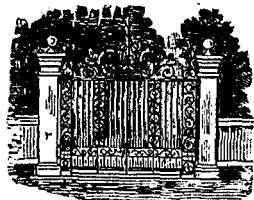


Outside the Gates.

THE SOCIETY OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS.



The Society of Women Journalists held the sixteenth annual meeting, followed by a delightful reception at Essex Hall, W.C., on Thursday, the 3rd inst. Lady McLaren, the retiring President, was in the chair, and Mrs. Willoughby Hodgson (the Hon. Secretary) presented a most hopeful report. Forty-one new members have joined the Society during the year, bringing the membership roll to upwards of 300. One feature of the year's events has been the members' teas at the quaint old rooms at Clifford's Inn, where the office of the Society is located. The list of hostesses and speakers includes the names of many of our leading women journalists. The resignation of Miss Mary Fraser, one of the Hon. Secretaries, who for the past four years has spared no pains to advance the interests of the Society, was received with regret, and she was elected a member of the Council.

Lady McLaren introduced the new President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, and in her smiling and gracious manner transferred the President's Badge of Office to her successor. She then delivered an earnest farewell address, in which she touched on questions of vital interest to women to be found incorporated in "The Women's Charter"—legislative measures by which she hopes to lessen the imperfections of the exceedingly complex social organisation of modern days.

Lady McLaren said she wished to recommend to every woman journalist the women's cause. The more attention they gave to this question the more they saw the pressure of injustice upon women. A great part of their struggle was not due to incompetence or want of talent, but to prejudice against sex. She hoped every woman journalist would study the law and see where it pressed hardly upon women, and that they would not rest until those laws were amended. They had such power with their pens that she hoped they would do their best to bring those injustices into the light of publicity, and when they were so expounded there was at least a good chance that those wrongs might be redressed. The attention of women should always be directed to any unfair attack made upon them. Remarks had recently been made about the attendance of women in court and the dress they wore there. She urged them to attend the courts and to study the administration of justice; and, in regard to dress, they did not need sackcloth and ashes to hear a prisoner tried. If there was one ridiculous head-dress in court, it was not worn by a woman, but by a judge, and she was sure the severity of counsel towards witnesses and their anger towards each other were due to the fact that their brains were

unduly heated by their head-gear. She advised a wet towel as a substitute for a mass of horse-hair if members of the Bar felt it necessary to cover their heads. Lady McLaren said she should remember with the sincerest pleasure her association as President with the Women Journalists' Society.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said how deeply she appreciated the signal honour which had been conferred upon her by her election as President of the Society of Women Journalists, and that it would be her pride and pleasure during her year of office to do all in her power to reciprocate the kindness of her colleagues. Her election was a surprise, because she had not instinctively adopted the honourable work of journalism as a profession, but as a means to an end. She had become a journalist because she desired to see the profession of her choice—Scientific Nursing—elevated and legally constituted by Act of Parliament, and, without a voice in the press dedicated to the education of the public, the views and aspirations of trained nurses could find no expression. There at once one realised the power and value of journalism, in which she had become intensely interested. The responsibility and pleasures of journalism were manifold—and women were peculiarly adapted for it, as they possessed so many faculties the profession demanded. Women had in journalism a profession of illimitable possibilities—scope for all carefully cultivated talents, a profession worthy of a thorough probation, without which no work was worth a row of pins.

Let junior journalists be encouraged to study deeply, to become founts of accurate information. They would then obtain access to the press because their work would be of economic value.

The Society of Women Journalists, which in the past had done so much to place high ideals before its members, would in the future continuously increase its sphere of usefulness. "Let us believe," said Mrs. Fenwick, "in ourselves and our destiny. We women journalists must take spacious views of the world generally and realise that the affairs of the whole world are ours."

The vote of thanks to the chair was proposed by Miss Nora Vynne in a very happy vein.

THE RECEPTION.

The Reception held later brought together many members and their guests, and the dainty tea and delightful entertainment were greatly enjoyed.

The Ladies' Army and Navy Club Trio is a unique and most musical band; the recitations of Miss Elsa Davis, who possesses a delicate art all her own, the cello solo of Mr. Frank Ivimey, and the fine singing of Mr. H. Hilliard, gave unqualified pleasure to all present.

There appears to be a very happy and useful future before this society of talented women.

On the occasion of the Centenary of the political liberation of Chile, the Government Lyceum directed by Miss Lina Mollett, was awarded a first prize diploma and gold medal. Miss Lina Mollett is sister to Miss Mollett, of Southampton.

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