

Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.

The Conference programme of the National Union of Women Workers, to meet at Lincoln on the 10th inst, is one of wide human interest. At these gatherings an enormous amount of expert information is annually exchanged, and this year child life and educational ideals will receive prominent consideration.

The reasons why the vote should be given to women are enumerated by the Countess of Selborne, the President of the Conservative and Unionists' Women's Suffrage Society, as follows in *Votes for Women*:—"They should have it because in a democratic form of government unrepresented interests are perforce neglected. They should have it because trade unions, anxious to keep up their own wages, do not stop to consider the hardship they are inflicting on the women whom they are ready to deprive of their only means of livelihood. They should have it because it will educate them and make them think. They should have it because they pay taxes, and therefore should be consulted about the spending of the national income. They should have it because there are many laws which apply mainly or only to them, and they are the proper people to say whether laws are satisfactory or not. They should have it because they are the guardians of family life, the mothers of children."

The urgency of this matter is increased by the imminence of State payment of members. That women who are denied the right of electing members of Parliament shall be compelled to pay for their maintenance will create an impossible situation, from which the enactment of the Conciliation Bill will provide an escape.

A meeting of the United Kingdom Branch of the Association of Medical Women in India was held recently, at which Mrs. Scharlieb, M.D., presided. The meeting was arranged to meet Miss Benson, M.D., First Physician of the Cama Hospital, Bombay, in order to hear from her some proposals as to the formation of an organised female medical service for India, and to receive information on the present working conditions of the Dufferin Fund. The meeting was unanimously of the opinion that the Secretary of the Countess of Dufferin's Fund should be a qualified medical woman; that at least one qualified medical woman should have a seat on the Central Committee of the Fund (at present, excepting the President, Lady Minto, no woman is on the Committee); and that an efficient service of medical women for India should be organised. For the furtherance of these objects it was resolved that the Secretary of State for India and Lady Hardinge should be asked to receive some members of the Association in order that a brief explanation of the urgency of the need in India for an efficiently organised service of medical women may be set before them.

Book of the Week.

THE LANTERN BEARERS.*

This story is of very unequal merit; though it cannot lay claim to much originality, it just escapes the commonplace, but we cannot say it gives it a very wide berth. It tells of a family of fallen fortunes, living in Surbiton, on a hundred and fifty a year. True, they are but three in number—Mr. and Mrs. Byrne and their daughter Helga—but one can well imagine that life pressed somewhat hardly upon them. Too much stress is laid upon this aspect of the book, and the reader gets wearied of the details of petty economies, and depressed by their persistent misfortune. Pretty Helga has, of course, none of the advantages of her class, but her mother, who, by the way, is a perfect marvel of thrift and philosophy, "taught her child what she herself had learned as a child, so at nineteen Helga knew German well, French imperfectly, knew some history and geography, and could even play the piano passably."

By superhuman effort and contrivance, Helga is able to accept an invitation to a dance at the house of an old friend of her father's.

"She was content to look on for a time, and see how others danced and what was their demeanour. Certainly her hair was not right. No other girl in the room wore plaits at all. Their gowns were unlike hers, too. . . . Her mother had always told her it did not matter what you looked like, provided you behaved well and had pleasant manners. Possibly her mother was right, but how can you have pleasant manners when you sit by yourself on a long bench in a crowded ball-room?" Of course it is here she meets her fate, in a certain Clive Ashley, who decidedly loses no time in his wooing. As a perverse Fate ordained, he is the son of her father's enemy. Their true love, in consequence, runs anything but smoothly, and he persuades her to a secret marriage.

Matters are complicated by the attentions to Helga of a young German boarder, a boy of good family, whom the Byrnes have taken to help eke out their slender income, and who has quite made up his mind that, with his father's consent, he has only to ask and have.

"I was right about Conrad," said Mrs. Byrne to her husband. "He does wish to marry Helga."

"Has he told you so?"

"Yes, but not officially. He hopes to get his father's consent when he goes home at Christmas."

"We shall probably never see him again, once he goes home. His father will tell him not to be a young fool, and keep him in Hamburg."

Conrad in wishing Helga good-bye, and, referring to the English mincemeat, etc., he is taking to Hamburg with him; remarks:—

"My mother will be delighted to find that you can cook so well."

Though Helga made no reply at the time, she came back to this remark after he had gone.

"Why should his mother be pleased because I can cook?" she asked.

* By Mrs. Alfred Sidgwick. (Methuen and Co., London.)

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