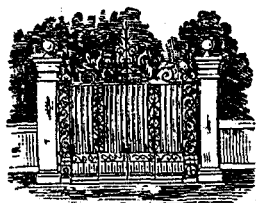


## Outside the Gates.

## WOMEN.



Lady Frances Balfour, presiding at the annual meeting of the Women's Local Government Society, said that the Bill which had second place for April 6th, to enable women to serve on all local governing bodies, would be much simpler than a measure to grant the Parliamentary suffrage to women, which would always mean a dissolution. The driving power for that Bill was, she believed, possessed by the present House of Commons. Skilfully handled, the Bill would afford a way out of the other difficulties in the way of women's suffrage.

A memorial signed by two hundred members, representing all sections of the House, has been presented to the Prime Minister by Sir Charles McLaren asking him to receive a deputation in favour of women's suffrage. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman has expressed his willingness to hear the views of the deputation, but has suggested that the women's associations who have been so persistent in their endeavours to interview him should have the opportunity of being heard at the same time. He has, therefore, proposed that a joint deputation should wait upon him at his official residence in Downing Street after Easter.

Speaking at Brighton, under the auspices of the local branch of the National Union of Women Workers, Lady Battersea said women were now credited with taking an intelligent interest in public affairs, and might, could, and did bring their minds to bear upon subjects outside their home. Life's home had opened its portals, and woman in these days was all the better equipped for her own life if she knew something of the work being done by public bodies, such as boards of guardians, education authorities, inspectors of factories and workshops. The duties of citizenship were not opposed to home duties, but somewhat extended home duties.

Rosa Luxembour, the Socialist agitator, against whom no definite charge has been made, but who has been arrested in Warsaw for complicity with the recent troubles, describes the condition of affairs in the prison as disgraceful. She shares a cell with 16 other persons, male and female, but the number is sometimes raised to 60, and the sanitary conditions are intolerable.

The explanation given by General Wood of the deaths of women and children in the battle of Dajo Hill in the Phillipines, is that the Moros used them as shields in the hand-to-hand fighting, and that many of the women, clad in male attire, were fighting desperately, so that it was impossible to distinguish sex.

## Book of the Week.

## PORFIRIO DIAZ. SEVEN TIMES PRESIDENT OF MEXICO.\*

The modern history of Mexico is a fascinating theme, and Mrs. Tweedie has the field almost to herself. The character of Porfirio Diaz is one of the most remarkable of modern times. His influence upon his country has been, and continues to be, almost unprecedented.

But, naturally, the book includes the history of that tragic and ill-fated pair, dogged by the relentless ill fate of the Hapsburgs—that piteous pseudo Emperor and Empress, Maximilian and Carlota of Mexico.

Reading dispassionately that bit of mid-nineteenth century history—that story of the treachery and cold-heartedness of the third Napoleon—we feel that retribution is still sometimes as symmetrical as inevitable, as in the time of Æschylus: that men move always to the harvest of what they themselves have sown.

Napoleon thought by backing up a European sovereign in Mexico he could obtain for himself prestige and profit in the Western hemisphere. Taking advantage of the terrible internal dissensions of Mexico, he sent French troops to overawe it, and caused the throne to be offered, by a non-representative section of the people, to Maximilian, younger brother of the present Emperor of Austria.

When Napoleon found that the resistance to the government of Maximilian was better organised and deeper rooted than he expected, and that the gain he hoped for did not seem to be forthcoming, he broke faith with Maximilian and withdrew the French troops, instead of leaving them for six years as he had promised to do. Whether the six years would have enabled the Emperor to form a stable government, we do not know. The fact remains that no sooner had the French troops withdrawn than the Revolutionists, led by Juarez, captured the unhappy Maximilian and shot him. His wife, who had hastened to Europe to make a personal appeal to Napoleon, went mad, and still survives, a life-long lunatic. Can one avoid seeing retribution in the *débacle* of the French Empire at Sedan ten years later?

The horror of the cold-blooded murder of the gentle and well-meaning Maximilian is perhaps a little too gently handled by Mrs. Alec Tweedie. But we must remember, as she urges us to do, that Juarez, who ordered it, was a full-blooded Indian of the Zapotecs, and cannot therefore be judged by European standards.

As to the character of the man who since then has shaped the destinies of Mexico, the financial credit of his country in all the world to-day is the most wonderful tribute to his genius.

"The terrible poverty which sapped the life's blood of the country during three-fourths of the last century has turned to affluence. Peace is the outcome of Revolution. The land, jibed and jeered at abroad, now holds a position among the leading nations. Lawlessness has given place to wise jurisdiction. Instead of money pouring out to

\*Mrs. Alec Tweedie.

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