

Outside the Gates.

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE CONGRESS AT BERLIN.

By Miss MARY BURR.

Having seen the Congress of Women in London in 1899, I naturally had some idea of what to expect in Berlin in 1904, but I did not anticipate surprises. Determined to see everything possible, as soon as I understood there was to be a reception on Sunday evening to receive and welcome the delegates, I secured a ticket at once. Then began the first of a series of surprises. One has usually a preconceived idea of things and people; my idea—shared, I've no doubt, by many others—of the German woman was that as a mother and housewife she was unequalled, but as a progressive she was centuries, or, to put it a little more moderately, quite fifty years, behind the times. Of course, I knew that there were a few more up-to-date women, but they were very few. I have now learned the value of preconceived ideas of people. My first experience was at the reception and supper given on Sunday evening, when about 3,000 persons sat down. The President of the German National Council of Women, Frau Strith, after supper, in a very clearly enunciated speech welcomed us all to Berlin. She spoke so easily and clearly, without a trace of nervousness or self-consciousness, as though addressing thousands of people were an every-day matter. Perhaps it is. I don't know. It was a splendid meeting, so enthusiastic, so cordial, but even that did not make me realise what the German women were capable of. On Monday morning



MISS M. BURR SOWING THE SEED.



KITCHEN AT VICTORIA HOUSE. SISTER GERTRUDE AND MISS BREAY.

began the week's work. The section to which I devoted myself was presided over by a young unmarried lady of about twenty-five, and her system of conducting the business was excellent—such determination that order should be kept, such method, and, when speaking, so fluent. I wondered, and remarked: "Can this possibly be a German woman? But she must certainly be one of the exceptions which prove the rule."

I found she was no exception. In all sections that I entered I was filled with admiration of the Presidents and many of the speakers—their fluency of speech, their clearness of enunciation, and their utter lack of self-consciousness. There were no little nervous coughs, no little er-er-ers, or ahs and ohs, but energy and *verve* in plenty. Many of them were quite young, and, one would presume, unaccustomed to business of such a nature, and certainly not used to conduct such cosmopolitan meetings. Nor did my admiration cease with the presiding geniuses of these meetings, but must needs be extended to the stewards, many of whom were young girls. Their determination and quiet resistance was admirable. At all meetings seats were reserved for delegates, and the calm manner in which ladies of all nations and degrees were sent to the other side of the barrier (if they had presumed to thrust themselves into the seats of the elect) was a lesson worth learning. No

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