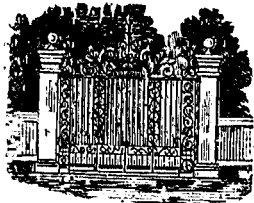


Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



In last week's *Votes for Women* will be found a very useful map, showing the starting points in the Great Procession on June 17th, in support of the Conciliation Bill (Enfranchisement of Women) for the various societies, and the class sections into which they are divided. Nurses have been invited to join the processions organised by several societies, but surely it would be more impressive for all those who can wear uniform indoor and out to walk together, and thus show a bold front. Nurses are to range up in Section H. 3 on the Embankment. We hope they will make a good show. They are favourites of the man in the street, as they well deserve to be. *A place in the ranks awaits them.*

The Pageants of Prisoners, of Queens, of Empire, and of historical heroines will make a brave show, indeed, this Procession is calculated to make an immense impression on the imagination and sense of justice of the enormous crowds, which we hope will give it an enthusiastic welcome. A nation which crowns queens cannot afford to be so illogical as to ignore the rights of women to liberty of conscience, which legal status can alone secure to them.

The very unsatisfactory pronouncement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the Government's policy on the Women's Enfranchisement Bill will delude nobody. By the postponement of time for the Bill's consideration the Cabinet overrules the decision of the House of Commons, which, by a huge majority, demands the settlement of this question. There is ample time to pass the Bill this session. The refusal to grant time is a thoroughly unstatesmanlike policy, and is calculated to intensify the burning sense of injustice in women to a dangerous degree. The only hopeful sign in this prolonged struggle with tyranny is the growing sense of justice upon the part of men who are not political helots.

The National Insurance Bill is arousing a tremendous outburst of indignant criticism. The whole medical profession is on the warpath, and the Women's Co-operative Guild, an organisation of 27,000 working women, have issued a statement from which we quote, as the Bill affects married women:—

"The most serious defect in the Bill needing immediate amendment," they write, "is the total exclusion of all married women who are not wage-earners from sickness, medical, disablement, and sanatorium benefits. It means that, roughly, five million women are shut out from what is called a 'National' Insurance Bill. The exclusion has no doubt arisen because the Bill has been con-

structed, not on the basis of employment, but of wage-earning employment. The fact that a married woman's work in the home is not paid in cash is the cause of this great injustice to the largest class of women. Their exclusion gives a sort of sanction to the view that work in the home is less arduous and honourable than that of the direct wage-earner, and it is also an incitement to married women to go out to work. . . . The exclusion from sanatorium benefit of non-wage-earning married women who are bearing children, and living with children all day long in the house, makes the talk of abolishing consumption little short of ridiculous. . . . We welcome the maternity benefit as an instalment of a great and far-reaching reform. From a national point of view it is the most important feature of the Bill."

"Women's knowledge and experience in matters connected with sickness and health and their organising and administrative ability," the writers conclude, "should be utilised on all the bodies charged with the working of the Bill. We, therefore, ask that it should be made compulsory that at least one-third of the Insurance Commissioners, the Advisory Committee, and the Health Committee should be women."

Book of the Week.

THE MAJOR'S NIECE.*

In an introductory letter the author informs us that the red haired curate is the villain and not the hero of the piece, so it is from this point of view that we must regard that delightfully irresponsible person, the Rev. J. J. Meldon, curate at Ballymoy, to which place "no visitor would go for its scenery, which is uninteresting, nor to play golf, for there are no links."

The district has but one resident landlord, Major Kent, of Portsmouth Lodge, and he only owns a small property. The curate is regarded as vulgar by Mrs. Ford; is liked by Mrs. Gregg, who is younger than Mrs. Ford, and enjoys the friendship of Major Kent. By the actual natives of the town he is treated with a sort of wondering contempt. They appreciate his easy manners and friendly helpfulness; but they have grave doubts about his sanity, and speak of him among themselves as a decent poor man, though, maybe, not quite right in his head.

The Major quite unexpectedly learns that his niece, of whom he knows not even her age, is coming to make a protracted stay with him, and the passage where he confides his difficulties to Meldon is one of the most amusing in a very amusing book.

"Dear J. J., what am I to do with the girl? How can I keep her here? How am I to entertain her?"

"Don't let that get between you and your sleep. I'll entertain her for you. I'll be getting my holidays almost at once, and I'll not go away except for a week just to see my own little girl."

* By George A. Birmingham. (Smith, Elder, and Co., London.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)