

THE VOTE,
MARCH 30, 1917.
ONE PENNY.

Russia Free! Jubilate!

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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FRIDAY, MARCH 30, 1917

Edited by C. DESPARD.

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

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE RUSSIAN WOMEN.

MY sisters. You have achieved. In a space of time that may seem to the uninitiated as a moment, you, standing side by side with your brothers, have shaken off the shackles of oppression; you have gained that for which we have been striving—many of us for a lifetime.

This is how it appears; but we who in the past, with passionate sympathy, have watched your struggles, we, who have drawn inspiration from your courage and fortitude, know that behind the day of triumph lie work, patiently wrought, and sufferings heroically endured.

Personally, I may say that I owe more to you—to the women of Russia and of Finland—than I can possibly express.

I cannot use the ordinary commonplaces. To say that I congratulate you would be out of place. Rather, as myself, as President of the Women's Freedom League, as daring to speak in the name of the women of Great Britain and Ireland to whom liberty is dear, I am with you; we are one. In and through us, womanhood all over the world is making itself felt and understood; and who can doubt this will be for the healing of the nations?

A mighty task lies before you and your brothers. The world you have known—the world that has persecuted you and your brothers—lies in ruins. Out of those ruins you, and those of your glorious army of exiles and prisoners who still exist, must build up a new world—a regenerated nation—where there will be place for all to live well and where opportunity for joyful service will be given to everyone who is able to render it. Our cordial goodwill goes out to you; our earnest prayers follow you. You will have difficulties. The hatreds sown by centuries of oppression cannot be eliminated in a moment. The ravelled threads of age-long misery on the one hand, and despairing misery on the other, will not be gathered up at once; but the splendid consciousness that your country has taken the right road, and that every step is in advance, will strengthen you in your task.

As sisters we greet you; as fellow-workers and fellow-sufferers we claim with you a still deeper kinship. With beating hearts we watch your progress. Whether swift or not, may it be strong and sure!

144, HIGH HOLBORN,
LONDON, W.C.

C. DESPARD
(PRESIDENT OF THE WOMEN'S
FREEDOM LEAGUE).

Women's Freedom League.

Offices: 144, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C. 1.

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Secretary—Miss F. A. UNDERWOOD.

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



DARE TO BE FREE.

Wednesday, April 18.—Public Meeting, Caxton Hall, 3 p.m. Speakers: Mr. Holford Knight on "Women and the Legal Profession," and others. Admission free. Tea can be obtained in the Hall at 4.30 at 6d.

Wednesday, April 25.—Public Meeting, Caxton Hall, 3 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Nevinson, L.L.A., on "Our Glorious Liberties," and others.

Friday, April 27.—Croydon Public Meeting, 32a, The Arcade, High-street, 3.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss Abadam.

PROVINCES.

Tuesday, April 3.—Portsmouth, Members' Meeting, 17, Lombard-street, 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 25.—Middlesbrough. Great Suffrage Demonstration, Town Hall, 7 p.m. Speakers to be announced.

Friday, April 27.—Swansea. Jumble Sale, Ragged Schools, 6.30 p.m.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Sunday, April 22.—Kingston Humanitarian Society Meeting, Fife Hall, Fife-road, 7 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Tanner.

EASTER HOLIDAYS.—SPECIAL NOTICE.

The Offices of the Women's Freedom League and Minerva Publishing Company will be closed from 1 p.m. Thursday, April 5, till Wednesday, April 11, 9.30 a.m.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE WHIP.

As soon as the date was fixed for the debate in the House of Commons on the Electoral Conference Report, the Women's Freedom League sent the following Whip to members of the House:—

URGENT.

Dear Sir,

You are earnestly requested to be in your place in the House of Commons on Wednesday, March 28th, when Mr. Asquith will move a resolution for the consideration of the Report of the Speaker's Conference. Women, who are entirely unrepresented in the House, look to you to insist that their claims to citizenship shall be immediately recognised.

Signed on behalf of the Women's Freedom League:—

C. DESPARD (President).

E. KNIGHT (Hon. Treasurer).

ANNE E. CORNER (Acting Political Organiser).

FLORENCE A. UNDERWOOD (Secretary).

POLITICAL NOTES.

Mr. Asquith and Electoral Reform.

After THE VOTE has gone to press this week Mr. Asquith will move his resolution asking the House to instruct the Government to introduce a Bill to give legislative effect to the recommendations of the Speaker's Conference. "Wayfarer," writing in *The Nation*, states that Mr. Asquith will come forward on this occasion particularly as a champion of woman's suffrage, and certainly this would be the only logical outcome of his statements last August, when he declared that women have an unanswerable case, and that he could not deny their

claim to enfranchisement. If "Wayfarer's" surmise is correct, then we welcome the entry of our new champion into the lists, and hope that he will wipe out old scores by gaining for us a crushing victory over the forces of reaction that are still grouped against us. An amendment to Mr. Asquith's motion is to be moved by Mr. Clavell Salter, who will propose that legislation is required "to obtain an immediate register and to provide means of voting to electors who are absent on naval and military service," and the amendment goes on to declare that "save as aforesaid the attention of Parliament should be wholly devoted to the prosecution of the war." We know what this means, and it is fairly certain that had there been no Women's Suffrage recommendation from the Speaker's Conference, there would not have been all these delays and difficulties and talk of "devotion to the prosecution of the war." This Unseen Hand begins operations whenever Women's Suffrage is mentioned.

We should like to know how the war could be carried on without women. And since it has been admitted that it could not, how can the giving of more work and responsibility to women hinder the vigorous prosecution of the war? If logic were a strong point, which it is not, with Members of Parliament, they could not fail to be struck frequently with the possibility of the application of their own words to our position. We would suggest that in discussing the question of Women's Suffrage, members should keep in their minds the fine words used by Mr. Asquith last week in speaking on the motion of congratulation to the Russian Duma:—

"There is no lesson which history teaches more clearly than that freedom is justified of her children. Power and responsibility go hand in hand. The wider you make the basis of your power the more you infuse and stimulate the sense of responsibility. We may predict with confidence that this will be found to be true in Russia as it has been proved to be true in every other part of the world."

Let it be tried at home by the Mother of Parliaments!

Fiddling with the Food Question

A debate took place in the House of Commons on March 23rd on the food supply. It is stated that the Food Controller has issued an Order forbidding grocers to make the supply of sugar conditional upon other purchases being made, but leaving them free to refuse to supply customers at will. Most of our readers, being women, will at once see, if they have not already experienced, the natural result of such an Order, and probably some will be wishing that no new Order had been issued. We are also told that the Controller has made proposals with regard to hoarding and is to issue an Order against it, making it a penal offence under the Defence of the Realm Act, to be supplemented by police inspection and search! A short time ago we were told that food tickets would be un-English. Is it then English to allow the police to search private houses? Are we to start where Russia has left off? It was good to find Mr. J. M. Henderson protesting in the House against the outrageous suggestion and declaring that he would strenuously oppose any Order of that kind, even if it landed him in gaol. His words will surely find an echo in the heart of every lover of liberty. A spectacle that would be comic if it were not so tragic at this time is the innocence of Captain Bathurst. We can imagine him groping blindly amongst masses of figures and crying pathetically, "What are Economics?" The extent of his innocence (to put it gently) can be gauged by an answer given when he was being pressed by members with regard to the present system of including the weight of the wrappers in packets of tea,

thereby robbing people of at least one ounce of tea. Captain Bathurst replied, "At the present time it is thought undesirable to change the system, especially as the bulk of the representatives of the trade are quite satisfied that it should continue."

This should surely be his valedictory remark. With regard to food hoarding and proposed domiciliary visits by the police, the following letter was sent by the Women's Freedom League, on March 27, to Sir George Cave, Home Secretary, signed by Mrs. Despard, Dr. Knight, Mrs. Corner, and Miss Underwood:—

"DEAR SIR,—The Women's Freedom League notes with regret that the Food Controller proposes to issue an Order empowering the police to search houses whose occupiers are suspected of hoarding food. While fully appreciating that everything possible must be done to prevent such hoarding, we feel that better methods might be employed without introducing into this country a system which has always been considered as entirely opposed to our ideas of the liberty of the subject. We therefore urge you to use your influence to prevent such an Order coming into force."

Criminal Law Amendment Bill.

The debate on Thursday last was on points connected with advertisements of remedies for complaints arising from sexual intercourse, and very little of importance took place, most of the time being occupied by long speeches on the difficulties of "legislation by reference." With regard to the deletion of Clauses 4 and 6 mentioned last week, and of parts of Clause 2, mentioned earlier, we all do well to remember that this is only the Committee stage, and that attempts will no doubt be made when the Committee Report comes before the House to re-introduce the objectionable clauses. It is advisable therefore for us to be ever vigilant and to see that Sir George Cave's postbag does not suffer from leanness owing to over-confidence on our part.

Last Tuesday the Home Secretary begged leave to withdraw Clause 1 and to substitute a short form as follows:—

(1) "It shall be no defence to a charge or indictment for an indecent assault on a young person under the age of sixteen to prove that he or she consented to the act of indecency.

(2) "The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1880, is hereby repealed."

This was agreed to by the Committee.

ANNE E. CORNER.

Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage.

A meeting was held at the Mound, Edinburgh, on Friday evening, to consider the terms of the limited franchise for women recommended by the Speaker's Conference. Mr. Thomas Shaw presided. The following resolution, moved by Mr. J. Wilson McLaren, and seconded by Mr. James Brunton, Executive, Edinburgh Trade Council, was carried unanimously:—"That this meeting of Edinburgh citizens publicly protest against the recommendations of the Speaker's Conference to bestow a limited franchise on women. They demand the vote for women on exactly the same terms as men, and consider the proposed age limit—thirty to thirty-five—an insult to the women of this country, and most unfair to the great army of women workers. They desire at the same time publicly to thank the Scottish Miners' Federation for the stand they made at the great Labour Conference, held in London on March 20, for equality of voting rights as between men and women."

Important.

THE VOTE next week will be published on April 3 to ensure its distribution before Easter. Monday morning's first post will be the latest time for receiving copy. Mrs. Despard will write on the House of Commons debate on the Electoral Reform Conference, and a summary of the speeches will be given.

"ON THE WIDEST POSSIBLE BASIS."

A straight and clear message to the Prime Minister and his Government and to the Houses of Parliament sounded out from the Mass Meeting of Suffragists at the Central Hall, Westminster, last Tuesday night, on the eve of the call for a Reform Bill. It was embodied in the following resolution, passed *nem. con.* with enthusiasm:—

That this meeting, encouraged by Russia's Great Charter of Freedom, heartily supports Mr. Asquith's resolution calling for a Reform Bill on the general lines of the Speaker's Conference, and urges the inclusion of women on the widest possible basis."

Mrs. Swanwick presided and, referring to the great victory in Russia, urged British men to give freedom freely to British women. Mrs. Philip Snowden, Miss Maude Royden, Miss Margaret Bondfield, and Miss I. O. Ford, spoke to the resolution; Miss Royden declared that to be old in political experience is no advantage; it brings the conviction that nothing can be done. If Russia had not been young in this sense she would not have dared to accomplish her great victory. Miss Bondfield pleaded earnestly with the women who may be enfranchised soon to remember the industrial women who are outside the scope of the recommendation of the Conference, and not to rest till every woman has a vote. The meeting was organised at very short notice by the Women's International League and supported by the Women's Freedom League, the United Suffragists, and other suffrage societies.

Russia Free!

A GREAT

MASS MEETING

TO CONGRATULATE THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE ON THEIR CHARTER OF FREEDOM, WHICH INCLUDES VOTES FOR WOMEN,

WILL BE HELD AT THE

ALBERT HALL

On SATURDAY, March 31, at 7 p.m.

Doors open at 6 p.m.

SPEAKERS WILL INCLUDE

A. BELLAMY (President N.U.R.)

Commander WEDGWOOD, M.P.

IZRAEL ZANGWILL

GEORGE LANSBURY

W. C. ANDERSON, M.P.

ROBERT WILLIAMS

ROBERT SMILLIE

MAUD ROYDEN

Dr. LYNCH, M.P.

H. W. NEVINSON

FREE TICKETS TO BE OBTAINED FROM

The "Herald," 21 Tudor Street, E.C. 4; W. A. T. Foot (N.U.R.), 119 Harvist Road, Kilburn, N.W. 6; I.L.P. Office, Salisbury Square, E.C. 4; 4 Duke Street, W.C. 2; 220 Blackfriars Road, S.E. 1; Foreign Jews Protection Committee, 42 Whitechapel Road, E. 1; Dockers' Union, 425 Mile End Road, E. 1; or—if you are lucky—at the Hall before the Meeting.

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THEY SUPPORT US!

SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 168.

THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY, March 30th, 1917.

NOTICE.—Letters should be addressed as follows:—
To the Editor—on all editorial matters.
To the Advertising Manager—on advertising.
To the Secretary—on all other business, including Vote orders, printing, and merchandise, etc.
Telephone: MUSEUM 1429.
Telegrams: "DESPARD, Museum 1429, London."

EDITORIAL.

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATE.

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

AGENTS.

International Suffrage Shop, 5, Duke-street, Charing Cross, W.C.; Messrs. Horace Marshall and Co., Temple-avenue, E.C.; City and Suburban Publishing Company, St. Bride's Churchyard, E.C.; E. Marlborough, Old Bailey, E.C.; A. Ritchie, Pemberton-row, Gough-square, E.C.; Simpkin, Marshall and Co., Orange-street, Haymarket; John Heywood, Manchester. Can be obtained at the Book-stalls of Messrs. W. H. Smith and Son and all newsagents.

FREE RUSSIA.

When Will Britain be Free?

While all who love liberty are rejoicing over the Russian revolution, comparatively few, if we are to judge from the Press comments, have even faintly realised what this momentous event may mean to the world. Freedom from German influence; renewed energy in the war—and here it is noted with complacency that revolutionary armies have fought in the past with peculiar fervour—assurance that no separate peace will be made; these are the aspects of the revolution on which special stress has been laid.

The refusal of the people's representatives to leave the post which might presently be a post of danger, or to betray the people's interests; the fraternisation of military and civilians in view of a common danger; the support by the nation of the Duma's bold action, and the complete collapse of the old unhallowed order are, for the most part, simply indicated. Where Liberal Russia might have expected a jubilee of joyful acclamation, the attitude of most of our public Press has been doubtful and halting.

In the House of Commons the note has been truer. The Prime Minister's resolution of sympathy and appreciation, and Mr. Asquith's fine speech in its support, though they cannot be said fully to express the deep feeling of masses of men and women in this country, are certainly an evidence that Great Britain, through her representatives, recognises and welcomes the revolution.

To us of the Woman's Movement, as from day to day we watch its progress, elements of extraordinary interest and importance stand out.

We note with peculiar satisfaction that there is amongst the revolutionists no blood-thirst or demand for reprisals. Governors, Generals, and Ministers who, by their duplicity and cruelty, have forfeited the confidence of the people, are placed under arrest pending trial and inquiry. Universal suffrage, individual freedom in industry, national education, civil and religious liberty for all, are the chief planks in the programme of the Provisional Government, which is to be superseded as soon as possible by a Constituent Assembly elected by the free vote of the people.

There has been some doubt as to what universal suffrage may mean. We are told in *The Manchester Guardian* of Saturday last that one suffrage society two days ago telegraphed to a Petrograd correspondent asking whether women would be included. A statement made by M. Milyukoff answers this question. "It had been settled," he said, "that women should vote for the Constituent Assembly." This is in accord with his statement at Cambridge last year that Russian women, by the help they had given in the war, had proved their claim to citizenship. That is good; but we looking back upon the inner life of Russia with Tourguenev's novels and Kropotkin's "Memoirs" and Stepaniak's "Underground Russia" in our minds, we who have heard across the continent the whispered words of Marie Spiridonova, tortured almost to death by a brutal soldiery, "Joy! joy! to suffer for my country!" know that it is not only in war-time women have proved their right to citizenship and their capacity to fulfil its responsibilities. In Russia and in Finland, whose constitution, we see with gladness, is being restored, men and women—some of them little more than boys and girls—have been comrades in danger and partners in work. Russia, with her deep spiritual instinct, could not separate them now. So wonderful is all this that we cannot altogether grasp it yet. We recall the first days of the French Revolution, when "a glorious nation vibrated again," and we know that to events so momentous there must be great reverberations throughout the world.

What will the effect be here?

While Russia has leapt forward, Great Britain is lagging behind. So, at least, it seems. While the Duma is establishing itself as a power in her land, the Mother of Parliaments lacks the force by which to control her own actions. Will the noble example set by our Ally make our statesmen feel that the time has come to set their own house in order? In a day, with magnificent imaginative insight, Russia determines to trust her people. The British House of Commons stands shivering before an electoral reform measure that would enfranchise some additional millions of men and perhaps a third of the women of the country. It is difficult to imagine that the present state of things will be allowed to continue. Our hope is that one of the effects of the Russian revolution will be such reorganisation of our national life as will set free all our energies for the service of our country.

What will the effect be elsewhere—in the Austrian Empire, in Hungary and Bavaria and Bohemia? We know that German women have spoken out, and that many of them have suffered for their faith. Will the fever of revolution spread until brother refuses to kill brother, and the war comes to an end because the peoples will tolerate it no longer? That also might be. And when Democracy speaks, when, instead of mighty empires with dominating rulers who hypnotise nations into the belief that war is glorious and that conquest is good, there are everywhere in Europe Federations of States linked together by national centres, when women as well as men organise the activities, regulate the industries, and impose such laws upon the nations as are necessary for the preservation of order, war will be a hideous story of the past. The peoples, as it was promised long ago, "will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks." Instead of destruction there will be production, for none will wish to hurt or destroy.

To many that may seem a far-off, even an impossible, vision. Our own contention is that nothing is too good to be true. In the meantime, however, let us look carefully to our next step. The resolution for electoral reform to be moved by Mr. Asquith

is down for this week. To quote from *The Nation*, the best-informed and the most spiritual of our political papers:—

"We must re-don our discarded dress of democracy, if only to escape open shame in the eyes of Free Russia. A Reform

Bill is now almost certain. The changed attitude of Mr. Asquith and other notable opponents and the example of Russia confirm us in our conviction that from that Reform Bill women will not be shut out. And that will mark the beginning of a peaceful and glorious revolution in our land."
C. DESPARD.

THE JOY OF FREEDOM! Thoughts of a Russian Woman.

At last the long-desired freedom has come in Russia—freedom of speech, of religion, of conscience. That for which progressive Russians have struggled and died has at last been achieved, and now her dear brave children, brothers, husbands, fathers, who fight and suffer all the hardships of war, may add to their glory the knowledge that they have taken part in liberating Russia from the despotism which has so long oppressed her. They fight against Prussian militarism, but Prussian militarism always went hand in hand with Russian autocracy. One fell; now the turn of the other will come.

It was a hard and difficult task for Russians to liberate themselves from the old form of Government, protected by spies, and its decay sheltered by the gorgeous covering of the Tsar's mantle. Only

those who supported the old régime had freedom in Russia. None else. Those who dared to speak openly and act devotedly for the good of the country were imprisoned, banished and slain. Now at last the prison doors are open and the long-suffering patriots are set at liberty. There are thousands of them—great men and women, who have given their lives that Russia may be free. But one name stands out above all others—that is, Catherine Breshkovsky, "Our Grandmother." She has been fighting for freedom since 1874. She entered the struggle when autocracy was at the height of its power and when the fighters for freedom were but a handful. Now autocracy has fallen, and a new era dawns. The great victory has been won by men and women; men and women together must build up New Russia.
ZENA SHKLOVSKY.

JUBILATE!

Jubilate! Let all lovers of liberty rejoice, all who love her passionately, with the only love that counts—the Russian Revolution is an accomplished fact, the great miracle has happened.

Most of all should the world's workers for the freedom of women raise their voices in jubilation and gratitude. For at one stroke the nightmare that oppressed the soul of the only country where woman takes her place on a social, educational, professional, economical and political equality with man disappears. Finland is free. What that means it is difficult to put into words without seeming to exaggerate. But for nearly ten weary years the physical, intellectual and political life of one of the most cultured of the smaller nations has suffered unnameable indignities at the hands of Governor-General Seyn, who earned his title to a Governor-Generalship by being one of the butchers of the Baltic Provinces in 1905.

To him and his agents nothing has been sacred, neither the high dignity of office, nor the white hairs of age, nor womanhood. Public rights and liberties have been flouted, institutions protected by solemn oaths and covenants have been set at naught, and for the individual "offender" there have been the swift domiciliary perquisition, generally at night, and the hurried deportation to a prison in Petrograd or in far away Siberia. From that fate women have been no more exempt than men. But the wheel has come full circle, and Seyn himself is now a prisoner of the Revolution.

How sweet must sound the announcement of the restoration of Finland's liberties to the devoted band of women members of Parliament, always in the front of the movement for social amelioration and development, and praised for the admirable nature of their work by chiefs of all parties, not least by Speaker Swinhufud, himself one of the notable victims of the Seyn régime. To one of these M.P.s, well known here for her personal charm and her intellectual eminence, Dr. Tekla Hultin, the thoughts of many Englishwomen will turn. She, like many another, has known the bitterness of oppression. For using a truthful pen on behalf of her native land she has been bullied, coerced, and twice punished, with the darker threat of exile always in the immediate background. That threat, thanks to the Revolution, now melts into thin air.

When life runs once more in normal channels we may expect to learn that the women of Finland have taken up their work again at the point where the ill-omened advent of Governor-General Seyn broke it off. They have been, through these long years, the heart and soul of the stern, spiritual resistance of the nation to the oppression of its bureaucratic tyrants; and with the rebirth of freedom they will be the inspiration of the new up-springing life.

Across the frontier, in the great Russian Empire, the days are big with fate—fateful not only for Russia but for Europe, for the world at large.

The general sequence of recent events is too well known to need repetition. It is rather with the trend of those events that we are concerned here. It hardly needed the declaration of the Foreign Minister, Miliukoff, or the more guarded utterances of the Minister of Justice, Kerensky, to rouse the hope that the Revolution meant complete emancipation for Russian women as well as men.

With a Government hitherto the quintessence of absolutism and of the most oppressive form of feudalism, crushing the soul of the people,

With a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life,

the Russians have been, and are, in themselves, one of the most democratic of peoples. It is inconceivable that a people in whom democracy is a vital instinct should not in their free development include the free development and emancipation of their womenfolk.

That the one should not involve the other seems to us a contradiction so incredible as to border on the absurd. And we have but to look back on the part played by women in the long-drawn-out drama of freedom; their share in the spiritual tragedy that has lasted for 87 years; the martyr's exaltation with which they have gone to death, and tortures worse than death, for the sake of that liberty which dawned so suddenly a fortnight ago—we have but to think of these things to see that an emancipated Russia must mean emancipated Russian women. Think of the return of white-haired "Báboushka"—Catherine Breshkovsky—from the horrors of savage North-East Siberia; of Marie Spiridonova, the tortured, to mention no other of the legion of worshippers at the shrine of Liberty for Russia! They and their comrades and compeers represent

an army of devoted workers, whole lifetimes of ardent sacrifice, for the cause of Liberty. They have given proof, in full measure, of their single-heartedness in the great cause of freedom. Surely women, as represented by these, have earned their reward.

Going among friends in the Russian colony in London has been in these last few days a remarkable experience. Joy has been almost too great for words. One half expected to hear the Easter greetings, "Christ is risen," "He is risen indeed," so strong was the flood of spiritual light which had burst through the darkness. "It is impossible for you to understand what we feel; to do that, you must have lived under the nightmare." That was a common expression, and it is profoundly true. It is happily given to but few Britishers to understand even faintly what the sudden release from this age-long, strangling oppression means to Russians. But some of us have seen sufficient of the senseless persecutions, the ignorant destruction of beneficent activities, in Russia itself, and of the horrifying effect of the rigours of the old régime on some who have fled hither, to get a glimpse of the almost unutterable joy that must be felt by all true Russians to-day. The days and weeks are yet charged with fate. Heaven grant that no untoward event mar the full growth of the freedom that has so recently been born. And across the hideous fields of battle of Europe British women should join hands with Russian women—one in their passionate love of Liberty.

The general effects of the Revolution on the development of Europe are incalculable. It wipes out the blot on the Alliance which tied to the neck of free Western peoples the corpse of a retrograde absolutism; it adds a people of 120 millions to the family of democracies; but it does much more. It removes the perpetual menace of a huge population manipulated by an irresponsible autocrat backed by a great military force. It opens a new era to peoples whose history has been one long record of bitter oppression, often bloodstained—to Poles, Finns, Letts, Lithuanians, Little Russians and Georgians. But most of all it puts at the service of the world the spiritual treasures of a young and vigorous people—its genius in art, in science, in literature, and, it may well yet be, its genius in the solution of the problems of democratic government. Russian genius has given abundant proof of its existence even under the evil rule of the past. Who can foretell the effect of a quickening of the spirit that runs like subtle ether through the souls of 120 millions?

Instead of languishing in prisons or rotting in Siberia, its thinkers can now bring freely the fruits of their inspiration for the use and glory of that New World for which they passionately longed, and of which the faint yet distinct vision emerges from the welter of blood and hate in which the globe is struggling.

The effects of the French Revolution are yet working themselves out to-day. What, then, may be the fruits of the Revolution of 1917?

W. T. GOODE.

PETROGRAD, says *The Times*, is witnessing the novel spectacle of processions of women agitating for the vote.

WE CALL THE ATTENTION OF OUR READERS to the great demonstration at the Albert Hall next Saturday, at 7 p.m., in honour of the wonderful revolution in Russia. A list of speakers and full particulars will be found on page 163. Suffragists will be glad to be present and show their appreciation of the great victory for freedom won throughout the Russian Empire.

SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS.

**RUSSIA'S FREEDOM:
The Transcendent Event of the War.**

"When a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad earth's aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from east to west,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels the soul within him climb
To the awful verge of manhood, as the energy sublime
Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the thorny stem of Time."
LOWELL.

The Russian Revolution remains the transcendent event of the war. Neither will any future defeat or victory of arms—however terrible, however splendid—diminish its august happening; its inspiration runs like a clarion cry throughout a world bound grievously by ancient wrongs and present corruptions.

Last year a party of Russian journalists visited England, and one of their number said: "I notice to-day more than ever how strangely undemocratic, judged by Russian standards, is the framework of your social life. I think Russia may do something to teach England the true meaning and expression of brotherhood."

Truly Russia has made good those words. We women find ourselves asking: "Is Britain to be a less free country than Russia?" We as a nation have called ourselves democratic; but when are we to have a democracy of sex? We have had between men and women, as between nations, tyranny and submission, then rivalry, and time is overdue for understanding and comradeship. We have fostered the over-masculine male and the over-feminine female; while the nation's imperative demand is for clean manhood and responsible womanhood, that the devastations of our future peace may not prove as appalling in their figures as the devastations of war; that 175,000 children shall not die every year under the age of five; that sweating and slums, alcoholism and consumption, physical and moral diseases shall not waste our people.

Men have always drawn Justice as a woman; but she must be allowed to step down from pedestals of inaction, and be made free of our councils of administration, of law, of education and religion. Only thus shall we get a Government worthy of humanity; that in which the wise and kind, whether they be few or many, shall govern the unwise and the unkind.

"Freedom ain't a gift that tarries long in han's o' cowards!" It has been tarrying long in the hands of our politicians. They are still cowardly enough to withhold it from women, who find themselves turning for strength and encouragement towards that land—hitherto of exile—which, with a great gesture, as of the all-conquering Spring, has burst her bonds asunder.

EDITH MARY MOORE.

Our "Wednesdays."

A brilliant and inspiring address was given on March 21 by Miss Margaret Hodge on "Shakespeare's and Sheridan's Women as Prototypes of the Women of To-day." Miss Hodge held her audience spellbound, and left them with a keen appetite for "more." She showed how Shakespeare was a good Suffragist; his plays proved that wherever the woman failed there was tragedy. He believed that woman was more direct and effective than man, that she had more initiative. A woman was on the throne in Shakespeare's day, and women were held in honour. In Sheridan's time a great change had come over the attitude of men towards women, due largely, she thought, to Puritan influence. Sheridan said that a woman of forty should cease to exist. Miss Hodge's vivid character sketches of the women drawn by both writers were full of interest and humour, and an

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impressive conclusion to her excellent lecture was the power of love to overcome hate, as shown in *Romeo and Juliet*. Mrs. Mustard, dealing with the political situation, showed how the urgency of a settlement with Ireland was paralleled by the urgency of a settlement with women. Miss A. A. Smith presided.

**OUR TREASURY.
NATIONAL FUND.**

Amount previously acknowledged, October, 1907, to December, 1916, £27,609 4s. 3d.

	£	s.	d.
Amount previously acknowledged	116	11	0
<i>Fifty Thousand Shillings Fund</i> (Fifth List)—			
Already acknowledged	127	16	6
<i>Special Emergency War Fund</i> —			
"A Friend"	3	2	6
W. R. Snow, Esq.	1	0	0
Mrs. Mallarie	10	0	
Mrs. H. Samuel, per Clapham Branch	5	0	
Mrs. Sholl	5	0	
Miss Hurry	2	0	
Miss Bosley	1	0	
Tufnell Park Branch	4	0	
	5	9	6
<i>Criminal Law Amendment Bill Protest</i> —			
Mrs. de Fonblanque, per Mrs. Arndiffe Sennett	5	0	0
C. Schofield Coates, Esq.	1	0	0
W. H. F. Alexander, Esq.	10	0	
C. E. Maurice, Esq.	10	0	
Mrs. Sargent Florence, per Mrs. Pethick Lawrence	10	0	
Lady Bunting	7	6	
Tickets	10	6	6
Collection at Central Hall	15	10	0
	33	14	0
<i>Green, White, and Gold Fair</i> —			
London Branches Council (for adverts. in Tubes)	1	10	0
Friends of Armenia (rent of Stall)	1	10	0
Goods sold at Office	3	6	9
	6	6	9
<i>Stockaan By-election</i> —			
Mrs. Catmur	2	6	
Major A. ...	2	0	
Mrs. M. E. Anderson	2	0	
	6	6	
Mrs. Despard	5	0	0
Miss Eunice Murray	2	14	0
Mrs. Linsell	2	2	0
Misses A. and E. J. Sherwood	1	0	0
Mrs. E. Grove	10	6	
Mrs. Saul Solomon	10	6	
Mrs. Catmur (Dr. Patch's Protest)	10	0	
Mrs. J. S. Bader	8	6	
Mrs. Pick	5	0	
Mrs. Putz	5	0	
Miss M. I. Saunders	5	0	
Miss F. A. Underwood	5	0	
Mr. and Mrs. Townend	4	0	
Mrs. K. Hardy	2	6	
Miss F. Haughton	2	6	
Mrs. Nourse	2	6	
Miss Ione Levy	2	0	
Miss Grace Phillips	2	0	
Mrs. O. E. Tippet	1	6	
Miss M. Garner	1	0	
Mrs. Morris	1	0	
Mrs. E. McCall	1	0	
Mrs. A. McLeod	1	0	
Mrs. K. E. Regan	1	0	
Miss T. R. G. Taylor	1	0	
Mrs. Annie J. Tucker	1	0	
Mrs. Welch	1	0	
Tickets	1	11	9
Collections	9	4	11
Office Sales	16	7	
<i>Branches Capitation Fees</i> —			
Bournemouth	3	0	
Ipswich	6	0	
	£317	7	0

Cheques to be made payable to the Women's Freedom League, and crossed "London and South Western Bank, Ltd."

AT NEWCASTLE.

Miss Ada Broughton, 23, St. George's-terrace, will be glad to receive offers of help for future work and in forming a Branch. We have to thank her for her valuable help in the campaign just completed. A number of meetings were held in and around Newcastle during the week, and a group of new members enrolled. Resolutions calling for the enfranchisement of women on equal terms with men went up to the Government from a public meeting, a Tipperary Club, and a Branch of the British Women's Temperance Association, which Miss Dorothy Evans addressed.

**WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.
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It has given me great pleasure to respond to my sister's request and pay a private visit to the Despard Arms. I am very pleased with the place, and warmly support Mrs. Despard's desire that there should be similar places in many parts of London and other large cities. This was the greeting of Field-Marshal Lord French to the soldiers and the large company of friends who gathered to greet him at the Despard Arms last Sunday afternoon. He went over the house, saw the bedrooms, and interested himself in all the arrangements. It is gratifying to know that the efforts made on behalf of our billeted men were warmly appreciated by him. Mrs. Despard, in a delightful speech of welcome, explained that the Despard Arms is founded on the goodwill and help of friends, and is designed to provide a cheerful meeting-place for men and women where they may find good food and recreation. The fighting men may bring their women relatives—an advantage which is not possible at the Y.M.C.A. huts. Lord French and Mrs. Despard were warmly cheered on arrival and departure. We give grateful thanks to Mr. Harrison Hill, our unfailing friend, for his songs and entertaining stories of Tommy; to Miss Nigel for her admirable recitations; to Mrs. Despard for £5, Mrs. Sharman £2, Mrs. Bader £1, Mr. T. E. Catty £1, and to Miss Haward for the useful gift of a £1 share in the Edmon-ton Co-operative Society.

Nine Elms Settlement, 1, Everett-street, S.W.

Further gifts resulting from the Sale at Mr. P. H. Miller's studio have been received from Mrs. Wild, 5s.; Mr. Nesbitt, £1; per Miss Hobson, 12s.; per Mrs. Miller, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Davies, £1; Miss Wood, £1; Mr. W. Pett Ridge, £1; Mr. Archer, 10s.; Dr. Alexander Irvine, an autograph copy of his book, "From the Bottom Up"; and we also thank Mrs. Pearce for a large supply of honey to sweeten the babies' milk, and Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Delbanco for provisions. The proceeds of the Sale will cover our house-moving expenses, but we still need furniture of every description, especially chests of drawers, screens, tables, chairs, pieces of linoleum, and curtains. Spoons, forks, odd saucers and soup-bowls would be most acceptable, for in the new house we shall have eighty or ninety children dining at one time, and shall want crockery and cutlery to go round. We ask the help of Freedom Leaguers, so that we may start fully equipped.

BRANCH NOTES.

Anfield.

The monthly meeting of the Anfield Branch was held on March 16, when Miss Appleton, of Bootle, opened the discussion on "Disappearing Words and Customs." She showed how words spring from ideas, and how these old ideas about women must be done away with, so as to raise women to their proper status in the world. Miss Scott presided. A vote of condolence was passed, conveying to Mrs. Despard our sympathy with her in her sad loss.

Croydon. 32a, The Arcade, High-street.

A Branch meeting was held on March 23, at which it was decided to hold a public meeting each month, and one sewing party on the second and fourth Fridays. Goods for our Spring Jumble Sale should be sent to the hon. secretary before Easter if possible. The Sale will take place, we hope, soon after Easter.

Middlesbrough Suffrage Club, 231a, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road.

A very successful meeting was held in these rooms on March 19, at which Miss McCombie gave an address on "Women and International Goodwill." Her audience was very much impressed, and we all hope she will soon address us again. In connection with the Suffrage Club, which is open to all men and women interested in progressive movements, Wednesday gatherings have been started for debates, discussions, and entertainments. On March 21 Miss Purvis was to have opened with the subject "Economy True and False." As she was unable to come, that debate was postponed to March 28, and Mr. Hobson opened with the subject of "The Teaching of History." The subject for April 4 will be "Reason v. Emotion"; the speakers Mr. Harold Hobson and Miss Dorothy Evans. The debates are open to any who care to attend; Club membership, 5s. per year or 6d. per month.

AT STOCKTON.

As we go to press a meeting is being held at Mrs. Wilson's house, 57, Eton-road, Stockton, with a view to forming a group of people for study and self-education. This, it is hoped, may develop into a Women Voters' League when our enfranchisement is won.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORAL AND SOCIAL HYGIENE is holding a public meeting to-day, Friday, in the Caxton Hall, at 4 p.m. The speakers are to be Dr. Jane Walker, Mrs. Philip Snowden, and Dr. Charles Macalister, of Liverpool. The meeting will be of special importance, and readers will do well to attend.

SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 168.

FRIDAY,
MARCH 30,
1917.

THE VOTE

ONE
PENNY
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

London Branches Council.

Two more drawing-room meetings have been held and served to bring fresh enthusiasm to our cause. At Kensington, on March 10th, we were favoured with the presence of our co-secretaries, Miss Mitchell and Miss Reeves, the former taking the chair and the latter being the hostess. Mrs. Cobden-Sanderson, speaking on "How to Save our Girls," showed conclusively that women must have political power in order that this work may

be effectively done. Mrs. Mustard followed with a plea for real representative Government.

At Highbury, on March 24th, Miss Bisset-Smith was our hostess, the chair being taken by Miss Waddington (hon. sec. Hackney Branch). The speakers, Miss Raleigh and Mrs. Mustard, both dealt with the resistance of women tax-payers and of Dr. Patch in particular. THE VOTE sold well, and good collections were taken at both meetings. Our grateful thanks are tendered to our hostesses for their hospitable entertainment.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

ASSOCIATION FOR MORAL AND SOCIAL HYGIENE.

WE must not rest on our oars. The worst features of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill are defeated; we must now examine the new medical proposals for the prevention of venereal disease.—*Vide correspondence "British Medical Journal."*

These will be considered at the Annual Meeting of the above Association on Friday, March 30, at Caxton Hall, Westminster, at 4 p.m. Subject: "The Moral Prevention of Venereal Disease." Speakers: Dr. Jane Walker, Mrs. Philip Snowden, and Dr. Charles Macalister, F.R.C.P. (of Liverpool).

Tickets from the Secretary, 19, Tothill-street, S.W. 1.

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