

THE VOTE,  
MARCH 15, 1918.  
ONE PENNY.

Make Sure of Your Vote!

# 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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## SUFFRAGE NEWS FROM THE UNITED STATES.

**Women Voters in New York State: 90 per cent. Women; 30 per cent. men.**

Women 90 per cent.; men 33 per cent. This, according to cabled news, is the proportion in which women and men voted in the election for the National House of Representatives in New York State on March 6. If the men were "tired," the women were determined, and the message states that, as a result, the Republican majority of one has now become a Democratic majority of two by the return of all the four Democratic candidates. The great victory last November which gave the women of the State the vote on an equality with men—with no tiresome age or other restrictions—was specially significant, as New York is the first eastern State in the Union to do justice to the citizen claims of women. The enfranchised women have soon had an opportunity of exercising their new power, and their energy has evidently surprised the men. No doubt other surprises are in store for them. Meanwhile, we congratulate our sisters in New York on their first record.

### Illegal Imprisonment of Women Suffragists.

We are particularly glad to know that the arrest and imprisonment of American suffragists, who last summer picketed the White House, the official residence of the President, have been declared illegal by the Court of Appeal of the District of Columbia. The further news comes that the women are deter-

mined to file a suit against the district authorities claiming damages amounting to half a million dollars for wrongful imprisonment. We wish them the best of success. The March number of *The International Suffrage News* tells how the presence in prison of the women suffragists has also had the effect of bringing about needful reforms, just as it did in Holloway.

### Member of National War Board in the United States.

Miss Agnes Nestor, of Chicago, has been appointed to represent the working women of the United States on the National War Labour Board created by the Secretary of Labour, a position of unique power. Miss Nestor is also a member of the committee of women's defence work of the Council of National Defence, and a member of the sub-committee of women in industry of the Council. She is President of the Women's Trade Union League of Chicago, and entered industrial life as a glove worker at the age of 13. She early established herself as a power by the clarity of her testimony regarding the conditions of women workers when called as a witness before various private and public committees, as well as before the Senate (Second Chamber) of the State of Illinois. She is one of the most successful lobbyists in the States, and it is largely owing to her pluck and persistence that the law for the limitation of the hours of women's work is on the Statute Book of Illinois to-day.

**I**F you Believe in Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men

**Join the Women's Freedom League.**

Fill in your name and address and send it to the Secretary, Women's Freedom League, 144, High Holborn, London, W.C. 1.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



## Women's Freedom League.

Offices: 144, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C. 1.  
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 Hon. Head of Literature Department—Miss MARGARET HODGE.  
 Secretary—Miss F. A. UNDERWOOD.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L. LONDON AND SUBURBS.

**Saturday, March 16.**—Jumble Sale, in aid of Headquarters Fund, in the Lecture Hall, Ladbroke-grove Chapel, Cornwall-road, N. Kensington, 2.30 p.m. Contributions to 144, High Holborn. Helpers wanted on day of sale, 1.30 p.m.

**Wednesday, March 20.**—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3 p.m. Speaker: Mr. J. King, M.P., on "What the Liberal Party has to Offer Women." Chair Miss F. A. Underwood. Admission free. Tea can be obtained in the Café if desired (6d. each).

**Friday, March 22.**—Political Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 6 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Despard, Miss Dorothy Evans, Miss Anna Munro, Miss Tooke, Mrs. Whetton. Admission free. Collection.

**Wednesday, April 10.**—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Aldridge on "Serbia." Admission free. Tea can be obtained in the Café if desired (6d. each).

**Thursday, April 11.**—Mid-London Branch Meeting, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 6.30 p.m. Delegate's Report of Conference.

### We draw special attention to—

**Wednesday, March 20.**—Public Meeting in Minerva Café, when Mr. J. King, M.P., will speak on "What the Liberal Party has to Offer Women."

### OTHER SOCIETIES.

**Monday, March 18.**—Home Workers' League, Oxford House, Mape-street, Bethnal Green. Mrs. Nevinson, 3 p.m.

### National Union of Teachers' Conference, Cambridge, Easter, 1918.

#### WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE CAMPAIGN.

Hon. Organiser-in-Charge: Alix M. Clark.

The Women's Freedom League campaign at Cambridge will open on Monday, March 25; Miss Clark will be in Cambridge from March 21 to make preliminary arrangements. Miss Anna Munro will be one of the principal speakers, and will assist Miss Clark in organising the campaign; Mrs. Mustard and Miss Margaret Hodge will also speak. Will teachers and members of the Women's Freedom League who are spending their Easter holidays at Cambridge kindly communicate with Miss Clark, The Hut, Severn-street, Newtown, Montgomery Boroughs, immediately, as helpers are urgently needed? Another imperative need is £20 for this important work. Please send your donations as early as possible to Miss Clark.

### An Easy Way to Help—NOW!

Now is the moment to help Headquarters Funds by supporting the Jumble Sale on **Saturday, March 16**, at 2.30 p.m., to be held in the Lecture Hall, Ladbroke Grove Chapel, Cornwall-road, North Kensington, W., near Notting Hill station (Tube and Underground). Please make sure that many parcels arrive at the Hall by noon on the day of the sale, and helpers should be ready for duty at 1.30 p.m. Do your best to make the sale a great success!

### The Despard Arms, 125, Hampstead-road, N.W. 1.

Ask your friends to join you at lunch and tea at "The Despard Arms," and see for yourselves how well your needs can be supplied. The welcome spring sunshine has a way of revealing the ravages of winter, so we shall be grateful to friends who can help in our spring refurbishing by the gift of cushions, curtains, easy chairs, carpets, linoleum, chests of drawers, looking-glasses, coal scuttles, etc.

SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS.

### MAKE SURE OF YOUR VOTE.

An Order in Council of March 5 gave the following dates for the new Parliamentary Register:—

April 15.—End of qualifying period.  
 June 15.—Publication of lists of voters.  
 July 5.—Last day for claims.  
 July 8.—Publication of objections.  
 July 13.—Publication of claimants.  
 July 26.—Last day for objection to claims.  
 October 1.—The new Register comes into force.

The thing to be done by all members of the Women's Freedom League who are over 30 is to make sure at once that they are qualified as voters.

The qualifying period is the six months ending on April 15, 1918, this applies to women occupiers, joint occupiers, tenants of business premises, partners in businesses, owners of business premises, and lodgers living in unfurnished rooms.

Any member requiring advice as to her qualification is invited to write at once to headquarters.

### Be Ready!

According to *The Daily News* Britain's champion woman optimist has already ordered a neat, inexpensive voting costume to be ready for the General Election. The most suitable model for the purpose is now on view at Madame Minerva, 144, High Holborn, and can be adapted to the needs of women voters of all political parties.

### IN PARLIAMENT.

#### Women as Solicitors.

For the second time the Peers have been unanimous in passing the Bill for the admission of women as solicitors. In the House of Lords, on March 5, Lord Buckmaster moved the second reading of the Solicitors (Qualification of Women) Bill. He pointed out that the measure was identical in form with the one which passed all its stages in that House last session. Unfortunately, the Government had not been able to give facilities for the Bill to be passed through the House of Commons, but now, seeing that millions of women had been enfranchised, it was hoped they would do so this session, so as to enable women to practise as solicitors. Women, he argued, were fully competent to discharge the duties of practising solicitors, and there was no reason why they should be debarred from exercising such duties in the police and county courts. The second reading was agreed to without any discussion.

#### How Men Manage our Affairs.

On March 7 the House of Commons was asked by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to vote the sum of £600,000,000 towards defraying the expenses during the year for General Navy, Army and Air Services, for the conduct of naval and military operations and other expenses. Mr. Bonar Law explained that this was the largest single vote ever submitted to the House, and Mr. McKenna stated that we were spending to-day out of the Vote of Credit just £1,000,000 a day more than we spent on the war a year ago. The conduct of the war, our efforts to frustrate the U-boat campaign, our failure to supply sufficient shipping, the inadequate pensions to widows and dependents, etc., all came under review, yet such was the lack of interest shown in all these matters by the House that one Member exclaimed that he thought it was "disgraceful that the British House of Commons should, at half-past five on Thursday afternoon, be discussing a grant of £600,000,000 with less than fifteen Members present in the Chamber!" We agree, and are convinced that when women become Members of Parliament they will show more interest in the way the money of the country is spent, and will insist that men also will be in their places to shoulder their responsibility for our national expenditure.

#### Pensions for Widows and Dependents.

Mr. HOGGE, M.P. (East Edinburgh), drew attention to the fact that a wife with two children draws 24s. 6d. separation allowance, but if soldier or sailor husband is killed, after twenty-six weeks have expired, the widow, instead of drawing 24s. 6d., is reduced to a pension of 22s. 11d., which he did not consider "sufficient to keep a woman and two children above the poverty line," and added, "They could not be kept on that amount in any workhouse of the country." Mr. Hogge added, "The other day I got a

THEY SUPPORT US!

letter from a widowed mother, sixty-five years of age, who had given her only son to the British Army, and he had been killed. The Ministry of Pensions gives that widow 4s. 7d. a week pension, based on the pre-war dependent's allowance of 4s. 7d. a week—8d. a day—and that means that the value of the lad's life to this great country is worth two pints of Government ale—8d. a day!" Comment is unnecessary.

#### Navy and Army Nurses.

On March 7 SIR ARCHIBALD WILLIAMSON asked the Pensions Minister whether he is aware that many nurses have relatives dependent upon them; whether Army nurses are eligible for pensions if they suffer injury through the war in common with other branches of the Army, and, if so, will he take steps to place them on the same footing as other branches of the Army by making provision for dependents in cases where a nurse loses her life?

Mr. HOGGE (Minister of Pensions): I have no knowledge as to whether many members of the Navy and Army Nursing Service have relatives dependent on them. No such cases have been brought to my notice, but I will consider the question of making some provision for the dependent relatives of nurses who lose their lives through war service. Army nurses are eligible for pensions if they suffer injury through military service arising out of the war.

F. A. U.

### THE WOMEN TEACHERS WIN.

The decision of the London County Council last week to reject by a large majority the salaries scheme submitted for acceptance is a victory for women in two ways. The scheme differentiated unfairly against women teachers; it was on this point that it was rejected after every possible effort had been made by the Education Committee to secure its adoption. The victory for women was the work of women; it was the National Federation of Women Teachers which so successfully organised the opposition and presented a petition of protest signed by 10,000 women teachers, against, not with the aid of, the National Union of Teachers and the London Teachers' Association. We look to this striking success as an augury of victory for women, both at Spring Gardens and Westminster.

#### Teachers' Strike in Montgomery Boroughs.

Miss Alix M. Clark writes:—In Montgomery Boroughs, the teachers are making a fine fight. To a certain extent their demands have been conceded, so, for the present, the strike is over. We are, however, waiting developments for unrest and dissatisfaction among the teachers in the county of Montgomery remain acute. The first fetters have been broken by the daring action of the assistant teachers who came out on strike three weeks ago; they are now determined to withstand the unfairness and injustice with which teachers have been treated for many years. The sooner the Local Education Authorities (if they want the children in Montgomeryshire educated) recognises this determination the better. They must give the teachers their just demands, and not be content to sit in committee, pat each other on the back, say "Glory to me, etc., etc.," and talk of patriotism, while teachers under their authority, who are doing the greatest national work, do not receive enough to keep body and soul together.

#### Thanks to the Women's Freedom League.

We appreciate very much the letter of the National Federation of Women Teachers thanking the Women's Freedom League and its members for the help given in the recent Salaries Campaign and victory. The hon. secretary of the London branch writes:

"My Committee have desired me to express to you their warmest thanks and appreciation of the valuable help given them by the members of the Women's Freedom League in their recent Salaries Campaign. I am also directed to express the delight and pleasure of the London branch of the National Federation of Women Teachers in the further help extended to them by the presence of so many members of the Women's Freedom League at Spring Gardens. Will you please convey my Committee's wishes to your members?"

### CROYDON'S VICTORY CELEBRATION

Our Croydon Branch is joining with the National Union of Women Suffrage Societies and other women's societies in organising a Croydon Women Citizens' Day Celebration, which is to be held on Wednesday, March 20. The proceedings will begin with a special service of Praise and Dedication at the Parish Church, at 2.30 p.m., to be followed by a procession, headed by the Mayoress, Mrs. Fawcett and Miss C. Nina Boyle, to the Town Hall entrance, where a halt will be made in order to present an address to the Mayor and receive from him a speech of welcome. The procession will then make its way to the Large Public Hall, George-street, where a meeting will be held, at which Mrs. Fawcett will speak on "Lift up your hearts!" and Miss C. Nina Boyle on "Marching to Victory." The Mayoress will occupy the chair. The Celebration Executive Committee urges "both present and future voters" to take part, and the last section, No. 12, in the procession is to be reserved for "Wives, Mothers, Daughters, and Women Householders"—a comprehensive heading that should attract a large company. Representatives of the various women's industries, societies, political parties, national services, etc., will also be present, and all who are entitled to distinctive uniforms are asked to wear them.

The Croydon Branch of the Women's Freedom League, which will, of course, march as a united body, will be led by Mrs. Terry—a fact that we know will rally every member proudly round their standard. No Suffragists have fought more devotedly or strenuously for the vote than our Croydon Freedom Leaguers, and they must be there in full force to share the plaudits of victory and swell the psalm of thanksgiving and triumph.

### SUFFRAGE RALLY.

A very interesting and crowded Suffrage Rally, organised by the Women's International League, was held at Kingsway Hall on March 9. The Hall was adorned by the banners of the Women's Freedom League and other suffrage societies. In the absence of Mrs. Swanwick through illness the chair was occupied by Mrs. Pethick Lawrence. Letters of regret for unavoidable absence were read from Mrs. Fawcett, Miss Ellen Terry and Miss Maude Royden.

Mrs. Despard proposed the resolution rejoicing in the first step towards the enfranchisement of British women, and declaring that enfranchised women could best show their gratitude to our gallant pioneers by working for complete equality of opportunity between women and men and for a closer co-operation between women of all countries in the service of humanity. At this moment, she said, when everything seemed hopeless and all men were crying for the way out, women had been called in to take their place in the nation. Criticism was easy, but a great responsibility was theirs; the protests of yesterday had become the demands of to-day. Wisdom, knowledge and skill must be brought to the common fund of the nation so that all might be able to act together. Women had a glorious task before them to build up the nations in a new way.

The resolution was seconded by Dame May Webster, in the absence of Miss Eva Moore, supported by Mlle. Spelleman (Belgium), Councillor Margaret Ashton, M.A., and Miss Calina (Russia), who brought greetings from all progressive Russian women and men, and carried unanimously.

Brief greetings were also given to British women by Mrs. Wong (China), Mrs. Barton (Women's Co-operative Guild), Miss Czaplicka (Poland), Mrs. Roy (India), Miss Ford (Independent Labour Party), Miss Evelyn Sharp, and Miss Chrystal Macmillan.

SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 184.



## THE VOTE.

Proprietors:—THE MINERVA PUBLISHING CO., LTD.  
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FRIDAY, March 15th, 1918.

NOTICE.—Letters should be addressed as follows:—  
To the Editor—on all editorial matters.  
To the Advertising Manager—on advertising.  
To the Secretary—on all other business, including Vote orders, printing, and merchandise, etc.

Telephone: MUSEUM 1429.  
Telegrams: "DESPARD, Museum 1429, London."

### EDITORIAL.

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.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATE.

At Home and Abroad ... post free. 6/6 per annum.

## THE REAL CAUSES OF WAR.

We wonder if many of the women to whom war and peace are of such momentous significance have considered the memorandum which has been set forth as their Peace-aims by the recent Labour and Socialist Conference.

Of the war itself: how or when it is to end: of the immense, indescribable bliss which will possess us when the nations return to a partial sanity, we are not now thinking. We know that sooner or later peace will come, and probably in a sudden and unexpected manner.

That which concerns women—as the moulders and guardians of life—is the organising of society on a basis which will make the nightmare of horror and misery through which we and our children are passing to-day impossible for the future; and it is chiefly on this account that we rejoice in our newly recognised citizenship.

We had no part in making the war. Materialism run mad, reckless domination and cynical greed, like dark spirits, growing by that they fed on, were the forces which brought it to pass; and against these the women of the nations, unfranchised and therefore ignored, were powerless to contend. We thank heaven that a new day has dawned. We, the women of Great Britain, are not powerless now. Before many months are over our voices will be heard in the councils of the nation. If we are to speak with effect we should now be considering earnestly, not so much the map of Europe and its possible changes, but the principles on which the reconstruction of our national life and our international relations is to be based.

And here we should bear in mind that while vague sentiments and flashy acclamation of generally accepted watchwords lie upon the surface of things, so much so that they will always evoke unthinking applause, the deep, strong springs of forceful action lie below the surface and can only be set free by those who are willing to risk everything in the adventurous and often dangerous task of penetrating below the surface and seeking diligently for the hidden treasure. The ancient story of "The Pearl of Great Price" was as much a symbol as a parable.

We stand for freedom. That, like other high-sounding words, such as patriotism, justice, democracy, will always, if acclaimed honestly, evoke response.

Take Freedom first. It is patent to every one of us that war, resting as it does not on Right but on Might, is, and always must be, the enemy of Freedom. We women, standing upon the watch-towers, gifted, for the first time in our national history, through forced recognition of our value, with the power of calling, now and then, a halt in the hideous Dance of Domination that has accompanied the Dance of Death, have seen liberty after liberty filched away from our people, until at last it would

be farcical to speak of the nation as a democracy at all.

In making this statement we are treading on sure ground. A few, for their own selfish purposes, may desire the continuance of the old order, with its war panics and sudden outbreaks of war fever. By far the greater number of the people, and certainly all who love freedom, men as well as women, desire ardently a peace that may last.

We are of these. Freedom is our watchword. How, penetrating below the surface, and linking with the emblem we have chosen as our own those other great conceptions—Patriotism, Justice, Democracy—are we to achieve its realisation? The time has come when, with the utmost urgency, we should ask this question. Never let us forget that we are the "Women's Freedom League," and that the freeing of woman, in the high and true sense, means the freeing of man.

The subject is of such far-reaching importance, and the space at our command is so limited, that it will be impossible to do it justice in one article. We hope that it may be treated of again in a later issue.

On this occasion we will deal with the memorandum put forward by the Allied Labour and Socialist Conference. It is far from perfect or, on all points, convincing. It is well said in the "London Diary" of *The Nation* that the Conference was not drawing up a treaty: its purpose was "to give the world of 'statesmanship' a general lead of principle." This is what we are seeking for the foundation of that world in which men and women will walk as comrades.

That is the natural state of affairs, and it is that which social and political conditions, built up on competition as its basis, make impossible. Looking below the surface and trying to shut our ears to the rival cries of warring politicians, we come to this. As organic diseases in the body prevent it from the exercise and enjoyment of its natural faculties, so is war in the body politic. If the nations are to lead healthy and natural lives, if they are to enjoy freedom, if they are to develop in every beautiful way, the reason of the disease from which they are suffering must be discovered and some radical cure must be found.

Setting aside these adventitious circumstances, what are the root-causes of the war? Precisely the same as those which made for industrial, class and domestic strife before the war. How frequently we used to hear of social unrest: how often we were told that if things did not mend some great cataclysm was bound to come. It has come, and it is our business as women, as patriots and world-lovers, to trace the evil to its source and to work with all the energy we possess for its removal.

Greed, domination, cynical disregard of human suffering so that the lust or ambition of persons or groups of persons might be gratified—these were at the root of the unrest that preceded the war. Greed, ambition, lust of domination, as revealed in the secret treaties, "strife for raw material and spheres of exploitation and colonial rivalry," with a cynical disregard for the rights of nationalities—these are now, and have been in the past, the real causes of war. If we are to have a peace, not inconclusive, as the treaty-made settlements of the past have been, but conclusive in the fullest sense of the word, we must deal not so much with war itself as with the disease from which it springs.

Our own fervent desire is that women who have fought so valiantly for freedom within their nations may prove in the future a harmonising force between the nations; that, gathering themselves together now for the great things, the recognition of which the world so sorely needs, they may be ready to take their part in the preparation and carrying through of peace-aims.

C. DESPARD.

## THE GREAT CRISIS IN THE NURSING PROFESSION.

The Freedom League is precisely what its name implies. It stands for *freedom*, and so, in all sincerity, it defends those who are in danger of being deprived of their freedom; it fights for freedom and justice for women, and it is very largely due to the work and enterprise of the Women's Freedom League that women have at last won political enfranchisement. The nursing profession owes to the Women's Freedom League a debt it does not desire to cancel—a debt of gratitude. No other society—either of women or men—has so generously and so consistently supported it in its struggle for its own professional enfranchisement.

Just below the letter from Miss Rundle, secretary of the College of Nursing Company, Ltd., which appears in the February 22 issue of *THE VOTE*, I was pleased to read, in a brief editorial note, the wide difference explained between this lay corporation and State registration as "demanded by organised bodies of nurses." It supplies me with a good text for amplifying the idea. Miss Rundle has uttered the word democratic in qualifying the constitution of the College Company innumerable times; and yet it fails to carry conviction, and only appears ridiculous to thoughtful nurses who have carefully read and studied the memorandum and articles of association upon which the constitution of the company is based.

I submit to our readers a few facts concerning the College of Nursing Company, Ltd., and they shall judge for themselves whether it is inspired by the spirit of democracy, or whether that unlovely word, autocracy, would best fit it. This limited liability company presumes to liken itself to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons (in England, Scotland and Ireland). As a matter of fact, it is in no way comparable. The latter concern themselves with education alone, and not with registration and discipline. The College of Nursing Company, Ltd., and its nominated Council assume arbitrary control over the education, registration and discipline of the nursing profession, and now they have added philanthropy to their unauthorised activities. It is easy to see what a serious menace this will be to the economic independence of nurses, both now and in the future. We must not confuse the issues. A college is an educational body, and should have nothing to do with registration and discipline. A general nursing council which would be set up under a State Registration of Nurses Act—for which nurses have been working for thirty years—would be the authorised body for registration and discipline.

### As for Doctors, so for Nurses.

Economic independence of nurses can only be obtained by an independent governing body such as the medical profession possesses under their Registration Act, and such as is provided by the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses.

The present council of the College of Nursing Company, Limited, consists of employers—that is, members of hospital committees and matrons under their control. No independent working nurse has a seat on that provisional council. It is useless for Miss Rundle to labour the point about the future elective nature of the constitution. It seems strange that she, in her office of secretary, should not understand a principle so vital as the representation of organised bodies of workers on the first or provisional council of any association. And why? Because (1) these representatives are responsible to their societies who elect them; (2) it is this council who have the important work to do of framing rules and laying down the foundation of the work.

If, therefore, the various bodies of nurses are not allowed representation on the *first* council, they are debarred from taking any part in this work, and yet they will have to obey the rules made.

A nominated council is not responsible to the nurses' societies. Is this "frankly democratic"? Furthermore, this foreign body (the College of Nursing Company, Limited) has promoted a Nurses' Registration Bill, and again they exclude from its provisional council representation of the organised societies of nurses. These societies have been working steadily and unceasingly for over thirty years to obtain the right of State registration; they had achieved many successes before the war broke out, when, for patriotic reasons, they suspended—not their work, but their demand on the time of Parliament during the grave national crisis. All this splendid work, entailing—as all such constructive work does—so much sacrifice of time, health and money (out of the nurses' own pockets), has been ignored by the iconoclasts, who desire to pull down the fine edifice and set up in its stead a destructive imitation: Miss Rundle's denial that Sir Arthur Stanley was at one time opposed to State registration is not in accordance with facts. Two years ago, when he issued his first circular letter to the chairmen of hospitals concerning the foundation of a college of nursing, he said:—

There is no unanimous feeling either amongst those responsible for the training of nurses, or amongst nurses themselves in favour of State registration. My own view is that, for the time at least, we must rely upon a voluntary scheme of co-operation amongst the nurse-training schools throughout the country.

It was not until he woke up to the fact that there was an overwhelming demand by nurses for that urgent reform that he changed his tune.

### Broken Pledges.

The nursing profession had the honour years ago of being the recipient of the first women's charter. On February 8 Miss Macdonald, the secretary of the Royal British Nurses' Association, was invited to speak in the Royal Institution, Liverpool, on its behalf. She used this opportunity also to protest against the obtrusive humiliation offered to this great chartered profession by appeals for charity in the advertisement columns of the newspapers by the British Women's Hospital Committee (formerly a section of the Actresses' Franchise League), under the auspices of the limited liability company mentioned above. In explaining how deeply the nurses resented this intolerable interference with their economic independence, she asked the following questions:—

(1) How much of the money collected had been spent on advertisements in the newspapers? (2) What proportion of the money collected was to be spent on buildings for the College of Nursing Company, Limited? (3) Whether the money collected was to be handed over to the council of a limited liability company to administer? (4) Whether the members of the limited liability company alone were to benefit, or all the nation's nurses? (5) What were the names of the members of the nursing profession who, at a meeting or as individuals, sanctioned the charitable appeal?

Mr. Herbert Paterson, F.R.C.S., hon. secretary of the Royal British Nurses' Association, supported the speaker and declared that the advertisements for charity were degrading to a noble profession.

My main object in relating these facts is to tell also what arose out of them. A lady present said she had taken down the questions, and promised that Lady Cowdray, hon. treasurer of the fund, would answer them and any others Miss Macdonald chose to ask when she came to speak at a meeting of the College of Nursing Company, Limited, to be held in Liverpool on February 22. Accordingly Miss Macdonald went again to Liverpool to receive the



answers promised, accompanied by Miss Breay, sub-editor of the *British Journal of Nursing*, and myself, of the Nurses' Protection Committee, to support her. Miss Eden, foundress of the National Union of Trained Nurses, was also present. When the speakers had made their charitable appeal, instead of fulfilling the pledge given, which had been endorsed by Lady Cowdray herself in a subsequent letter, the chairman, Dr. Caton, ruled the questions out of order, and the audience began to disperse. The four "aliens" could hardly believe the evidence of their senses, but the audience was not allowed to depart, however, without a vigorous protest from two of the London nurses.

We are at war to uphold the sanctity of the pledged word, and yet there are British men and women who, while precious blood is being shed for honour's sake, will deliberately and dishonourably break a solemnly pledged word. This is not the first time during the present crisis that trained nurses have been tricked and betrayed.

What I have written will show the members of the Freedom League that the opposition we are up against is complicated by traits of character which intensify the struggle. Let those who seek to subjugate us remember that attempts to gag us at meetings, the boycott of the Press, and all shady tricks will ultimately fail of their purpose, because "the spirit of liberty is never defeated, whether in chains or in laurels." I hope that all those who read this will realise that trained nursing is one of the nation's greatest assets, and its efficiency and its freedom should be the concern of every member of the community.

BEATRICE KENT,  
Press Representative, Nurses' Protection Committee.

### JUSTICE!

In pursuance of its "Watch Dog" policy, the need for which is evident every day, the Women's Freedom League has written to the Irish Secretary, the Home Secretary, and the Minister of Labour as follows:—

The Rt. Hon. H. E. Duke, K.C., M.P., March 6, 1918.  
Irish Office, Old Queen-street,  
Westminster, S.W. 1.

SIR,—On behalf of the Women's Freedom League I am venturing to call your attention to the following paragraph which appeared in the daily Press on March 3:—

#### GIRL SENTENCED TO DEATH.

Margaret Travers, an unmarried girl of 18, who drowned her child in a drain and then laid its body, covered with wreaths, on the shore of a lake, was at Westmeath Assizes yesterday sentenced to be hanged on March 28, the jury adding a strong recommendation to mercy.

In our opinion (which is fully shared by the Irish members of our League), this sentence on a girl of eighteen years of age was a piece of wanton cruelty on the part of the judge, and utterly devoid of justice or equity. There can be no doubt that the girl was temporarily insane when she drowned her child and afterwards covered it with a wreath on the shore of a lake, and we appeal to you to see that Margaret Travers is released immediately, and that she shall be placed with friends until she has recovered her health both physically and mentally.

We strongly protest that apparently no effort was made by the Court to trace the father of Margaret Travers' child, for whose fate he should have been held equally responsible with the girl upon whom this callous sentence has been passed.—I am, sir, yours faithfully,

F. A. UNDERWOOD.

The Rt. Hon. Sir George Cave, K.C., M.P.,  
Home Office, Whitehall, S.W. 1. March 6, 1918.

SIR,—On behalf of the Women's Freedom League, I venture to bring to your notice the case of Mary Lewis, aged 20, a servant, who was charged recently at Shrewsbury Assizes before Judge Bailhache with the wilful murder of her fourteen-months-old child by throwing her into the Severn, near the Welsh Bridge, on December 27.

The following report of the case has just appeared in the Shrewsbury Press:—

Mr. Cotes-Preedy, in opening the case, said the child of prisoner was illegitimate, and has never been fathered. On December 27, the accused came into

Shrewsbury and saw her sister, Mrs. Richards, Peacocottages, Coleham, and afterwards went to various places to try and find shelter for herself and her child. In Frankwell she told a Mrs. Jones, who tried to help her to get lodgings, that if she failed to find anywhere to sleep it would not be her fault if she drowned either herself or her child. The following evening the prisoner's father, a waggoner, living near Cressage, heard someone scream outside his house, and, on going out, he found the accused lying on the ground. When asked what had become of her baby, she said she did not know, but later admitted she had thrown the child into the Severn. The police were sent for, and the child's body was subsequently recovered from the river. It appeared that the prisoner had not been treated well by her step-mother, who had been convicted for ill-treating her.

Mrs. Richards, the sister, repeated the evidence she gave before the magistrates, and, cross-examined by Mr. Graham, witness said her sister had always been very kind to the child and had taken the greatest possible care of her. Practically all her life prisoner had had to support herself, as she did not think her sister was welcome at home.

Thomas Lewis, the father, a waggoner, living at Watch Oak Cottage, Cressage, cross-examined by Mr. Graham, said that prisoner's mother died when she was twelve months old. When prisoner was nine years old her step-mother was charged at Wellington with neglect of prisoner, and it was suggested that she had burnt the girl. A month later prisoner was taken away from his (witness's) home, and from that time she passed from one workhouse to another.

Harriet Mary Lloyd, St. Mary's-place, Shrewsbury, said on December 27 prisoner came to see witness's sister, and Miss Lloyd went on to relate the conversation she had with prisoner, and which has already appeared in the Press. In reply to Mr. Graham, Miss Lloyd said the Refuge Home was that day, unfortunately, closed, as the superintendent was away ill. Also a bed which was available and under the charge of her sister, Miss Edith Lloyd, was also occupied, so that prisoner could not go there.

The jury found prisoner guilty of manslaughter, with a strong recommendation to mercy, on the ground that on the day in question prisoner's mind was quite unsheltered owing to her experiences when she vainly sought shelter for herself and child.

The Judge said the jury had taken a very merciful view of the case. One would have thought that the last thing any mother would do would be to destroy her child. The sentence must be a severe one—three years' penal servitude.

In view of this evidence we appeal to you to exercise your powers for the release of this girl. Apparently no effort was made by the Court to trace the father of her child, who ought to have been present in Court, fully to share with her the responsibility for the fate of the child. In face of the evidence given in Court and of the jury's strong recommendation to mercy, we cannot but consider the sentence passed by Judge Bailhache as a piece of wanton cruelty, and his remarks when pronouncing sentence utterly devoid of understanding and callous to the last degree.

The Women's Freedom League wishes to add that women bitterly resent the fact that extenuating circumstances are so little taken into account when women are tried by the law of the land, but that they have played so prominent a part lately in securing the acquittal of men charged with the murder of their wives.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

FLORENCE A. UNDERWOOD.

### Trades Boards and Equal Pay for Equal Work.

The Rt. Hon. George Henry Roberts, M.P.,  
Ministry of Labour, Montagu House,  
Whitehall, S.W. 1. March 6, 1918.

SIR,—The Women's Freedom League shares the hope you expressed at Exeter last Saturday that the Government will see that every man when demobilisation takes place has a reasonable chance of securing employment within four weeks of discharge. We also note that you would like to see the country free from industrial strife during the period of reconstruction after the war. May we remind you that one of the most important factors of industrial strife may be the competition between men and women workers because the disastrous undercutting of men's wages by the customary paying of women less than men for the same work will do more than anything else to bring disunity into the industrial world?

The Women's Freedom League therefore urges you to take this into consideration when drafting the extension of the Trades Board system. The principle of equal pay for equal work for men and women should be established under the Trades Board Act and minimum piece rates and time rates should not be acceptable to the Board when they make a differentiation in the pay of men and women workers for equal work.

May we hear from you what you propose to do in this matter?—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

FLORENCE A. UNDERWOOD.

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### WOMEN AND THE LAW.

As the law now stands no woman may become a solicitor, and as the customary tradition of the four Inns of Courts persists no woman may be called to become a barrister.

This means, also, that every citizen of the British Isles, however much he or she may desire to utilise the services of a woman to conduct a case or plead in a High Court, is limited to the advocacy of one sex only. This is a direct blow at the citizens' right of representation in court by an advocate of their own choice. The limitation thus imposed is one of sex, not of ability or character. The citizen thus narrowed in choice of expert legal advice has to pay his or her share of taxes towards the maintenance of the legal system of the country as if it were a public service instead of being (as it is) a private monopoly. Further, the very citizen who has to pay taxes for the upkeep of judiciary and courts where labour is undiluted by woman has himself to submit to the keen competition of women in practically every other walk of life. How long the men of the country will tolerate this anomaly, once they realise it, is very doubtful. Why should a man doctor have to share a clientèle with a woman doctor round the corner whilst the barrister who lives next door to him has no such competition to face?

What is the public interest? It is that every individual should render to the community the service most suited to that person's gifts. Men cannot in this momentous era assert that women, as such, have no legal gifts among the whole sex without provoking derision and contempt. Of course some women have legal qualities, just as others have medical or housekeeping talents. Many women in France, our Dominions Overseas, Italy, and the United States, earn an honourable livelihood at the law; indeed, an American woman barrister, Mrs. Annette Adams, is Assistant United States Attorney, and was the person who, in 1915, traced the payments made by the Kaiser's emissary in America to purchase German arms for the purpose of fomenting a German rebellion in India. If Mrs. Adams had been at home making puddings, or teaching in a kindergarten, someone else might or might not have traced the connection between Captain Tauscher and Dr. Albert. The point, anyhow, is that she did. But had Mrs. Adams been born a British woman such service to her country would have been denied her.

The exclusion of women from the Bar acts further against the public interest in that it makes much more easy the extraordinary laxity of punishment shown to soldier criminals. The Unwritten Law that a man may murder a faithless wife, a faithless wife's lover, and now a wife's illegitimate child, is a corollary of the other Unwritten Law that no woman may practise or prosecute in the courts. "Malcolmsism," with all its disastrous consequences, is upon us; if women retaliate and shoot the men, anarchy is at hand.

The only real remedy is a Woman Public Prosecutor, who would carry out her stern duties unflinchingly and effectually. Then we should stop this orgy of private revenge, where the injured man becomes judge, jury and executioner in his own cause. Julia Decies was not allowed to take the law into her own hands—the masculine trade union of the law protected the wider masculine trade union of all men.

Now that women are pouring in to the industrial sphere in such immense numbers there is need for a number of women lawyers specialising in industrial law. Even now, where the Factory Act is infringed, women Factory Inspectors constantly conduct cases in court to the great and expressed satisfaction of the Bench. A wider scope for the usefulness of women to women lies here. There is also a great

need for women lawyers to deal with matrimonial and divorce cases and to introduce a more grave tone into the conduct of breach of promise cases.

As soon as the women of this country realise how they are prevented from using the services of women whose natural calling would be the law, and as soon as the men also realise how unfairly the lawyer, whilst himself resisting dilution of labour, is ready enough to arrange it for other men, this sex-exclusiveness in the legal profession is doomed. The shortest cut to end it is by *enfranchised women seeing that no barrister is chosen as a Parliamentary candidate for the next General Election*, and if such be chosen by any inadvertence, to see that the local woman and labour vote is organised against him. The man who excludes women from his profession is no fit representative of either women or of democracy.

HELENA NORMANTON.

### Marriage and Divorce Law Reform.

Speaking for the Women's Freedom League at the Minerva Café on March 6, Miss Lind-af-Hageby said that it was impossible to look on marriage as an absolutely rigid institution and never liable to change, for all human forms have to change as the human spirit develops. The subject of marriage was a perennial plant of discussion in our daily press, and in literature the views of Ibsen, George Bernard Shaw, George Meredith and other prominent writers were well known. The question of divorce was hotly debated between two classes of people—those who believed that marriage was a sacrament and indissoluble and those who regarded it as a civil contract with certain obligations binding on the individual. To the former the speaker had nothing to say, for there was nothing to be said. To the latter, there were many evils in our present marriage and divorce laws, and it was for the reformer to consider how those evils could be remedied. At present in England there was only one way of breaking the marriage contract, resulting in proceedings in the police court and frequently disgusting reports in the daily Press. In other countries other reasons were admitted for divorce. In England, but not in other countries, damages could be claimed by the husband against the man for his wife's misconduct, apparently because a wife's honour was the husband's chattel. Reformers wanted to do away with the evil of perpetual separation; 500,000 people were now living in this state and cannot re-marry. What was wanted was a time limit to this separation for people who could not possibly live together either through incompatibility of temperament, insanity, habitual drunkenness or penal servitude for life of one of the contracting parties; 7,000 judicial separations were granted each year, which meant that 14,000 people every year found it impossible to live together. With the poorer classes these separations very often led to immorality in the cramped housing accommodation at their disposal. Although not altogether a woman's question, Miss Lind-af-Hageby thought it was largely so, for women at the beginning of the marriage contract, in the marriage service itself, and at the end of it, if the contract were broken, had no equal position with men. We needed equal marriage and divorce laws and more in accord with the modern spirit of freedom and an equal moral standard for men and women.

The chair was taken by Mrs. Despard, who declared that the children's position should be considered in this important matter. After all, children were the worst sufferers in unhappy homes, and if people could not live together without continually quarrelling under the present system of marriage, Mrs. Despard thought that some modification of that system would be better for the children.

SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 184.



FRIDAY,  
MARCH 15,  
1918.

# THE VOTE

ONE  
PENNY  
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

## BRANCH NOTES.

### Work in Wales: Aberystwith and Aberdovey.

Last week Miss Alix M. Clark, hon. organiser, visited Aberystwith and Aberdovey, and canvassed both places. Members and sympathisers hailed with delight the constructive programme on which the W.F.L. is now at work. Aberystwith members are anxious to have a large public meeting as soon as possible, and also a summer campaign, previous campaigns having been remarkably successful. Miss Clark has started a "Double F" (Fighting Fund), which is being supported and appreciated by members and friends. *THE VOTE*, as usual, had a ready and easy sale.

### Portsmouth.

There was a good attendance at our monthly public meeting on March 6. In introducing the Rev. G. W. Thompson, Miss Maynard urged women to take more

interest in municipal and local councils, and if possible try to get more women on these bodies. Speaking on "Woman's Unique Opportunity," Mr. Thompson congratulated the Women's Freedom League on the result of their Conference, a report of which he had read in *THE VOTE*. Democracy, he declared, would be a new thing now women had the power of the vote. He urged women to look at life and causes from every point of view, and to be big enough to see and sympathise with other people's ideas. They had a unique opportunity to help to reform and rebuild and restore order out of the present chaos. Questions were asked and a good collection was taken. Miss Avery gave an interesting report of the conference to members only, and plans for future work were discussed. Miss Odell was appointed as delegate from our branch to a Conference of Women's Societies called by the Portsmouth Women's Conference to consider: (1) Public Brothels in France, (2) Parliamentary Representation, (3) Communal Kitchens.

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