

THE VOTE,
AUGUST 2, 1918.
ONE PENNY.

Women Teachers Win!

AGNES DAWSON.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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OBJECT: To secure for Women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the power thus obtained to establish equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

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SOMETHING-MUST-BE-DONE FOOLISHNESS.

What the President of the Medical Women's Federation Thinks of 40 D.

The following quotations are reprinted from an article, "Beware of Constructive Legislation" (Josephine Butler's own words in 1883) in the July number of our able contemporary, *The Englishwoman*, by the courteous permission of the Editor and of the author of the article, Dr. Jane Walker, to whom we tender our sincere thanks:—

"It is practically impossible to legislate on the subject of morality as between men and women. What the law ought to do is two things, to prevent one citizen from injuring another, and to preserve the rights and liberties of all."

"There is a great tendency at the present time to press for legislation in every possible direction, and the laws and enactments arising are accepted uncomplainingly, even where they are irksome, if they apply equally to all and are for the general good of the community. But when regulations seem to press more heavily on some members of the community than on others, then they are vigorously

resisted, and further power and force is brought into play, and fresh regulations are made to seek to overcome such resistance."

"I think it is true, at any rate for the time being, that the moral standard of men and women has to a large extent approximated, and that, because that of women has been lowered towards that of men, whereas that of men has been raised; but as far as women are concerned, that is most certainly not a permanent state of things. May it not rather be the means of 'stabbing the spirits' of men wide awake by showing them what things would be like, when the what-is-sauce-for-the-gander-is-sauce-for-the-goose sort of principle became operative?"

"There are at the present time before the country three attempts to deal with the increase in immorality and consequent increase of disease. They are:—

"1. Regulation 40 D under the Defence of the

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Realm Act, which has been in operation for some few weeks.

"2. The Sexual Offences Bill, introduced by Lord Beauchamp in the House of Lords.

"3. The Criminal Law Amendment Bill, introduced by Lord Sandhurst in the House of Lords.

"Regulation 40 D is not so far-reaching as the other two, and only applies to women having intercourse or soliciting members of His Majesty's forces. Under this regulation the naval and military authorities give the particulars of the accused woman to the police, who collect the evidence and take charge of the case.

"The Sexual Offences Bill and the Criminal Law Amendment Bill substitute 'every person,' male or female. All three lay it down that no person (or woman according to 40 D) suffering from venereal disease in a communicable form shall have intercourse, or invite, or solicit it.

"In all these three attempts to deal with this subject the offence is *having intercourse*, and this is what should be proved; but the Sexual Offences Bill includes *wilfully communicating disease in any manner*.

"In the two Bills 'reasonable grounds to believe' that he or she was free from disease in a communicable form at the time may be urged by the accused.

"The Criminal Law Amendment Bill allows the accused to claim examination to prove her innocence, if she can.

"The Sexual Offences Bill *orders* submission to examination.

"Both Bills provide the same penalties, *i.e.*, imprisonment for six months or two years.

"There are several general principles that should be applied in testing all legislation. We have already drawn attention to Mrs. Butler's two dicta of laws—to prevent one citizen from injuring another and to preserve the rights and liberties of all. In addition, or perhaps more in amplification of this requirement, we must ask, Will it bring about the end at which it aims? Will it be the same, as far as is possible, for both sexes?

"Let us apply these tests to these three enactments.

"Regulation 40 D was issued on March 26th when Parliament was not sitting, when many people were away from London, and when the grave anxiety about the military news might be supposed to absorb the interests of the public. It is, indeed, one of the most striking examples of panic legislation we have experienced even during the War. It is a very fine example of the foolishness of the something-must-be-done attitude. It is a restoration of one of the worst features of the C.D. Acts, and puts any woman into the power of the police. It also greatly aggravates the inequalities of the laws relating to solicitation. Any man, any policeman may have the power to take up a woman for solicitation. The man may have been making indecent suggestions to the woman, and she may have only been giving him the 'glad eye.' She can do nothing to him, but he can give her in charge to a policeman and decamp, leaving the policeman to give evidence against her, and she quite unable to prove her innocence except by submitting to a medical examination which is nothing short of an outrage. Take two possible cases, doubtless occurring by hundreds: (1) That of a young woman of so-called good character who has come up from the country to London to do war work. She is full of admiration for the soldiers, desirous to help all she can to do her bit. Supposing she helps a soldier wounded and somewhat incapacitated across the street and chats for a few moments to him on the kerb, and a policeman chooses to say she was soliciting the soldier, what redress has she if she is ordered to submit to a

medical examination, and refuses? Again, take the case of a married woman under similar circumstances. She happens to have some form of venereal disease of which she is totally unaware, her husband having infected her on his last leave. She may be as innocent of any desire to go wrong as the babe unborn, but if on examination she is found to be infected with disease, what magistrate, or the general public either for the matter of that, is going to believe her? And if she is found diseased, what are they going to do with her? 40 D, perhaps wisely, leaves that an absolutely open question. But there is really no need to labour the question as far as 40 D is concerned; it is proving its own futility.

"But, in spite of the obvious futility of this hit-or-miss one-sided legislation, we are told that it must be done in the interests of the soldiers. But does the Government really care for them? Look for a moment at this extract of a letter from some one on the spot:—

"The men come back after two years or more of Mesopotamia and camp-life, and are stuck down in another huge camp in the middle of India, with nothing to do and nowhere to go. They have got lots of money, and are longing to enjoy themselves and have some fun, and forget the War and its miseries. Instead of which, last year (1917) the Army authorities made absolutely no preparations for them, dumped them down in hundreds, often without even tents, told them to spend their month's holiday in that place, and "if you want women, don't go to the bazaar; such and such houses are all right." Result, 9,000 out of 21,000 troops had to be left behind in hospital, when their furlough was over, suffering from venereal disease."

"It was left to the writer and others to run canteens and cinemas, and organise games and amusements for them so as to give them as jolly a time as possible and help to keep them out of mischief.

"Look, too, at this extract of a letter from a young officer, alas! since killed:—

"The system of having inspected prostitutes out here (India) continues. The only change effected by the C.D. Acts agitations, so far as I can gather, is that whereas the system used to be open and officially sanctioned, it is now secret and unofficially sanctioned. The day after we arrived here, my colour-sergeant asked me to speak to the men about it, as there were "authorised women provided by the authorities," which greatly scandalised him. "I don't believe," he said, "that however much they like to inspect 'em they can be sure it's all right." And indeed they can't, for one regiment left numbers of men behind who were too bad to be taken to Europe. It is a crying shame and a foul disgrace to men who can treat women so. It is the essence of slavery. I never felt more ashamed of my sex than when I had to speak to the Company about it. I felt bound to defend the system as best I could, putting on it an interpretation which I fear it doesn't deserve; but I told them my views and my wishes, and for the moment I knew they were with me."

Is it surprising that venereal disease spreads? Men cannot be treated as if they were merely fighting animals. They are more than this, and the country that takes their bodies and desires to make and keep them fit should remember that they have minds and souls, and that it will not hinder but help to keep them fit if a little attention be paid to this aspect of the case."

(To be concluded next week.)

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.



LONDON AND SUBURBS.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE
CLYDE CAMPAIGN.—Headquarters:
Rothsay, 4, Mount Pleasant-road.
Meetings daily till further notice at
the Pier Head. Organiser: Miss Alix
M. Clark. Speakers: Mrs. Mustard,
Miss Whitton, B.A., of Wigan, and
others.

September 28.—London Branches
Council. Debate 3 p.m., Minerva
Café. Opener, Mrs. How-Martyn. Subject, "That it is
in the National Interests that Women should be Members
of the next Parliament."

Wednesday, October 9.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café,
3 p.m. Mrs. Hall Simpson on "How Women of India and
England can Co-operate."

Sunday, October 20.—Herne Hill Branch. Drawing-room
meeting. Speaker: Mrs. Despard.

August Bank Holiday.

The Office of the Women's Freedom League and the
Minerva Publishing Company will be closed from 5 p.m.
Friday, August 2, until 9.30 a.m. Tuesday, August 6.

OUR POINT OF VIEW.

Scottish Women Speak Their Minds.

We are glad to see that Scottish women, representing many organisations, including the Women's Freedom League, gave the Secretary for Scotland some home truths when he received them in deputation at Edinburgh a few days ago, and impressed him with their determination to get things done. Miss Louisa Lumsden, LL.D., strongly and ably urged the claims of women to an equal number of seats with men on committees and to serve as school inspectors; also that equal facilities should be given to girls and boys in continuation and educational classes. Miss Rosaline Masson and Mrs. Leslie Mackenzie championed the cause of women as lawyers, and Mrs. Shaw McLaren showed how Scotland lagged behind England in permitting the husband's right to manage his wife's property. Mr. Munro not only expressed his entire sympathy with the views presented, but promised practical effort in the directions indicated. He declared that he could not see why women should not be solicitors if they desired, but sheltered himself behind the old and convenient hedge, "a controversial measure." It is too late in the day for such shelter to stand before women's determination, and Scotland's powerful help in breaking down masculine prejudice against women entering the legal profession, Parliament, and other close preserves will go far in bringing complete victory. The Secretary for Scotland doubtless had visions of the energising effect of the presence in the House of Commons of such women as waited upon him in the deputation. We look to their speedy realisation.

The Education of Indian Women.

We are glad to note that in the Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, now being so widely discussed, attention is called to the deplorable backwardness of education among Indian women. The paragraph dealing with the subject is as follows:—

As regards the limited diffusion of education, we also take into account the conservative prejudices of the

country. It is not very long since the advocates of the higher education of women were regarded as unpractical and subversive theorists; and in India social customs have greatly multiplied the difficulties in the way of female education. Upon this question opinion is slowly but surely changing, and educated young men of the middle classes are beginning to look for literate wives. But so long as education is practically confined to one sex, the social complexion of the country must react upon and retard social progress; and for this reason we regard the great gulf between men and women in respect of education as one of the most serious problems which have to be faced in India.

We trust that the recognition of the problem will lead to further practical steps being taken to ensure facilities for education for Indian girls. It is a case in which the Government of India and Indian opinion must co-operate. For the first time in the history of the British connection with India the Minister for Education is an Indian, Sir Sankran Nair, who belongs to that section of the people of India among whom the Matriarchate still rules. It goes without saying that he has been a staunch supporter of the woman's movement in this country, and is eager to do everything possible to advance the progress of his countrywomen.

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for "Women's Accident and Illness" prospectus, which gives full particulars of the many advantages you may secure by taking out this beneficial Policy, which is so designed that it will suit the pocket of every woman worker. The sooner you insure the sooner you will be relieved of all monetary anxiety in respect to this ever-present risk, and remember—

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FRIDAY, August 2nd, 1918.

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The Editor is responsible for unsigned articles only. Articles, paragraphs, or cuttings dealing with matters of interest to women generally will be welcomed. Every effort will be made to return unsuitable MSS. if a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed, but the Editor cannot be responsible in case of loss.

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WOMEN TEACHERS WIN.

The ultimatum of the London Women Teachers to the London County Council is not only the great event of the week in the struggle for equal pay for equal work, but it marks a step which must be counted as historic in the general advance towards the goal. By showing they meant to fight to a finish and were not afraid of self-sacrifice, the women wrung from the London County Council immediate relief in the form of a war bonus of 15s. a week, to date from April 1 last; they also retained the right to deal with the offending scale of salaries. The Council was compelled to capitulate to the women's determination to strike unless justice was done. The struggle not only affects "the Cinderella of professions," teaching, but women—and men—employed in every form of work. A victory in one direction helps the fight in other parts of the field. For this reason our readers will welcome the following article by Miss Agnes Dawson, acting president of the London unit of the National Federation of Women Teachers, a foremost leader in the fight, a friend of many years' standing of the Women's Freedom League.—Ed.

The London women teachers' strike has been averted. There was no doubt that the agitation, which has been in progress since the end of February, would end in success. The women teachers were fired with indignation against an iniquitous salary scale and with enthusiasm for a just cause.

Women, with the new won power of the vote, are realising what political enfranchisement means, and at the first call the teachers recognised that the new power meant also new responsibilities.

Education for the masses has hitherto been regarded by varying branches of Society as a necessary evil, and the teachers in our schools have been paid in accordance with this lack of regard. A salary scheme was passed by the London County Council on May 14 which was a scandal for women teachers; it absorbed the war bonus and left all the women assistant teachers worse off financially for the next two years than they would have been under the old scheme. In fact, the official reports of the London County Council clearly acknowledged that these teachers would only benefit by the operation of the new scale at the end of four or five years. Those who defend the scale are constantly pointing to the maxima and to the splendid prospects of superannuation, omitting at the same time to state that the majority of the teachers now in the schools will not reach a maximum, that the *splendid* superannuation, quoted in the daily Press, is only accessible in theory, and that the youngest teachers who may reach a maximum cannot be expected to enthuse on future

prospects while they cannot meet present-day needs.

The Education Committee and the London County Council have remained unmoved to all appeals by women teachers, even when 10,000 petitioned for arbitration on the matter. The refusal to grant arbitration proved the last straw. At a great meeting in London on July 22, when the Queen's Hall was packed with members of the National Federation of Women Teachers, there was a unanimous resolve that matters must be pressed to a successful issue, even if to do so a strike became necessary. All constitutional means had been sought in vain; to strike or not to strike depended on the decision on the following day of the London County Council. The women's determination was tremendously strong; their faith in their leaders absolute; the meeting was earnest to the last degree, and the gravity of the situation was fully understood.

There was no strike fund on which members could draw and take holiday; the strike meant sacrifice for a principle. No gibe about selfishness could have been levelled against the strikers by an unsympathetic public, but the public was entirely sympathetic. Offers of hospitality poured in from the provinces and from the teachers in London who had homes and some little substance from which to draw for a time. A father, who was an assistant master, offered 5s. a week while the strike lasted; a brother, who was a discharged soldier, 5s. a week; two girls in a flat offered their double bedroom, while they would make shift in another room; an anonymous gift of £1 was handed in at the Trafalgar-square meeting; 10s. 6d. was sent by another assistant master. These are typical offers of help; none of them could provide a luxurious time for any concerned, but all denoted a spirit of sacrifice. There were other letters from brave souls whose desire to help was strong, but whose dependents, many of whom were sick, stood to suffer. It was difficult for such to come to an immediate decision, but the Organising Committee was busy at work, and none would have been left to suffer unduly; those with sick dependents would have been the first to receive offers of hospitality.

To the eternal disgrace of the London County Council, it was not until women teachers were in a state of rebellion that the largest education authority in the kingdom could be induced to contemplate a measure of justice. An ultimatum and determination had their usual effect. A round-table conference has taken place; an immediate increase, in the shape of a war bonus of 15s. a week, is to be paid to all London teachers, irrespective of grade and sex, without prejudicing attempts to amend the salary scale as it exists to-day. The women teachers had demanded an immediate increase all round; it was conceded in the shape of the war bonus. They had also demanded arbitration, which would have taken place had the proceedings at the round-table conference broken down.

The women are still determined to get certain anomalies and injustices removed from the existing scale, and consequently insisted that their agreement to the war bonus should not in any way prevent them from getting to work in the autumn to secure a revision of the present scale as it affects women teachers. The agitation was levelled against the unequal distribution of the "Fisher Grant," and the increased difference between men's and women's salaries. The goal at which the National Federation of Women Teachers is aiming is

Equal Pay for Equal Work.

This has been made clear right through. A first step towards achieving this greatly needed reform has been taken; the National Federation of Women Teachers (London Unit) has been officially recognised, and its representatives invited to the first round-table conference. AGNES DAWSON.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE'S WATCH ON PARLIAMENT.

Women Members of Parliament.

Up to the time of going to Press no reply has been received from the Crown lawyers as to whether or not, in their opinion, women can take seats in the House of Commons. Our readers will remember that in June last it was publicly announced in the Press that the Labour Party purposed bringing in a Bill to give women a statutory right with men to election to Parliament. In reply to an inquiry about this Bill, however, we have received the following statement from Mr. Lindsay, Parliamentary Assistant Secretary to the Labour Party:—

It is not possible for the Labour Party to introduce any Bill just now. During the war the right of private Members to introduce Bills has been suspended, and only Government Bills are taken. It is expected that the result of the inquiry into the legal question as to whether women can be elected to Parliament will be announced shortly.

In view of the fact that the Labour Party was responsible for the statement that it would bring in a Bill, and that conditions have not altered in Parliament since that statement was made, we are somewhat astonished to receive this letter. We believe we are right in saying that if the Labour Party can get two hundred Members of Parliament to sign a petition for the introduction of such a Bill, should the opinion of the Crown lawyers be adverse to the interests of women, the Government would give leave for the Bill to be introduced. In any case we think that the Labour Party, if only for the sake of its own prestige, should use every means to bring this matter to an issue in the House of Commons.

Interpretations Act.

Meanwhile women are asking if it will always be necessary for them to fight men's prejudice against their entry into positions which women themselves know they can well fill. The war has thrown a curious light on men's dictum, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." Women, in the interests of the State, can now take the places of men in the engineering shops, but not at the Bar, or in any branch of the legal profession. Women could and do drive motor lorries and motor mail vans in London, but for a long time were not allowed to drive taxis. Women are considered good enough to minister to the bodily ills of men and women in the hospitals, but not fit to minister to their souls in the Established Churches; women can be tried, condemned, and sentenced by juries, judges and magistrates, but cannot sit on a jury or occupy a seat on the judges' or magistrates' bench; women can be arrested and imprisoned on the mere suspicion of infecting a soldier or sailor with venereal disease, but they have no redress against the men who infect them; women over thirty years of age can vote for Members of Parliament, but up to the present it has not been decided whether they can stand for election as Members of Parliament. Women demand that they shall have equal opportunities, responsibilities, and rewards with men throughout all branches of our national life. The Interpretation Act, 1889, reads as follows:—

BE it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

I. (1) In this Act and in every Act passed after the year one thousand eight hundred and

fifty, whether before or after the commencement of this act, unless the contrary intention appears—

(a) words importing the masculine gender shall include females.

We would urge that an Amending Bill to this Act be passed through Parliament without delay, and that it should state simply and definitely and without any limitations that

In every Act on our Statute Books words importing the masculine gender shall include females, and this shall apply also to customary or common law.

This would secure equal treatment and open to women all positions occupied by men, including the Bench, the Bar, the Jury Panel, the House of Commons, the Cabinet, the Diplomatic Services, etc. Thus women's long struggle for equality with men in our national life would be crowned with success.

Juries Bill.

On July 25 this Bill was considered in Committee by the House of Commons. To Clause 5, which reads as follows,

Sixty-five years shall be substituted in section 1 of the Juries Act, 1825, for sixty years as the age at which liability to serve upon a jury shall cease, and that section shall have effect accordingly.

Mr. Handel Booth moved this amendment:—

And women who possess the same qualification as men and are between the ages of sixty and sixty-five shall be placed upon the lists for jury service and shall be liable to serve, explaining that he so framed his amendment because he understood from Mr. Speaker's ruling on the Second Reading of the Bill that "whereas this Bill was only increasing jury service for men from sixty to sixty-five, it was far too big a change to suggest that women should come in of all ages!" The chairman declined to accept the amendment on the ground that he did not think a woman ceased to be a woman under those circumstances, and that it went beyond the scope of the Bill! Mr. Booth protested against this ruling, and thought the Government would have been well advised to introduce a moderate beginning, say a third of the jury, because directly the women have votes they will appeal to the House to have juries composed in equal proportions of men and women. Mr. Dennis interrupted "Wait till then," and Mr. Booth promptly retorted that Mr. Dennis would doubtless pledge himself to that at the next election.

Mr. Chancellor reminded the House that cases constantly occurred in which women appeared before juries of men; that they were not tried by their peers; and that injustice was often inflicted which women believed their service on juries would enable them to prevent. Mr. Chancellor thought it was a great pity that this occasion was not used for the purpose of putting women in a position to help in the administration of justice.

However, Sir Gordon Hewart, the Solicitor-General, although stating that he was "extremely anxious not to say a single word which might be taken as hostile to the claims of women to sit as jurors, or, indeed, as hostile to any other of the professional duties in which they engage," declared that the question whether women might sit as jurors could not be determined in relation to this Bill.

Solicitors (Article Clerks) Bill.

Last week the House of Commons found time to give this Bill a Second Reading, to consider it in Committee, and to pass its Third Reading—all within less than an hour of Parliamentary time. The Bill provides that an article clerk might reckon as time duly served under his articles any time which

he has spent in war service and that in circumstances arising out of the war he might be exempted from his intermediate examination. We have no special quarrel with this particular Bill, but we would remind our readers that the Government declared through Mr. Bonar Law a fortnight ago that it could find no time to proceed with the Solicitors (Qualification of Women) Bill—which Bill had previously passed its Third Reading in the House of Lords. We regret that our friends in the House of Commons failed to remind the Government of this partiality to the interests of men.

Ministry of Labour.

We have during the past week been in correspondence with the Ministry of Labour regarding the Constitution of Committees which are to deal with the employment of men and women after the war. The Local Advisory Committees, as they are called, have been appointed by the Minister to advise him in connection with the Employment Exchanges, and it has been decided to entrust these Committees with very important functions in connection with the resettlement of labour when peace is declared. It is provided that "there will normally be at least one woman on each Committee." We cannot consider that *one* woman member on each of these Committees will have power to safeguard the interests of the women workers in her district, and we hope the Ministry of Labour will see the necessity of appointing an equal number of women and men on all these Committees. We have asked him if he can give us an assurance on behalf of the Government that, when the war is over, women will not be excluded by the old trade union rules from working in trades and sections of trades in which they are now earning fair wages. We have not yet received that assurance, but we think the Minister of Labour cannot fail to see the justice of safeguarding in peace time the interests of the women who so promptly and so skilfully responded to their country's call for their work in its hour of need, especially as the majority of these women, not being over thirty, will not have the protection of the Parliamentary vote.

British Nationality and Status of Aliens Bill.

This Bill passed its Second Reading in the House of Lords on July 26, and was committed to a Committee of the whole House. In moving the Second Reading of this Bill, Viscount Sandhurst explained that in the general question of the national status of women cannot be settled without further direct communication with the Dominions. We should have thought that the status of a British-born woman could be settled by the custom and traditions of her own country without any communications with the Dominions on this question.

F. A. U.

WILL YOU HAVE C.D. ACTS?

You will have them unless you take action to prevent it. The Women's Freedom League is fighting tooth and nail against the reintroduction of State Regulation of Vice in this country. Josephine Butler did her part and secured the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. You have the easier task of preventing their re-enactment. The Government will not move in the face of the people's determination.

Do all you can yourself and send your contributions to the Women's Freedom League to maintain the fight to victory.

E. KNIGHT,
Hon. Treas.

144, High Holborn,
London, W.C. 1.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVENT A CONTAGIOUS DISEASES BILL.

BUT—

"BEWARE THE WOMEN!"

The solid opposition which is developing against the Criminal Law Amendment Bill and the Sexual Offences Bill was again much in evidence on July 24, when the House of Commons discussed the question of appointing a Select Committee of six members to join with a Committee of the Lords to consider the Bills.

MR. JOHN BURNS, in vigorous language, referred to the body of opinion in the country against the question being touched at all at this time. In 1913, when he was President of the Local Government Board, a Royal Commission investigated the whole subject of venereal disease, and it was senseless, he said, to appoint a Committee to go over the same ground. By the provisions of these Bills the Committee could revive some of the most objectionable features of the Contagious Diseases Acts, though the Royal Commission was dead against them and public opinion would not tolerate them for a moment. The Government was soundly beaten last Session on its Criminal Law Amendment Bill. With his great persuasive powers Sir George Cave secured its Second Reading, but after about fifteen sittings of the Grand Committee such opposition was evinced that the Bill was killed. But *what the Home Secretary failed to do by his Bill the Government have done under 40 D*. Now they wanted to bring in the substance of 40 D in an amended Consolidated Bill before the House, and we should then see an agitation against it. The Resolution, the Select Committee, and these two Bills were all totally gratuitous and unnecessary. By 40 D, in many cases, the grossest injustice had been done to the women of the country, innocent, healthy and uninfected, in a way which women would not tolerate. Only a small minority of corybantic females, more angry with their own sex than with men, were asking for the persecution of these few women.

Whatever was said and whatever was intended, these measures implied differential treatment of women and men, and they had no right to impose such legislation. But there was a more excellent way of grappling with venereal diseases—by the free, secret and confidential treatment initiated by the Local Government Board, without either imprisonment or compulsion, and by moral discipline and example. In our Indian Army counter-attractions and the efforts of officers had very greatly lessened the amount. The rate of hospital admissions per 1,000 men in the British Army in India dropped between 1884 and 1917 from 550 to 50, and in the Home Army at Aldershot from 271 to 44, and the rate of rejections per 10,000 recruits from 106 to 16.

One last word to the Government: Beware the women!

In 1884, without the vote, the women forced the Government to revoke the hated and oppressive Contagious Diseases Act, and nearly wrecked one Government. Now that six or seven million women were enfranchised, was it fair, before they had the chance of expressing their views at the next election, to prejudge the problem in which every woman had a right to be consulted, and to decide for herself in a way that men were incapable of deciding for her?

MR. DILLON complained that, having twice failed to push through their Criminal Law Amendment Bill last Session, the Government, behind the back of the House, enforced what they could not get through the House. 40 D, passed by an Order

in Council, was the most scandalous Act of executive Government that he ever remembered. The Government themselves were now ashamed of it. They took refuge in the House of Lords, and introduced two Bills there; then the House was asked to appoint a very small Select Committee of six members to consider them with a small Lords' Committee. It was a very bad practice. The Government seemed to intend to rush the Bill through the House in the autumn before the General Election, but it would be a scandalous outrage, the bitterest possible opposition would be created in the House, and he would do anything to oppose it.

Last Session he read out to the Grand Committee protests against the Bill from every woman's association of any standing in the country. It was a mean proceeding, on the eve of a General Election, to smuggle through the House an odious measure affecting in a very unfair and one-sided way the women of the country before they had had the chance of using the votes that Parliament had given them.

One provision of the Bill would detain young women loitering or walking about the streets in a riotous manner, and treat them practically as prostitutes. This placed every woman in the country at the mercy of a policeman.

Another provision, to penalise the communication of disease, was debated for many hours, and ridiculed by every person with any expert knowledge. Think what an enormous opening it gave to blackmail; let it be called a Bill for the promotion and facilitation of blackmail. This infamous proposal was disgraceful to any civilised country. It was monstrous that, after being defeated in Grand Committee, such measures should be smuggled through before the six million women could vote, and he would oppose its every stage.

LORD E. TALBOT (Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury) did not think that the object was to legislate in any hurry.

MR. CHANCELLOR sat for many weary months trying to devise a method which would be fair between the sexes, but found it absolutely impossible. The women already realised that they would suffer most, and probably every Member had had memorials from the women's organisations against it. **This sort of legislation tended to increase the practices that led to the disease, and so increased the disease itself.** The Government introduced 40 D just as they recognised *maisons tolérées* in France. Public opinion drove them back: it would be tenfold stronger if this were passed. It was a gross injustice to the women electors.

MR. KING complained that no one from the Home Office was present. Lord E. Talbot said the Government would not unduly hasten legislation, but the Home Office in the House of Lords had the previous day "earnestly desired to pass the Bill as soon as possible." The real fact was that the Government had not made up its mind. What they hoped was to rush a Bill through at the end of the Session, when the country and the House were preoccupied over the General Election. It was unfair to the country, to the House and to the women electors, and would be a burden round their necks at the General Election.

MR. ROCH said it was most deplorable to perplex the women at their first election with the old, worn-out controversy of the Contagious Diseases Acts raised by these Bills, for which there was no excuse at the present time.

On the division the Government detachment numbered 50, our friends 36.

The Joint Select Committee consists of: Earl Beauchamp, Earl Strafford, Viscount Sandhurst,

Lord Desart, Lord Muir Mackenzie, and one other Peer; Sir William Collins, Sir Willoughby Dickenson, Mr. Godfrey Locker-Lampson, Mr. Neville, Mr. John O'Connor, and Mr. Tyson Wilson, and has power to send for persons, papers and records.

What We Have to Do.

To take no risks, but to write, every man and woman who reads these words, to our own Member of Parliament, denouncing this attempt to rush a Contagious Diseases Bill through a dying Parliament, which represents men only, and urging him to oppose it with the greatest determination. He will want your help at the General Election, so he will be the more willing to help you to-day.

E. KNIGHT.

The Women's Deputation Against the Bills.

SIR GEORGE CAVE, in answer to Mr. King, said that he would be ready, after the Joint Select Committee had reported, to receive the deputation of women's organisations opposed to the proposals of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill who wished to lay their views before him last session, if they still desired to do so.

MR. KING: Deputations in favour of the Bill having been received, is it not only fair and even sportsmanlike to hear the other side?

SIR G. CAVE: I entirely agree, and I am willing to do so.

This promise has been repeated to the Women's Freedom League by the Home Office on July 25 and 26, in answer to the letter published in last week's VOTE.

ON OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

"Out of Chaos." By Moysheh Oyved. (Minerva Publishing Company, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1.) Price 2s. net, post free 2s. 2d.

The author of this remarkable little book writes with the fervency of a poet and a prophet. The pages are ablaze with the fire of passionate hope and trust in the glorious future for Humanity, which is to be the sequence of the great calamity that has fallen upon the world of to-day. The poetic phrases glow and flash like meteors in the sky, and the rich Eastern opulence of the language in which the messages are clothed undoubtedly adds to their mystic power. The writer is convinced that he is divinely inspired, and fearlessly expresses what he conceives to be the authoritative word which, in supreme moments, has entered his soul.

The first chapter is in the form of a prayer to be guided in the transmission of the messages which he feels called upon to deliver:—

"Sharpen my dull speech," he cries, "that I may therewith vanquish the death-angel and blunt the keenness of his sword. Fuse my broken spirit in the furnace of thy glory and cool it in the stream of thy eternity. And let the echo of my voice reach to the ends of the earth, and to the confines of the seas, until mankind, the dreaming and suffering, wakens out of his wild dark dreams and beholds the sunshine of God, until he feels the divine fire in his veins, the fire of love, justice and beauty, which shall resound like the waves, surge like the floods, and scorch like the sun in his strength, until the fire shall spread and spread, and there shall come forth a new life, a new age."

Some of the visions are startlingly drastic in their suggestions for methods of reform, and the first edition of the book would probably not have been weakened by the omission of Chapter X., but the exaltation of art and the desire for the erection of a national temple in its honour, for the uplifting of the soul and the inspiration of world genius, will commend itself to all who desire the expression of beauty in every department of life.

It is difficult to select from such a wealth of beautiful language, refined feeling and diversity of

FRIDAY,
AUGUST 2,
1918.

THE VOTE

ONE
PENNY
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

thought a quotation sufficiently typical of the whole, but the following is a striking example:—

"With walls of stones and thorns have you fenced in your gardens and covered them with roofs of iron and steel. The fruits languish, the stalks rot and drop off, piece by piece. The delicate young blossoms wither and thirst and are parched before they unfold. Should a ray of sunlight steal in, it is like a spear driven into a tender heart. Should a raindrop find its way through, it falls like a sprinkle on a hot desert. The wind, blowing past, is poisoned, and the nightingale is silenced in the heart of May.

Saith God:
"I will send a storm of fiery hail that shall melt your roofs like wax, a whirlwind that shall tear down your walls like cobwebs, and a flood of rain that shall wash away all the dirt and foulness. Then will everything that is sown in God's gardens shoot and bloom and bear fruit.

And all men shall see it and exclaim in one tongue:
'God lives.'

A Good Example.

Lord Courtney of Penwith, a staunch champion of votes for women from the days of John Stuart Mill and of women's advance to equality with men in all spheres of activity, acted up to his principles to the end of his life. In making his will he left the ultimate residue of his estate, after certain legacies have been paid and life interests enjoyed, in equal shares between Girton College (for women) and St. John's College (for men), Cambridge, with unfettered discretion in its employment. Once again we record our gratitude to Lord Courtney and our abiding appreciation of his service to our cause.

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W.F.L. Clyde Campaign.

Hon. Organiser: Miss Alix M. Clark.
Headquarters: 4, Mount Pleasant Road, Rothesay.

In spite of inclement weather, very successful meetings have been held during the week on the Pier Head, and Mrs. Mustard has addressed large crowds every night. Keen interest and strong indignation have been aroused with regard to Regulation 40 D, and Mrs. Mustard intends to hold meetings dealing only with the detested 40 D, at which resolutions will be put to the audience. One subject, we find, is of particular interest to Scottish people, namely: Can women become Members of Parliament? The strong opinion is that, even if the law be against them, women are determined to alter the law and claim their seats at Westminster. The fact that the Women's Freedom League strongly supports the return of women to Parliament has brought welcome donations to the funds.

Miss Bunten has given valuable help in the work of the campaign, presiding at meetings, chalking, selling THE VOTE, etc. We have now welcomed Miss Helen Whitton, B.A., of Wigan, as a valued helper. Last week we sold 750 VOTES.

I appeal to sympathisers and friends of the Women's Freedom League to enable us to carry on this important campaign by sending good financial assistance. If you cannot come yourselves, send your cheques and Treasury notes and postal orders to do duty for you, and so make our Victory Campaign on the Clyde both valuable and helpful to new—and old—voters, and, through them, to the nation.

The London Vegetarian Society Welcomes a Woman President

Vegetarian members of the Women's Freedom League will note with interest that for the first time in its history the London Vegetarian Society has elected a woman president, Mrs. Despard. On July 24 a meeting was held at the Food Reform Restaurant, Farnival-street, Holborn, to welcome Mrs. Despard in her new capacity, and the chairman, Mr. F. de Vere Summers, emphasized the fact that Mrs. Despard's election was not only historic in creating a precedent, but her personality and championship augured increased success for the Society, which welcomes the co-operation of associates who, without undertaking to abstain completely from flesh foods, will aid in promulgating a knowledge of the advantages of a vegetarian diet. In a vigorous speech in reply to the enthusiastic welcome accorded to her, Mrs. Despard laid stress on the connection between food reform and social reform.

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