

her heart had been sad at the thought of the struggles and probable separation before the bereaved family.

"You said the insurance would cover expenses, and with ten pounds you could start a little business. There's many a one has been started on less; and you would be able to keep all the dear children with you."

Mrs. Beale drew herself up sharply, and her brown eyes flashed scorn and indignation at the little milliner.

"Miss Fitchett, when I says I've felt a bit o' comfort, and ha' been heartened up, do you think as how it was a little business I was a thinking of? Do you think as how it's me vittles and drink that's a troubling me, now I've lost me poor lad?"

"The children," murmured Miss Fitchett faintly.

"Ay, the children, bless their little hearts! They shan't have it thrown at 'em when they grow up as their father was treated less than Christian. When I said the insurance covered all, Miss Fitchett, I meant to say the funeral and a bit o' black for meself, and maybe a band o' crape for the children; and sorry I was it should end there, but go into debt I won't, nor never would as long as I could help. But I never thought o' this. It's new black from top to toe for every one on 'em, school and Sundays, too!"

"But, Mrs. Beale, don't you think your dear husband would rather, if he could know, have the money spent for the children's good?"

"Never you mind the children, Miss Fitchett; the Lord'll take care o' the children."

The resentful tone of this speech awoke in Miss Fitchett a spark of anger.

"And do you think, Mrs. Beale, that those poor fellows gave their hard earned money to be thrown away on black clothes, that won't do any good to anybody?"

"They gave their hard-earned money, Miss Fitchett, that my man might be put away like a Christian. Poor we may be, but there's a time when all is equal; and my Ned shan't have less respect now he's gone than if he'd had money in the bank."

"But," pleaded Miss Fitchett as a last desperate hope, "mourning is going out of fashion. It isn't nearly so much worn as it used to be."

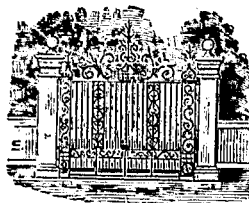
"Oh, is it? Of course, I leave you to know about the aristocracy, Miss Fitchett, such not being in my line. But I know where my youngest sister's in service they put everybody in the house in deep black for the young master, and they with ten servants. And if you'll excuse me I must be clearing up my place a bit, for there's no knowing who might be coming in."

The little milliner went back to her top room with the feeling that her visit of condolence had been a distinct failure. And she marvelled a little in her heart, having little else to think about that night, at the awful sway of Fashion, ruthlessly exacting its tax from us at the very Gate of the Unseen.

JESSIE HARVEY.

## Outside the Gates.

### WOMEN.



The text of the Qualification of Women (County and Borough Councils) Bill, which stands for second reading in the House of Lords, was issued last week. There is only one operative clause, and it

is as follows:

(1) A woman shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage for being elected or being a councillor or alderman of the council of any county or borough (including a Metropolitan borough):

Provided that a woman, if elected as chairman of a county council or mayor of a borough, shall not by virtue of holding or having held that office be a justice of the peace.

(2) The words "provided that no woman shall be eligible for any such office" in sub-section (1) of section two of the London Government Act, 1899, are hereby repealed.

The Bill does not extend to Scotland or Ireland.

At the Annual Meeting of the Women's Liberal Federation, Miss Clementina Black moved a resolution, demanding the institution of wages boards, saying that under free competition any commodity, including labour, was reduced to being produced at the lowest possible price. If the workers were paid reasonably they would benefit the employer by turning out better work.

An address on "The Work of the International Guild in Paris" will be delivered by Miss Williams at a meeting under the auspices of L'Entente Cordiale, at 3, Carlton Gardens, on June 5th, at half-past three o'clock.

It is a good sign of the estimation in which intellectual women are now held by the community that memorials of the work of three eminent women, passed away, are being promoted—to Miss Beale, of Cheltenham College, to Miss Maitland, of Somerville College, Oxford, and to Miss Guthrie Wright, the devoted Hon. Secretary of the Scottish Branch of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute, for Nurses.

Speaking at the Annual Conference of the Women's Labour League at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Saturday, Miss Bell, of Leicester, said women were absolutely necessary on boards of guardians, especially in dealing with female applicants for Poor-Law relief. In Leicester all the women applicants came before a committee of lady members, and they were never questioned by the male members of the board. Leicester had also got a female relieving officer, who had proved of great assistance to the board. She considered that half the relieving officers of the country should be women. She also thought that all degrading occupations for women in workhouses should be abolished. Oakum-picking had already been done away with at Leicester.

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