

## Outside the Gates.

### WOMEN.

The Council of the Society of Women Journalists will entertain the ladies attending the International Conference of the Press in London on Tuesday afternoon, September 21st, at the Waldorf Hotel, Aldwych. This should be a bright occasion.

The Conference of the National Union of Women Workers of Great Britain and Ireland will be held in Portsmouth from the 18th to 22nd of October, in the Grand Pavilion, Southsea.

The programme is an interesting one. The first day will be given up to considering the Poor-Law Report from various points of view. Women in Britain Beyond the Seas—in Canada, South Africa, and the Commonwealth of Australia—is down on the second day's programme, and How to Interest Girls at Home in the Daughter Countries will be discussed on the third day. Indeed, there is quite an international element in this year's conference which is all to the good.

## Impressions of the Militant Suffrage Movement.

By A VISITOR.

Remembering that the time is the 20th century, the place old England, mother of constitutional liberty, and the people, English people, proud of their civilisation, vaunting their progress, boasting in prose and poetry of their inalienable heritage of freedom—what a strange, dizzy, indescribable vertigo attacks the intelligence of the sympathetic foreigner, who observes in person the dramatic daily scenes in the militant movement of those heroic women who are called by the name—originally given them in derision and obloquy—Suffragettes! Can this really be England? Is this indeed not the Dark Ages? Are these occurrences not some weird delusion? They seem unreal. We hie ourselves to a remote point in the distant East End where a Chancellor of the Exchequer will address a great meeting. Behold a vast throng around the building. The outside meeting is larger than that within. All the doors are strongly guarded by barricades of police. Against whom are they drawn in such martial array? Against *women*, for these women are excluded inexorably from the Chancellor's meeting, although the Chancellor is to explain all about the Budget, and taxation, and even though the women will all be subjected to the Budget's taxes. But something is going to happen: Mounted police, six or eight of them; unmounted police in cordons, dozens of them, hold back the swaying, excited, expectant, yet on the whole not violent crowd—several groups of women—not Amazons but delicate, womanly women press through; they come up against the cordon—they

try to pass through the line—what! will they use horses against women? Yes—the mounted police—ride straight into them—the women refuse to give way—they cling to the horses' bridles—what a terrifying sight! But now: Can we believe our eyes? One of the mounted men—why! he resembles King Arthur in features and bearing—with his mighty clenched fist strikes crushing blows upon the frail wrist and arm of a woman holding to his bridle until she drops back into the crowd and is lost in the swirl! Caught in the human jam, here another, determined to speak, is whirled back against the low fence of the house front. Ignoring danger, danger that seems menacing to the onlooker, clinging to the fence, with brute force facing her in the crowd, she proclaims her protest aloud—demands justice—Heavens! are these men wild animals? A human tornado sweeps over her—she is carried away—she is lost to the visitor, who a moment ago stood beside her.

Perfectly tranquil and undismayed, others are holding a protest meeting from a motor car. Clear and strong their voices ring out. Justice; always this demand for justice. But the crowd is rather appalling. Dozens of young roughs, melancholy specimens of bleary-eyed and drink-sodden older degenerates growl and roar in contempt and domineering rage. With their quasi-obscene remarks and low expressions a sickening sense of the reality of the *animal* nature of part of this opposition comes to one. "What are women made for?" was often shouted, with leer and tone that implied all the degradation of ages. Is it from such men that women must hope for justice? But here is a fairer *milieu*. Here the lordly Houses of Parliament stand supreme in beauty and nobility. Could architecture devised and built by man express more perfectly all the rich ideals of a free people? But this fair exterior belies its promise. Instead of finding civic justice here the visitor finds the entrenched home of privilege and of "might" against "right." The women stand at every gate; refined and cultured women, wise, patient, lofty-minded, far-sighted, large-hearted women—the peers of any Englishman and the superiors of many, all wives, daughters, sisters, mothers of Englishmen—they stand at the gate and make a silent protest. What a remarkable—what an impressive sight! Is it possible that these men can pass daily in and out without feeling their manhood shrinking away from them, leaving only the naked, pitiful exposure of their small, mean core of selfishness? It appears that they *are* ashamed. Some pass with bravado, others with affected indifference. Some, at first, were insulting, but now they wear a hang-dog air. Only a few of the Labour members show a manly attitude. The very Prime Minister himself—why, is it possible that *that* is the Prime Minister of all England, shrunk up into the corner of a motor car, looking for all the world as if he were trying not to be seen! One imagines that a Russian despot may wear that hunted look, and again one's head spins and one asks, "Is this England?" And do men so hide from women who only ask for justice?

The police are thicker than blackberries in the

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