

Outside the Gates.

"THE ENGLISHWOMAN."

We welcome the first number of the *Englishwoman*, the latest addition to the now numerous journals dealing with the question of Woman's Suffrage. It is a monthly magazine edited by Mrs. Grant Richards, price 1s., and the Editorial Committee includes the Lady Frances Balfour, Lady Strachey, Miss Cicely Hamilton, and Miss Lowndes. It is convenient in size, and a pleasant feature is the type, which is clear and easy to read. It is intended to reach the cultured public, and to bring before it, in a convincing and moderate form, the case for the Enfranchisement of Women. The preface points out that the power which women undoubtedly possess has never gone together with recognised responsibility, and the want of responsibility and seriousness has been the offence and defence of women for centuries. No support will be given by the *Englishwoman* to any particular party in politics. Its active supporters are those, for the most part, who believe in constitutional methods, and no other methods will be officially advocated. Its special appeal is to the public interested in letters, art, and culture.

An admirable article by "An M.P.," under the heading, "In Parliament," explains the Bills affecting women which have been introduced into Parliament during the past Session, and points out that people believe Parliament to be all-powerful, and consequently expect great things from it, but they do not always realise how slow, clumsy, and out of date is the machinery by which Parliament has to do its work. The time at the disposal of Parliament for legislation is very inadequate, and the procedure is antiquated. It has been improved of late years by the closure and the guillotine, but "even with these improvements Parliamentary procedure leaves much to be desired, always assuming that Parliament meets to pass laws, and not merely to vote money."

The difficulties of a private member in getting a controversial Bill passed into law are explained. Notably, want of time and competition. The only time given to private members for private Bills is on Fridays, from twelve to five, and not even all the Fridays, for towards the end of the Session, the Government takes Fridays as well as other days. Then, as regards competition, there is always a large number of members anxious to carry measures of their own. Above 230 private Bills were introduced into the Commons last year, and only sixteen passed into law. Of the sixteen, four had Government help.

"The right to have a Bill discussed on a Friday is decided by ballot. At the beginning of the Session a numbered list is placed on a desk in the No Lobby. Members write their names against a number. The first number drawn gives the member who owns it the first Friday, the second number the second Friday, and so on. The five or

six senior members become at once very popular if their own pet reform is a small one, or if, as is sometimes the case, they have no child of their own to bring up. Enthusiasts, unsuccessful in the ballot, urge the lucky (or unlucky) member to act foster parent to their reform."

The successful member then gives notice to bring in his Bill on a certain day. He is called on the Speaker by name, and hands to the Clerk a dummy Bill, which need only give the name and the title. The Clerk reads the title, and the Bill is, by a fiction, treated as both introduced and read a first time. On the allotted day the member moves the second reading of the Bill, which requires some tact. If the member or his seconder speak too long, or the supporters too much, the Speaker may not give the closure. The Bill will be talked out, and its chance gone for the Session. If, in the opinion of the Speaker, it has been fairly and sufficiently discussed, the member may be given the closure, and his Bill is read a second time, or thrown out, as the case may be. The Bill is then referred to a Grand Committee. This stage, says the writer, is not dangerous. The Bill may be altered, but in practice it is not destroyed in Committee. When it has gone through Committee it is reported to the House, with or without alterations. If with alterations, the Report must be considered by the House itself before the third reading. If it is reported without alterations it has only to wait the third reading.

It is the Report (if any), and the third reading, which blight so many promising measures. Unless the Government "star" a Bill—that is, take it out of the private list, the only time when Report or third reading can be taken is in the time allotted to unopposed business. Objection is nearly always taken by someone, and the member in charge of the Bill has to try again another night. Sometimes the opposition is conciliated, sometimes a Bill slips through a stage owing to the absence of the opposing member, but the chances are not good.

Once through the Commons, the writer says, a private member's Bill, unless it is highly controversial, runs very little danger in the Lords.

The Bills relating to women introduced during the past Session are then ably discussed under the following heads:—(1) Bills to confer political rights. (2) Bills to regulate woman's employment. (3) Bills to regulate woman's property. (4) Bills relating to children. (5) Bills relating to divorce.

By some extraordinary oversight, although the introduction of the Nurses' Registration (House of Lords) Bill, No. 107, is noted, the writer states that of the four Registration Bills introduced "the only one debated was the Directory of Nurses." The history of Bill 107 (House of Lords) is as follows:—(1) It was presented by Lord Amphilhil on June 23rd, and read a first time. (2) It was read a second time without a division on the 6th July; thus the principle of registration was accepted by the House of Lords. (3) It was discussed by the

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