

# THE WOMAN'S LEADER

## AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

#### "A Power is passing from the Earth."

As we go to press the news arrives which the nation has been expecting for the past few days, that Lord Oxford and Asquith is no more. We leave it to others to pay tribute to his services to the Nation as a great political leader and parliamentarian. In relation to the causes for which this paper stands, we once counted him as perhaps our most formidable opponent. But the fact that we desire to remember at this hour is that of Lord Oxford's conversion to Equal Franchise and the remarkable speech in which he announced it in Parliament on 28th March, 1917. The passage in that speech which most sticks in our memory is not his famous comparison of himself to Stesichorus—suggested only to be disavowed—as one whose "eyes, which for years in this matter have been clouded by fallacies and sealed by illusions, at last have been opened to the truth." Nor is it the tribute paid to the work of women during the war. "How could we have carried on the war without them? Short of actually bearing arms in the field, there is hardly a service which has contributed, or is contributing, to the maintenance of our cause in which women have not been at least as active and as efficient as men." That tribute was common form at the period when it was spoken. The really remarkable passage of the speech—that which showed the insight of a statesman—was the admission that "what moves me still more in this matter is the problem of reconstruction when the war is over. The questions which will then necessarily arise in regard to women's labour and women's functions and activities in the new ordering of things—for, do not doubt it, the old order will be changed—are questions in regard to which I, for my part, feel it impossible, consistently either with justice or expediency, to withhold from women the power and the right of making their voice directly heard." That was a notable utterance. But we in 1928 still await complete fulfilment of the promise it held out.

#### Equal Franchise.

The question of Equal Franchise was referred to frequently during the debate on the Address. The Prime Minister, without giving a date for the discussion of the Franchise Bill, undertook, as indeed he has done before, that whenever the Bill is passed "we shall take care that there is a clause in it, if it is necessitated by the time, to ensure that all who are enfranchised by that Bill shall vote at the next election." He stated, however, in answer to Mr. MacDonald, that he had not considered whether they would be ready to vote for the municipal elections. The mover and seconder of the Address, Lieut.-Colonel Lambert Ward and Mr. Templeton, stated respectively:—

"There is no reason why a woman of 21 should not be able to return at least as reasoned a vote on national questions as her male contemporary."

and

"Although the experiment may seem drastic and may give offence in certain quarters, there is a necessity for continually advancing and continually adding to the powers of the people in the democratic government of our country."

We regret that last week we stated that the Franchise Bill had been introduced. We should have stated that notice was given that the Bill would be introduced "at an early date."

#### Private Members' Ballot.

The Private Members' Ballot, both for Bills and resolutions, has proved singularly disappointing with regard to subjects with which this paper is concerned. Considerable interest from a general point of view will be taken in the Stabilization of Easter Bill, which may have come up for its Second Reading by the time this is in the hands of our readers; the Shops (Hours of Closing) Bill, the Children and Young Persons Employment and Protection Bill, and the Hours of Industrial Employment Bill. Among the successful resolutions were those referring to anomalies in the contributory pensions system, municipal banks, etc. As our readers know, the ballot for Bills is taken only once during the Session. The ballot for resolutions is taken each month up to Easter.

#### Edinburgh Corporation Bill.

At the suggestion of the Committee on the above Bill, of representatives of Societies, which was called by the N.U.S.E.C. to support the opposition which is being organized against this Bill, a Conference of Members of Parliament has been arranged for Wednesday, 22nd February, 1928, at 5.15 p.m. in Room 11. Dr. Graham Little, Mr. Ernest Brown, and Dr. A. Salter are summoning the Conference, when the arguments against compulsory notification and treatment of persons suffering from venereal disease will be given by Dr. Graham Little and Miss Neilans. The Bill, which gives powers to the Medical Officer of Health for Edinburgh to enforce such notification and treatment in certain cases has been put down for its second reading, and a letter signed on behalf of a number of organizations is being sent to all Members of Parliament asking them to oppose it.

#### The Age of Consent in India.

As some criticism has been levelled at the Government for Opposition to the Age of Consent Bill, which raises the age of consent for unmarried girls to 16 and married girls to 14 (the present ages being 14 and 13 respectively), it is interesting to hear last week that Mr. Cresar, Home Member, speaking on 9th February on the Bill, announced that the Government has decided to appoint a committee to investigate the whole subject, including child marriages, in the hope of stimulating and concentrating public opinion. In the meantime the present Bill has been circulated with the object of eliciting public opinion. *The Times* Correspondent states that the proceedings in the Assembly were watched from the public galleries by 300 Indian women delegates of the All India Women's Educational Conference. "Their presence," he writes, "gave an unprecedented appearance to the Chamber, as the galleries had never before been occupied by Indian ladies in such large numbers."

#### The Cavell Film.

The present semi-official opposition to the public exhibition of the Cavell film strangely recalls the outcry which a generation ago greeted proposals to stage Bernard Shaw's play, "Mrs. Warren's Profession." As Shaw himself has pointed out, the British public is ready enough to greet vice with a cheer when it is presented in the rosy and attractive guise of musical comedy or farce, but disposed to rise in revolt against the presentation of it in a form calculated to send the spectator away

sick with the knowledge of its dirt, its ugliness, and its degradation. To-day we are solemnly told that the earlier war films to which the War Office and the Admiralty have lent willing co-operation are justifiable because they recall the endurance, the chivalry, and the splendour of war, without exciting bitter feeling on either side of the North Sea, but that the Cavell film is in a different category. It is painful, bitter, tactless. Well—so it may be. To regret the exhibition of films which glorify the heroics of war and evade its coarsening and its ugly aspects, is not necessarily to approve the exploitation of a story which mingles the glowing heroism of Edith Cavell with the frigid cruelty of war conditions under a military occupation. And there are doubtless members of the British public who will readily assume that German militarism is a peculiar thing, and that the military occupation of Brussels was in some sort more vile than the military occupation of—let us say, Essen. From that point of view the Cavell film has its dangers. It has its aesthetic dangers too, for few stories open wider avenues for the type of nauseating sentimentality which the film industry is capable of purveying to a hungry public. Like Sir Austin Chamberlain, we have not seen the film. But, unlike Sir Austin Chamberlain, we feel chary of criticizing it. The presence of Sybil Thorndike in the chief part gives us pause. Sybil Thorndike has her moments. Whether these moments can be achieved without the aid of her supreme instrument, her voice, we do not know. It is, however, just conceivable that in some such moment she might manage to "put over the footlights" (or should we say "put across the canvass") Edith Cavell's own message, by which she will be remembered through generations: *Patriotism is not enough*. It would be worth doing, even at the cost of a little diplomatic friction, because there are still people who are firmly convinced that it is.

#### War Films.

The controversy on the Edith Cavell film will give a special interest to the conference on Tuesday, 21st February, organized by the Women's International League, which is to be held at the Gate Theatre, 16a Villiers Street, on the influence of war films. The first session will discuss how and why war films are produced, and the second their influence. This conference, it should be noted, is not open to the general public, and tickets *must* be procured beforehand (see Coming Events). We believe that the subject is of great importance. We may not perhaps be prepared to ban all war films, but we recognize the grave dangers which were pointed out in a recent article in these columns.

#### The Conscription of Women.

The *Times* Correspondent last week reports on the debate in the French Senate on the proposals for the organization of the country in time of war. Article 6 deals with the conscription of women and was by many speakers held to be unnecessary in view of the voluntary services of French women during the late war. An amendment that women who held public appointments should be compelled to remain in them in the event of war, was opposed on the grounds that in the late war not a single woman had deserted her post. The question was ultimately referred back for fuller consideration. What, we wonder, did the women of France think of this debate? In André Siegfried's *Post-war Britain*, we see ourselves as a highly trained French observer sees us. At least we can claim that ingenuous and illogical though we may be, we believe, as he says, in "fair play" and laws relating to future wars will no longer be wholly man made.

#### The Women's International.

The International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship is holding the first of a series of lecture entertainments on Monday, 20th February, when a lecture on the women of Russia, in history, religion, and politics will be given by Jaakoff Prelvoker, to be followed by a recital of Russian songs. The object of this and future similar gatherings is to increase the membership of the Alliance in this country and the circulation of the monthly paper *Jus Suffragii*. The payment of six shillings for admission will carry with it a year's subscription to *Jus*. This new venture calls for support from all British suffragists with international sympathies, and we hope that this and subsequent entertainments will succeed in attracting many who have hitherto been outside the Alliance.

#### To What End.

It is reported that Signor Mussolini's Government is contemplating the imposition of compulsory eugenic medical control of marriage. In the meanwhile the Fascist League of Social

Hygiene at Geneva has opened a medical consultation bureau where candidates for matrimony may voluntarily seek medical advice both before and after marriage. So far so good. Compulsory interference with the freedom of individuals to marry and beget children is a delicate and highly controversial matter. In all probability there are few people who would deny its justification in certain extreme cases, and few who would care to contemplate its widespread and indiscriminate application. But the opening of opportunities for voluntary consultation is a different thing. There is room in the world for a good deal more expert study and advice concerning the technique and management of that most difficult human institution: marriage. Only—when Signor Mussolini concerns himself with the future of his race, we ask ourselves dubiously, "to what end?" To the end that it may darken the sun with its fighting planes and conquer the world with its imperial expansion? We fear his end is not the end of civilization. Or, in another sense we fear that it may be.

#### Women as Relieving Officers.

It was recently decided by the Northampton Board of Guardians to restrict applications for a vacant post as a relieving officer to men in spite of the plea put forward by one member for no sex bar on the grounds that intelligence and suitable qualifications were what mattered. This appears to us an extraordinary decision in view of the work that the Relieving Officer is called upon to do. We should have supposed that even the most anti-woman among Poor Law Guardians would consider that visiting the homes of the poor and receiving applications for assistance is work pre-eminently suitable for women. It looks as if the nature of the occupation and its requirement is the last thing that people think about if there is a post going.

#### Information for Weekly Tenants.

The Westminster Surrey Group has done a useful piece of work in issuing a leaflet compiled by Mrs. Barclay and Miss Perry, Chartered Surveyors, giving practical information of the law as affecting weekly tenants in London. Though intended for London tenants, it cannot fail to be useful for weekly tenants in other places, and social workers are advised to find out if anything of the sort is available for their own localities, and if not, consult Mrs. Barclay (96 Seymour Street, N.W. 1), who is willing to answer inquiries. Such information accessible to the ordinary householder on the protection afforded him by the Housing Acts, is essential at the present time. Though new houses and more new houses is the crying need of the moment, much of the worst effects of the present conditions would be mitigated by fuller knowledge on the part of tenants.

#### Another Woman By-election Candidate.

We congratulate the St. Ives Division of Cornwall on the candidate who will in all probability be formally adopted next week. Mrs. Walter Runciman has very unusual qualifications for Parliament. She began her career by taking the first class historical tripos at Girton. Since her marriage she has lived in the world of politics, and has taken a leading part in the work of the Women's Liberal Federation. We have on more than one occasion expressed our desire to see some Liberal women in the House of Commons, where at present the figures are four Conservative to three Labour, and we sincerely hope that Mrs. Runciman will be successful.

#### The Chances of Marriage.

In the survey of the Social Structure of England and Wales by Professor Carr Saunders, which has recently been published, the widespread theory that women have fewer chances of marriage since the war has been refuted. Census figures are quoted for 1911 and 1921, which show that on the average out of every 1,000 women over 15, 520 married in 1921, as compared to 506 in 1911. It is estimated that about one quarter of all women between 20 and 24 are married, and of women over 50, only one in six remain unmarried. Marriage at some time of her life is therefore the destiny of five out of six women—a fact apt to be forgotten by professional women and others in the middle classes, in which the proportion of spinsters is much larger than in the working class. We hope in a subsequent issue to review this important book, which as its introduction states, aims at presenting a coherent picture of some of the more important aspects of social life in this country so far as they can be illustrated by statistics.

## NO SEX DISTINCTIONS IN SOCIAL INSURANCE.

Considerable criticism has been evoked by the proposal put forward in Miss Martelli's *Sign Post to Social Insurance*—published in the series newly inaugurated by the N.U.S.E.C.—that insurance contributions and benefits should no longer be different for men and women, but that, if differential scales are judged necessary on administrative grounds, the difference should be based on the earnings of the contributors, rather than on their sex. No doubt this proposal, when discussed at the forthcoming Council meeting of the N.U.S.E.C., will be hotly debated. Our readers may therefore be glad to study beforehand the grounds for it.

It is a commonly accepted principle of a sound unemployment insurance scheme that (as the Blanesburgh Report puts it), the scheme "should provide benefits definitely less in amount than the general labourer's rate of wages, so that there may be no temptation to prefer benefit to work."

No one who has sat on an Employment Exchange Committee, charged with the unpleasant task of adjudicating on disputed claims to benefit, can doubt the soundness of this principle. The proportion of unworthy claimants that come before such a Committee is fortunately small. But among the most difficult cases to decide is that of the girl or woman whose earnings when in work are so small that she is financially nearly as well off when living on unemployment pay, and is besides more free to help her mother or attend to her children. Owing partly to the higher wages of men, partly to the fact that men have not this "alternative occupation" of home duties, it is much more rarely worth a man's while to remain on benefit instead of actively bestirring himself to find work. In the Committee on which the present writer serves, it was pointed out by her men colleagues that the proportion of women's applications that were "turned down" by the Women's Rota Committee was much larger than in the case of the Men's Rota Committee. Obviously the men were inclined to suspect that we—the Women's Committee—were harder on our own sex than the men were on theirs. But the composition of the Committee, on which labour women were amply represented, one of them serving as Chairman, made this extremely unlikely. On careful inquiry we satisfied ourselves that the true explanation

was that given above. I believe that the same fact—as to the higher proportion of rejected women's claims—holds good in other towns. If this is true now, when the women's benefit is only 15s., the men's 17s., obviously the tendency will be intensified if the women's rate were simply raised to the men's, or if a sum midway between the two were adapted for both. Can we then, as feminists, reasonably ask for a change which, as administrators, we know perfectly well would work badly, by helping to demoralize and discredit the woman contributor?

But the problem of the low-paid contributor is not confined to women. There are some general labourers (men) who earn less than some textile operators (women). Especially if he has a wife and many children, the unemployed labourer's benefit (including his dependents' allowances) may easily be higher than his earnings. At the other end of the scale, to the highly paid artisan (male or female) with a highly rented house, the unemployment benefit is a miserable pittance.

The logical way out of the dilemma is clearly to make contributions and benefits vary for both sexes with the rate of earnings. The stock objection to this course raised in British official circles is that the graded scheme would be too difficult to work. The present writer used meekly to accept this explanation, until she discovered from conversation with those experts of the International Labour Office at Geneva who specialize on insurance and have recently produced two weighty reports on the subject, that these experts consider that the British objection to a graded scheme and adherence to our flat rate system to be a peculiarly tiresome and indefensible instance of British conservatism. To the official objection "it would be too difficult," they replied simply "every other nation that has adopted a social insurance scheme has graded contributions and benefits in some form or another, based on earnings not on sex." If they can do it, why cannot Great Britain?

These foreign experts may be right or British officialdom may be right. It is not for the mere feminist to say. But if the feminist desire to get rid of the segregation of men and women workers into separate groups for insurance purposes, here is a possible way of doing it, without putting forward a demand which she knows in her heart neither will, nor perhaps should, be granted.

E. F. RATHBONE.

## THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN ON INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE EDUCATIONAL BODIES.

By MRS. RENUKA RAY, B.Sc. (Econ.) Lond.

II.

Recently a proposal has been set afoot by some of our pioneer women educationalists to move Government for the creation of a separate board for women's secondary and intermediate education, consisting mainly of women and a small number of able men in the nature of experts. This board is to set up a separate school final in accordance with the proposals of the Saddler Commission report. The Saddler Commission has shown us that there is great waste of time due to the low standard of the present school-leaving examination of the Calcutta University. Time is at this stage of education, even more precious in the case of girls than boys, and the reason is that only a few girls go in for higher education, the great majority getting married at the completion of their school life. If their school final is on a higher level, they would at least be ensured of a better and more complete education before leaving school. The board would also be useful in introducing new subjects for girls, such as domestic science and social hygiene. Its advocates want the board to have the recognition of the University and its co-operation in its creation; but they maintain that the board must be created even if University help is not forthcoming. The usefulness of such a board is unquestionable. It would give women a much greater power in the administration of girls' education. But it is essential that this board, though a separate entity, should have connection with the University. This could be secured by a few of the members of the board being members of the University Senate or vice versa. As a matter of fact, the University which contains so many of our most intellectual men, should be brought to realize the necessity of co-operating with educated Indian women, and of rendering them every aid in the formation of this women's board.

In matters educational, centralization is necessary in order to obtain co-ordination of policy, but there is need for a good deal of regional devolution for its actual administration.

This devolution could be effected by the formation of District Women's Councils which would be supervised by the Central

board of women's education. These district councils would be concerned with both primary and secondary as well as the zenana education of women in the districts. At present they would have to consist of quite a number of men, and only a few women. The number of women would gradually increase as the social conditions in the districts improved. The wives of officials and other educated women in the districts should be induced to manage the boards and to train up interested resident ladies to take up the work. This is most important to preserve continuity in action. Although men would have to form the majority on these district Councils under present circumstances, yet these Councils would form a training ground for women in the districts and would also be under the control and influence of a central board, where women would predominate. Herein lies their superiority over local bodies, such as municipalities which would have to consist wholly of men for a much longer time to come, as a long period will elapse before women are either able or willing to join them.

The Inspectress of schools would be an ex-officio member of the central board, and the District Inspectress, if appointed would be ex-officio members of the district councils and could play a large part in making the councils a success. However, the whole power should not be vested in their hands. Ultimate control should be kept in the hands of independent men and women who have not to be accountable to Government for their action, as Inspectresses naturally would be. Initiative and new ideas can only be introduced by those who are free from the trammels of officialdom.

Of course the time will come for these district councils to be established after the central board is brought nearer materialization. Recently the Government have urged upon the University the necessity of forming a separate board for secondary and intermediate education for both boys and girls. If such a board if formed and women are given their due importance, then

(Continued at foot of next page.)

### AN INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WELFARE FORTNIGHT.

An interesting experiment in co-operation between social organizations which will affect much saving of time, labour, and expense will take place in July of this year in Paris, when four independent congresses dealing with different aspects of Social Welfare will combine in an "International Social Welfare Fortnight."

The International Housing and Town Planning Federation will lead off on 2nd July. Several days later follows the International Congress of Public and Private Social Welfare which unlike many international bodies can claim a pre-war existence. During the second week the International Child Welfare Congress and the International Conference of Social Work will be held. The first of these includes no fewer than four International Societies, the International Child Welfare Association, the International Union for the Welfare of Infancy, the Save the Children International Union, and the League of Red Cross Societies. The second is an entirely new venture. America has already a National Conference of Social Workers but we do not know of any similar organization in any other country, and, up to the present, no attempt has been made to gather social workers of all countries together except in the case of those engaged in some specialized form of activity such as hospital social service, industrial welfare or settlements.

These different conferences will have the great advantage of common arrangements for hospitality, information bureau, travelling, exchange, and other practical matters that add much to the ease and comfort of delegates. Joint visits, excursions, and social functions will be arranged and an exhibition consisting of exhibits from all the countries represented, which will be known as the International Exhibition of Housing and Social Progress, will be open for a month for the benefit of the Paris public as well as the delegates, which are expected to number several thousands.

The methods of the various congresses will also aim at the saving of time and labour. There will be a plenary session each morning and all speeches will be in the three Conference languages—French, German, and English—and circulated beforehand to avoid lengthy and wearisome translations. In the afternoon sectional meetings will be devoted to the discussions of the subjects selected when experienced translators will give the gist of each contribution so that all will understand what is going on.

The main difficulty in such a scheme is the avoidance of overlapping. Housing and town planning is a highly specialized subject and child welfare has become so in recent years. But the time between "Public and private welfare" and "Social work" is not visible to the naked eye. The admirable organization of the latter conference in the hands of Dr. René Sand has, however, produced a well proportioned programme which immediately strikes a different note. It includes Training for Social Work, Methods of Social Case Work, Social Work, and Industry, and Social Work and Public Health. The names of the Chairmen of the different sections, which include M. Albert Thomas, of the International Labour organization, Professor Bagge, of Stockholm, Mrs. John Glenn, of New York, Dr. Alice Salomon, of Berlin, and Mr. Percy Alden, representing Great Britain, gave evidence that the problems presented by post-war social administration will not be handled on amateurish lines. Fortunately the dates permit Social Workers to do justice to some of the interesting sections of the other Conferences which cover assistance of foreigners, the aged, and perhaps most topical of all in view of recent developments, the care of the mentally defective.

A British Committee for the Conference on Social Work has been formed under the Chairmanship of Mr. Percy Alden, British Institute of Social Service, 33 Bloomsbury Square, from whom particulars may be had and it is to be hoped that a very large contingent from this country will find its way to Paris. We are told that both Americans and Germans are coming in large numbers and that many nations, even the most remote, will be represented. Great Britain must not lag behind.

E. M.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH SCHOOL, PECKHAM ROAD.

SUNDAY, at 7 p.m.,

MR. G. F. HOLLAND

(Dramatic Critic to "Illustrated London News")

THE DEGRADATION OF BEAUTY.

### SOME SCOTTISH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS.

EDINBURGH.

In commemoration of the passing of the First Act for the Enfranchisement of Women, a dinner, organized by the Edinburgh Society for Equal Citizenship, was held in the Oak Hall, Princes Street, on the evening of 2nd February. In the absence of Miss Frances Simson, M.A., the company, composed for the most part of women and numbering about 100, was presided over by Miss Milne Chapman. Among the speakers was Miss S. E. S. Mair, LL.D., Hon. President of the Edinburgh S.E.C., and one of the first of our Scottish pioneers in the work for the emancipation of women. Her speech, reminiscent of the early days of the movement, delighted the audience with its charm and humour.

GLASGOW.

The Amalgamated Glasgow S.E.C. and W.C.A. was fortunate in having Mrs. Stocks as its guest for the commemoration on 6th February of the Representation of the People Act of 1918. In the afternoon, Mrs. Stocks spoke of "The Programme and Work of the N.U.S.E.C." at a reception given by Mrs. Douglas Mitchell, convener of the Hillhead Division. From a survey of the winter's activities she passed to an exposition of the "New Feminism" with its subordination of particular aims to a deepening and steadying of values in every sphere. She gave an account of the work of the Parliamentary Section of the N.U.S.E.C., discussed moot problems and in her address, as in answers to numerous questions, brought the attitude and personalities of the movement vividly before us.

In the evening a dinner was held in the Ca'doro Restaurant. The President, Miss F. H. Melville, B.D., LL.D., Mistress of Queen Margaret College, was in the chair and about 65 members were present. In proposing the toast of "The Tenth Anniversary," Miss Melville reviewed the 1918 Act in relation to previous effort and in the light of new perspectives. Mrs. Stocks, speaking of "The Future of the Woman's Movement," made many prophecies—about the weather, about Mr. Winston Churchill, above all about the obstacles still to be surmounted by feminists. She was witty, stimulating, and sobering; her statement of the present position and her penetration into wider issues were full of illumination. Other speakers were Miss M. J. Buchanan, Miss de la Barra, Chilean Consul in Glasgow, Miss E. C. Ewing, M.A., and Mrs. McCallum, M.A. A letter was sent to the Hon. President, Dame Millicent Fawcett, LL.D., G.B.E., on behalf of the company.

### ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

St. Joan's Alliance birthday celebrations of the partial enfranchisement of women took the form of a New Year's party in aid of the funds of the *Catholic Citizen*, which was held in the Caxton Hall on 6th February.

There was a delightful programme of music, one of the artistes being Miss Felia Doric, whose mother is an active worker for suffrage in Switzerland. She sang some delightful Swiss folk songs, accompanied by her guitar.

Mrs. Laughton Mathews introduced His Lordship the Bishop of Pella, an associate member of the Alliance. He warned us that Equal Franchise was not yet on the Statute Book, that in public matters those who sit quiet achieve nothing, and that it was necessary to agitate in order to obtain reforms. He hoped that Catholic women would make good use of the hard-won franchise, and spoke of the necessity of societies like our own to spur on those who were apathetic in using their votes.

### THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN, etc.

(Continued from previous page.)

educated women would have no quarrel with the project. But it is most deplorable that the Government proposals to the University include only one woman on this board. All things considered, it would be best for women to have a separate board, but it must work in co-operation with the University if it is to be a success. The formation of this board would by no means make it unnecessary for women to establish their claims to fellowship on the body of the University. Higher education will be controlled there, and it is essential for us to have a hand in the guidance of the higher education of Indian women.

Surely with the urgent need for the spread of women's education, and an even greater need to improve the type of education given, we should count on the help of all fair minded and liberal men. But we must not forget that it is on women that ultimate responsibility lies. It is for them, not only to insist on their rights, but make use of them.

### GEORGE MEREDITH AND THE WOMAN'S MOVEMENT.

Women suffragists hold many men in grateful remembrance for their chivalrous support of "The Cause," but it is a question if any deserve more hero-worship than George Meredith, whose centenary is being held this week. Had his novels and poems been more widely read, the campaign for women's Suffrage would have been shorter. His ideas on equality between men and women have filtered down from the few to the many, and have become absorbed in the thought of to-day.

But he was a futurist in literature, whose ideals are not yet wholly realized. He understood the movement, that to so many otherwise intelligent people remained an enigma. "Civilization," he wrote, "is impossible without some degree of equality between the sexes."

*The Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt* became a textbook to budding suffrage speakers, reasoning out, as it does, the whole case for and against to a triumphal finish. The poems and novels that deal directly with the Equal Moral Standard make a very direct appeal. The tragic story of the two sisters in *Rhoda Fleming*, and the quintessence of feeling put into the last sentence of it, "Help poor girls," must have filled up the ranks of the Suffrage Societies.

It seems a striking coincidence that the centenaries of George Meredith and Josephine Butler should come so near each other. They were one in their steady preaching of equality, and their demand for justice rather than mercy.

MARION J. BUCHANAN.

### THE CAXTON HALL DEMONSTRATION.

From a Correspondent.

Life will be a little duller when Equal Franchise is won. The meeting in the Caxton Hall on 8th February was full of the old spirit, and the historic banners showed up beautifully against the panelled walls of the old hall. Lady Rhondda was in the Chair, and the speakers included Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, Mrs. Abbott, Miss Froud, and Miss Nancy Parnell. Strange as it may seem, they all found something fresh to say on the well-worn subject, and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence congratulated the younger suffragists on their little escapade on the morning of the opening of Parliament. True to suffrage meetings of past days there was some insignificant but persistent heckling which was drowned by community singing—a device not discovered in pre-war days. The following resolution was carried by a very large majority, only the one or two disturbers of the peace voting against.

This meeting of the Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee notes the statement in the King's Speech that proposals will be brought forward in Parliament for amending the law relating to the Parliamentary and Local Government franchise.

Relying upon the pledge made by the Prime Minister on behalf of his Government—that women shall have the parliamentary vote at 21, and on the same terms as men, and shall exercise that vote at the next election—this meeting calls for the immediate introduction and passage into law of a simple measure not complicated with other electoral matters.

### QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT.

Thursday, 9th February, 1928.

In answer to a question asked by Mr. Ernest Brown as to the number of training centres which have been established for unemployed persons, and the numbers attending them on 31st January, 1928, the Minister of Labour gave the following reply: Training centres for unemployed men have been established at Birmingham, Dudley, Wallsend-on-Tyne, Claydon near Ipswich, and Brandon. The number of men in attendance at the end of January was 1,281. Home training centres for unemployed women and girls are being conducted by the Central Committee on Women's Training and Employment at Chatham, Ramsgate, Dover, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, Gateshead, Jarrow, Newcastle, Sheffield, Leeds, Pontypool, Abertillery, Swansea, Glasgow, and Greenock. The number in attendance at the end of January was 882. There is also a centre at Market Harborough for training women as household workers for Australia; 39 were in attendance at the end of January. Ninety-four Juvenile Unemployment Centres (62 for boys and 32 for girls) have been established by local education authorities in 43 districts. In addition, four centres have been approved, but are not yet open, and other centres are in prospect. The number of boys and girls attending during the last week for which figures are available was 8,200, representing an average daily attendance of 7000 (5,000 boys and 2,000 girls).

### PARODY: "A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT."

The following parody on Robert Burns' song, "A Man's a Man for a' that," was composed by the late Mrs. Albert Grey, and was recited by her at the dinner to celebrate the passing of "The Representation of the People Act, 1918," which was held in Glasgow on 6th February, 1925:—

We're here, in happy mindfulness,  
To toast the day and a' that,  
When woman first was gi'en the richt  
To serve like man, and a' that.  
For a' that, and a' that,  
Our joy is great for a' that,  
The vote is but the needful note,  
The wills the power for a' that.

But though we're glad for battles won,  
We canna' bide, for a' that,  
There's ithers etling to be freed  
Frae man made laws and a' that.  
For a' that, and a' that,  
We maun be leal for a' that,  
To gie her due wha lacks it noo,  
For honour's sake and a' that.

We licht some heart, she taks her share  
In honest toil and a' that,  
She earns, but does na' get fair pay,  
For man is man for a' that.  
For a' that, and a' that,  
She'll hae to work for a' that,  
Though her deeds be great for weal of State  
She'll get sma' thanks for a' that.

In days gane by, baith grim and dour,  
She fought the fight, and a' that,  
Dared mony a deed fu' courage high,  
Was jailed for that, and a' that.  
For a' that, and a' that,  
She'd dae't again for a' that;  
For prison's lot she cared nae jot,  
She wan the vote for a' that.

Some men there be, say Woman's Spere's  
The Hame and Bairns and only that,  
But gin there's game to bring them fame  
It's "Here's to Her" and a' that.  
For a' that, and a' that,  
Oor toast's Fair Play and a' that,  
For equal wark gie equal pay,  
For a wife's a wife for a' that.

God gie's the strength, the skill, the love,  
To gav him help an' a' that,  
For man's oor freen' the best we hae  
To see us through and a' that.  
For a' that, and a' that,  
We'll bless his name for a' that,  
Tho' only man he's part of the plan  
O' the womanly woman for a' that.

Then here's to Her, and here's to Us,  
And here's to Life, and a' that,  
We'll mend the laws, and help the Cause,  
And end the strife, for a' that.  
For a' that, and a' that,  
We'll pledge ourselves for a' that,  
Wi' willing heart to play our part  
In woman's name and a' that.

### USEFUL INFORMATION FOR WEEKLY TENANTS IN LONDON.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Copies can be obtained from the WEARDALE PRESS,  
26 GORDON STREET, W.C.1. Post free, 1½d.

This leaflet issued by the Westminster Survey Group gives a simple summary of the law relating to Tenure, Rents, Premiums, Repairs, etc.

HELEN AND FELICIA.<sup>1</sup>

In order to appreciate Miss E. B. C. Jones's latest novel, it is necessary to take for granted the view of life held by the chief characters in it, and perhaps by the author herself. I say "perhaps" because although the book, like other serious novels and plays, may be taken as a statement of a philosophy; it may also be taken simply as a description of a phase of contemporary life. It is from the second standpoint alone that I wish to criticize it to-day. Lest I should give rise to misunderstanding, however, or seem to neglect a possible challenge, I will begin by saying that I believe the set of people described in it are the victims of a tragic delusion, and that I also feel about them that in their violent reaction against the insincerities and the cruelties of some of their forbears, they have fallen into other insincerities and cruelties not one whit less horrible than those they condemn. *Helen and Felicia* will shock and disgust some old-fashioned people. Not without reason, I think; though I also hold that *Helen and Felicia* and their like were not without reason for the reaction which (as reactions are apt to do) has carried them some way the other side of truth.

To turn to the book itself, it seems to me much the most profound piece of work that Miss Jones has yet attempted. This very fact probably accounts for the greater unevenness that one feels in it. It is the history of the close and tender relation between two sisters in a large family. Helen and Felicia and their love for each other during some years of their youth, is, I think, almost perfectly described. They are very young indeed when the book begins, and still very young when it ends. We are left in doubt as to what feeling for each other would have developed into in later life. The actual incident with which the book closes seems to me frankly impossible, but the idea suggested, that there may be a love between sisters of such a nature that love (in the ordinary sense) and marriage are only episodes in comparison with it, carries some conviction. Miss Jones at any rate describes it in a way which makes one believe in Helen and Felicia, and love them in spite of their (in my opinion) deplorable attitude towards all the rest of the world.

It is in the description of the family setting that the unevenness of the book first appears. In some ways it is very good indeed, the incidents and conversations are quite horribly real, and show an extraordinary insight into moods and the natures of those that undergo them. But there is too much of this, or too little. If we are told so much about Irene we ought to be told just a little more, in order that we should be able to sympathize with her from the inside, and not only observe her with dislike as her brothers and sisters did most of the time. Too much trouble is taken in defining Aswell if she is to be packed off to Germany to live with a love she does not love and study music, through all the second part of the book. As for Ann, she does not come in at all, but only serves as a subject of conversation and a (quite useless) warning to her sisters and brother. She fulfils her purpose in the story, but I cannot help feeling that she would have done it better if she had been presented more directly, and not as a rather dim composite photograph.

These defects in the otherwise admirable description of the family, are not, however, so serious as the comparative failure in the part of the book that relates to Helen's husband—Conrad is real up to a point, but at that point he behaves in a way so inconsistent with what we have been made to believe about him that he quite destroys his own image. This incident belongs to the end of the book, a part of it which it is very difficult to criticize if one has no experience of the view of life held by the actors in it. Looking at it from the outside I can imagine though not wholly believe in Helen's attitude; I can accept Felicia's action as being consistent with one part of her, though it seems to me impossible that the other part should not have won; but when we come to Conrad I feel that if he acted as indicated, then he was so to speak not there at all.

I cannot close this review without a reference to the extreme beauty of Miss Jones's style. Her descriptive passages have at moments a kind of lyric beauty which makes a strange setting for the oath-sprinkled dialogue. She makes us feel that her characters were seeing loveliness and believing in it all the time; no matter what they said!

I. B. O'MALLEY.

<sup>1</sup> *Helen and Felicia*, by E. B. C. Jones. (Chatto & Windus, 7s. 6d. net.)

## NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

President: Miss ELEANOR RATHBONE, C.C., J.P. Hon. Treasurer: Miss MACADAM.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Mrs. HORTON.  
General Secretary: Miss HANCOCK.  
Offices: 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.  
Telephone: Victoria 6188.

## TESTAMENTARY PROVISION FOR WIVES AND CHILDREN.

The N.U.S.E.C. has drawn up a memorandum which summarizes the position with regard to the dependents of a testator in England, and gives an outline of the laws in relation to this subject which are in force in Scotland, the Dominions, a number of European countries, and the United States of America. Copies of this memorandum (price 3d.) which has been written in connection with the resolution which the Union has asked Lord Astor to move in the House of Lords calling for an investigation into the matter, may be obtained on application to headquarters.

## ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING, 1928.

7th, 8th, 9th, 10th March, at King George's Hall, Central Y.M.C.A.  
*Appeal for Hospitality for Delegates.*

It is greatly hoped that any of our members and friends who live in London and who can possibly offer hospitality to delegates to our Annual Council Meeting from 7th to 10th March inclusive, will let us know as soon as possible. This is a form of help which is really invaluable as many of the delegates would be unable to attend the Council without it.

## Council Time Table.

We append a time table showing the Council sessions, and the various functions connected with the Council:—

Wednesday, 7th March: 2 p.m., First Session.  
8 p.m., Reception, King's College for Women, Campden Hill.  
Thursday, 8th March: 10 a.m.—12.45 p.m., Second Session.  
2 p.m.—4.30 p.m., Third Session.  
8 p.m., Mass Demonstration, Queen's Hall.  
Friday, 9th March: 10 a.m.—12.45 p.m., Fourth Session.  
1 p.m., Public Luncheon, Criterion Restaurant.  
3 p.m.—5 p.m., Fifth Session.  
Saturday, 10th March: 10 a.m.—1 p.m., Sixth Session.

All sessions will be open to the public, and the gallery of the hall is being reserved for visitors, who can obtain tickets, price 6d. a session, or 2s. 6d. for all the six sessions. Tickets for the luncheon can be obtained at a cost of 5s. for members of the N.U.S.E.C., or any of its affiliated societies, and 7s. 6d. for non-members. Tickets for the reception are free to delegates to the Council, and 2s. 6d. to others. Further particulars and requests for tickets should be made to the General Secretary, 15 Dean's Yard, London, S.W. 1.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS.

Copies of the questionnaire specially drawn up for the London County Council elections (of which a copy was published in these columns last week) and of the newly revised edition of our questionnaire for all Local Government Elections may be obtained from Headquarters, free of charge. We hope very much that as many members as possible will be able to put these questions to the candidates in their own constituencies.

## BY-ELECTIONS.—ILFORD BY-ELECTION.

Answers to our questionnaire have been received from all three candidates. Sir George Hamilton (Conservative) qualifies his answers to questions on Equal Moral Standard and Women Police with the statement that he would require expert advice on them. With regard to Equal Pay for Equal Work, he says: "Pay in all cases must be according to capacity," and on Restrictive Legislation, he remarks, "Yes, but obviously there must be cases in which the nature of the work is such that special precautions are necessary on grounds of sex." He does not agree, without reservations, to supporting legislation to make illegal the compulsory retirement on marriage of women in public employment. As the Nationality of Married Women is involved in International Treaties he will not pledge himself on this point; he agrees with the separate taxation of married people and with Family Allowances if and when the financial position of the country will allow such changes. To all other questions he answers in the affirmative. Mr. Comyns Carr (Liberal) answers in the affirmative to most of our questions,

## WOMEN AND ADULT EDUCATION.

A correspondent writes: "I do not know how it is in other parts of the country, but in the north-western district a very significant development is noticeable in adult educational activities: the coming of the women. It is the custom in our area for the Vice-Chancellor of the University to invite all the members of tutorial classes for which his University is responsible, to spend an afternoon and evening as his guests. Lectures, tea, music, dancing, and a public address are comprised in the day's programme. The visitors, some thousand strong, are drawn from a wide urbanized industrial area. Some of the remotest mining and textile centres of the surrounding district send their quotas. Every type of industry, every grade of wage-earning is represented. The fact that all are members of classes means that all are engaged in the systematic study, under Board of Education rules, of some educational subject for at least two hours a week. Now I have been present at these gatherings for the last four years, and I have observed with interest that whereas on my first occasion women students were a mere sprinkling in an audience overwhelmingly male, year by year the female element has increased. Regiments of young women now appear, elegant and normal young women with pink stockings and shingled heads—'under thirties.' Indeed, I should be inclined to say that during the past two or three years there has been a genuine 'movement' of women in the world of adult education. But it is unsafe to generalize from a particular area, and it would be interesting to know whether Manchester's experience is typical of Great Britain. Meanwhile, it remains to be seen whether circumstances will be too strong for these enthusiasts when married life takes toll of their free evenings. I cherish the hope that many of them may marry male fellow students, who, because they understand and share educational ambition, may be prepared to take turn and turn about with the baby of an evening."

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but qualifies that on Restrictive Legislation, thus: "Yes, on the nature of the work coupled with the capacities of the worker." With regard to Information on Methods of Birth Control and Women Police he does not agree with interfering with local authorities, but he is in favour of Women Police; and he cannot support our policy on Employment of Married Women in such general terms. He adds to the questionnaire the following remark, "Taxation imposed by the present Government presses with undue severity upon women and he would urge the removal of such taxes apart from any objections to them on fiscal grounds." Mr. de Gruchy (Labour) answers in the affirmative to all our questions except that on Information on Methods of Birth Control, which he considers a matter of personal discretion and not of politics." He remarks, "My record shows that I have always been a consistent supporter of the objects of your organization."

UNITED FRANCHISE DEMONSTRATION, QUEEN'S HALL,  
Thursday, 8th MARCH, 8 p.m.

## Decorations.

Arrangements for this great event are in full swing—offers of help in making festoons will be greatly appreciated; a room for this purpose is available each day from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Saturdays included) at c/o Messrs. Gaunt and Jarrold, 34 Marsham Street, S.W. 1. If members and friends of the N.U.S.E.C. living in country districts would send gifts of evergreens to the above-mentioned address from now on, it would be a real help.

## Tickets.

As the demands for tickets are so heavy, ticket holders are asked to be in their seats by 7.55 p.m. As soon as all the tickets are sold for the Queen's Hall, applicants will be allotted seats in the Overflow. There are tickets still available in the Orchestra seats for those under 30 wishing to take part in the Singing Procession.

## Community Singing.

Mr. Martin Shaw has kindly consented to conduct the final practice of songs at the Guildhouse on Saturday, 3rd March, at 7 p.m. It is greatly hoped that our Societies in and near London will make a special effort to be present on this occasion. Handbills and all particulars can be obtained from Miss Auld, 15 Dean's Yard, S.W. 1.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

The leaflet on the work of Provincial County Councils has been revised and brought up to date, and copies can be obtained from Headquarters, price 1s. 8d. post free.

## NEW LEAFLET.

A new leaflet dealing with the Interpretation of Equality accepted by the N.U.S.E.C. has just been brought out. We strongly recommend this leaflet to our Societies, as a means of making clear to those of our present members who are in any doubt the object and aims of the N.U.S.E.C. We hope this will be read by every member of every Society. Copies can be obtained from Headquarters, price 3d. per dozen.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## THE RESIGNATIONS AT THE N.U.S.E.C. COUNCIL, 1927.

MADAM,—It is both interesting and amusing to note that Mrs. Mott evidently thinks that she knows why "the eleven" resigned, better than they themselves do! But really there is no need for her to try to "force it into our heads"—we know very well why we resigned; and if Mrs. Mott had read the statement issued by us at the time, she would know too.  
17 Campden House Road, W. 8. FLORENCE M. BEAUMONT.

## GLADSTONE AND THE POSITION OF WOMEN.

MADAM,—An ancient friend of mine, a radical working man, sends me the following, which I think has some special interest for us at the present time:—

"Talking of Mr. Gladstone, I am reminded of an incident which has some bearing on the Equality of Women. In 1878, just 50 years ago, I was instructed to ask Mr. Gladstone to contribute some books to the Library of a Radical Club, which had taken as its motto what purported to be a quotation from one of the G.O.M.'s speeches:—

"A RADICAL IS A MAN WHO IS IN EARNEST."

"By return of post there came a post card, filled to overflowing as only Gladstone knew how, with a passionate, angry remonstrance at being misquoted. He said 'What I really said was "A RADICAL IS ONE who is in Earnest," and you make me declare that woman is incapable of expressing earnestness, thus imposing upon me the odious charge of placing the female sex in a very inferior position. I must ask you to get the Club to rectify this very serious mistake at once.'"

"As no report of this incident has ever appeared, I thought you would be interested in hearing of it. . . . Yours very truly."

It does interest us very much, and I hope it will interest the readers of THE WOMAN'S LEADER.  
MILLCENT G. FAWCETT.

## COMING EVENTS.

## BRITISH COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE.

FEB. 21. 1 p.m. 17 Buckingham Street, Strand. Luncheon. Speaker: Miss Newcomb, "Education." Tickets 2s.

## JOSEPHINE BUTLER CENTENARY.

FEB. 21. 8 p.m. King's College, Campden Hill, W. 8 (under the auspices of the Women's International League, Kensington Branch). Speakers: Miss Alison Neilans and Dr. Ethel Williams. Chair: Lord Balfour.

## NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

East Croydon W.C.A. FEB. 20. 3 p.m. Eldon House, Wellesley Road. Mrs. Abbott, "The Responsibility of the Vote."

East Lewisham W.C.A. FEB. 17. 3 p.m. Courthill Road Hall. Mrs. Cecil Chesterton, "Cecil Houses and how they are made."

Edinburgh W.C.A. FEB. 21. 5.15. 27 Rutland Street. Study Circle Lecture—Miss Cowan, M.A., "The Employment of Children."

Kensington and Paddington S.E.C. FEB. 23. 5 p.m. Meeting for Members only to discuss policy with regard to the forthcoming local government elections. Chair: Lord Balfour.

## SIX POINT GROUP.

FEB. 21. 5 p.m. 92 Victoria Street. Mrs. Mortimer, "Women in Advertising." Chair: Mrs. Harvey Clark.

## SOCIETY OF FRIENDS PEACE COMMITTEE.

FEB. 20. 8 p.m. Meeting House, Euston Road. Public Meeting on the Outlawry of War. Speakers: Prof. Gilbert Murray, Prof. Noel Baker. Chair: Lord Parmoor.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

LONDON AND NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE, 35 Marsham Street, Westminster. Secretary, Miss P. Strachey. Information Bureau, Interviews, 10 to 1, except Saturdays. Members' Centre open daily. Restaurant open to 7.30. (Not Saturdays.)

EDUCATED HOME HELPS BUREAU, 190 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W. 1 (new address), requires and supplies educated women for all domestic work. Registration: Employers, 2s. 6d.; workers, 1s. Suiting fee: Employers, 7s. 6d.; workers, 2s. (Victoria 5940.)

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 19th February, 3.30, Lady Hoare, "My Flight to India." 6.30, Dr. Percy Dearmer.

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