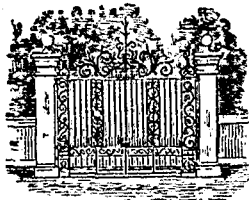


## Outside the Gates.

### WOMEN.



A great public demonstration in favour of the Parliamentary vote for women took place on Tuesday last in the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, under the auspices of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. The large hall was crowded, and an overflow meeting was held in the small hall. Mr. Leonard Courtney, M.P., presided, and over his seat was a scroll bearing the words "The Franchise the Keystone of our Liberties." Members of Parliament belonging to both political parties, and many prominent supporters of the Suffrage movement were present on the platform.

Mr. John Morley, M.P., who had intended to be present and to speak, said in a letter addressed to the Chairman:—"I regret that I find myself unable to be present at your meeting to-night. As you know, I am in entire accord with its great object. Politicians of both parties welcome the active aid of women in their political contests. They are all glad that women should help them in organisation, canvassing, and other of the least attractive details of electioneering. It is absurd, then, to pretend either that women are incapable of political interest and capacity, or that the power of voting on their own account must be injurious to their womanhood. Few now hold that the chief business of women is the kitchen and the nursery. Plain social facts are against that odious and ignoble view. Great hosts of women, in constantly increasing proportion, earn their bread with their own hands, and the female worker in a Scottish printing office or a Lancashire cotton mill is as much entitled to a voice in the laws that regulate her toil as is the man. The same plea is obviously just as strong for every woman who is affected by rates and taxes. For my own part, I have until now been content to let opinion gradually ripen. But the new and most impolitic exclusion of women from work on public bodies hitherto open to them, and where by common admission they were peculiarly fit to render useful service, is one of those retrograde steps that force general questions forward. To this inevitable movement so important a meeting as yours promises to be will give a powerful and much-needed impulse, with which I most heartily sympathise."

The Chairman said he could address the meeting in terms of the most unqualified satisfaction. There was no question, there had been no question for some time past, as to the sentiment of the majority of the House of Commons on that matter. The majority had been tested again and again in favour of the Parliamentary enfranchisement of women. The promises already given showed that in the next Parliament woman's suffrage would have a greater support than ever. They had the whole force of public opinion on their side.

Sir J. Rolleston, M.P., then moved the resolution of the evening:—"That this meeting calls upon Parliament to give legislative effect to the resolution of the House of Commons of March 16th, 1904:—"That the disabilities of women in respect of the Parliamentary

franchise ought to be removed by legislation." He said that there was intense force and energy behind that movement, and they would all agree that there was justice as well. He expressed the hope the Government would realise that fact, and bring to legislative fruition the wishes of so large a proportion of the people. If that were done it would be accepted as a landmark in our civilisation and in the advancement of this country.

Sir Charles McLaren, M.P., seconded the resolution, and urged those present to "think imperially." In 1881 the Isle of Man granted the suffrage to women. In 1893 New Zealand followed suit, and the Australian colonies came after. Why was Great Britain to fall behind? Why was the British woman to be deprived of those rights which her colonial sister enjoyed in all the great Colonies except Canada? If the fiscal question was to be discussed at a great conference representing all our Colonies, why should British women be denied the representation which was granted to their colonial sisters?

Sir Richard Jebb, M.P., in support, said that amongst those conversant with educational matters there was but one opinion—viz., that the aid of women was not only invaluable, but absolutely indispensable. The question was one of both national and international importance.

Mr. Bamford Slack, M.P., also supported the resolution, and announced that on May 12th he would introduce into Parliament a Bill to place women in the same position electorally as that in which men are now.

Other Members of Parliament having supported the resolution, it was unanimously carried by the great meeting, which then ended with a cordial vote of thanks to the Chairman.

## A Book of the Week.

### AMANDA OF THE MILL.\*

This is another example of the increasingly good work of the American novelist. Miss Van Vorst is, apparently, a new arrival. But of the fact that she has arrived, the book before us leaves little doubt.

To begin with, she achieves the universal desire of the modern novelist—she breaks fresh ground. This is a story of the "hill folk" or "po' white trash" of South Carolina.

These people have, so far as I know, no parallel in other nations. In the Southern States the whites were the dominant, slave-owning class; and the others were negroes. There was no social status for the poor white, who was heartily despised by the negroes attached to large estates, and living in every comfort. But for all that, the poor white was free-born, and often of good blood. They live, apparently, in the direst poverty, in shanties consisting for the most part of one room. Many of them have actually never held coin of the realm in their hands. They exist upon the produce of their gardens, of the forests, and the soil generally.

Into a family of this kind stumbles Henry Euston—at war with fate, drunkard and derelict at five-and-twenty. The family consists of Gran'maw, Lily Bud, and Amanda. Gran'maw is one of the most interesting old ladies of fiction. Her demeanour, when the

\* By Marie Van Vorst. (Heinemann.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)