

# The Common Cause

## THE ORGAN OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF

Sept. 26th,  
1912.

Vol. IV.  
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# Women's Suffrage

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Literary Contributions should be addressed to the Editor, The Common Cause, 2, Robert Street, Adelphi, W.C. The Editor, however, accepts no responsibility for unsolicited matter, and no manuscripts will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

Correspondents are Requested to Note that this paper goes to press on Tuesday. The latest news, notices and reports should, therefore, reach the Editor by first post on Monday. The Editor reminds correspondents, however, that the work is made much easier if news is sent in as long beforehand as possible. Monday is only mentioned as the last day possible, not as the one upon which all news should arrive.

NOTICE.—This paper is obtainable at newsagents and bookstalls by mid-day on Thursday. If people have any difficulty in getting it locally they should write to the Manager, The Common Cause, 2, Robert Street, Adelphi, W.C., giving the name and address of the newsagent or bookstall from which they wish to be supplied.

**Notes and Comments.**

**The Member for Midlothian.**

Miss Robertson writes that it was an error to describe Major Hope as an Anti-Suffragist, and we are very glad to note this, and sorry for the error. Major Hope said he was not opposed to the enfranchisement of women ratepayers, so he will probably support Lord Robert Cecil's amendment. (Mr. Craig, M.P. for Crewe, has already promised to do this.) Mr. Shaw only promised to support the adult suffrage amendment. The situation in Midlothian is therefore even more favourable than our article of last week showed.

**Thank You, Mr. Anderson!**

We strongly recommend members of the National Union to buy, read, and keep for reference *The Labour Leader* of September 19th. There, on p. 610, will be found a complete summary of the resolutions passed by the I.L.P. and the Parliamentary Labour Party on the subject of the Government Franchise Bill, and Mr. Anderson's conclusion from these is that "Under no conceivable circumstances, therefore, can the Parliamentary Labour Party support a measure which extends the franchise to men without admitting women."

On the 16th, this good friend of ours spoke at Longsight, where after pointing out the deep differences between Labour and Liberal on the questions of foreign policy and armaments, instancing the Government's policy in Persia as showing how far we have got from the Liberalism of the great historic Midlothian campaign he said:—

"On the question of Women's Suffrage, both the Liberal and Conservative parties were hopelessly divided, and only the Labour party was solidly united in defence of the full citizen rights of both men and women. . . . The time was coming when the growth of the Labour party would drive a wedge through the Liberal party, which contained a section opposed to privilege. When the breaking-up came these men would join in the fight for Labour, and the rest of the Liberal party would range themselves with Toryism in an attempt to stem the movement. The Labour party entered into three-cornered contests just because of these differences."

**Subterranean Methods.**

In connection with the "unofficial inquiry" into the land question, instituted by Mr. Lloyd George, one is entertained to see that Miss Violet Markham is very indignant about what she calls its "subterranean methods." It is precisely the enforcement upon women of such methods which makes one of the strongest arguments for enfranchisement. We are constantly told by the Anti's that women have influenced and will always influence legislation. We should not dream of

denying it. But what is that influence? Whose is it? How is it exercised? What is it based upon? It does not appeal to a labouring woman to be told that some fair lady has used her womanly wiles to cajole the head of a department, nor does it console a vigorous young woman who wants a career thrown open to know that some Mrs. Grundy has spoken for her sex in the ear of a minister already enough disposed to keep a woman in her "place."

**Physiological "Facts."**

In its anxiety to back up Sir Almroth Wright's wholly unscientific generalisations about the physical construction of women, the *Times*, in a leader on September 24, makes a bad shot. This leader, dealing with the hunger-strikers, says that the women are "resting upon the physiological fact which they are so reluctant to hear mentioned—that the feminine nervous system is much more unstable and more easily broken down under strain than that of men." Very few men Suffragist prisoners have attempted the hunger strike, but the only person to go mad under the torture was William Bell, a man, and the authorities found themselves compelled to release Mr. Pethick Lawrence, after a very half-hearted attempt to feed him by force. The reported "nervous instability" of women is a generalisation based upon such imperfect data that it is scientifically valueless. We should have to make far more dispassionate inquiry than has ever been made into the conditions under which men and women respectively keep their sanity. In a world so largely ruled by men it may quite well happen that women are strained as well as cramped in ways unthought of, or unacknowledged.

**A Farcical Situation.**

The Treasury had got itself into the most ridiculous muddle over the taxation of married women. It all comes of our national habit of living from hand to mouth. The Married Women's Property Act declares a married woman's property to be her own; the Income Tax Act declares that property to be "for purposes of taxation" the property of the husband! So a poor man with a rich wife may actually have a tax levied upon him which he is literally unable to pay, and if he does not pay this absurd imposition he is sent to gaol. Mr. Mark Wilks, a headmaster earning £160 a year, is now in prison for the non-payment of taxes on his wife's earned income. The Anti-Suffragists are fond of pointing out to women the inestimable advantages they derive from the preposterous relics of a barbarous age. The queer thing is that the women Suffragists are much keener to abolish them than the Anti's, and are holding energetic protest meetings against the unjust imprisonment of Mr. Wilks. We may hope that on Thursday, 26th, Mr. Shaw's cold wit may make the sentimentalists' world altogether too bleak for them. We have not space to enlarge on the details of the situation, but they are fit for comic opera, and we are truly sorry that our Government should so discredit itself. Unless you are an Anarchist you cannot wish the Government of your own country to make itself ridiculous.

**The Hunger Strike.**

Mrs. Mary Leigh was, on Friday last, released on licence from Mountjoy prison, where she had been forcibly fed during forty-four days. Miss Gladys Evans, up to the moment of our going to press, remains in prison. In the *Daily News*, of September 17th, Mr. Bernard Shaw urged that the Government's responsibility ended with the provision of food and prisoners should not be forcibly fed. On the 21st Mr. Chesterton in an equally characteristic article announced that "prisons ought not to torture people for trying to commit suicide."

**Methods.**

The W.S.P.U. ignored the request of the Criccieth Society that they should refrain from baiting Mr. Lloyd George at Llanstymdwy on Saturday, and they created the kind of disturbance one has grown to regard as almost a certainty. Commenting on these methods, a correspondent writes:—"When I was a girl about to be married, a worldly-wise wife instructed me in the gentle art of managing a husband. 'If,' she said, 'you want something he won't give you, tease him until you make him very angry, and then, when he has thoroughly lost his temper, he will be so ashamed that he will give you anything'! Perhaps—I don't know, for I never tried. It seemed to me a repulsive method, and—suppose it hadn't even succeeded!"

**Our Unguarded Children.**

One month was the sentence which the Brentford Police Court thought sufficient sentence upon George Rolfe, of Isleworth, for a "serious offence" against a little girl. This was not his first offence either, for the detective was watching him "in consequence of complaints."

## THE ELECTION FIGHTING FUND.

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MR. G. E. S. STREATFIELD.  
MR. ISRAEL ZANGWILL.

## THE RECENT BY-ELECTIONS: A SURVEY.

For the moment there is a lull in by-elections, though it is probable that there will be several more before Christmas. It is fortunate for us that we should so soon have had opportunities for testing the efficacy of the new policy we adopted last May, and we have every reason to be satisfied with the result of those tests.

The Election Fighting Fund policy was adopted with three objects:—(1) To increase the number of members in the House of Commons who can be relied upon to vote for Women's Suffrage measures; (2) to strengthen the Party in the House of Commons which stands for political justice for women as well as for men, and is prepared to oppose a measure of so-called democratic reform which leaves the female half of the democracy entirely unrepresented; (3) to put pressure on those who secured the defeat of the Conciliation Bill in order that they may consider it expedient to secure the passage of a Women's Suffrage amendment to the Reform Bill.

Let us this week consider the third point only, the effect of our Election Fighting Fund policy on the Liberals and the Nationalists who opposed the Conciliation Bill.

There is abundant evidence that Liberals are being forced, however unwillingly, to acknowledge the full significance of the Suffragist support of Labour candidates. Holmfirth, Crewe, and Midlothian have proved not only the strength of the Women's Suffrage campaign, and the identification of the Labour leaders with it, but above all they have made manifest the peril which the Government incurs by three-cornered elections, a peril frankly emphasised lately by one of the leading Liberal organs.

At Holmfirth, the seat of an unbroken Liberal tradition, the Labour vote was almost exactly doubled, and the Liberal vote fell by 1,590. At Ilkeston there was every reason to believe that the anticipation of the advent of a Labour candidate with Suffragist support decided the Conservatives to put a candidate in the field in order to take advantage of the split in the progressive vote. Otherwise the election would probably not have been contested, and the Government would have avoided the damaging blow to its prestige occasioned by the big drop in the majority of a newly-appointed Cabinet Minister. Had a Labour candidate stood, Colonel Seely's seat might well have been seriously imperilled, in spite of his previous large majority.

The Loss of Crewe as a Liberal seat was directly due to the presence of the Labour candidate, the Labour vote at that election representing an increase of 1,105, the Liberal vote a decrease of 2,467, and the Conservative majority an increase of 841. The Labour poll of 2,485 represented a solid backing for Labour and a strong fight for Women's Suffrage.

In Midlothian, owing to the split progressive vote, the seat reverts to a Conservative member for the first time since 1880, when Mr. Gladstone won it for Liberalism.

A candid observer cannot fail to recognise the powerful part that Women's Suffrage has played in these contests. It has been one of the most popular planks in the platform of the Labour speakers; it has never failed to arouse the interest and sympathy of the audience; our own speakers have attracted and held large crowds, often to the detriment of the competing Liberal and Conservative orators. On the eve of the poll in Midlothian the Labour organisers asked for all our speakers for their meetings, those who spoke purely as Suffragists as well as those who have Labour sympathies. This is notable evidence that Women's Suffrage was popular with the electors. The Labour Party has freely acknowledged the help which the well-trained Suffrage workers have been able to give. In the

"Labour Leader" of September 12th, the following passage occurs:—

"We cannot speak too warmly of the great service rendered to the Labour cause by the band of women speakers and organisers, especially by those sent down by the N.U.W.S.S. In all the recent by-elections the N.U. has thrown its weight on the side of the Labour candidates, and at places like Holmfirth, Crewe and Midlothian they rendered most valuable aid, sending trained and well-equipped women, many of whom have a good knowledge of electioneering and can put the case not only for political justice to women but for social justice to men and women alike."

To mention only one of the ways in which we were able to give really valuable help: four out of the seven motors at the disposal of the Labour Party for polling day in Midlothian were lent by Suffragists. This fact alone may well have accounted for some 40 votes which might otherwise not have been cast, owing to the long distances some voters had to cover to reach a polling booth. (The E.F.F. Committee tenders its warmest thanks to those who so kindly lent their cars for this purpose, and also to those who sent money for the hire of cars during the long campaign.) Unwilling as they are to admit it, the Liberal papers have been obliged to recognise the fact that if "the forces at work in Midlothian (including those of the Suffragists) were all to continue to move with their present direction and velocity for the next three years, their normal result would be at the end of that time the return of a small Conservative majority at a General Election. (*Manchester Guardian* September 12th.) The Liberal Party is obviously not in a position to incur this risk with equanimity, a risk which will be increasingly imminent if the Liberal Whips do not succeed in bringing home to the Irish Whips and to unreliable Liberal members that it would be expedient for them to undo in January what they did in March. It was the use of the Irish vote to kill the Conciliation Bill which caused the present development in the election policy of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. If the Irish Party is disturbed by the loss of Liberal seats, and the prospect of further losses, at this critical juncture when the fate of the Home Rule Bill still hangs in the balance, they have no one but themselves to blame. There is only one remedy, and that, too, lies in their hands. Until a Women's Suffrage amendment has been passed by the House of Commons and thereafter adopted by the Government, in accordance with the Prime Minister's pledge, as an integral part of the Reform Bill, the National Union will pursue its present policy with unremitting energy. It has at its command money, strength, enthusiasm, and an organisation which no party can now ignore. These resources are increasing daily; every by-election adds to its knowledge how to use them in the most effective way, strengthens the belief of its members that its fighting policy in the constituencies is wise and fruitful and justifies its immovable confidence in constitutional methods of bringing pressure to bear on the political machine.

C. E. MARSHALL.

Our readers will be interested to see the letters which follow:—  
"Labour Party Offices."

"DEAR MISS ROBERTSON,—My first duty upon returning to London is to ask your acceptance of our very best thanks for all the work of your excellent band of workers—and no less yourself—during the recent fight in Midlothian. For the best part of four weeks you all toiled for the common cause with a spirit of determination that could not have failed to have won for the women's cause thousands of supporters. I am

equally sure that our candidate, Provost R. Brown, will readily agree that much of his support was largely the outcome of all your labours. In their hearts at least the Liberals will recognise that their defeat was in no small degree due to your work, and must bear fruit in the immediate future. Our united attack upon the eve of the poll was especially a distinct success.

"Would you also kindly convey our best thanks to the ladies who so willingly sent along their motors for the polling day? Their generosity was never better appreciated. Again thanking you all, believe me to remain, yours sincerely,

"ARIHUR PETERS."

"DEAR MADAM OR SIR,—We desire to invite your attention very earnestly to the enclosed appeal on behalf of the Election Fighting Fund, which, in our opinion, is doing invaluable work for the cause of Women's Suffrage. The new policy of concentrating efforts to ensure the success of Labour candidates standing against Liberals is in effect anti-Governmental. The reasons for supporting the Labour candidate, instead of merely opposing the Liberal, are: (1) that the Labour Party has officially adopted Women's Suffrage as part of its programme, and (2) that in this way more effective work can be done to secure votes. The argument most likely to appeal to the Liberal Whips is that they will lose seats if they continue to obstruct the enfranchisement of women. The prospect of a series of by-elections which might end, as the contests at Crewe and Midlothian ended, in the loss of safe Liberal seats, and the further certainty that the next General Election will produce a large number of triangular contests, is bound to affect the calculations of the Liberal Whips. Even if a Government measure of Women's Suffrage is not attainable, the Liberal Whips could easily ensure the success of the Suffrage amendments by influencing 'wobblers' and by securing the Irish Vote. They would undoubtedly do this if they were convinced that a failure to enfranchise women would entail electoral disaster. Experience has shown the value to us of triangular contests. It is difficult in a straight fight between a Liberal and a Tory to turn many votes on the suffrage issue alone, but when Liberalism and Labour are competing we can make our influence powerfully felt.

"While there is a real chance that this policy may bear fruit this year, we believe it cannot fail in the long run to make victory certain. The chief obstacle to the adoption of Women's Suffrage officially by the Liberal Party is the existence in its ranks, and above all in the Ministry, of a small but obstinate anti-suffragist minority. These men must at all cost be eliminated from Parliament, and the best means—indeed, the only means, of doing this is to attack their seats by triangular contests, and to prepare the ground betimes in these selected constituencies by systematic organisation and propaganda. For

this purpose we hold that all sections of the suffrage movement should combine, and in this belief we venture to commend the Election Fund to your generosity. We are, faithfully yours,

"H. N. BRAILSFORD.

"LAURENCE HOUSMAN.

"ISRAEL ZANGWILL."

Every post just now brings expressions of encouragement and thanks and promises of help from the local branches of the Independent Labour Party. Nothing could be firmer than the tone of an article in the *Labour Leader* for September 19th, "The Labour Party and Women."

Our members who are not able to give much money or work to turn elections can at least show their appreciation of the attitude of the Suffrage Party by going to the Albert Hall on the evening of Friday, October 11th, WEARING THEIR COLOURS, when the autumn campaign, "War Against Poverty," is to be inaugurated. The meeting is being organised by the I.L.P. and the Fabian Society, and "the campaign," says the *Labour Leader*, "will raise the social problem in all its aspects. . . ."

The speakers advertised are W. C. Anderson, J. Keir Hardie, M.P., George Lansbury, M. P., Miss Mary R. Macarthur, G. Bernard Shaw, and Mrs. Sidney Webb. Chairman, J. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P.

Certainly one may expect that some at least of the speakers will point to the need of a full citizenship, the indispensability of women with votes, in such a gigantic crusade.

Should we not more effectively show our presence and support if we were to arrange to sit together? If those who think this idea good will send me postcards to the office I will do my best to arrange a National Union section of seats in the hall.

Seats in boxes can be had for 2s. and 1s. 6d., and stalls for 1s.

M. P. STANBURY.

FIFTEENTH LIST TO SEPTEMBER 20TH.			
	£	s.	d.
Already acknowledged	3,922	12	1
<i>N.W. Federation</i> —			
Mrs. Slack	3	3	0
Miss E. Matravars	1	0	0
Anonymous	0	10	0
Miss G. W. Evans	0	10	0
<i>Manchester and District Federation</i> —			
Miss M. Lees	5	0	0
Leigh W.S.S.	1	1	0
Altrincham W.S.S.	5	0	0
Mrs. Forrest Hewitt	0	5	2
<i>Norwich W.S.S.</i> —			
Mr. W. H. Jewson	0	10	0
Miss M. Sheepshanks	0	10	0
<i>MIDLOTHIAN BY-ELECTION</i> —			
Anonymous for Motor Car	36	12	0
Total	£3,981	19	3

Other Donations from members of the Manchester and District Federation have already been announced in COMMON CAUSE of July 25th and August 15th.

## The Higgling of the Market.

Mr. Churchill's experimental balloon, flown by premeditation or by a remarkable irony before an audience of women on September 12th in Dundee, has set all the papers surmising, theorising, arguing about the merits and meaning of this crop of little parliaments. According to your conception of Mr. Churchill's character, ambitions and prejudices, will be your interpretation of the motive prompting the flying of this particular *ballon d'essai*. As an addition to a speech on Home Rule for Ireland it reminds one of nothing so much as Morgiana's device of chalking all the doors in the same row as Ali Baba's. As a speech made to women is either betrayed a truly staggering contempt for women's understanding and faith in their servility, or it was a cautious feeler thrown out to discover what kind of bargain could be struck with Liberal women in the matter of the franchise.

We have to remember that Mr. Churchill was making a speech about Home Rule and a Parliament for Ireland, and he went on to suggest that "there would be no difficulty in applying the federal system to Scotland and Wales as well as to Ireland," that "larger units" of local Government might be established, and that these larger units "would afford a much larger sphere than is open at present for the activities of women." It is cautiously worded; you cannot pin down Mr. Churchill, still less the Government, to anything tangible. But the sentence seems to suggest that Mr. Churchill at least would approve of women having the vote for these local Parliaments. Then surely we should begin at the beginning and make the electorate of the first of these local Parliaments as far as may be a model for the rest that are to follow. In the Irish Council

Bill, introduced by Mr. Birrell in 1907, while Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was yet Premier, women were as a matter of course part of the proposed electorate; with the same Irish Secretary, with an entirely new enthusiasm on the part of Anti-Suffragists for the development of women's share in local Government, we have the astounding retrograde step of a proposed electorate that shall be wholly male for a local Parliament whose business Suffragists and Anti-Suffragists alike agree is women's as well as men's business. Nay, further, this amazing Government introduces a Franchise Bill for Great Britain, which not only perpetuates the existing disabilities of women in local Government, but definitely enacts a disability which has hitherto been imposed not by law, but by the decisions of revising barristers. We publish on another page an account of how an unusually sensible revising barrister in Birmingham has succeeded in putting more women on this register than are on any other in the kingdom, because he has actually interpreted the Act of Parliament to mean something when it says that sex and marriage shall be no disqualification. The Government Franchise Bill distinctly states that outside London and Scotland (yes, really, we are not joking!) marriage shall be a disqualification for a woman. This, remember, is a Bill brought forward by a Government whose Anti-Suffrage members based much of their criticism of the Conciliation Bill on the fact that it "penalised marriage," refused the vote to "the best of her sex, the married woman!"

What, what, we ask amazed, can have induced the Government to bring forth such a crop of absurdities? Some hints dropped by Mrs. Humphry Ward have given a clue, and Mr. Churchill's speech makes the scent much hotter. Mrs. Ward in a recent letter to the Press threw out dark hints that in the autumn it would appear how active the Antis had been, and we were left to infer that womanly woman, working as woman

should, under the rose, by truly womanly wiles, would win all that it was fit for her to have. Mr. Churchill said, "So I would urge upon all those who are attracted by the idea of a federal system, and also by the idea of a Scottish Parliament for the settlement of purely Scottish affairs, to concentrate upon what is essentially a preliminary step. I mean the reconciliation of the British and Irish democracy by the restoration to Ireland of a Parliament for dealing with purely Irish affairs."

Now Mr. Churchill was asking these Liberal women to concentrate, as an essentially preliminary step, on a Home Rule Bill which leaves women out, and he dangled before them the hope that other local parliaments might follow the first, and that women might have a "wider sphere of activities" in these. We hope Liberal women will say that this is not quite good enough; that if the Irish Parliament is to be the type and exemplar of half a dozen or more other little Parliaments, they want to see women established in the type; that they do not see the fun of resuming in each case the weary battle as to whether Lancashire thinks women ought not to have the vote because by working like men they compete with men, or Cornwall thinks that women ought not to have the vote because they don't work like men; whether Loamshire thinks women are too good and the Black Country that they are too bad. This is parochialism run mad—men are men and women are women in Ireland as in Scotland, Wales, and England, and Parliament has one task in this matter, not a dozen. That task is the one which it tries to perform as far as men are concerned, whenever it sets up a new authority, but which it has never even tried to perform as far as women are concerned; it is the task so fluently described by Mr. Asquith, "to vindicate and establish upon an unshakable foundation the principle of representative government." (December 10th, 1909.)

There is nothing new in these devices. They are so old that women should by now scarcely need to be advised of them. Mr. Churchill hopes by dangling the carrot of a "wider sphere" before the noses of Liberal women to get them to pull their hardest in the shafts of his cartful of little parliaments. The foundation of an Irish Parliament (without women) is an "essentially preliminary step;" the foundation of all the other little parliaments (without women) will be further "preliminaries," and if and when women have worked their hardest to help Mr. Churchill in establishing these purely male governments, they will find him equally fertile in devising fresh "preliminaries." It was ever so! Women slaved to free the slaves, worked with the men for Reform, for the abolition of the Corn-laws, for a thousand matters which in their turn were "essentially preliminary." Women have now their own preliminary, which will be as essential as they choose to make it. They must not budge an inch. They must demand inclusion in the Home Rule Bill and resist the Local Government clause of the Franchise Bill, but they must remember that these two points are simply a matter of holding the ground which they already have morally won, and which this Liberal Government is threatening. The Government is like a rack-renting landlord. The tenant, having spent years of labour upon the farm and reclaimed acres of waste by his toil, demands that he should be given materials wherewith to repair his ruinous buildings; to whom the landlord replies, "Dear me, and I was just thinking you paid too low a rent, and was going to add the 20-acre field to the next lot. Let us say no more about it. I'll give you back your 20-acre field and you shall drop your claim. We must give and take, you know. It can't be all on one side."

The local government vote is ours; the revising barristers' interpretation of the law as disqualifying married women as such is ridiculous, and, by all its professions, the Government is bound to amend the Local Government Acts so as to permit of many more women voting and standing for election. These are not matters for the higgling of the political market, rights to be given away with a great flourish of generosity at the secret solicitation of anti-suffrage ladies and adduced by them as examples of what can be done by feminine influence.

Mrs. Churchill is reported to have said at the meeting on the 12th that "all women must feel a sense of humiliation and degradation at the scenes we have witnessed." This was more true than she knew. One does feel humiliated that Mr. Churchill should even imagine that there are women to whom he could make such an offer as this would seem to be, and we hope that Liberal women will be very stiff indeed in their determination that the Home Rule Bill shall, in the matter of the representation of women at least, be a type which other Local Parliament Bills will be forced to follow and will strengthen the hands of Mr. Philip Snowden to secure the passage of his amendment to the Home Rule Bill.



Photo: Mark E. Mitchell and Co.

#### A SHOP IN HARROGATE.

### Jane Addams' Great Book.

The prominent part taken by Miss Jane Addams in seconding the nomination of Col. Theodore Roosevelt has brought her more especially before the world, and it is good to think that a woman with such a great record of social work of the very best kind should be taking up politics; there seems no question that American politics need such women. As long ago as September, 1909, we published a short article on Hull House, Chicago, and the book now before the world is the ripe fruit of the experience of Hull House. It is written throughout with a sobriety of language which reveals the author's conviction that the facts have only to be known for the new conscience to deal at long last with this ancient evil. The evil is the white slave traffic, and the continued existence of "the oldest profession on earth."

Miss Addams finds in the uprooting of the upas tree of slavery, "the tree that was literally as old as the race of man," a close analogy to the work, now gathering impetus, of uprooting its twin slavery, that of commercialised vice. She finds many of the arguments the same against both slaveries, and some of the methods against both also the same. She sees good hope in the quickening of a social conscience in the matter:—

Nothing is gained by making the situation better or worse than it is, nor in anywise different from what it is. This ancient evil is indeed social in the sense of community responsibility, and can only be understood and at length remedied when we face the fact and measure the resources which may at length be massed against it. Perhaps the most striking indication that our generation has become the bearer of a new moral consciousness in regard to the existence of commercialised vice is the fact that the mere contemplation of it throws the more sensitive men and women among our contemporaries into a state of indignant revolt.

Miss Addams, illustrating her contentions with actual cases, shows that, however the victims of this traffic are first captured (and they are kidnapped or inveigled very young indeed), they are retained in the trade by the twin processes of involving them in hopeless debt, and of degrading them by drink and drugs and beatings, and the inculcation of vicious practises. In addition, it is common to add to the helplessness of the victim by ensuring that she shall be a foreigner in the land of her slavery. We wish we had space to quote at length Miss Addams' simple tales of Breton Marie and Swedish Olga. She does not attempt to idealise them; shows them not a little stupid, sometimes sullen;

above all, shows them pathetically and cruelly ignorant in a society which professes to shelter women, but which preys upon them in the most dastardly way imaginable, using even their purest if ill-placed affection and their desire for home and marriage as a bait to drag them into the filth from which the same society will never permit them to be cleansed.

But our author calls upon us not only to learn the many ingeniously repulsive devices by which young girls are degraded in order that they may lose their rights as human beings, and be sold as so much flesh; she also forces us to consider the conditions under which many thousands of women and girls have to live, and not only the temptations to which they are subjected, but the sapping of will, hope and health which make them unjoyful victims much more often than lustful wantons. When men are always reminding women that so much more must be forgiven men because of their less controllable appetites, women should contemplate this author's picture, not in any way overdrawn, of the life of unending toil, harassment, physical fatigue, under-feeding, and general misery which thousands of girls must endure or "fall." We have only to compare the average wage of six dollars a week earned by girls in industry with the average wage of twenty-five dollars a week earned by prostitutes plying their trade under a "protector," to realise that sexual appetite is not the only "temptation"; in the case of a woman it is often the even more poignant hunger for food and shelter that constitutes the temptation. But this is by no means the end of the matter. Hotels, restaurants, and department-stores give a high percentage of prostitutes, but it is a curious and disquieting fact that the highest of all is to be found among domestic servants, and the next highest among girls living at home with no definite occupation whatever. The causes in the last named condition seem to be mainly ignorance or neglect, or over-severity on the part of the parents, and a longing for finery, for independence, for money to spend, and the need for healthy work on the part of the girl. Undoubtedly undisciplined and ignorant youth is ill-armed to meet all these assaults.

One shudders at the quiet tale of vicious young men, of the debauching of little girls, who are made to pay to some satyr the price of a coveted ride on a hobby horse, of the hideous unprotectedness of youth. And here we do not need to remind readers of this paper that we in England are not one whit better than America. In Chicago alone in 27 months over 600 children passed through the ward for venereal diseases, and Utah is quoted as the pioneer State in grappling with this scourge. We do not know England's record. We fear it is no better.

Miss Addams is far too wise to give us one remedy, one Morrison's pill which, without trouble or loss to anyone, will put this age-long evil right. She sees that there is not one cause but many, and shows how the raising of a woman's status, so that she puts a high value on herself, the capacity for useful work, the wise teaching of sexual matters, the support and guardianship of true social life and affection, as well as an enormous mass of economic improvements will all help. But, admitting all the natural temptations, she endorses the assertion that—

There is not enough depravity in human nature to keep alive this very large business. The immorality of women and the brutishness of men have to be persuaded, coerced and constantly stimulated in order to keep the social evil in its present state of business prosperity.

We must all admit, to our shame, this is true. It cries to us from the hoardings, it meets us in the vast majority of our theatres. Drink and drugs and corrupt plays and shows, violence and militarism all play their part in reinforcing the primal instincts of man and woman.

Miss Addams believes that white slaves can only be afforded protection through legislation, and she believes in the virtue of political agitation to transform pity into action and create a greater social sympathy. First among the movements that will in time suppress the social evil, she says:—

Perhaps, is the equal Suffrage movement. . . . Life is full of hidden remedial powers which society has not yet utilised, but perhaps nowhere is the waste more flagrant than in the matured deductions and judgments of the women, who are constantly forced to share the social injustices which they have no recognised power to alter. If political rights were once given to women, if the situation were theirs to deal with as a matter of civic responsibility, one cannot imagine that the existence of the social evil would remain unchallenged in its semi-legal protection.

She sees, further, in the entrance of women into public life a certain way of screwing up the private standards of public men. Women may at last force men to do away with the traditional use of a public record as a cloak for a wretched private character, because society will never permit a woman to make such excuses for herself.

But Miss Addams is as far as it is possible to be from the pit-fall of legalism. The power of the spirit and the sacredness of the individual person is her rock of faith. The monstrous

iniquity by which man allows a child in years to "consent" to his degrading of her, and then damns her for the rest of her earthly life because of this degradation, is well brought out. That men who have caused this degradation should sit in judgment on the women they degrade is the ultimate arrogance.

If a man has seized upon a moment of weakness in a girl and obtained her consent, although she may thereafter be in dire need of help, she is put outside all protection of the law. The courts assume that such a girl has deliberately decided for herself, and that because she is not "of previous chaste life and character," she is lost to all decency. Yet every human being knows deep down in his heart that his own moral energy ebbs and flows, that he could not be judged fairly by his hours of defeat, and that after revealing moments of weakness, although shocked and frightened, he is the same human being, struggling as he did before. Nevertheless, in some States, a little girl as young as ten years of age may make this irrevocable decision for herself.

The whole book is a noble plea for the recognition of the full humanity of women.

\*A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil, by Jane Addams, Hull House, Chicago. (The Macmillan Co., pp. 219. 4s. 6d. net.)

### They Say—What Say They?

Labour stands reproved by a staunch friend. Mr. Philip Snowden, observing the recent criticism of the Labour Party by the *Nation* after Midlothian, finds matter in it which should strike home. In the *Christian Commonwealth* of last week he deduces "Some Morals from Midlothian" intended to apply to the recent tactics of the Labour Party. He finds that the failure of these tactics to raise the position of the Labour candidates at the poll is due in considerable measure to the want of organisation in election campaigns. He points out that in at least six out of the seven constituencies contested during the last year there had been no thought of bringing forward a Labour candidate until the vacancy occurred, this fact betraying a want of judgment and sound policy, without which no party can make a stand. The other parties, being stronger and more firmly established, can afford to put forward candidates "who have neither political knowledge nor general information" and are not, therefore, personally equipped for the campaign. But Labour candidates should not rely on their party to supply their deficiencies of quality. Their knowledge and arguments should be firm and well grounded enough to attract a larger body than that which listens merely to the single appeal of trade unionism. The work of the Labour Party lies before it in making its position stronger. Its members must concentrate their keen enthusiasm upon the task of stronger organisation and the setting up of a standard which shall be definite as well as ideal; as easy to grasp as it may be difficult to attain. At present, Mr. Snowden thinks, "organisation beats enthusiasm every time."

Weakness lies, moreover, in policy, as in criticism, that is purely destructive. The Labour Party will never win on a criticism of its opponents or on denunciations of capitalists. It must convince the electors that it has a constructive policy of its own that can break down the policy of the others. By so doing it may succeed in organising the industrial electorate who at present fail to see the particular reason why the Labour Party should exist at all. It may do more than this. By a clearly-explained appeal on the ground of civic and social progress, it may convince a larger section of the middle and professional classes of the necessity and advantages of its success.

In view of the threats which have been industriously circulated of exporting "militant methods" from England to Canada, the following extracts from Canadian papers will be of interest to our readers:—

The *Montreal Daily Witness* had a leader note this month in which, after speaking sympathetically of the equal co-operation of Mr. and Mrs. Bramwell Booth in their great work, it suggested that the world goes better wherever such co-operation exists, and the opponents of citizen rights for women are assured that they would be "surprised to find how little of a revolution it would be."

The *Free Press* (London, Canada) has in its issue of September 9th an excellent article on "Suffrage and the Pioneer Woman," urging that when Canadian women clearly state their claim and desire for the vote, the men, who are too near the bed-rock of life to be under any of the sentimental delusions which afflict Englishmen, will give it to them. Alluding to Mr. Borden's reply to the deputation from the Women's Social and Political Union, this writer says:—

From the interview announced one gains the idea that the English Suffragettes have conceived the scheme, should suffrage not shortly be granted to the women of Canada, of pressing upon this country a militant movement such as that which has lately been fraught with so much misery and humiliation to the Suffrage Party in England.

Without going the length of actually believing this report in its

entirety, one must, nevertheless, be struck with what is said to have been Mr. Borden's reply when he gave the delegation to understand that in his opinion the women of Canada are intelligent enough to run a suffrage campaign, should they inaugurate such, on their own account, and that no outsiders are able to know so well as they either the needs of the women of this country or the best way of making those needs public.

The *Mail and Empire* (Toronto) has an eloquent letter declaring that Canada is in danger of following all the disastrous industrial practices of the older countries unless she stems the danger by giving women the franchise as New Zealand and Australia have done. The letter concludes:—

"Women and children first" is a great unwritten law, and with unselfish courage and devotion does every man obey it in times of sudden danger or disaster which imperil human lives. But when one thinks of the thousands of women and children whose lives are endangered, ruined, or sacrificed yearly by child labour, the white slave traffic, and the sweating system, evils which exist mainly in order to gratify the desires or increase the profits of men, one cannot but ask what has become of that law. Is it perhaps only "a law of the sea"?

### Women Voters in Birmingham.

A series of interesting decisions have been given by the Revising Barrister for the City of Birmingham during the past three years.

In the first place, the old stock objection of the party agents "That you are a married woman" (or "That you are disqualified by reason of coverture") has been completely disestablished. Mr. Brooks (the R.B.) holds that by inference the Act which was passed by the Liberal Government to remove the disqualification

of sex and marriage for election to city councils removed the previous common law disqualification of married women as burgesses.

Furthermore, the revising barrister has decided that widows should be deemed to succeed instanter to their deceased husbands' tenancies, even though these were only weekly ones. He held that the acceptance of the widow as tenant by the landlord was sufficient to justify the overseers in regarding the widow as succeeding "by descent, succession, marriage, marriage settlement, or devise" in the terms of the Act. The result of this decision has been that many hundreds of widows come on the burgess roll every year without waiting until they have enjoyed the usual twelve months' tenancy in their own right.

Thirdly, it had been the common practice in Birmingham, as elsewhere, that if, for example, the overseers had in error put Mrs. Mary Jones on the list (regarding her, wrongly, as the tenant) and Mr. Wm. Jones, her husband, put in a claim and his claim was allowed, then Mrs. Jones' name was struck out without objection. The Liberal agent contended that this could not legally be done, and the revising barrister decided in his favour. As it is a common thing for the wives' names to be given to the overseers' canvassers, there are now a considerable number of cases in Birmingham where the names of husband and wife both appear on the burgess roll.

It was an interesting outcome of the first of these decisions that a married woman, Mrs. Pinsent, became enrolled as a burgess, and was then elected to the City Council. And it is an equally interesting result of the cumulative force of the decisions that there are probably more women burgesses in proportion to the electorate than in any other city in the kingdom.

T. P. N.

## THE NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES.

Non-Party. Non-Militant.

**OBJECT:** To obtain the Parliamentary franchise for women on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men.  
**METHODS:** (a) The promotion of the claim of women to the Parliamentary vote by united action in Parliament and by all constitutional methods of agitation in this country. (b) The organisation of Women's Suffrage Societies on a non-party basis.

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### From Headquarters.

#### GREAT MEETING IN THE ALBERT HALL.

As already announced, the National Union is holding a great demonstration in the Albert Hall, on Tuesday, November 5th.

The speakers will include Mrs. Fawcett (in the chair), Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. W. C. Anderson, Miss A. M. Royden and Miss Margaret Robertson. Preliminary handbills have already been printed and may be obtained from the London Society for Women's Suffrage, 58, Victoria Street. Societies in the National Union are asked to make this demonstration known amongst their members and others, to ensure a crowded hall. The autumn of 1912 will be a critical time in the political history of the Women's Suffrage Movement, and a demonstration to demand the inclusion of women in the Reform Bill must be on the largest possible scale.

#### GENERAL COUNCIL.

The half-yearly Council Meeting of the National Union will be held in Manchester on October 9th and 10th, and on October 10th the Manchester Society is organising a great public meeting, at which the speakers will be Mr. Philip Snowden, M.P., Mr. Laurence Housman, and others. On October 9th

a reception will be held for the delegates. The agenda includes some important resolutions and a large gathering of delegates from all parts of the country is expected.

#### NEW SOCIETIES.

*West Riding, Yorks:* Rotherham.  
*Eastern Counties:* West Cambridgeshire.  
*West Midlands:* Upton.  
*East Midlands:* Hucknall.  
*Surrey, Sussex, Hants:* Brockham and Betchworth.  
*Scottish Federation:* Largs.

K. D. COURTNEY.

#### ORGANISATION.

Our readers cannot fail to have been impressed by the growth of the National Union recorded in the Treasurer's notes last week. The addition of 104 new societies is a record to be proud of, and we hope it will serve to spur on those of our members who are doing less than they might do, in order that the record may be surpassed during the next nine months. We are proud of it, but we are never satisfied!

We should like, however, to remind our readers that every new society means more work and more expense at headquarters. The affiliation fees do not represent net gain. This increase

### FAMILIAR INITIALS AND THEIR MEANINGS.

**N.U.W.S.S.** (National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies).—Objects—to obtain the Parliamentary Vote for Women on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men. Methods.—Constitutional.  
**W.S.P.U.** (Women's Social and Political Union).—Objects—Same as above. Methods.—Militant.

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represents 104 more envelopes to address whenever we circularise the societies, and 104 more stamps to put on. When mistakes are made we would beg our secretaries to remember that we are but flesh and blood. We aim at perfection, but we have not quite attained it. There are ways also in which societies may help us; we are not always notified when a new secretary is appointed, or when a temporary worker retires and a permanent one returns. We have reason also to believe that changes notified at headquarters are not always sent to the Federation Secretary. These apparently small omissions lead to considerable confusion. We are shortly bringing out the quarterly list of societies in COMMON CAUSE and hope this time to have it quite without mistakes. We have abandoned the plan of alternating the alphabetical list with a list of societies within their federations, as the latter involves much more trouble in the printing.

GERALDINE COOKE.

### Literature Department.

Our stock of leaflets has grown very rapidly in the last few months. We have now got leaflets touching on almost every aspect of the Suffrage question, and some which rather overlap.

Visitors to the National Union Office have probably noticed that the rooms and passages are crowded with parcels. Most of these contain leaflets, and it seems likely that if they go on increasing in size and bulk it will soon be impossible for the staff to move about at all. As the developments of the Suffrage situation will certainly make it necessary to publish more new leaflets in the course of the autumn, we have no choice but to drop some of the old ones.

The Literature Committee has therefore decided not to reprint the following leaflets when the present supply is exhausted:—

Lord Haldane on Women's Suffrage.  
Mr. A. J. Balfour on Franchise Reform.  
Women's Suffrage and the Referendum.  
Constitutional Suffragists and the Militants.  
How the Reform Bill of 1832 was won.  
The Australian Senate and Women's Suffrage.  
Teachers.

A blow to Anti-Suffragists.

Women's Need of the Vote: an Illustration.  
Seamen's Wives.

We have still got some considerable stock of most of them in hand, but Societies or others who wish to make sure of obtaining them should order as soon as possible.

I. B. O'MALLEY.

### Press Department.

The papers which open out special columns to the Woman and Suffrage Movement multiply rapidly. *The Formby Times* and the *Southport Visitor*, for whose excellent propaganda we are much indebted to the local National Union contributors, furnish good examples of the work which is being done. The *Reading Standard*, a most flourishing Liberal paper, with a wide circulation, is doing splendid service to our cause, and warmly advocates Women's Suffrage on Constitutional lines. Besides giving a weekly column, an excellent series of articles by Miss M. Jones, of Pangbourne, on the historical aspect of the Suffrage Movement, has been lately appearing. These will be continued till the Buda Pesth International Conference next year, where the Society hopes to have a representative who will report to the paper. A striking illustrated supplement appeared on Saturday, containing portraits of Mrs. Fawcett, Sir Rufus Isaacs,

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