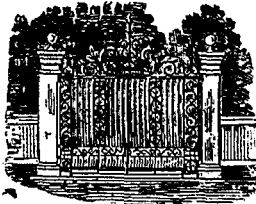


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



The decision of the Cabinet to give time for a discussion and second reading of the Women's Conciliation Suffrage Bill—too late in the season to grant facilities for its passing into law—satisfies no one. Indeed, it is a shuffling policy unworthy of statesmen. The crop of insolent leaders in Friday's dailies, after the sapient pronouncement on the suffrage question in the House of Commons, made one wonder if all journalistic womenfolk were the idiotic and degraded creatures presented through the press to the derision of the world in general. Why have the majority of newspaper men idiotic mothers, irresponsible wives, and airy, fairy, brainless butterflies for daughters? It is not presumable that if they had known the devoted self-sacrifice of a good mother, the unselfishness of a clever managing wife, the worship of a sprightly little daughter, who is compelled to earn her own living, that men could deliberately insult the sex to which these dear ones belong! Anyway, the whole thing is as contemptible as it is reprehensible, and of course invites reprisals, which may be of a very serious nature.

The text of the Conciliation Suffrage Bill is now issued. Its two clauses are as follows:—

"Every woman possessed of a household qualification, or of a £10 occupation qualification, within the meaning of the Representation of the People Act, 1884, shall be entitled to be registered as a voter, and, when registered, to vote for the county or borough in which the qualifying premises are situate."

"For the purposes of this Act a woman shall not be disqualified by marriage for being registered as a voter, provided that a husband and wife shall not both be qualified in respect of the same property."

Mrs. H. J. Tennant, Chairman of the Women's Work Committee, in a letter to the press, draws attention to the danger lest the three work-rooms directed by the Central (Unemployed) Body for London should have to be closed for want of funds while 600 women are seeking admission. Mrs. Tennant says that the loss of the expected work would be a calamity to these unemployed women, most of whom have been waiting and hoping for its opportunities for many weeks, and most of whom are widows with young, dependent children. In addition to providing work for poor women, over 8,000 garments have been voted to the London County Council Care Committee for distribution amongst necessitous children in the poorest districts of London. Contributions in support of the Committee's work may be sent to Mrs. Tennant, at 33, Bruton Street, or to the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House.

Bedford College for Women is to be rebuilt in the grounds of South Villa, Regent's Park. The building fund now amounts to about £48,000, and it is hoped to begin building this year.

The Morality Bill which has been introduced by Mr. King is a comprehensive measure which will materially strengthen the law relating to offences against morality and decency. The age of consent under the Bill is 19. Provision is made for the protection of all feeble-minded women and girls, and it is made criminal to obtain consent by any threat or inducement in connection with employment. It is proposed that lads under 19 should be protected from women of abandoned character, and that the existing law with respect to procuration should be greatly strengthened. It is made an offence for any person of either sex to live upon the earnings of habitual immorality; and where the offence is committed by a man it is indictable, and punishable with imprisonment for 12 months, and, although there may be no previous conviction for crime, with police supervision. Fresh provision is made with respect to indecent literature, disorderly houses, and soliciting.

Book of the Week.

SIMON THE JESTER.*

Simon de Gex, M.P., the spoilt darling of fortune, as his opponent in the labour interest called him in the last electoral campaign, tells his own story in these pages. He is, or was, engaged to Eleanor Faversham, a girl with a thousand virtues. "There seemed a whimsical attraction in the idea of marrying a girl with a thousand virtues. Before me lay the pleasant prospect of reducing them—say ten at a time—until I reached the limit at which life was possible, and then one by one until life became entertaining. . . . Even now I am sorry I can't marry Eleanor. But marriage is out of the question.

"I have been told by the highest medical authorities that I may manage to wander in the flesh about this planet for another six months. . . . Save for an occasional pain somewhere inside me I am in robust health. . . . They gave it a kind of lingering name that I wrote down on my shirt cuff . . . but I have always hated people who talk about their insides, and if mine is only going to last me six months it is not worth talking about. But the quaint fact of its brief duration is worth the attention of a contemplative mind. . . . I am not afraid, but having otherwise the prospect of an entertaining life, I regard my impending dissolution in the light of a grievance. . . . It is the dying that is such a nuisance . . . there should be no tedious process of decay either before or after death. You would go about your daily avocations unconcerned and unwarned, then—phew—and your clothes would remain standing for a surprised second, and then fall down in a heap without a particle of you inside them. It would be so clean, so painless, so picturesque. It would

* By W. J. Locke. (John Lane, Bodley Head.)

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