

THE VOTE,  
FEBRUARY 16, 1917.  
ONE PENNY.

## The 'Priceless Opportunity.'

# THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

VOL. XVI. No. 382.

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FRIDAY, FEB. 16, 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.

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**WHERE WOMEN VOTE**  
for their Representatives in  
the Government.

NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA,  
TASMANIA, CANADA (IN MANITOBA,  
ALBERTA, SASKATCHEWAN, BRITISH  
COLUMBIA),

FINLAND, NORWAY,  
DENMARK, ICELAND,

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
(IN WYOMING, COLORADO, IDAHO, UTAH,  
WASHINGTON, CALIFORNIA, ARIZONA,  
KANSAS, ORIGON, ALASKA, ILLINOIS,  
MONTANA, NEVADA).

*In the BRITISH ISLES*  
*No Woman*  
*has the Parliamentary Vote!*

**WOMEN SAY;**  
**NO MORE DELAY!**

**SUFFRAGE MESSAGE**  
of the Australian Senate to  
the Motherland in 1910.

On November 17, 1910, the Australian Senate passed the following resolution:—

"That this Senate is of opinion that the extension of the Suffrage to the women of Australia for States and Commonwealth Parliaments on the same terms as men has had the most beneficial results.

"It has led to the more orderly conduct of elections, and at the last Federal Elections the women's vote in the majority of the States showed a greater proportionate increase than that cast by men.

"It has given a greater prominence to legislation particularly affecting women and children, although the women have not taken up such questions to the exclusion of others of wider significance.

"In matters of defence and Imperial concern they have proved themselves as far-seeing and discriminating as men.

"Because the reform has brought nothing but good, though disaster was freely prophesied, we respectfully urge that all nations enjoying representative Government would be well advised in granting Votes to women."



## Women's Freedom League.

Offices: 144, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.

Telegrams—"DESPARD, MUSEUM 1429, LONDON."

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Political and Militant Organiser—Miss C. NINA BOYLE.

Secretary—Miss F. A. UNDERWOOD.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.

#### LONDON AND SUBURBS.

**Saturday, February 17.**—POLITICAL MEETING, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3.15 p.m. Speaker: Dr. G. B. Clark, on "How Our Laws are Made." Chair: Mrs. Mustard. Questions. Discussion. Tea 4.30 p.m. (6d.). **HERNE HILL BRANCH.**—WHIST DRIVE, for W.F.L. Rally (March 2), 69, Danecroft-road, 7 p.m. Tickets 1s.

**Monday, February 19.**—LONDON BRANCHES COUNCIL, At Home to London Members at Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 6 p.m.—9 p.m.

Refreshments. Speeches.

**Wednesday, February 21.**—PUBLIC MEETING, Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., 3 p.m. Speakers: Miss Abadam, "The Feminist Outlook," and Mrs. Corner. Chair: Mrs. Mustard. **CLAPHAM BRANCH MEETING**, 15, Clapham Mansions, Nightingale-lane, S.W., 6 p.m.

**Friday, February 23.**—CROYDON PUBLIC MEETING, 32A, The Arcade, High-street, 3.30 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Mustard. "Women's Place in the Empire."

**Saturday, February 24.**—GOLDER'S GREEN BRANCH DRAWING ROOM MEETING, 13, Temple Fortune-court, 3.30 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Despard and Mrs. Mustard. Chair: Miss Hedge.

**Sunday, February 25.**—Dramatic Recital of "Romeo and Juliet," by Miss Clara Reed, at Bijou Theatre, 3, Bedford-street, Strand, W.C., 3.30. Chair: Mrs. Tanner. Tickets, 2s (numbered and reserved) and 1s., from W.F.L. Office.

#### PROVINCES.

**Monday, February 19.**—Middlesbrough, Public Meeting, Suffrage Rooms, 231A, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road. Speaker: Mrs. Despard, 7.30 p.m.

**Wednesday, February 21.**—Portsmouth, Whist Drive, Unitarian Schoolroom, High-street, 3 p.m. Tickets 1s. each.

**Thursday, February 22.**—Reading, Annual Business Meeting, Parlour, Recreation Club, Oxford-road, 7.30 p.m. Chair: Miss Anna Munro.

**Thursday, March 1.**—Reading, Public Meeting, Gas Offices Lecture Room, Cross-street, 7.30 p.m. Speakers: Miss Eunice Murray and Miss Anna Munro.

#### SCOTLAND.

**Wednesday, February 21.**—Edinburgh, Public Meeting, Suffrage Shop, 90, Lothian-road, 8 p.m. Miss A. B. Jack, "A Visit to India."

**Saturday, February 24.**—GLASGOW, in Hengler's Circus, ILLUSTRATED LECTURE, "How I escaped from Ruhlben," by Geoffrey Pyke, Esq. Other speakers: Sir Samuel Chisholm and Miss Eunice Murray. Proceeds in aid of Scottish Prisoners of War. 2.30 p.m.

**We call special attention to—**

**Wednesday, February 21.**—Caxton Hall, 3 p.m. Speakers: Miss Abadam on "The Feminist Outlook," and Mrs. Corner. Chair: Mrs. Mustard.

**Sunday, February 25.**—Bijou Theatre, 3, Bedford-street, Strand, 3.30. Dramatic Recital of "Romeo and Juliet" by Miss Clara Reed. Chair: Mrs. Tanner.

#### To help "The Vote."

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Amount already acknowledged				392	18	0
In Memory of Mrs. Snow	50	0	0			
Mrs. Fox Bourne	5	0	0			
Dr. E. Knight	5	0	0			
Mrs. Walter Carey	3	6	0			
Miss Tennant	3	0	0			
Miss Eunice Murray	2	0	0			
Mrs. Baillie-Weaver	1	0	0			
Miss Beatrice Kent	12	0				
Miss Mary Anderson	12	0				
Mr. John Hunter, per Miss Eunice Murray	10	0				
Miss Isabel Macdonald	10	0				
Mrs. M. E. Anderson	1	0				
				71	11	0
				464	9	0

SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS.

## POLITICAL NOTES.

### Our Next Political Meeting.

A meeting will be held on Saturday afternoon next, February 17, at 3.15 o'clock, in the Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C. Dr. G. B. Clark, who was for fifteen years a Member of Parliament, will speak on "How our Laws are Made," and the chair will be taken by Mrs. Mustard. We hope that all members who attended and enjoyed the last political meeting will come to this, and bring as many friends as possible. Dr. Clark will give an account of the passage of a bill through all its stages until it becomes an Act of Parliament, and this address should be especially interesting to Suffragists, who have so often watched a Bill for their enfranchisement start gaily on its way and break down before the many obstacles placed in its path. We hope that all present will join in the discussion which will follow Dr. Clark's address. Tea (6d.) will be served at 4.30 p.m.

### The Call to Arms.

The question that is occupying all our minds today is whether at last women's claims to the rights of citizenship are to be recognised and granted by those in authority over us. We are anxiously waiting to know the effect produced on the House of Commons by the report of the Speaker's Conference; our views on the matter are dealt with in our leader. Now is the time for a great rally of Suffragists around their flag; we must make it our battle cry that there shall be no more votes for men unless there are votes for women also. For the sake of the whole nation and its future, women must be enfranchised before peace is declared, so that reconstruction may be started not on the old lines of inequality and discord between the sexes, but on new lines of equality, good-fellowship and freedom.

### Less Rights, More Punishment.

At Westminster Police-court on Saturday, a soldier's wife, drawing separation allowance, was charged at the instance of Westminster City Council with keeping a disorderly house. It was stated that thirty-one soldiers visited the place in one week. Mr. Paul Taylor refused to impose a fine, and ordered three months' imprisonment in the second division, saying that it was only because it was a first offence that he did not impose a sentence of hard labour. We are not told that any sentence was imposed on the thirty-one soldiers who visited the house, and it seems strange that women who are not considered fit to help in the making of the laws should be more heavily punished than men for breaking those laws. In demanding that women should have equal rights and responsibilities with men, we should lay stress on the need for men to be equally punished with women.

### Suffrage Meeting at Queen's Hall.

On Tuesday, February 20, at 8 p.m., a great demonstration of women workers will be held at Queen's Hall. The meeting is organised by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, and is supported by other suffrage societies, including the Women's Freedom League. Mrs. Fawcett will take the chair, and speakers will be Mrs. Creighton, Mrs. Strachey, Lord Cowdray, Mr. Runciman, M.P., and Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P. All suffragists are urged to support this meeting. Tickets (2s. 6d. and 1s.) may be obtained from the W.F.L. Office, 144, High Holborn, W.C. ANNE E. CORNER.

M. EDOARD SOERMUS, THE RUSSIAN VIOLINIST, who has so often helped us with his playing at Caxton Hall, will give a concert on Saturday, February 17, at 8 p.m., at Wigmore Hall, Wigmore-street, W. Assisting him are MM. Adolphe Raibin (Russian tenor) and Budden-Morris (pianist). Tickets, 10s. 6d., 5s. 3d., and 2s. 8d., may be obtained at the hall.

THEY SUPPORT US.

## THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE AND THE GOVERNMENT.

### Reply from the Prime Minister.

The following letter has been received from Mr. Lloyd George's Secretary:—

10, Downing-street, Whitehall, S.W.

DEAR MADAM,—I am desired by the Prime Minister to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 5th and 22nd January, and to express his regret that you have not received an earlier reply. He wishes me to inform you that he is not prepared, at the present moment, to receive a deputation on the subject of women's franchise. Later on, however, when the question of franchise is being considered, he will, no doubt, receive a deputation on this matter, and you will then be communicated with further.—Yours faithfully,

F. L. STEVENSON.

### Letter from Mr. John Hodge, Minister for Labour.

The following letter has been received from Mr. Hodge, in answer to our request to him to receive a deputation:—

Ministry of Labour, Montagu House, Whitehall,

London, S.W.

February 10, 1917.

DEAR MADAM,—I am desired by the Minister of Labour to thank you for your letter of February 5, in which you ask him to receive a deputation from the Women's Freedom League with reference to the problems of reconstruction after the war, and I am to say that, in consequence of the pressure of Parliamentary and departmental duties, it would be exceedingly difficult for Mr. Hodge to fit in a reception of a deputation from your League. He wishes me to say, however, that if you will kindly let him have your proposals in written form he will be pleased to give them his own personal consideration.—Yours faithfully,

W. W. HENDERSON.

Miss Underwood, Secretary,  
Women's Freedom League,  
144, High Holborn, W.C.

### Reply from The Women's Freedom League.

The Women's Freedom League have sent the following letter to Mr. Hodge:—

144, High Holborn, W.C.

February 13, 1917.

To the Right Hon. John Hodge, M.P.,  
Ministry of Labour, Montagu House, Whitehall, S.W.

DEAR SIR,—We are in receipt of your letter of February 10, and regret that you are unable to receive our deputation. The Women's Freedom League feels that, in view of the presence of large numbers of women in industry, the problems of reconstruction cannot be fairly and adequately dealt with unless women are enfranchised before peace is declared. We therefore urge you to vote against any Bill dealing with Electoral Reform which does not enfranchise women and to use your influence to persuade other members of the Labour Party to do the same.—We have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servants,

C. DESPARD (President), EUNICE G. MURRAY,  
E. KNIGHT (Treasurer), ALICE SCHOFIELD COATES,  
ANNE E. CORNER (Acting), KATHLEEN TANNER,  
Political Organiser, F. A. UNDERWOOD (Secretary).

A letter on the same lines as the above has been sent to Mr. Wardle, chairman, Mr. Henderson, secretary, and all other members of the Labour Party in Parliament.

## IN PARLIAMENT.

### Taxi Driving and Women.

Sir Henry Norman asked the Home Secretary if he will now follow the example of authorities in other cities and authorise the issue of licences to drive taxi-cabs to qualified women, at least during the hours of daylight and for the duration of the war.

Sir G. Cave: "In view of the opinion of the Army Council that it has become necessary to call up certain drivers hitherto exempted by the tribunals, the Commissioner of Police, who is the licensing authority, proposes, with my approval, to license qualified women to be drivers of public carriages."

### Teachers' Salaries.

Mr. Fisher (in a discussion on education): "There is, I believe, a general consensus of opinion that the only way in which the supply of teachers can be placed on a permanently satisfactory footing will be by substantial improvements in the emoluments and prospects of the teaching profession."

## EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.

There are signs of a determined effort on the part of the temporary women employees in Government Departments to bring to the notice of the Treasury the unfair policy they have hitherto adopted in regard to women's work, and the far-reaching, harmful effects such a policy is likely to have in the readjustment of labour after peace is declared. When the Treasury granted a war bonus to the Civil Service on account of "the increased cost of living," women and "persons under 18 years of age" were to participate to the extent of one-half of the amount granted to the adult male staff. The women employed in almost all the Government Departments made a protest against this injustice; a courteous reply was received, stating that the petition had been forwarded to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, etc., and there, apparently, the matter ends, as far as the various Departments are concerned!

But some public-spirited women (and, it may be, men), knowing the many evils which will undoubtedly accrue if such a precedent is allowed to be set up, are making a firm stand, and insisting that the grievances of the women clerks shall receive attention. A private conference of representative women war workers in Government Departments was arranged, and an address was given by Mr. H. H. Elvin, general secretary of the National Union of Clerks, on the need of organisation if they were to present their case in an effective and co-ordinate manner. The Government has set up an arbitration tribunal to enquire into and settle disputes as to conditions of work, hours, rates of pay, etc., and it is hoped that this body will realise that it is neither economical nor in the country's interests for the Government to employ armies of women at salaries (except in a few isolated and not always well chosen cases) below those usually paid in ordinary commercial offices. The women may sometimes be untrained, and sometimes inefficient, but very few trained, experienced, and capable women are given any opportunity in a Government Department to show what they can do. Some male clerks, apparently on account of their sex alone, are graded at higher rates of pay for doing exactly the same kind of work, and less of it, than women. It is further to be hoped that the arbitration tribunal will recommend that the wasteful and pernicious system of continual overtime be abolished. It is to be hoped —!

C. E. P.

### London Branches Council.

London members are reminded of the At Home, to be given by the L.B.C. at the Minerva Café on Monday, February 19th, 6-9 p.m. Invitation cards are being sent out, but these are not necessary for admission, and all members will be heartily welcomed. Light refreshments will be served from 6 to 7 p.m. There will be short speeches by Mrs. Corner and Mrs. Mustard, and time will be given for discussion of work in London.

ADA MITCHELL (Hon. Sec.).

### Great Suffrage Rally: March 2.

The attention of all readers is called to the Suffrage Rally which the W.F.L. is holding on Friday, March 2, at Caxton Hall. We are all now preparing for the last push which is to bring us the victory. We don't ask for a "Victory Loan," but for a "Victory Gift," and we appeal particularly to those who have not yet contributed to the 50,000 Shillings Fund to come to the rally and bring their gifts, large or small. There will be short speeches by Mrs. Despard and other suffrage speakers. Mrs. Despard and the members of the National Executive Committee will receive the guests at 7 p.m., and there will be a short musical programme. Please look for further details next week. A. M.

SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 120.



## THE VOTE.

Proprietors:—THE MINERVA PUBLISHING Co., LTD.  
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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.

## THE "PRICELESS OPPORTUNITY."

There was no mention of woman suffrage in the King's Speech at the opening of Parliament last week. There was no mention even of women, although the war and the great efforts which have been made in the past, and which must be made in the future, to bring it to a successful conclusion, were the burden of His Majesty's message to Parliament. The women who are "winning the war" might be non-existent.

In the debate on the Loyal Address to the Throne, which is the official reply to the King's Speech, and affords hon. Members an opportunity for bringing forward important matters, Mr. Walter Roch put down an amendment dealing with the Electoral Reform Conference Report and its outcome in legislation. This was withdrawn, however, when he received assurance that the Government was determined to act.

What will the Government do?

Sir John Simon, in his speech at the Kingsway Hall adult suffrage meeting last Saturday—a crowded and important gathering of suffragists of all shades of opinion in tactics—declared that the present is a "priceless opportunity." We agree. It is a "priceless opportunity" for men to do justice to women, to repair the delays and disappointments of the past, and to refuse a Franchise Bill which does not include women.

The Government is in a serious electoral tangle, and must extricate itself. This Parliament has long outlived its five years' lease of life, and has twice extended its lease. Within a month or two it will have to give itself another extension or dissolve. Dissolution means a General Election. A General Election on the existing register would be a mockery of representation even of men—*every Parliament is a mockery of representation of voteless women*—as vast numbers of men fighting in His Majesty's Forces, and of munition and other workers have, by reason of absence from home, become disfranchised. Parliament is unconstitutional in extending its existence by its own vote; a General Election on the stale or even on a patched-up register would be more

"lop-sided"—to quote Mr. Percy Alden—than ever, as so many men would be unable to record their vote.

This state of affairs with regard to men voters cannot continue; the fighting men and other workers must be replaced on the register; but in dealing with the register many electoral anomalies have been forced to the front. *The greatest anomaly of all is the disfranchisement of women.* It is this long-delayed justice to women which stands in the way of progress. Mr. Asquith and other members of the late Government admitted it. The Ex-Prime Minister did his best to throw the responsibility for settlement proposals on the House of Commons; hon. Members replied: "It is the business of the Government; get on with it!" After various fruitless attempts at legislation the matter was referred to the "Speaker's Conference."

Sir John Simon told the Kingsway Hall audience last Saturday that it was only the change of attitude and outlook brought about by the war which enabled the Conference to achieve such an astonishing result as unanimity on 34 out of 37 resolutions, nearly all of which were seriously controversial. He paid public tribute to the effort, skill, and tact of the Speaker in guiding "an unruly team" to so remarkable a result. Woman suffrage is not one of the unanimously agreed resolutions; members of the Conference, said Sir John, who would not compromise on this, as on other questions, retired, and the recommendation on woman suffrage was passed by a majority.

As to Government action, which may be speedy, Sir John Simon said:—

"It is confidently expected that the Government will introduce a Bill embodying the resolutions of the Conference, and I am convinced that no such Bill can be introduced by the Government unless it contains provision for woman suffrage. That is an immense advance."

We agree that a Government Bill containing woman suffrage will be an immense advance. Private Members' Bills have long been simply diversions; for this reason we have over and over again emphasised the need for a Government measure, with Government power behind it to carry it through its various stages to the Statute Book.

The Prime Minister has promised to receive a suffrage deputation when the question of franchise is being considered. He has now a "priceless opportunity" to put into practice his oft-repeated declarations in favour of votes for women. He requested the Speaker's Conference to finish its work, despite the change of Government, recognising the imperative need for reform in the electoral machinery of the country.

Long ago he promised that votes for women should through his voice re-echo throughout the land. He has power now to do more. He can send women to the polling booth. He can win a place in the temple of fame by unfettering the women of the British Isles, and making them free citizens. We look to him to do it, so that the end of the war—for which he is striving so earnestly—shall see not only small nationalities set free, but the women of Britain.

Suffragists have now a "priceless opportunity" to rally round the flag; their work, their money, their powers are needed for the great "Push to Victory." We must not underestimate the power of the enemy, despite the fulsome praise showered upon women for their war work. It will be revealed when the actual fight is waged in Parliament. We must stand strong in our demand for the equal rights as well as responsibilities of citizenship.

## REMEMBER MARCH TWO. SEE YOU MARCH TOO.

I still want 34,000/- and there are only two weeks before

MARCH 2.

Bring your contribution or send it if you cannot come, and I will add it to the list.

E. KNIGHT.

Our hundreds of supporters in Parliament—including "war converts"—have a "priceless opportunity." The very least we expect of them is that they shall recognise their responsibility to women by pressing for an immediate Government Measure, and pledge themselves to vote against the third reading of any Electoral Reform Bill which does not include woman suffrage.

## ADAM AND THE APPLE AGAIN. SHE Gave Me of the Fruit.

Adam has become rampant again, especially at the week-end, and Eve, the temptress, the powerful not the "weaker vessel," has been subjected to virulent attack. Adam has had his apple, but it is Eve's fault; she must bear all the blame; Adam must be protected; the flaming sword must fall on Eve. Not until it falls with equal severity on Adam as well as Eve will justice be done and evil be overcome.

Miss C. S. Bremner, in the course of a communication to us on the subject, writes:—"One of the Sunday papers of February 11 had a heading

'PRISON FOR WOMEN PESTS,'

with Mr. Paul Taylor's remarks in the Westminster Police-court on a soldier's wife who kept a disorderly house. He characterised such women as enemies of their country, putting temptation in the way of young men with horrible consequences. 'No fines will meet this class of case.' The woman was sent to gaol for a month.

"The woman that Thou gavest to be with me—' is always the person to be blamed. Students of sociology, those who realize that we are struggling towards the goal of sex equality, can best understand the application of Adam's excuse to the case in the Thames Police-court. For serious women engaged in the great fight for the emancipation of their sex, prostitution is the direct outcome of women's social and economic subjection. If Mr. Paul Taylor would review the *causes* of prostitution, and especially two of them, the exaggeration of sex in women's education, and the depreciation of her labour, even when it is admirable, by the closing of the labour market to her and by payment below its value, he might be won over to demand with us the political and economic equality of women. *That is the real remedy for the social evil.*"

Miss Margaret Hodge, writing on

"THE HARPIES OF LONDON,"

says:—"Such was the lurid heading of an article in the *Daily News*, of February 7, which described the streets of the metropolis as infested with women as cruel and voracious as these monstrosities of classic lore, and the various methods they employ in luring unwary soldiers to their doom. The perusal of the column set me thinking. The accusation is as old as Adam, man's sin is always to be traced to woman's power of temptation. I was glad to see that the Bishop of London pointed out that many of the soldiers were themselves 'looking for trouble,' and that their weak self-indulgence was as much to be deplored as the arts and devices of the temptress. For who are these harpies with their wings so sadly disabled that all soaring towards lofty ideals has been made impossible for them, and whose weapons of offence and defence have been so much enfeebled in a hostile world? They are the prostitutes who haunt our streets after nightfall.

The Press has at last begun to see one side of the evil in the rapid spread of venereal disease. The indefatigable work of women suffragists and women doctors has made public the ravages of this canker which is eating at the heart of the Empire. But what is the remedy proposed? After unlimited abuse of a class, which man's lust has called into existence, the Press urges restraint and imprisonment of these

harpies, destroyers of manhood. We are at the beginning of a new era. The Parliament that reassembled last week is to set itself to deal with the danger of venereal disease and of prostitution. Let us hope that it will approach these subjects in a very different spirit from the penny and half-penny 'dreadfuls.' The 'harpies' are man-made, for they are the living impersonation of man's vices and woman's compliance, the very quality that our minor poets and the unthinking male public think to be so exquisitely feminine. Economic necessity, the dread of starvation, has forced these 'harpies,' for the most part, into an utterly loathsome employment, and has warped their natures because they can only follow their trade by stifling their higher instincts.

Where lies the real remedy? In giving women political power and the certainty of economic independence. Addison, in an article in the *Spectator*, upon 'Pin Money,' scouts the idea of such economic independence as being displeasing to the man and morally bad for the woman. 'There is no greater enticement to love in the mind of man than the sense of a person's depending on him for her ease and happiness, as the woman uses all her endeavours to please the person whom she looks upon as her honour, her comfort and her support.'

Is not this the prostitution of a soul? Have our legislators to-day travelled very far beyond this point of view? We none of us feel that they can be safely trusted to deal with these questions, for there can be no rapid rough-and-ready remedy for an age-long evil. The attainment of an equal standard of morality, which is the outcome of political equality, the education in self-restraint of the one sex and in self-reliance of the other, is a labour of Herculean difficulty, but can be effected. If a tardy act of justice be performed by this epoch-making Parliament, and women are permitted to share with men in the work of political reconstruction and social regeneration after the conclusion of the war, there will be hope for the accomplishment of this gigantic task. But the attitude of British men to British women must alter materially. Seven generations have passed away since Matthew Prior wrote of woman:—

Be to her virtues very kind, Be to her faults a little blind,  
Let all her ways be unconfined, And clap your padlock on  
Her mind.

"Yet the extravagant laudations and the patronising rebukes from High Olympus, the Press of to-day, are as clear an indication that men still adhere to the poet's first two pieces of advice as is their rigid exclusion of women from the legal profession a proof that they are ready and eager to follow his third precept. Where, indeed, is the benefit of higher education if the incentive for effort be taken away? Knowledge is power, but man has strictly limited the range of that power for our sex, and has thus weakened the stimulus which arouses and encourages intellectual effort."



## OUR OPEN COLUMN.

*\*\* Letters intended for publication must be written on one side of the paper only, and authenticated by the name and address of the writer. It must be clearly understood that we do not necessarily identify ourselves with the opinions expressed.*

## SUGGESTIONS FOR IMMEDIATE AND FUTURE ACTION.

DEAR EDITOR,—With reference to the meeting at headquarters on Saturday, January 13, below is our plan for: (a) Getting the vote; (b) Using the vote.

Under (a) we would suggest two forms of action. Firstly, a campaign directed on the main military and munition centres, in particular the latter; and, secondly, redoubled energies with regard to THE VOTE selling. We think that each Branch should make a point of at least one paper-selling weekly, and that the number of copies sold should be recorded in each copy of THE VOTE. Surely every member can spare a little time weekly towards this invaluable part of the work and progress of their League. Most of the Branches are near either a munition factory or camp district, and these are above all the places to be worked. A regular paper-seller would have a very good effect on the outside public, for she would show that we are not dead (a popular idea in the provinces), or even sleeping, and much propaganda could be accomplished.

(b) To use the vote: If we get the vote immediate action will be of vital importance. To avoid the women being swept up into party politics we suffragists must be ready. However soon or late we get the vote, we must be absolutely prepared, our machinery in working order and ready to move at a moment's notice. The obvious suggestion is the formation of a National Women Voters' Association (as there is in Australia), with its object the organisation of the women's vote, and with a definite programme in which the planks would probably be: Child welfare, education, wages question, social and moral hygiene, housing and municipal reforms.

Naturally, we cannot have a Women Voters' Association with a branch in each constituency until we are voters, but we must have something ready for immediate action, and consequently must use what machinery is already in existence, viz., the Co-operative Councils of suffrage societies which are already working in several large centres. These Councils seem to have secured the co-operation of suffrage workers of all shades, and this union is bound to be the strongest power in the women's party now and always; also, this is a good time to form such associations because the points of dissension before the war are no longer operative. Secondly, these Councils would probably take up the organisation and working out of such campaigns as the munition and military centres already suggested, to which Manchester suffrage societies are already favourably inclined. These Councils could be turned into Women Voters' Associations without any difficulty were the vote to be granted, and would already have the machinery and knowledge of their various centres, for it would probably be found best to run the work of the national Women Voters' Association at various centres, such as London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow, Bristol, Middlesbrough, and one Irish and one Welsh town.

We therefore urge the Freedom League to lay this plan before a meeting of London Suffrage Societies, that no time may be lost at this most critical period in the history of women's emancipation.—

EVA CHRISTY.  
WINIFRED GILES.  
BESSIE HODGES.  
L. G. PRIESTLEY  
McCracken.

JANE WATTERSON.  
DOROTHY WATTERSON.  
J. WATTERSON.  
MAMIE REID.  
JOYCE PRATT.

SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS.

## A WOMAN'S THOUGHTS ON A DISQUIETING INCIDENT.

In view of the letter sent by Mr. Otto Beit to the papers last week-end, we shall not publish in full an article on the death of Second-Lieutenant Beit, wrung from the heart of a mother of two soldier sons. But there is grave disquietude in the country over this tragedy, especially among the women of the nation.

Our correspondent writes:—"Here was a boy of 18½ with life opening out before him, with what should have been every prospect of happiness and honour, who commits suicide by shooting himself in his quarters at York cavalry barracks, after what was termed a 'ragging' and a 'cub-hunt.' Is a sensitiveness in youth so little valued in this country that we can accept without misgivings the verdict of 'suicide while temporarily insane,' which a coroner's jury returned; also the meagre reports in the papers, and the military trial being held in private?"

"There are military 'traditions,' as well as some belonging to public schools, which need to be swept away by the growing sense of the sacredness of the individual and of life. This tragedy is inevitably suggestive of that spirit of Prussian militarism against which we have taken up arms and made unparalleled sacrifices.

"There are mothers in homes throughout the country whose hearts have been oppressed by a horror more sinister than that of the sacrifice of their dearest in this war; and that has been the moral contagion which has not spared youth the foul story and the brutal jest and act. Unhappily, unclean talk and lack of respect and reverence to women are widespread; they are a deadly offence against the women, whose burdens of suffering and labour are being so gallantly borne.

"Lieutenant Beit wrote in his farewell letter: 'Don't worry about me. I shall work out my own salvation in the world to come.' For him we may be comforted. But what shall we say of conditions that can induce the suicide of a boy, and leave us the poorer of another young life, without the compensating knowledge that, at least, it was sacrificed on a quest of honour, and for the preservation of principles, liberty and country?"

## OUR "WEDNESDAYS."

Mrs. Nevinson was warmly welcomed on February 7, and her speech on "The Political Situation" was both helpful and amusing. At the time of the Conciliation Bill, she said, men showed that they were very nervous of the political power of 1½ millions of women, and marriage was made a disqualification with idiocy and crime. Yet women were not relieved from taxation. The suffrage recommendations of the Speaker's Conference proposed to abolish sex and marriage as a bar to political power. Mrs. Nevinson gave a striking account of women's long struggle for political freedom, especially during the last ten years, but the vote is not yet won. The fact that women can make guns has altered the views of many men as to their right to enfranchisement. Yet the war presses on the old and young, because women have been called to war service. The loss of life among infants is heavier than our losses on the Somme.

Miss M. B. Murray spoke on "Women and Independence"; by reviewing the anti-suffragist arguments, she showed that a woman who has to earn her living must have the protecting power of the vote. Mrs. Despard, who attended the meeting after leading the poster parade, made an urgent appeal to suffragists to work harder than ever in this critical time to carry the Cause to victory. Miss A. A. Smith presided.

THEY SUPPORT US.

## BRANCH NOTES.

## Edinburgh Suffrage Shop, 90, Lothian Road.

Afternoon "At Homes" have been held on January 27 and February 10. At the first Miss Eunice Murray spoke on the political situation and on women's war-work, emphasizing the need for thorough training in such work as farming and for shorter hours in munition and factory work, both in the interest of women and of the work. Miss Murray's address was greatly enjoyed. On February 10 C. E. Hudson, Esq., B.A. Cantab., spoke from the suggestive title, "Are Laws Legitimate?", and showed that for women, who have given no consent to legislation, they are not. At both meetings Mrs. Jackson kindly took charge of the arrangements for tea. We look forward to a large attendance on February 21, when Miss Jack will speak on her recent visit to India.

## Glasgow Suffrage Shop, 212, Bath Street.

Members are asked to remember the Lecture in aid of Prisoners of War Fund and to sell as many tickets as possible, as several hundred pounds are wanted. Mr. Pyke is a splendid lecturer, and his subject is of great interest. The other speakers are well-known to Glasgow and never fail to interest their audiences.

## Middlesbrough Suffrage Shop, 231a, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road.

Our meetings for soldiers every Wednesday and Saturday are doing excellent work. The music is greatly enjoyed, but the men are also glad to be expected to use their brains and think on social questions. We expect a great rally of suffragists at a joint meeting with the Middlesbrough Suffrage Society in the Trinity Presbyterian Hall on February 15. The subject, "Women and Electoral Reform," is exciting great interest at this critical juncture. Canvassers and bill distributors are wanted for Mrs. Despard's meeting on February 19 at 7.30 in the Suffrage Shop. Admission 6d. Volunteers for this work and for the street selling of "THE VOTE" are asked to write at once to, or call and see, the organiser, Dorothy Evans.

At a recent business meeting Mrs. Coulthard offered to undertake the distribution of THE VOTE and was elected VOTE Secretary. It will save time and work if the paper is paid for in advance. Will all members who have not already paid their annual membership fees to the hon. treasurer kindly do so without delay? Members and friends can render us good service by collecting at once for the Jumble Sale to be held in the spring; arrangements will be made for collecting the goods.

## Portsmouth.

For the 50,000 Shilling Fund.—A whist-drive has been arranged at the Unitarian Schoolroom, High-street, for Wednesday afternoon, February 21. Tickets 1s. each. Play will commence promptly at 3 p.m. Goods for the jumble sale will be received by Mrs. Speck at 17, Duncan-road, Southsea.

## As Others See Us—At Middlesbrough.

Readers in all parts of the country will be interested to know how the Middlesbrough Press viewed the latest development of Women's Freedom League activity, as shown in the following extract:—

"The Middlesbrough Branch of the Women's Freedom League inaugurated a novel departure at their rooms in the Arcade, Linthorpe-road, last night. It had been decided by the branch to throw their lecture-room open every Wednesday and Saturday night for soldiers who are at present quartered in Middlesbrough, and the men are invited by ticket in numbers each evening not exceeding the capacity of the rooms.

"The members of the Women's Freedom League provide a cup of tea for each soldier and other light refreshments and cigarettes. A musical entertainment is also given, and finally a 'pill' is administered in the shape of a suffrage address.

"Last night the room was crowded, and many had to be turned away. The 'pill' was administered by Mrs. Schofield Coates, who gave an interesting address, which was keenly and sympathetically followed, and at the close it was suggested by the soldiers that a petition for the suffrage should be got up amongst the men stationed here.

"On Saturday night the new district organiser of the Women's Freedom League will be the speaker."

Bravo, Middlesbrough! An excellent example! Who will follow? Suffrage petitions from soldiers—and sailors—are admirable!

The Middlesbrough and District Women's Council (hon. sec., Alice Schofield Coates) is warmly supporting the candidature of Mrs. Levick, M.D., for the Middlesbrough Town Council, and in an excellent leaflet points to the many matters in which a capable woman's help and experience are needed in the best interests of the community. The Manchester City Council last week chose a woman, Miss Catherine Herford, to fill a vacancy there.

## SAYINGS OF THE WEEK.

It is true that if you had adult suffrage at a single blow you would have more women voters than men. But I have never been able to understand what is the real danger or grievance. Those who think it dangerous appear to me to labour under two fundamental fallacies, that no woman in any circumstances ever agrees with a man, and that in no conceivable circumstances does a woman ever disagree with another woman.—Sir JOHN SIMON, M.P., at Suffrage meeting, February 10.

Before the war I opposed the claim of women unwillingly, on the sole ground that when Armageddon came only men could maintain the State. Now I know that men alone never could have maintained it, and that henceforth the modern State must be dependent on men and women alike for the progressive strength and vitality of its whole organisation. If a convert on the point, I am a glad convert, and a complete convert.—J. L. GARVIN, in a letter to the suffrage meeting, February 10.

While we civilians are doing our best to deal with one side of the trouble, surely the military authorities might act with far more strictness on the other. The attempt to depict our soldiers as poor innocent lambs led to the slaughter is ridiculous to those who know the facts. Many of them are out "looking for trouble."—THE BISHOP OF LONDON.—*The Times*, February 7.

It is rubbish, and a libel on our soldiers to suggest that troops, home and Colonial, are being led astray in London by girls of sixteen and seventeen. It is not very easy for a woman to lead a man astray, but it is certainly easy for a man to lead a woman astray, and is, unfortunately, too common.—Mr. A. C. COTTON, at the Southwark Diocesan Conference, February 6.

Women's Freedom League Settlement,  
1, Everett-street, Nine Elms, S.W.

Gifts in money are gratefully acknowledged from Lady Markham, Mrs. Swire, Dr. O'Brien, Miss Wood, Mrs. S. A. Barnett, Miss Alice Hobson, Mrs. Walpole (Tasmania); and in kind from Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Delbanco, Miss Emily Carter, Mrs. A. Gascoigne, Miss J. Holford, Mrs. Thomas. A sale of work, garden and home-made produce, and other useful articles will be held next month at The Studio, 1, Campden-hill-road, Kensington (by kind permission of P. H. Miller), in aid of our funds. Contributions of all kinds will be very welcome, and may be sent either to Mrs. P. H. Miller, at the above address, or to Miss Holmes, at the Settlement. Please help, for our catering becomes very difficult in these times of high food prices, and the demands on our soup kitchen are steadily increasing.

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## Opening of Parliament: Poster Parade.

The Poster Parade organised by the Women's Freedom League for the opening of Parliament last Wednesday was a great success. The other societies taking part were the Free Church League, the British Dominions Women's Suffrage Union, the Independent W.S.P.W., Suffragettes of W.S.P.W., Workers' Suffrage Federation. The parade, led by Mrs. Despard, marched down Whitehall, and continued around Parliament-square for an hour.

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SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 120.



FRIDAY,  
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