

THE VOTE.
February 7, 1913.
ONE PENNY.

THE FINAL ISSUE. C. DESPARD.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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Edited by C. DESPARD.

OBJECTS: 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.

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

CARTOON: THE TANGLED SKEIN.

OUR POINT OF VIEW.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE DECLARATION.

AT HEADQUARTERS.

HONOUR. G. COLMORE.

THE SIREN SONG. C. NINA BOYLE.

POLITICAL NEWS.

THE FINAL ISSUE. C. DESPARD.

THE MEN WHO GOVERN US. C. NINA BOYLE.

"HENCE THESE TEARS."

OUR INTERNATIONAL COLUMN.

WOMEN IN INDUSTRY.

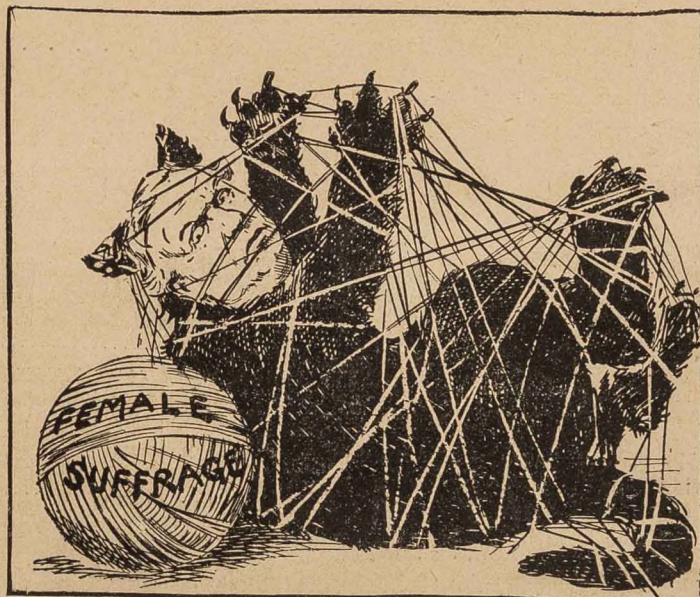
NURSES AND REGISTRATION: MORE BROKEN PLEDGES.

OUR NEW PRIZE COMPETITION.

A NIGHT OUT AND THE MORNING AFTER.

LONDON CAMPAIGNS.

A
Tangled
Skein.



By courtesy of]

[“The Pall Mall Gazette.”

“To think
I began
by playing
with it!”

OUR POINT OF VIEW.

Suffrage Exhibition at Eastbourne.

Most heartily we wish the greatest success to the Women Suffrage Exhibition at Eastbourne on Feb. 8, and sincerely congratulate Mr. Jaakof Prelooker, its hon. organiser, on behalf of the Men's League for Woman Suffrage, on the hopeful prospect. Mr. Prelooker is a champion of thirty years' standing, having worked actively for our Cause in Russia, Germany, France and England. It will be of interest to our readers to know that it was when the Russian censorship interdicted his lectures on "Woman in Judaism, Christianity, Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Mahommedanism," that he voluntarily gave up his position in a Government school and came to England, where he has since become a naturalised British subject. He was also the first man in this country to refuse to pay rates and taxes as a protest against the political disabilities of his wife and daughter and women generally. The Women's Freedom League is taking part in the Exhibition. Mrs. Tanner will be one of the able and experienced speakers, who during the day will deal with various aspects of the question, and Miss Thomas will have charge of our literature. Mr. Prelooker and his very strong, energetic and representative committee have arranged a most attractive programme to show the extent of the movement, the magnitude of its organisations, its journalistic, literary and artistic productions, illustrating the need and justice of woman's claim to full citizenship. The Exhibition is to be heralded by a Poster Parade on Friday, Feb. 7, in which many well-known inhabitants of Eastbourne, men and women, will take part. Poster parading has been raised to a new dignity—as have other methods of work—by its association with the suffrage movement, and Eastbourne is determined to make a good show. Sussex suffragists are rallying to the support of the Exhibition, and all friends who can spare the time will do good service to the Cause by attending and helping in the conversion of the "Antis." We hope next week to be able to chronicle a record success, and in the meantime congratulate our enterprising contemporary, *The Eastbourne Gazette*, on its continued devotion of space to the discussion of vital questions under the heading "Woman's Sphere."

Mrs. Humphry Ward Again.

Mrs. Humphry Ward has again written one of her epoch-making letters to *The Times*, in which she states that before the collapse of the Franchise Bill, and even yet, she was and is anxious to admit married women to the municipal franchise on a wider or Dickinsonian amendment, chiefly, apparently, for the purpose of having a special new municipal referendum of married males and females by which Women's Suffrage may be defeated. Speaking of married women, she says:—

There is no other class of the community that is so deeply interested in good municipal government—good schools, good sanitation, good housing, good administration of a score of important Acts dealing with the welfare of women and children. To admit them to the municipal vote would, I believe, infuse a new spirit and a new responsibility into municipal government. And yet by giving them these new and important powers you would not—pace my old friend Mr. Lyttelton!—be asking women to vote on the selection of a male Imperial Government, or on Imperial affairs, vital to the existence of this country, and dependent entirely on male experience and male force. In this field, if women made mistakes they would not be irremediable. And there is an enormous amount of shrewd home-wisdom still unutilised among the women of this country, which would find its natural outlet in an enlarged municipal franchise.

We quite agree with Mrs. Ward's youthful enthusiasm for married women, the Cabinet Ministers have apparently infected her, only unfortunately those of us who have sat on municipal councils have groaned in spirit at the laws on Education, Poor Law, &c., which we have been called upon to administer; the law of lawyers is so lamentably lacking in "shrewd home-wisdom," it is no good telling us to respect the brains

or sense or justice of our rulers after a meeting on the Board of Guardians.

Indecent Domesticity of Male Legislators.

And things are getting daily worse, our rulers have made so "many irremediable mistakes." Take the insurance muddle, particularly with regard to consumptives and sick maidservants, who, in spite of being insured persons, are constantly being thrown upon the Poor Law. Women have no control over the indecent domesticity of an Imperial and male Parliament; they interfere with us in our homes and in our habits, even in our beds, and we want some "shrewd home-wisdom" in Parliamentary control to stop such invirile and ignorant legislation. Mrs. Ward seems delighted with her new referendum. We would remind her that the Dickinsonian amendment has been brought up before in municipal affairs. Nor would any suffragists accept the referendum. It is not the law of the land, and if England accepts it, it will strike at the root of representative government. Also, if you admit women to vote on such a matter, you cannot logically again refuse them as registered and qualified Parliamentary electors.

A Public Danger.

We call the attention of our readers to the question of nurses and registration, dealt with on page 251, and how, unsupported by the power of the vote, this much-needed reform has been shelved year after year. Miss Beatrice Kent, writing to us on the subject, says:—

The possibilities of trained, standardised, State-regulated professional nursing are almost unbounded. The urgency of State registration which will afford the fullest opportunities, was never greater than at this moment. Under the Insurance Act nurses will be largely employed by the State, which, while denying the honour and dignity of State recognition, yet eagerly claims their indispensable services. No educational standard is defined or required! The State says in effect, any standard will do—but we say, nothing less than the very best in nursing is good enough for the poor, equally with the rich.

It is inconceivable that a Cabinet Minister, whose salary of £10,000 a year is paid by the taxes of the people—men and women—for his services to the nation, should have the effrontery to suggest that District Nurses working under the Act, should receive the paltry salary of £80 a year. This is Mr. Lloyd George's conception of the value of trained nursing to the State. The suggestion, however, has been strongly opposed, and it appears likely that the figure will ultimately reach £120 for full time service, which now that the sickness benefits have become payable is no sinecure. In other words, the District Nurses employed under the Act are being—like the Panel doctors—much overworked.

It is easy to see what will follow; well-trained nurses will refuse to work under such chaotic administration of the law, so the half-trained nurse will come into the field, lowering the prestige of the profession and imperilling the health of the people. When once the public realise that this is a matter that intimately concerns them, we shall soon see the fruition of our hopes in legislative enactment.

"Men Are Men"

"Men are men," as women well know. They insist angrily, clamorously, pathetically on the value of their own "functions," and the return which the State should give for them. The subjoined Government document, however, shows that men do not object to filching the credit (and the cash) for women's functions.

State Section MATERNITY BENEFIT. Husband's Claim.

To the Secretary,

I hereby claim Maternity Benefit due to me in respect of my wife's confinement as certified below.

Signed Regd. No.
Address

Certificate. I hereby certify that
was confined on
and was attended by me during her confinement.
Signed* Date
*Add any Qualifications.

Receipt from Member (Husband). I hereby acknowledge the receipt of the sum of in cash.
Signature
Date

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE DECLARATION.

At Caxton Hall on January 29, the Women's Freedom League had the pleasure of listening to the views of Mr. W. H. Dickinson, M.P., author of the "Dickinson Amendment" to the defunct Franchise Bill, on the present situation. The speakers at the Caxton Hall Wednesday afternoon At Homes are given a free platform to express opinions not necessarily those of the Women's Freedom League, and Mr. Dickinson's thoughtful and most sympathetic address, while giving further evidence—if any were needed—of his profound interest in the women's movement and his distress at the failure of the Prime Minister's arrangements, also gave evidence of the fundamental difference between the outlook of party men and that of non-party women.

Mr. Dickinson's position is that of an earnest party man; and in the opinion of even so earnest a suffragist, party considerations must in the last resort take precedence of all others. The danger incurred by the Government in the recent crisis has evidently alarmed party men; and Mr. Dickinson's point of view is, that this alarm would imperil the chances of any measure for women's franchise with which the Government might be concerned so long as it is a question upon which the Government remains divided. And so he put it to the meeting that any attempt to associate the Government with the measure, or to entangle the question with a Government Bill, was foredoomed to disaster and should be resolutely avoided. Salvation could only be hoped for through a "free vote" on a private Member's Bill.

It is so short a time since a private Member's Bill was "torpedoed" by a suffragist Member, who in common with the majority of his fellow suffragist Members, assured us that the amendment to the Government Bill was such an opportunity as we had never had before, and that on that account we need not lament the private Member's Bill, that we confess to feeling a certain degree of mental dizziness. We, at all events, cannot turn round and round so quickly without vertigo. We believe the advice was earnest and sympathetic; but are only the more convinced that this Government realises the strength of our position and the threat to its own stability; and that our only sane and steady course is to demand a Government measure.

The truce to active militancy, as to which the National Executive Committee was given a free hand by the Special Conference of last March, was observed so long as the Franchise Bill was before the country. To the moment of its withdrawal, no resistance to law save passive resistance was sanctioned by the Women's Freedom League. The members, however, while admitting the necessity for this forbearance with a view to showing to the country clearly beyond possibility of doubt, that the bad faith of the House of Commons could be relied upon to trick suffragists under any circumstances, unless the Government makes itself responsible for their Bill, will not tolerate a continuance of negotiations doomed beforehand to futility.

The demand now is for a Government measure; the policy continues anti-Government; active militancy was resumed the instant the pledges of the Prime Minister were falsified; and a campaign against the improper administration of the law and the unconstitutional encroachments upon the rights of women citizens, will be carried on "persistently and continuously"—in the words of the resolution carried over-

whelmingly by the March Conference—until justice be obtained. "War against Law"—law which excludes women from the prerogatives granted by the Constitution, the administration of law which differentiates between the sexes to the disadvantage of women—against government without consent, and legislation without control, will be waged unflinchingly. The Women's Freedom League takes its stand upon the position as defined long years ago by Sydney Smith—one of the most famous of suffragists:

The enfranchisement of women is the law of the land. Not the law, but the lawyers, keep her from it.

And until this truth be recognised, the League will refuse to recognise the authority of the law, as administered by lawyers.

"WAR AGAINST LAW."

The campaign against law, reorganised by the Women's Freedom League, is no new thing, as some of our members seem to fear. It is a definite continuation of our time-honoured policy of protest by demonstration against the gradual and increasingly improper withdrawal of and encroachment on the rights of women citizens by statute, custom, and arbitrary interpretation of words and their scope. The lines on which such protests shall be carried on were exhaustively laid down by the Conference in March; and the definite instructions of that body for the guidance of the National Executive Committee will be implicitly observed "in the spirit and in the letter."

AT HEADQUARTERS.

Protest Meetings Outside Holloway Gaol.—

These meetings are being held each evening at 7.30 p.m. until the release of our third prisoner. Very valuable assistance has been given in the way of bell-ringing and speaking by Miss Andrews, Miss Nina Boyle, Miss Gibson, Mrs. Mustard, and Mr. John Scurr. On Saturday the meeting will be held at 4 p.m. instead of 7.30 p.m. All members and friends are urged to rally to our support by attending of these meetings.

Reception to Released Prisoners.—Next Monday evening, February 10, at 8 o'clock, we are holding a reception in honour of Mrs. Despard, Mr. John Simpson, and our other ex-prisoners. We are keenly desirous of giving them an enthusiastic welcome, and rely on our members and friends to see that Caxton Hall is crowded on this occasion. Miss Cecily Hamilton will take the chair, and the speakers will include our President, Miss Eunice Murray, and Mr. John Simpson. Tickets can be obtained from Miss Sidley, W.F.L. Office, 1, Robert-street, at 1s. each, including refreshments.

Our "Wednesdays" at the Caxton Hall.—Next Wednesday afternoon we shall hold our usual public meeting at Caxton Hall, and we hope that all our London friends will make a point of coming to hear the speeches of Miss Eunice Murray, one of our best known Scottish members, and the Rev. G. Llewellyn Smith. The chair will be taken at 3.30 p.m. by Miss Nina Boyle.

F. A. UNDERWOOD.

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HONOUR.

"His honour rooted in dishonour stood, and faith unfaithful kept him falsely true." These words were said of Lancelot, who lived long ago in the days of chivalry, and in those days was false to a man and faithful to a woman. In these latter days they may be spoken of men who have been true to their Party and to each other at women's expense.

We hear much of loyalty—to Mr. Asquith. He must not be embarrassed; his position must not be made difficult. What matter pledges to women, so long as things are made easy for the Prime Minister? We are told so often and with such emphasis that Mr. Asquith is a man of his word that we are struck by the fact that his supporters in the Press and in the House think it necessary to reiterate the statement. Perhaps it is because they think that Mr. Asquith's honour has been impugned. There they are right; impugned it has been—by his own acts; and assertions that it is above suspicion are not sufficient to protect it from criticism. Assertions are not enough; we must have proof of facts. Where are those facts we ask, and echo answers, "Where?"—an echo that sounds through the vast, empty corridors of promise where women's hopes were bred.

Mr. Asquith, it would seem, takes his honour, and his followers take his honour, somewhat lightly. They appear to think that a broken promise can be redeemed by a promise which it is impossible to keep. Having evaded a pledge, they apparently imagine that they can assume the guise (or disguise) of honourable men by giving a pledge which, as everybody knows who knows anything about Parliamentary methods, is impossible of fulfilment. Do they not then understand what honour means?—that it is not an outer garb to be exhibited to the public eye, but an inward sense that compels to rectitude of action.

"In the spirit and in the letter." How often we have heard those words! Since the year of the Coronation, when women were persuaded to patience and to trust by their utterance, they have been spoken again and again. The letter of the promise they embellished has undoubtedly been broken. As for the spirit—well, there is more than one kind of spirit. There is the spirit of deception, the spirit of levity, the spirit of contempt. What is the spirit that rules the Cabinet? One, whatever it may be, that women have ceased to trust; one which has no longer the power to lull them into the peace of false expectation.

The Liberal Press, after an outburst of genuine feeling, may revert to its tactics of excuses for Government deficiencies, of applause of Government proposals. In these excuses and in this applause women, all women who have studied the woman's movement, followed or taken part in its struggles, can no longer join. The trust of women is destroyed, and there is but one way to build it up again; a way that would at the same time vindicate the honour of the Prime Minister. The imprisoning of women, the abuse of militancy, the attempt to shelter behind its demonstrations, is not the way to either the one or the other. To! both the way is single and the way is straight; and if it is not taken, and since it has not been taken, the women's trust remains shattered and the Prime Minister's honour tarnished. G. COLMORE.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE invades *The Gentlewoman* (February 1) in the form of an article by the Rev. William Boyd-Carpenter on "Women Who Have Sat in Parliament." Names of eminent women, landholders and abbesses, are given who were summoned to Anglo-Saxon Witenagemots, Norman and Plantagenet Parliaments.



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THE SIREN SONG.

In vain is the net spread in the sight of the intended victim, and no one who has the remotest pretension to political insight will be roused to enthusiasm by the latest seductive offer held out by the discredited and somewhat downcast muddlers at Westminster. We see with approval that the old policy of the Women's Freedom League and the Women's Social and Political Union—the demand for a Government measure, only held in abeyance by our Society to give the advocates of Parliamentary compromise an opportunity of showing what their plans were worth—is now being adhered to all along the line. The National Union to-day will set its great influence to work to secure a Government measure; the powerful body of Conservative and Unionist women has declared such a solution to be the only satisfactory one; a large number of smaller societies, including the New Constitutional, the Tax Resistance, the Actresses', the Women Writers', the Men's Leagues, and the Church Leagues, are banded together to support the same demand; the Women's Co-operative Guild has also asked for it as urgently. The only dissentient note is in the weak and humble voice of that patient Griselda, the Women's Liberal Federation, and this in itself should place past discussion the relative merits of the new offer and the attitude of the combined Suffrage bodies.

It is necessary to rub up recent history in order to refresh the memories of those who may be tempted into the primrose path of dalliance with the new, yet old suggestion. "Better chances" have and will always be forthcoming—they are as easy to manufacture as terminological inexactitudes in the national factory of false issues—if by any possibility there is a hope of Suffragists being beguiled thereby into periods of smiling and propitiatory propaganda. Time is thus gained to outmanoeuvre and defeat the most honest and single-minded effort, as we have seen in the case of the Stanger, Dickinson, Shackleton, Kemp and Agg-Gardner Bills. It must never be forgotten that the Bills promoted by the Conciliation Committee were "our best chance" several years ago. Once the Conciliation Bill was carried and dropped; once it was carried and blocked. Having a majority of 167, it was discovered to be incapable of "free amendment." It had secured a "free vote," but was then subjected to further disabilities. Then it was "torpedoed" by a new offer which was "the best chance" Suffragists had ever had, i.e., the possible inclusion in a Government measure.

We need not recall the many assurances given us by Parliamentarians eager for further delays and excuses, that this was a chance indeed, and one not to be ignored. We need not recall Mr. George's indignation expressed to a deputation of the Men's Political Union. He flouted their concern, he gloried in his "torpedo."

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE PUBLIC RECEPTION TO RELEASED PRISONERS

CAXTON HALL (Westminster),

MONDAY, FEB. 10, 8 p.m.

Speakers:

Mrs. DESPARD AND OTHERS.

Chairman:

Miss CICELY HAMILTON.

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he rated them and reviled them, and told them not to teach him his business. It was they, not he, who were standing in the way of the enfranchisement of "millions of women"; it was they who would look "very foolish" when he, Mr. George, had secured it for them. To a joint deputation introduced by the Actresses' Franchise League, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald expressed the opinion that the Prime Minister's pledge was "a far better chance" than any we had ever had, and that that was why many Nationalists had not minded voting against the Conciliation Bill, which, being a private Member's Bill, could be used by both sides and all parties for endless purposes of obstruction and inconvenience. We were so "bettered," indeed, by all these assurances of the virtues of the new arrangement that many persons, at elections and elsewhere, seemed to take it for granted that the Prime Minister's pledge amounted to the promise of a Government measure!

Is it any wonder that, what with one trick and another, with delay after delay, with the breakdown of every scheme and the abandonment of every Bill, we should look askance at these "best chances" as each in its turn is trotted out, like the unsound animals at the horse-coper's when an inexperienced buyer comes on the scene? Is it any wonder, when we see Ministerialists wiping the sweat from their agitated brows over the recent narrow escape from disaster, that we doubt the disinterestedness of the desire to divorce our Cause entirely from the fate of Governments? In vain are their soft persuasions used, in vain the dulcet eloquence and the appeal to "reason." So many times has our frail bark been lured on to the rocks, that we no longer even need cotton-wool in our ears. The song of the Westminster siren pleases us no longer; we are not attracted nor distracted by its false sweetness.

In reviewing the events of the last few years, we also review the values of militant and anti-militant policy. Each in turn has brought us to the same pass—the rejection, by treachery and promise-breaking, under anti-Suffrage Prime Ministers, of carefully prepared and ingeniously shepherded measures. In the interim between the two great betrayals stretches a period of dreary inertia under two Suffrage Prime Ministers, when constitutional Suffragism seemed too discouraged to rally, and militant Suffragism had not yet come into being. Were the days of Mill and Gladstone not within living memory to guide us, a case might be made out against militancy; but we confess with some shame that a campaign, associated with names of the loftiest repute and carried on in the most respectable fashion, never succeeded in rousing our countrymen to anything more than academic interest. There was no popular excitement in '84, no tense moment such as we saw last week, no suggestion of a blow at the prestige of the Government, no such widespread controversy as is now going on as to the justification for Mr. Lowther's intervention, no such episode of recrimination between Cabinet Ministers. The Press of the day reveals nothing of this urgent nature. There is no shadow of ground for assuming that the forces of the National Union, left to themselves, would have been sufficient to rouse the country to the extent it is roused now, to force the question into its present prominence or to provoke a crisis of so definitely serious a nature. And we say this without any intention of depreciating that fine body of women, to whose patient spade work, splendid organisation, and magnificent propaganda we pay the highest tribute. It is, rather, on the public that our criticism falls; the public that cannot be roused without sensationalism, that cannot memorise without advertisement, that cares less for abstract justice than for spectacular effect. It is no fault of ours that it be to such a public that we have to make our appeal.

The Women's Freedom League, therefore, reverts to its militant policy of attacking law and the administration of the law—the perversion and travesty of

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justice by which male exponents of the profession of law decide at their own pleasure which of the statutes they make and interpret shall confer recognition on the citizenship of women. No effort will be spared to bring the law, the law-makers, and the law-administrators into disrepute, and to drag to light their unwholesome, sex-biased methods. The demand has gone forth for a Government measure, and the anti-Government policy of our League will gain enormously from active militant action. And so we contemptuously reject the fresh overtures of friend and foe alike designed to protect the dignity of the House of Commons; and in this matter of the new "best chance" will refuse to hear the voice of the charmers of Westminster, charm they never so plausibly. C. NINA BOYLE.

TO MY FRIENDS.

Dear Friends and Colleagues,—Through the pages of THE VOTE I desire to express my heartfelt thanks to those who have, in many a different way, stood by us and strengthened us in our late demonstrations.

Never have I been happier or prouder, never more convinced of the strength of our Cause and of the sympathy of the people than when, on Monday night, I stood beside our gallant treasurer, who will be with us before this issue appears, and appealed from the House of Commons to the men and women of London. That our appeal is spreading through the length and breadth of the country I believe. And I know it is being felt. The battle may be sharp, but I do not think now it will be long.

We, in the meantime, must prove our earnestness in work for our Cause. We want more members, an increased circulation of THE VOTE, and money, that sinew of war which unfortunately is necessary for the carrying out of our many schemes.

With all my heart I congratulate and thank you.—Yours fraternally,

Nine Elms, S.W., February 3.

C. DESPARD.

CAXTON HALL "WEDNESDAYS."—We had the presence last week of Mr. W. H. Dickinson, M.P., whose speech is dealt with in our declaration, and to whose services to the Cause our warmest thanks were expressed by Mrs. Mustard from the chair. Mr. Cameron Grant dealt with the new White Slave Traffic Bill to come before the House of Lords, Miss Boyle spoke on the political situation,

POLITICAL NEWS.

The Value of the Promise: Mr. Brailsford's View.

Writing to *The Daily News*, on January 29, Mr. Brailsford said: One speaker in the Suffrage debate declared that politicians live from hand to mouth. They seem rather to live from minute to minute, and their recollections hardly extend beyond the current debate. It was actually put forward as a new proposal that a Committee or "Cabinet" should be formed among Suffragists to devise an agreed Bill. We formed just such a Committee of Members early in 1910, and it had as its patrons Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Birrell, Mr. Lyttelton, and Mr. Churchill.

There is no new hope in this expedient, even if the last name should be excluded. As little is there reason to expect that a Private Member's Bill can secure a free vote on its merits. The "machinations" in the Lobby were, if possible, more active when the Conciliation Bill was before the House last March than they were this month. We had to face precisely the same talk about splitting the Government and embarrassing the Premier, the same organised "ratting" led by the younger aspirants to office, the same lobbying by hostile Ministers, and an even more determined and unanimous Irish opposition. Three years of such work as the secretary of this committee have convinced me that a free vote in this House under a divided Cabinet is a moral impossibility.

The proposal to save the wreck of the Conciliation Bill, which went down at the impact of Mr. Lloyd George's torpedo, offers no real gain in freedom. It does, however, lose two advantages which the Reform Bill pledge had secured. At no stage will the Government be responsible, and when (if ever) the Bill comes up a second and third time under the Parliament Act, it will forfeit Unionist support. The new promise is only one illustration the more of the incurable levity of a House which has surrendered its will to the party machine.

The Labour Party and Woman Suffrage.

The official resolution before the Labour Conference, which met at Lambeth last week, was as follows:—

"That this conference reaffirms its previous decisions regarding the enfranchisement of women, deploring the position created by the ruling of the Speaker, considers that the pledge of the Prime Minister can only be adequately and safely redeemed by the Government providing facilities during the coming Session for a free vote of the House of Commons on a woman's measure, and should it obtain a second reading the Government becoming responsible for it through all its subsequent stages. It calls upon the Parliamentary party to do all in its power to expedite the passage of a Bill during the coming Session giving votes to women on a broad and democratic basis."

The interest of the debate was entirely on the amendment of the Fabian Society, the I.L.P., and the Women's Labour League, as Mr. Philip Snowden's desire for a Government Bill amendment was ruled out of order. The amendment read:—"It further calls upon the party in Parliament to oppose any Franchise Bill in which women are not included." Mr. Stephen Walsh opposed, arguing that men should not risk losing votes if women were ruled out. Mr. Snowden made a powerful speech supporting the amendment. He held the conference tense, as no other speakers had done, and the response to his appeal to the men not to "sneak" more votes for themselves at the expense of the women was immediate and enthusiastic. The final announcement that the amendment was carried by 850 votes to 437, was received with enthusiasm. On the previous day women suffragist interrupters were turned out of the Conference, as also happened at Mr. Asquith's meeting at Dundee.

Professor L. T. Hobhouse on the Speaker's Ruling.

In a forcible letter to *The Manchester Guardian* (January 30), Professor Hobhouse "attacks the superstition of the Speaker's infallibility"; we take the following extracts:—

"The Speaker's ruling can but offer a momentary check to the enfranchisement of women, but it is of permanent significance in relation to the freedom of the House.

"Is it contended that the Speaker could not ease himself of the weighty secret till the moment came when the Bill was through Committee and came before him in its altered garb? If so, what an absurdity for the governing body of a great nation—the mother of Parliaments, the exemplar to all nations young in the ways of self-government—that the secrets of its points of order should be kept in mystery so profound that weeks of precious time may be wasted, a Bill lost, the intentions of Parliament frustrated, and the expectations of the public fooled because, forsooth, the authoritative exponent of this mysterious lore may not so much as drop a hint in season to save the House which he guides from waste and futility.

"But, absurd as it is, this contention cannot avail. For, in point of fact, the Speaker did not wait until the deed was done. He waited till all the pledges had been given, all the plans of the session laid out, till the Bill had passed its Second Reading and entered the Committee stage, in fine, till the end of the session was so near that the mischief was irremediable, and then launched his decision at the moment when it destroyed the chance of a free vote, smote the Government with shame and ridicule, and kindled a flame of indignation in the minds of women in the presence of which those of us who have most consistently preached patience and confidence are most humiliated. All this is done in virtue of an authority so exalted that it is not bound, like mere partisan reasoning, to justify itself by consistency. For when the Speaker was asked why, if Women's Suffrage was extra-

neous to the Bill, he allowed it to be discussed upon the Second Reading, he had, and could have, no reason to give. Nor does it matter that every relevant precedent is against him. He is above reason and precedent. The rules of the House are what he declares them to be.

"An assembly which cannot decide for itself what things it will discuss and in what form it will discuss them, which is bound not by written rules nor by traditions intelligible to the ordinary man and accepted by all its members but by the interpretation which one of its members chooses to give to those traditions . . . has delivered itself over in bondage to an authority of its own choosing. Such a method of proceeding is incompatible with democracy."

Comment of "The Manchester Guardian."

"Is it necessary," asks *The Manchester Guardian*, dealing with Professor Hobhouse's criticism, "that the Speaker's rulings on points of order and procedure should be kept so long in pickle? Before the voice from the oracle can speak, must it first be propitiated by hecatombs of slaughtered speeches? This, perhaps, is the main, practical point. The first duty of a Speaker, surely, is to guide and direct Parliamentary debate into useful channels, or at any rate to prevent Parliament from merely wasting its time; and if we accept this view of his functions we have to admit that it has not been successfully performed. It was only under demur that the Speaker on January 27 explained his views on the Women's Suffrage amendments, and then he did it, not as a duty that he owed to the House, but rather out of consideration to the Prime Minister."

The Suffrage "Cabinette."

A meeting of Liberal Members in favour of Woman's Suffrage was held at the House of Commons on January 30, Mr. Dickinson presiding over an attendance of between fifty and sixty, including Sir Rufus Isaacs, Sir J. Simon, Dr. Macnamara, Mr. Ellis Griffith, and Mr. F. D. Acland.

A deputation from the committee of the Women's Liberal Federation, headed by the Countess of Carlisle, was admitted. Mr. Lloyd George, who had intended to be present, was unable to leave the Treasury bench during the Railways Bill debate.

A discussion took place on the position of the Women's Suffrage question. There was no reference to recent events, and the offer of the Prime Minister to give facilities for a private Member's Bill next Session was fully accepted. It was unanimously voted:—

That the following Members of the group be appointed a committee to consider how best to take advantage of the offer of the Prime Minister, and as to the lines upon which the new Suffrage Bill should be drawn, with power to ascertain the views of other parties; and that the committee do report thereon to this group—Mr. W. H. Dickinson (chairman), Mr. J. H. Whitehouse (secretary), Mr. F. D. Acland, Mr. Leif Jones, Mr. Charles Reberts, Mr. H. McLaren, Sir Alfred Mond, Mr. Walter Rea, Sir Charles Nicholson, Mr. A. Ponsonby, Sir John Simon, Dr. Macnamara, and Mr. L. Chiozza Money.

It is understood that the committee will meet without delay and report to a meeting of the group to be held before the adjournment of the House.

[The Liberal Women's Executive have swallowed the Prime Minister's new pill with "indignant" patience, but there are welcome signs of revolt in the rank and file.—Ed.]

COMMENTS ON THE SITUATION.

"The Nation."

"The strength of the movement for Woman Suffrage lies in its moral force, in the weaning of the electorate from the vulgar strain of thought about women of which Mr. Harcourt's speech is an apt example. It represents an effort of the better mind and conscience of the community to give the State a truer and more representative basis.

"Christian Commonwealth."

Whatever may be the outcome of the immediate situation, it is certain that the women's cause has made tremendous headway during the last few weeks. For more than a week it has been the all-absorbing topic of political controversy. The newspapers have given to this question the use of their largest block type and the most conspicuous columns in their journals. Special Cabinet Councils have had to be summoned to deal with it. While opponents say no support is given to the reform in the country, it has had the effect of splitting Cabinets, obliterating the ordinary party divisions, and suspending the constitutional form of Cabinet Government. A cause which reacts upon the political situation to this extent has come to the very gates of victory. There may be delays in settling the terms of surrender, as in the case of the defeated Turks; but the delay can be but brief.

Mr. Philip Snowden in "The Englishwoman."

The present situation and experiences which have led up to it have proved that there is no half way house of refuge for the divided Cabinet, that they must either refuse to accept any responsibility whatever for Woman Suffrage, or accept sufficient responsibility to dispose of it effectually.

"The Spectator."

Once more women are being encouraged to build their hopes on a foundation of sand. When the partly built house and all the scaffolding comes down with a run, the women will feel, as they have so often felt before, that they have been fooled. We are bound to say that they will have some reason.



- W.S. — 14/11
- W.S. — 9/11
- W.S. — 14/11
- W.S. — 7/11
- W.S. — 15/11
- W.S. — 13/11

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FRIDAY, February 7, 1913.

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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.

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THE FINAL ISSUE.

Those who have taken part in any great and prolonged contest know, that before the final issue is reached, there are many incalculable moments. At such moments it is impossible for the wisest critics to tell what the next move will be, or whether victory is near or far off. Other moments there are when everything seems to promise a speedy end; when those who have been fighting long and valiantly believe they are almost within touch of the goal towards which they have been moving. "To-morrow—next day," they say, "we shall know the best or the worst. Very soon the energies engaged in this miserable strife will be set free, and we shall be able—how gladly!—to go forward to the tasks that have been waiting for us." Then, through some unexpected happening, very often through somebody's blundering, they are put back. Not defeat—the combatant in a great spiritual battle cannot be defeated—but what to the outside, casual observer looks perilously like it stares them in the face. They have miscalculated. They find themselves up against forces whose volume and subtlety they had not thoroughly gauged. But they are not discouraged. If a new and strenuous campaign or a series of campaigns is before them, they will not flinch. Rather they will review their resources, they will try to discover the weak places in their armoury, they will adopt hitherto untried tactics.

For all these vicissitudes the wise and happy warrior is prepared. He is not unduly elated by an apparent triumph, nor is he staggered by an unexpected blow. Whatever the situation may be, he faces it strongly and calmly.

Through such a crisis we of the Woman's Suffrage movement are passing, and we know that it will tax all our powers to the uttermost to meet it worthily.

What the situation is and the methods of dealing with it that will be adopted by the Women's Freedom League our readers will find in another column. But since we are in no small degree helped or hindered by the sort of spirit we take into our work; since some may need a bulwark against despair, and others a fresh incentive to action, it may be as well at this point to bring clearly before ourselves the greatness of our goal and the vital importance of the issue for which we strive.

We believe that the goal towards which the whole of the women's movement here, and all over the world, is moving is the attainment of such social, political, and economic independence for women as shall enable them to take their part in moulding the social forces of the future. What are the social forces that govern the world to-day? Men have made the conditions under which we live. Masculinity, in its blustering fictitious strength and its real weakness, meets us everywhere. If we have any doubt, let us watch our opponents, the real masculine men, chosen by heaven to command all things, especially woman, for these, in their bewildered wrath and threatened arrogance, are pouring out their

secrets freely, and we shall have many a flashlight as to the principles upon which the one-sided male creation which we call Society, is based.

Here is one who speaks with great frankness. He is answering the letter of a militant, who had ventured to say "It is nonsense to talk as if the persons enfranchised to-day were the owners of the country."

In answering—this particular enfranchised person—we presume he is an elector—sets forth one of the principles on which the Society of to-day is based. Men, he asserts are owners of the country, and women have a ridiculously low stake in it. One might gather from his further remarks that they only exist because MAN allows them to do so. When the mighty being who creates industry, who works, who gives, who pays taxes, who fights the foe abroad and punishes the rebellious at home; chooses, he can sweep her out into the nothingness from which he drew her, and hold the world for himself. "Women," he says, "have no right to this political and public ownership, unless they take an equal share of the national burdens."

It would be easy to show that a large number of those who are politically enfranchised, especially the most powerful, who are heard to boast that, helped by the motor-car, they can vote in six or seven different constituencies, bear no national burden at all. But, setting that aside, let us ask what national burdens are.

The writer answers with the story we know—"army, navy, police!" Mark that well, for it embodies another of the principles on which the man-made Society of to-day is built up! The real national burdens, we must understand, are fighting in foreign countries, marching in fine array through the streets of peaceful cities, carrying the national flag across the seas, detecting, arresting, and punishing offenders against the law. If we can but fairly grasp this masculine summing up, many things that have puzzled us in this topsy-turvy world will be explained. The principle on which the male politician works is that order can only be preserved by menace of punishment, and that physical force is the main factor in social organisation. Will not this go far towards explaining the rebel?

But women are allowed to have some share in the national burdens—not an equal share.

For our part, we think the burdens are very unequally shared. But it is the woman who bears by far the larger part. She bears, she rears, she nurtures, the burden-bearer, who, but for her, would never be able to fulfil his task. She follows him to battle and, braving hardship and danger, binds up his wounds. She administers in the household, and when through his waste, his folly, and his incompetence, commodities are at famine price, it is she who, forsaking what he calls her true work, goes out into the labour-market to gain bread for his children. There was an amusing illustration of the disparity of burdens given the other day, in an assembly of women that was being addressed by a man. They were the wives of men who are engaged in an industrial battle, and one of the speakers was telling them in his slow way how they might help. They might picket; they might take out boxes and collect money. He suggested that, while this was being done, some of the men on strike might stay at home and look after the children. "If this was done," he said haltingly, "the effect would be—"

"There wouldn't be so many children," cried a voice from the audience. A general laugh followed, and the man was heard to say "Oh! I didn't quite mean that."

Women pay taxes "out of the money given to them by men," say these blind reasoners. Who, on the one hand, makes it possible for the man to work at all, and, on the other, can he—dares he—deny that he has filched from woman the farm, the field, the home industry, all that for her spelt independence? If, in the case of man against man, the boast is made of giving to another man a part of that which he has stolen from him we call the complaisant self-praiser not a benefactor, but a hypocrite and a thief.

Out of the words of our opponents we judge them,

WOMEN IN INDUSTRY.

Women Workers Demand Equal Wages—

The Women's Labour League held their eighth annual Conference at the Caxton Hall on January 28. Dr. Ethel Betham took the chair, and in opening the proceedings touched on the position of the Women's Movement. She said their main efforts must be in the direction of securing a minimum wage. They must have a decent standard of living made possible for all, and towards that end the promotion of Trades Unionism for all, but especially among women. If the weapon of the strike were used the strike must be successful. They must have a strong political organisation. The Labour Party must be strengthened and upheld by every means in their power. They could be of as much strength to the Members of the Labour Party as that Party could be to them. Dealing with the aims of the Women's Labour League she particularised municipal housing, and declared that women knew more about this question than men. "We know something about pots and pans and doors that open the wrong way." A larger Old-Age Pension at a reduced age was demanded.

And a Government Suffrage Bill.

A resolution was moved demanding the immediate introduction of a Government measure containing clauses enfranchising women, and that facilities should be given for the passing of this Bill so that it should come under the provisions of the Parliament Act.

After an animated discussion the resolution was carried unanimously.

Equal Pay for Equal Work.

There was considerable discussion on a resolution that all national and local governing bodies should pay to women workers the same wage as they pay to men for the same class of work. It was urged that women teachers should have the same pay as men, and that nurses should receive higher remuneration. The resolution was carried. Other resolutions passed urged a Right to Work Bill; the establishment of open-air schools and the organisation of classes for mothers; the feeding of necessitous school children to be compulsory and apply to holidays, Saturdays and Sundays, as well as school days; the treatment of children in school and dental clinics without taint of Poor-law; and the cheapening of divorce to meet the case of those with small incomes.

"Fair Work" Badges in United States.

The blouse-makers' strike, which involved 25,000 out of the 160,000 disaffected garment workers in New York, was settled on January 18. The agreement, which is called the "Protocol of Peace," says *The Daily News*, is unusually interesting, for it declares that women's wear made under sanitary conditions at wages higher than the sweating-den standard shall be distinguished by the white "protocol" label, so that the purchasing public may know what it is getting.

The agreement further provides for a joint board of sanitary control, representing manufacturers, employees, and public. It establishes tentative schedules of hours and pay, and appoints a grievance board, a wage scale board, and an arbitration board to draw up permanent schedules within six months. Wages during the next six months will range from a minimum of 24s. for cutters' apprentices to £5 for fully-fledged cutters.

The American Federation of Labour undertakes to assist the Union immediately concerned in the faithful performance of the protocol, and the agreement has been welcomed by both sides.

Public sympathy has been deeply stirred by testimony as to the conditions of labour in many Eastside blouse factories, where girls sometimes work from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. for 15s. a week.

Why Factory Girls "Make-up."

One lady investigator writes: "I noticed that many of the girls had their faces painted and powdered and made-up as society is at the opera, and asked one girl the reason. 'The bosses will not hire a girl who looks pale and sickly,' she said. 'They speed us up at our work as fast as they do the machines, and we wear out as quickly. A girl of eighteen who has worked in our trade since she was fourteen looks as old as a woman of thirty. That's why they fix up to try to look young and strong.' An early settlement is expected in the case of the rest of the garment makers on strike, and it will probably be on lines similar to the blouse-workers' agreement."

Women's Wages: Increase Demanded at Cradley Heath.

Exceptional importance attaches to the appointment of a new Trade Board for the chainmaking industry of Cradley Heath. Since its formation the Trade Board has fixed a minimum rate of wages for women of 2½d. per hour, which is equivalent to 11s. 3d. per week of fifty-four hours. The minima for men vary from 5d. to 7d. per hour, which is equal at the lowest rate to 20s. per week. The Cradley chainworkers, who are calculated to be the worst paid women workers in the country, are now agitating for these minimum rates to be increased, and the action of the new Trade Board will be watched with interest throughout the district. A meeting of Cradley Heath women has unanimously carried a resolution urging the Trade Board to adopt a minimum of 2½d. The main reason advanced for this increase is the higher cost of food for household necessities.

Let it be clearly understood by ourselves and by them that we refuse to be hoodwinked any longer. They have seen, and we have seen, that this battle of ours for the Suffrage is bigger and more far-reaching than any, save a few, had imagined. We desire the rights of citizenship because we are up in rebellion against the principles upon which modern society is established. Domination, craft, social and political subterfuges, the tyranny of party, waste of human life and earth's produce—these things are abhorrent to us. One by one we must fight them. So shall we reach the final issue—recovery of our lost independence.

The subject is large, and we may possibly deal with it again in our next number. Meanwhile, let the consciousness of a great delivery to be wrought out for ourselves and for our children give wings to our words, power to our actions, wisdom to our counsels, and calm, resolute determination to our souls! C. DESPARD.

OUR INTERNATIONAL COLUMN.

A French View of the Situation.

The Paris correspondent of *The Pall Mall Gazette* gives a graphic description of the French attitude to the Suffrage situation in this country. He writes: "If militant methods do not appeal to Feminists, who conquer their way by stealth, little sympathy is given to the British Cabinet. 'The women may be viragos, but they have been badly treated,' says the critic in the café. 'Government strategy has been of the clumsiest. Why did not the British Premier receive the women in the first instance and speak them fair?'"

"The movement has been handled with a total want of *savoir faire*," said a leading politician to me an hour ago. "First of all, the deputation was refused the right of audience—a fatal mistake, especially with a woman; and, secondly, a grievous error was made in forcible feeding. Forcible feeding, *mon cher monsieur*, is a barbarity in the twentieth century, and suggests the knout in Russian prisons."

"What do you propose, then, in its place?" "The alternative is to let them die. Tempting food placed within their reach in the cells would have been irresistible. But if this appeal to human nature failed, there was the final step; release without the degradation of forcible feeding, an unforgettable indignity."

And the deputy shook his head over the "stupidity" of English statesmen. "The worst of it is they must yield after all," he said. "The agitation has become too great. The way to begin is by a modified franchise. How ridiculous the opponent of a moderate measure will look, even in five years!"

The Women of Burma.

"The women of Burma are emphatically, and without dispute from any quarter, the better half of the race." With these words Sir George Scott concluded a lecture on "The Position of Women in Burma" before the Sociological Society, London, on January 28, with Sir Frederic Fryer in the chair. Sir George has had wide experience of life in the East, and throughout his lecture he made comparisons between the Burman, the Japanese, and the Indian woman, always to the advantage of the former. The Japanese woman, he said, put her husband on a pedestal, and worshipped him as an idol; the Burmese wife put her husband on the same level, and treated him as a comrade. There was no veiling of the face, no zenana system, no wife-beating in Burma.

Explaining the upbringing of girls and boys in Burma, the lecturer showed how the girl gains her keen mercantile knowledge. When she is between fifteen and seventeen the parents set her up with a stall in the bazaar (market), and there she sells steadily for a year or two. "It does not matter what rank in life her parents occupy, or how much money they may have; the only difference is that she deals in more expensive things. The wealthiest naturally set her up in the silk bazaar, but there are many other branches to choose from for the sake of varied experience. The poorest can always sell stuff from the family garden, or thatching for the roof, or green cheeruts, which she has rolled herself. In this way she sees plenty of the world, and learns the ways of a great variety of people. She seems to have been born with a much keener mercantile instinct than her brother, and this training completes her business capacity."

It is for this reason that successive Governments of Burma have looked upon the Burmese woman with a mixture of admiration and respect and dismay. . . . It is certain that the Burmese woman has a freedom and independence which no other women in the East, and very few, if any, in the West, enjoy. She can practically marry whom she pleases; she keeps all her own property and has an equal share of the profits of all joint property. She has exactly the same right to claim a separation as a man has, and the consequence is that there are no unhappy marriages." Sir George Scott's interesting lecture will be published in full in *The Sociological Review*, the journal of the Sociological Society, 21, Buckingham-street, Strand.

THE MEN WHO GOVERN US.

False Issues.

The men who govern us have not quite recovered from their recent fright, and the whole episode reminds us greatly of the story of the gentleman who found a genius in a bottle and foolishly let it out. Spirits the Prime Minister was powerless to quell were invoked by the rash "pledge" and "torpedo," which seemed such innocently cunning implements when first devised; and the modern queller of parliaments finds himself a sadder if a wiser man after his brush with the Suffrage amendment and the women without. We find traces of emotion in all utterances relating to the great deliverance of the Government; and we doubt if Mr. Asquith has in any way improved his reputation by his pusillanimous speech on the fateful Monday that saw his "great measure" withdrawn. He actually went out of his way to express gratitude to the Speaker for saving the House "from what would have been a very regrettable waste of time." One might have thought that far more appropriate comment would have been to reproach the Speaker for the waste of time already involved—the time spent on the second reading and the months spent by persons just as much entitled to consideration as the Speaker in preparing for a discussion on women's suffrage. We again call attention to the fact that the party point—the "occupier" amendment which disfranchised the business men of the City—has been smuggled out of the discussion and the suffrage amendments made the scapegoat.

The Law and the Lawyers.

"The enfranchisement of women is the law of the land. Not the law but the lawyers keep her from it," was said by Sydney Smith many a long year ago. Sir Simon d'Elves, sheriff; Coke, the egregious and inaccurate law exponent; a bench of judges who had been lawyers and who gave ignorant and shameful judgment in the case of "Chorlton v. Lings"; and many others down to this day have taken it on themselves to deny the meaning of words, to misinterpret the English language at will, and to reserve expressions for one sex alone conferring rights and freedoms on citizens and subjects of the state. And in his general oration over his stillborn Bill, Mr. Asquith gives away the situation in all its barefaced iniquity by saying:—"It is well known that whatever may be the interpretation of the word 'person' in other departments of our jurisdiction, in franchise law it is always held to be confined to men and men alone." *By whom* is it so held, Mr. Asquith? By the possessors or the dispossessed? We can assure this feeble apologist for his own error that it most assuredly has never been so held by the women who have fought generation after generation for their rights; nor was it so held by the eminent statesmen and lawyers who introduced the Simplification and Interpretation Acts expressly to put a stop to this form of tyranny and spoliation.

A Difference Indeed!

Mr. "Lulu" Harcourt, whose pleasant contribution to the comfort of his colleagues and the gaiety of the House is summed up by *The Morning Post* as "brief, bright and brotherly, like a P.S.A. advertisement," quoted Herbert Spencer's declaration that the minds of men and women differed "qualitatively as well as quantitatively." We agree cordially. There is not one of us who is not conscious, with profound gratification, of a qualitative difference between our minds and those reflected in the national assembly; but where we differ is, that the expression of that qualitative difference could by any possibility have disastrous results.

Unpardonable Inaccuracy.

Mr. Harcourt stood on very unsafe ground when he committed himself to the statement that:—

He had often regretted that women did not make more use of the local government franchise. He wondered why they did not stand offener for vacancies on local bodies, and why, when they did stand, they were so seldom elected. That seemed to him an admission that women were not well qualified for that department of public life.

This contains so much of the *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* together that it is difficult to deal with, although it has been met again and again on platforms and in the Press. No amount of refutation, backed by irrefragable proof, will prevent persons like Mr. Harcourt from pursuing their course of untruthfulness; nevertheless, we will say once again that it is the double impropriety of importing party politics into local government, and of allowing the penalisation of married women at the will of the Revising Barristers, which militates against women coming forward as candidates. When they do stand it is generally the liquor interest, or a strong party or business bias, which secures their defeat; and Mr. Harcourt knows extremely well, unless, indeed, he be so unfit for his position as to have no accurate knowledge at all, that far from any "admission" of unfitness for "that department of public life," women have therein won the highest praise.

Hard Facts.

We must here call attention to a statement which will be found in "Woman's Platform":—"A prominent official" of Westminster, interviewed in respect of the attack on the ballot-boxes, which the Press encouraged the public to expect at the recent municipal elections, gave it as being "well known" that women always polled more heavily than men. This was quoted at an open-air meeting by a W.F.L. speaker and derided by an ignorant crowd. The speaker, however, was supported by a gentleman who had been returning officer for a big district; and his testimony was to the effect that the women polled "two to one" in proportion to the men—a most remarkable record when one considers that the male local government electorate outnumbered the female by about seven to one. Mr. Harcourt will shortly be called to account for his rash remark.

C. NINA BOYLE.

"HENCE THESE TEARS."

There is an interesting article in *The Woman's Journal*, of January 18, on the election of a woman—Frances C. Axtell—to the State-Legislature of Washington. In the course of an interview with a Press man, she made some remarks which are well worthy of being noted.

"Now that we have the Suffrage, we are going to do something with it."

"Most men are in politics because they want to do something or somebody, whereas women are in it because they want something done."

"One good thing about the women's vote is that the politicians can never tell how it is going to go. They can't line the women up as they do the men."

The interviewer says of her: "Then the Woman of the Hour remembered something funny that happened during the campaign—and she laughed. She laughed at the politicians who tried to defeat her and those who hope to thwart her efforts in the Legislature, laughed at herself and—I have every reason to believe—laughed at me."

"And because she can laugh as she does, this woman is going to accomplish a great many things; and because of it she is not going to be broken on the wheel. It is my belief that the women won, because people believed that they would not be wasting valuable time in politics were it not for the hope of doing some good."

The interviewer says further: "These women have tackled this political work not out of ambition, but in the same spirit in which they would have set out to sweep the floors and wash the soiled dishes accumulated by their husbands during a spell of keeping bachelors' hall."

Finally:—"Typical of others to follow in their footsteps, they are writing on the wall a message which political grafters, bar-room politicians, and all their unsavoury ilk must needs read and obey."

"The message is: 'Get out!'"

—Hence these tears!

OUR NEW PRIZE COMPETITION.

To the many competitors who sent in forecasts of the voting on Sir Edward Grey's amendment to the Franchise Bill we express our regret that the Government effectually prevented us from awarding the promised prizes by withdrawing the Bill before the voting took place.

We announce, however, a further prize competition, for which we hope all will enter.

Three Prizes—First, £2 2s.; Second, £1 1s.; Third, 10s. 6d.—will be given for the **Best Forecasts of the King's Speech** at the opening of the next Session of Parliament, **not exceeding 500 words.**

RULES:

1. The competition is open to all our readers except members of the Headquarters staff.
2. Each forecast must be accompanied by the coupon below, and give the name and address of the sender.
3. Forecasts, written on one side only of the paper, must be addressed to the Editor, Vote Office, 2, Robert-street, Adelphi, London, W.C.; the envelope marked *Prize Competition*. A halfpenny stamp is sufficient if the flap of the envelope is tucked inside.
4. Competitors may send as many forecasts as they like provided each is accompanied by a coupon.
5. The competition will remain open until the day before the opening of Parliament.
6. The forecasts will be submitted to a judge independent of the Women's Freedom League, whose decision will be final.

* COUPON.

"VOTE" PRIZE COMPETITION.

Not to exceed 500 words.

I forecast the King's Speech as follows:—

Name

Address

NURSES AND REGISTRATION: MORE BROKEN PLEDGES.

Sister Townend, one of the deputation of working women who waited upon Mr. Lloyd George on January 23, to insist on their claim to the franchise, after giving her experience of the long hours of work and the risks of a nurse's life, said:

"For years past we nurses have been struggling to obtain State registration, most necessary to us, to protect our status by enabling us to keep up a decent standard of wages and to prevent incompetent and untrained persons from imposing on the public and taking our work; but we now see plainly that we cannot get this until women are enfranchised."

Readers are already aware of the indignation aroused because the Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital has arrogated to herself the right to forbid free speech among her large body of sisters and nurses upon the subject of State registration of nurses. To try by such methods to suppress a great agitation of twenty-six years' standing, the aim of which is to protect the public from the dangers of the fraudulent nurse, is surely a matter which demands the resentment and sympathy, not only of all trained nurses, but of the general public. A protest meeting was held on January 23 at the offices of the Society for the State Registration of Nurses, 431, Oxford-street, W.

The following resolution was passed unanimously:—

That this meeting learns with indignation and regret that the Committee of St. Bartholomew's Hospital have deliberately forbidden the nursing staff to meet and discuss in the hospital a matter of the deepest importance to their profession and to themselves, viz.: the registration of nurses by Act of Parliament, thus depriving them of the much esteemed privilege of free speech, previously unquestioned.

This meeting recalls the facts that this movement for the improvement of nursing education, and for the protection of the sick public against incompetent and criminal women, who can now practice as nurses without let or hindrance, has the support of the large majority of the medical profession in the United Kingdom; that it has been fully considered for two sessions by a Select Committee of the House of Commons, which unanimously recommended legislation for the purpose; that a Bill to provide for nurses' registration was, in 1908, considered by the House of Lords, and finally passed through every stage with the cordial consent of both sides of that House; that this Bill has been for nine years introduced into the House of Commons, and backed and warmly supported by every section and party in that House; and that within the last twenty years Acts for the Registration of Nurses have been enforced in many British Colonies.

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in thirty-four of the United States of America, in the German Empire, and in Belgium to the great improvement of nursing, and the consequent welfare of the sick.

This meeting claims that the nurses employed by hospitals are not thereby dispossessed of the elementary rights of British Subjects, and indignantly denies the right of Lord Sandhurst, the Treasurer, and the Committee of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, to deprive the nurses of that institution of their inalienable right to freely discuss matters of supreme interest and importance to themselves and to their profession, and calls upon the Governors of St. Bartholomew's Hospital to expunge from the minutes of that institution, the record of a decision, upon the part of the Committee, as injurious to the reputation and interests of the charity, as it is ungenerous towards its Nursing Staff. Moreover, this Meeting confidently appeals to the public and the Press to support trained nurses in protesting against such intolerable injustice.

The members, responding to an earnest appeal from the chair—Mrs. Bedford Fenwick—who is also the president of the society, resolved that they would not rest content until free speech for women workers in public institutions had been conceded, since its denial was not aimed alone at the nurses of the hospital in question, it was felt to be a huge insult to the profession at large; and also to the sex in general.

Pronouncement by a Select Committee of the House of Commons, 1905.

"Your Committee are agreed that it is desirable that a register of nurses should be kept by a Central Body appointed by the State."

This very important pronouncement was made by the chairman of the Select Committee of the House of Commons at the close of their deliberations, after taking exhaustive evidence on the subject of State registration—for and against—in 1905. And nurses are not one step nearer the fruition of their hopes! If anyone could be found to give a reason for unreasonable conduct, it would, perhaps, go some way towards allaying the irritation of victims, and help them to "suffer fools gladly"! Perhaps, after all, the nurses themselves are the fools! This demand comes from women, and maybe they are unreasonable to expect any attention to it when the pressure of the vote is not felt behind it. As four days is to the satisfaction of a demand from men, so is eight years and the rest to that of women! A problem of applied mathematics.

For twenty-six years the agitation for State registration for trained nurses has been going on. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick—the leader and founder of the movement—now calls herself a Rip Van Winkle when she appears on the platform and recapitulates the hoary but sound and sane arguments in favour of this urgent reform, accepted by all the profession, except the reactionary and stick-in-the-mud element. Twenty-six years! and she cheerfully declares in the name of the members that they will go on unceasingly for double that time if necessary. It won't be necessary, however, for we shall get the vote long before that.

This movement is supported by the General Medical Council, the British Medical Association, the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, and a large number of self-governing leagues and associations affiliated to the National Council of Trained Nurses.

During the space of nine years, a Bill for the purpose has been brought before Parliament a number of times. It has never passed a second reading—the reason is obvious enough! Lord Crewe, then President of the Council, said in 1906, after receiving a deputation, that "the subject was of great national importance."

Mr. Asquith promised in 1909, after receiving a very influential deputation, that the arguments laid before him should "be most carefully and sympathetically considered by himself and his colleagues." Yet when Dr. Chapple, M.P., asked him in the House a few months ago if he would grant facilities for the passage of the Bill into law, his request was met by an unconditional refusal! B. K.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE EXHIBITION AT EASTBOURNE.—The Men's League for Women's Suffrage, assisted by many Suffrage Societies, including the Women's Freedom League, has organised an excellent Exhibition at Eastbourne to be held on Saturday, February 8, from noon to 10 p.m. "to convey an idea of the extent of the Woman Suffrage movement, the magnitude of its organisations, and of the innumerable journalistic, literary and artistic productions, illustrating the need of women's political enfranchisement and the justice of their claim to full citizenship." A Sweated Industries Section will emphasize the message of the Exhibition.

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BRANCH NOTES.

Will Branch Secretaries kindly write their reports very distinctly and briefly on ONE SIDE of a sheet of paper, leaving a margin on the left, and address them to the Editor, THE VOTE Office, 2, Robert-street, Adelphi, London, W.C.? A halfpenny stamp is sufficient; the flap of the envelope should be tucked inside. All reports must reach the office on or before the first post on Monday mornings.

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LONDON.—Anserley and Crystal Palace District.—Hon. Sec.: Miss JESSIE FENNINGS, 149, Croydon-road, Anerley.

A Branch meeting was held at 149, Croydon-road on January 30, to frame resolutions for the Conference. We regret the attendance was small. Tickets for the Reception on February 10, at Caxton Hall, may be obtained from the hon. sec.

Croydon.—Office: 32A, The Arcade, High-street, Hon. Sec.: Mrs. TERRY, 9, Morland-avenue.

We hope all those who were disappointed and inconvenienced by the postponement of our public meeting on January 27 have realised that the critical political situation prevented the speakers leaving town. It was with great reluctance that we decided, almost at the last moment, to abandon the meeting. At a Branch meeting held on January 31 it was decided to recommence our weekly "At Homes" on Thursday, February 20; Thursday was thought to be a more convenient day than Friday. Resolutions for the annual Conference were considered. Members are urged to do all in their power to make widely known the White Slave Traffic meeting on February 13. Will each member determine to get one new subscriber to THE VOTE during this month, in order to increase the circulation of our paper?

Kensington.—Hon. Sec.: Miss MARION REEVES, 16, Bracewell-road, North Kensington, W.

Will Branch members make a special effort to be at the annual meeting on Thursday, February 6? Will they also remember THE VOTE? Tea will be on sale, also literature and a few things left over from our stall at the Fair. At the meeting and the election



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of officers will take place. Please note time and place: 8 p.m. at 55, Glebe-place, Chelsea. Conference resolutions will be considered.

Tottenham.—Hon. Sec.: Miss F. L. EGGETT, 30, Lausanne-road, Hornsey, N.

Members everywhere! Will you please send "any" and "every" unwanted article to Mrs. Harbord, 91, Mount Pleasant-road, Tottenham, N., for a jumble sale? The proceeds are to be devoted specially to THE VOTE fund.

West Hampstead.—Hon. Sec.: Madame JEANETTE VAN RAALTE, 23, Pandora-road.

The annual meeting was held on January 15. The retiring committee was re-elected with the exception of Miss L. Goldstein, who is unfortunately ill, and is consequently unable to act as literature secretary. Miss Wells, a new member, consented to fill the post, and was unanimously elected. Vote of sympathy with Miss Goldstein was passed with hopes for her speedy recovery. Another Branch meeting was held on January 22. Arrangements were concluded for the series of Suffrage Talks at 211, Belsize-road.

PROVINCES.—Bournemouth.—Hon. Sec.: Miss S. GERTRUDE FORD, Heather Cottage, Bengal-road, Winton.

A meeting was held on January 28, at Freedom Hall, to discuss the new Parliamentary situation created by the dropping of the Franchise Bill. A resolution pointing out that women are in no way responsible for the unlooked for *contretemps* which has arisen, and calling on the Premier to find some means of redeeming his pledge, and preventing the frustration of their hopes, was proposed by Mrs. Y. K. Hume (president), seconded by Mrs. Lambert (hon. treasurer), and passed unanimously. A copy of the resolution was forwarded to Mr. Asquith.

Brighton and Hove.—Hon. Sec.: Miss HARE, 8, San Remo, Hove.

A members' meeting was held at 8, San Remo, on January 30, when the secretary's and treasurer's reports were read, and the new committee elected. This was followed by an open meeting, at which Miss Hare spoke on the White Slave Traffic, and aroused much interest. A good discussion followed, and some new members were made. Members are reminded that their subscriptions are now due, and should be sent either to Miss Hare at the above address, or to the treasurer, Miss White, Westcroft, West-street, Brighton.

Chester.—Hon. Sec.: Miss E. WOODALL, 13, Abbey-square.

The Speakers' class on January 30 was opened by Mrs. H. F. Brown, who dealt with the physical force argument as applied to Women's Suffrage. Mrs. Crosland Taylor presided, and an interesting discussion followed, in which Miss Winifred Davies, Mr. and Mrs. Yond, the secretary and others took part. Two *Qui Vive* members had good sale of THE VOTE on Saturday afternoon, dressed in the brown costume of the Women Marchers.

Gravesend.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. MALBEY, 10, Cobham-street, Gravesend.

The Gravesend Branch has opened very successfully, after Mrs. Despard's splendid meeting. Our second Branch meeting was held on Monday, January 27, when it was decided to hold a lecture on Monday, February 17, in the Medical Hall, Gravesend. The name of the lecturer will be announced later. It is hoped members will bring as many friends as possible. Next Branch business meeting will be on Monday, February 3, at 34, Darnley-street.

Middlesbrough.—Hon. Sec.: Miss A. MAHONEY, 35, Albert-terra ce.

At our last business meeting, at Hinton's Café, at which Miss Foster presided, the hon. secretary read a letter from Mr. Penry Williams, M.P., the local Member, in which he promised to give his full support to the Woman's Suffrage amendments. She was instructed to write a letter of congratulation to Mr. Edward Williams, son of the former, on his having won a debate on the question of Woman's Suffrage at a meeting organised by the Liberal Association the previous week. Plans were arranged to increase the sale of THE VOTE, and Mrs. Barrett was asked to undertake the duties of merchandise secretary.

Portsmouth and Gosport.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. WHEATON, 64, Devonshire-avenue, Southsea.

Mrs. Bremner has again generously promised to pay for five copies of THE VOTE to be sent weekly to the free libraries. On February 12 there will be the usual work party at 17, Lombard-street, 3 to 9 p.m.

SCOTLAND.—Dundee.—Hon. Sec.: Miss H. WILKIE, 280, Perth road.

A very successful protest was held on Wednesday night. Huge crowds gathered at the four different platforms—very orderly and attentive. Protests were made at Mr. Asquith's presentation on Thursday, and of course, the women were ejected, but Mr. Asquith and Mr. Churchill had both heard the dissents and know that there were women in Dundee who resented the "freedom" offered to the Prime Minister. A very enjoyable evening was spent at Quarryknowe, Mrs. Allan's hospitable home, by the members of the Branch, when Miss Husband, in name of the members, made a presentation of books to Miss J. Clunas and Miss Kinnaird, who have sailed for Australia. Miss Husband spoke of the regret felt by the Branch in losing two of our most earnest workers, and expressed the good wishes which accompanied them overseas to a land where the vote was already won. Miss Daisy Anderson was also presented, in *absentia*, with a beautiful volume of verse. On January 23, at the usual fortnightly Branch meeting, Miss Nannie Brown delighted us with her account of the Edinburgh to London march.

Edinburgh.—Suffrage Shop, 33, Forrest-road.—Hon. Sec.: Miss A. B. JACK, 21, Buccleuch-place; Hon. Treasurer: Miss M. A. WOOD, 67, Great King-street; Hon. Shop Sec.: Mrs. THOMSON, 39, Rosslyn-crescent.

On Wednesday, January 22, our speaker was Miss Mary Williamson, M.A., of the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Associa-

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