the women's political associations had organised their forces.

Lady Trevelyan presided over the annual meeting of the Women's Local Government Society, held at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, and spoke of the many branches of public work in which, she said, the assistance of women was most desirable. The strongest claim women had to places on county and borough councils now was that education was one of the most important matters with which these bodies had to deal. She felt sure there was nobody present who did not see how disadvantageous it was to the education of girls that women should be members of the Education Committee only, and have no voice in the final decision either of the policy or the finances of the education which they were supposed to direct. It was natural that women should resent being unceremoniously dismissed from elective public bodies, and they had no intention of submitting permanently to exclusion. Lady Trevelyan concluded by introducing Miss Louisa Twining as the newly-elected President of the Society.

A resolution was carried in support of the enabling Bills introduced this Session for England and Wales by Earl Beauchamp and Mr. Channing and for Scotland by Mr. Parker Smith, and appealing to men and women interested in civic welfare "to lay before their Parliamentary representatives the facts as to the need for this important and simple change in the law to render women eligible for town and county councils and for London borough councils." It was agreed to send the resolution to the Prime Minister and to the Leader of the Opposition, with a request in each case that a deputation might be received to represent the urgency of the need of the desired reform.

Among those who have joined the Women's Free Trade Union—an organisation which will in future be composed of women Free Traders drawn from all political parties—are the Duchess of Devonshire, Lady Avebury, Lady Balfour of Burleigh, Lady Moyra Cavendish, Lady Grant Duff, Mrs. George Cornwallis-West, Lady Frances Balfour, &c. Mrs. Herbert Gladstone is the chairman, Mrs. L. V. Harcourt hon. treasurer, and Lady Frances Balfour and Mrs. Bamford Slack hon. secretaries.

The following women have been co-opted on to the Education Committee for London of the London County Council:—Dr. Sophie Bryant, Miss Margaret Eve, Mrs. Homan, the Hon. Maude Lawrence, and Miss Susan Lawrence.

A Book of the Week.

THE DELIVERANCE.*

Miss Glasgow's book shows in many respects a maturing of power and sureness of touch which give charm to a style always forcible. It is a pity that she always shows a tendency to insist upon things unduly—to over-emphasise and to prolong—to spoil what only just falls short of being a real achievement by an amount of re-stating which almost amounts to reiteration. In other words, the book is too long, and suffers in strength, in interest, and in value from its inordinate dimensions. The removal of 150 of its 543 pages would benefit the general effect enormously, giving relief and symmetry.

The story is one to seize the imagination; and though it treats of Virginia after the Civil War, and introduces us to a whole colony of darkies, and though the atmosphere is avowedly local, and the outlook frankly American, the interest of it is as wide as earth, as deep as ocean; for it is the clash of love and hate.

It is the furious passion of a great, deep hatred, boiling in the soul of a young, strong man, helpless on account of bitter poverty, fed continually by the sight of his low-born enemy prospering upon the land which belongs to him by right, fattening upon the money stolen from Christopher Blake's father, when he was a child and his widowed mother an unconscious invalid.

In the person of this widowed mother—'ole Miss'—pathos inexpressible comes to heighten the effect of Miss Glasgow's strong situation. Mrs. Blake, struck down by a paralytic stroke which left her blind and helpless at the time of the defeat of the South and the ruin of the slave-owners, was kept by her adoring eldest daughter Cynthia, and her little son Christopher, in ignorance of the blows which had fallen upon their house. They did not seriously think that she could live long; they wished her to be happy until her death; they believed the shock of knowledge would kill her. So they began the long lie which lasted for twenty mortal years. One day, when she was driven out for her airing, they took her back, not to the old Hall now lost to them, but to the little farm of seventy acres which the dead Blake had cut out of his estate to make a home for his brother Tucker, crippled in the service of his country. The old slaves—now all free, though their mistress knew it not—unhesitatingly followed the fallen fortunes of the house. Still she was able to give her orders, to threaten whippings; still she fed upon the fat of the land, still she wore dainty clothing, and still, so she imagined, she lived in all the state and dignity befitting a Blake; while her son worked as a labourer in the fields, and the family supped off bacon and bread in the back kitchen!

The man who had taken all was Fletcher, slave overseer to the father of Christopher. Fletcher's only son was dead, but he had two grandchildren, Maria and Will.

It is upon Will that the hatred of Christopher, nursed to white heat, falls. To strike at Fletcher through the only thing that Fletcher loves—that is his hellish intention. And he succeeds only too frightfully well. To what lengths hate carries him, and the nature of the expiation he sets himself, shall not be divulged. It is told with force which is great,

* By Ellen Glasgow. (Constable.)

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