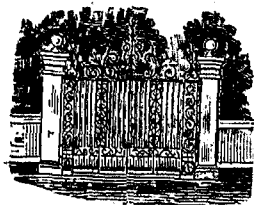


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



The two great Societies for Women's Suffrage are already busy organising processions and demonstrations to be held in London in June, to prove that women do want the vote.

Lady McLaren has given in a pamphlet, "Better and Happier," published by Mr. T. Fisher Unwin, an answer from the Ladies' Gallery to the speeches in opposition to the Women's Suffrage Bill submitted to the House of Commons in February last.

At the seventeenth annual delegate meeting of the National Union of Shop Assistants just held at Cardiff, Miss Howe moved, on behalf of the Executive, a resolution condemning the living-in system as bad for health, bad for morals, and bad for the growth of individuality, declaring in favour of its total abolition, and urging the Government to promote a Bill to extend the provisions of the Truck Acts to all shop assistants, warehousemen, and clerks. The death rate from consumption among shop assistants living in, she said, was very high, due in a large extent to the need for change of air. Young men and young women did not get outside the house during the day from one Sunday to another at a time of life when air and sunshine were most important to them. Moreover, the food and accommodation left everything to be desired. The same thing applied in regard to sleeping accommodation. The devil himself could hardly have invented a system more calculated to bring about moral demoralisation than this system which kept young people in compounds. An amendment instructing the Executive Committee to support by definite Trades Union action any demands made by a given number of members for the abolition of the living-in system was carried.

The Mayor of Canterbury appears to be a sensible man. At a women's protest meeting against the Licensing Bill he remarked that he hoped the meeting would dispel the ridiculous hallucination of some teetotallers that all barmaids were bad. It was quite as absurd to say that all teetotallers were good. He believed barmaids exercised a restraining influence for good.

Canon Horsley recently gave a census in the *Daily News*, taken of persons entering a certain public-house in Lambeth. Having hired a room opposite the public-house in question, and provided it with the requisites for speedy and accurate counting, three persons recorded the number entering between the hours of 10.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1.45 p.m. to midnight. The result was as follows:—1,182 men, 1,287 women, 107 children, 111 babies; total 2,687. Just about one-third of these entered during the two hours before closing time, and the women even during these hours outnumbered the men by 66, and brought with them 49 children.

Book of the Week.

SWEET LIFE.*

"Sweet Life" is a well written, thoroughly interesting book. Its main theme is certainly a hackneyed one, and in common with, one might say, the majority of present day books, it has a very unpleasant side. But it has one feature to commend it above its fellows—it is not a mere tale told for the sake of telling, there is throughout a definite purpose. There could hardly be found a book that would point out more mercilessly and baldly the appalling difficulties besetting the path of the would-be self-supporting girl in London.

Leslie Vincent is left portionless, and being well educated, and intellectual, she tries to make a living by journalism. We are given the rise and fall of her fortunes with keen accuracy, and the falls become far the most frequent, till she reaches depths that her more fortunate sisters do not even dream exist. Because she is young and has been gently nurtured, because she knows what life can be Leslie fights for it through starvation, weakness, and a prostrating illness.

"Life is sweet, brother."

"Do you think so?"

"Think so?—there's night and day, brother, all sweet things; sun, moon, and stars, brother, all sweet things; there's likewise the wind on the heath. Life is very sweet, brother; who would wish to die?"

These are the words that haunt Leslie. She does not wish to die, moreover she yearns to live well, and she has no prospect before her but starvation, a miserable, lingering existence at best. Then she makes her false step. With the irony of fate abused, no sooner is this step irrevocable than the need for it is swept away, she becomes possessed of an independent fortune, and her circumstances are entirely changed. It seems that she is to be lucky all through henceforward, for without any difficulty she breaks away from the broken spar she was clinging to, and sets herself resolutely to live her new life. Everything promises well, the very summit of her ambition is reached, and she seems to be sailing along on the very crest of the wave when the broken spar comes thudding against the sides of her vessel, and she realises to the full her insecurity.

Now much of this has been done before, and the plot cannot be said to be exceedingly strong, but for the history of Leslie Vincent's life as a struggling journalist, the difficulty she experiences in getting work, the under-pay when she attains her object, and the results upon her physically and morally, the book is worth reading. In a day when Women's Rights are being so much discussed, it is well to study Women's Wrongs alongside them. There would be fewer sceptics if more people could be brought to look into the matter with a living interest, rather than upon the surface with mere old-fashioned prejudice.

E. L. H.

* By Kathlyn Rhodes. (Hutchinson and Co.)

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