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THE VOTE

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CHRISTMAS WEEK]

Edited by C. DESPARD.

[NUMBER.

THE SCAPEGOAT—AS USUAL.



The Cause, like Charity, can be made to cover a multitude of sins.

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[By THOMAS MAYBANK.]

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OUR POINT OF VIEW.

To Our Readers.

Our Christmas week number of the VOTE brings to all our readers sincerest good wishes for the festive season and the coming year. We hope that in the holiday time they will gather energy and determination to help more than ever before in the strenuous work which lies just ahead, and that the New Year will bring to Headquarters offers of regular service from all. We have work for each one—for the timid as well as the courageous, and we can assure the timid that a brief spell of suffrage work banishes fear and they will soon find themselves in the ranks of the brave. Miss Ethel Dickens, granddaughter of Charles Dickens, has been writing in *Answers* recently, on the loneliness of girl workers in London and other great cities. We suggest that they will find friendliness and welcome if they join the Women's Freedom League, as well as relief from the often deadening monotony of their existence. They, too, will render us good service by bringing to our knowledge the facts of their experience. We are fighting for the vote in order to have in our hands the lever which alone moves politicians to legislate for justice to women in all spheres of activity. Definite improvement in the conditions of women workers has been the result of enfranchising women in our own Dominions Overseas and other countries. A Finnish artist, speaking recently in the United States, declared that it was better for men as well as for women that both should have the vote, and the result in Finland was that everyone was interested in public questions. He added, in reference to the significant fact that his country has been wise enough not only to give women votes, but to elect them as law makers:

"No one thinks it strange now for women to sit in Parliament and help to make the laws. They are no less womanly for doing so, and they pay attention to many public questions to which most of the men are indifferent."

So to all our readers we say, Come and stand by us in the fight, for victory is sure and will not be long delayed.

Our Holiday Number.

This week we give our readers a "Holiday Number" of the VOTE, with articles and sketches which we know will both amuse and enlighten. From far and wide we have received contributions, and we doubt not that all readers will gather courage from the amusing way in which A. L. Little shows us, in "The Shadow of the Sofa", the value of that quality. We are glad that our good friend, Miss Mary Maud, promises to continue "The Sign Post" in the New Year. To all we express our appreciation and thanks, especially to Mrs. Harvey, to whose generosity we owe our front page cartoon. We appeal again to our readers to make it possible for the enlargement of the VOTE to 20 pages to be permanent.

News from Other Countries.

Our readers will also be glad to know that we have at Headquarters many Suffrage newspapers from other countries; the files of these papers are available for consultation by any of our members. It is important that we keep ourselves well informed with regard to all that is happening in the Suffrage movement beyond our own islands, for we know that the woman's movement is world-wide. To mention a few of the papers: we have *The Woman's Journal*, the well-known weekly of Boston, U.S.A., the current number of which contains an excellent account of the great convention at Washington; *The Woman Voter*, of New York, the monthly organ of the Woman Suffrage Party; *Life and Labour*, of Chicago, the monthly organ of the National Women's Trade Union League of America; *The Party Builder*, of Chicago, a Socialist organ; *The Woman Voter*, of Australia; *Woman's Outlook*, of South Africa; *Le Mouvement Féministe*, the monthly Suffrage organ

published at Pregny, near Geneva; several Swedish, and Norwegian Suffrage papers, also one from Iceland. In addition, there are home Suffrage papers, including the *Irish Citizen*, and several monthlies. We shall be glad if our friends will make use of the facilities available, and we know their interest will be broadened by keeping in touch with Suffragists all over the world.

Standing Together.

Another means of drawing British subjects closer together is the Woman Suffrage Union, British Dominions Overseas, which is to be formally inaugurated at a conference in London in 1914. By this Union the enfranchised people of Australia and New Zealand will co-operate with Suffrage societies in Canada, South Africa and the British Isles in a common endeavour to obtain equal political rights for women with men. The proposal originated in New Zealand in March, 1913. Since that date it has been approved by almost all the chief Women's organisations in New Zealand and in Australia. The Women's Societies in Canada and South Africa have been invited to join, and the replies received from the officers of these societies express the warmest appreciation of the idea. The Union will observe absolute neutrality on all party questions and also on all strictly national questions. The only bond is adherence to the principle of equal Suffrage. All inquiries will be answered by Miss Harriet C. Newcomb, hon. sec. (*pro tem.*), International Women's Franchise Club, 9, Grafton-street, London, W.

What is Before Us.

The opening of Parliament has been fixed for February 10, and the Women's Freedom League will have to be in harness with hardly a breathing-space for holidays. King's Speech meetings throughout the country, a brisk campaign in Hertford and Hackney, an overhauling of our policy and organisation to fill up gaps, bridge over deficiencies and generally to tighten our rivets, together with preparations for the annual conference, will give our members all the work they care for and some over! The various Branches and centres of the League are urged to put forward fresh ideas for discussion and to consider and formulate new methods to make the work of the League effective and striking.

OUR INVALIDS.

Readers of THE VOTE will be glad to hear that Mrs. Sproson is at last beginning to recover strength after her long and harassing illness. She will not be able to join in active work for some little time yet, but we hope to have her in the ranks again when the strenuous times begin. Mrs. Sproson's valuable services were greatly missed by her colleagues during the recent rush of by-elections, and it will be welcome news when we hear that she is once more in harness.

Mrs. Edith Watson, now in the Royal Free Hospital, has made a fairly good recovery from her rather serious operation, but her condition still leaves much to be desired. The treatment she is undergoing is painful and exhausting, and with the best response possible she can hardly leave the hospital before the middle of January. Christmas in hospital is not a cheerful prospect, but she keeps in excellent spirits nevertheless. If any members have books or magazines to spare, and would let her have them, to hand on to the hospital library—which is but poorly provided—after she has finished them, she would, we feel sure, much appreciate the kindness.

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THE SHADOW OF THE SOFA.

A ONE-ACT PLAY, by A. L. LITTLE.

[Permission to perform must be obtained in writing from the authoress.]

CHARACTERS:—

BEATRIX FURNESS Twenty-one years old—a pretty girl, Quaker-like in dress and manner.
AUNT RACHEL .. An innocent, white-haired old lady.
UNCLE JEREMIAH An old-fashioned old gentleman.
PHILIP STANTON An ordinary young man.
LOUISE A young house-maid.

SCENE.—Beatrice's House.

SCENE—Parlour with writing table in foreground. Large arm-chair partially hidden by screen.

(Enter Uncle Jeremiah with newspaper.)

UNCLE JEREMIAH: Anywhere here one can have five minutes' rest? (*Grumbling.*) Goodness knows I'm not ambitious, but I do ask of a chair that one can sit on it—and of a sofa that one can—ah!—here. (*Sinks into arm-chair clasping paper and falls asleep.* Enter BEATRIX without seeing him.)

BEATRIX: Now for these accounts. (*Sits down to table with air of energy, but immediately falls into reverie.* What a nuisance a house of one's own really is. My poor old London lodgings!

(*Sighs.*) I could almost wish I had kept on at my classes another year if it wasn't for—(*checks herself abruptly*)—if it wasn't for Aunt Rachel. I couldn't have had her in London—nor the furniture (*sighs deeply*). Where is the newspaper? (*Starts up and hunts about.*) I wonder—I wonder if there are any more Resisters? Oh if only there was a single soul here to whom I could mention the subject (*passionately*). I feel so isolated—so (*sits down*) wretched at keeping this secret. Aunt Rachel—dear domesticated old soul—wrapped up in our old family furniture. I hadn't seen her since I was ten years old, but could tell at a glance what she would think of non-payment of taxes. Fancy a Rachel being a Suffragette! And Uncle Jeremiah—

(Enter LOUISE.)

LOUISE: If you please, miss, you told me to come for directions about the dusting.

BEATRIX: (*Who has hurriedly taken pen and appears to work at accounts.*) Yes, yes, Louise. Things are puzzling for you the first day—just go on with that cabinet for a minute till I'm ready (*writes with grave, pre-occupied air*).

(*Louise, while dusting ornaments, observes her furtively; then, after a moment of irresolution, unpins a small badge she wears and drops it into her pocket.*)

LOUISE (*shaking head sadly*): My poor badge! This is no place for you! I don't risk it! (*Glances towards Beatrice.*) There's a regular Anti face for you!

BEATRIX (*lays down pen and addresses Louise with care-worn air*): Louise, I want you to take the greatest possible care any time you go into the drawing-room, in touching the furniture there. Especially the sofa. You see, it is an old, old suite which has come down—oh! I don't know how many centuries—especially the sofa (*sighs deeply and Louise mechanically repeats sigh*). It is a Louis Quinze. You must have noticed its curious carved legs.

LOUISE: Yes, Miss. (*Aside.*) So that's what they call a Looey—Cans—ugly, rickety thing!

BEATRIX: And you must be careful to cover the brocade with the holland cover before you begin dusting.

LOUISE (*unconsciously assuming Beatrice's look and tone of gloom*): Yes, Miss.

BEATRIX: Well, finish here first. (*Aside, sighing.*) Furniture is a great responsibility. Especially the sofa (*glancing at Louise, who is dusting*). What a prim girl she is! Not a bit like the nice little Suffragette who brought up my tea in London and waited till I opened the paper for the latest news. (*With increased melancholy, as she rises to leave room*). Well, Louise, you'll be careful.

LOUISE (*almost in tears*): Yes, Miss.

(*As BEATRIX is going, UNCLE awakes with loud yawn.*)
BEATRIX (*goes to side*): Uncle, I didn't see you. I hope we didn't awake you. (*Glances at paper which he still holds.*)

UNCLE (*gruffly*): No, no. Where's your Aunt?

BEATRIX: In the drawing-room. Looking after the furniture (*sighs*).

UNCLE: Ah! of course—(*resignedly*) the furniture (*sighs and rolls sleepily*).

BEATRIX: Would you like to go in, Uncle Jeremiah?

UNCLE (*hastily*): No, no. (*Exit BEATRIX.*) (*Savagely.*) Would I like to go in? To a room crammed with hideous old articles, all too "good" to touch or look at—especially the sofa! But—ssh! Rachel would never forgive me if she suspected I felt like this—(*takes news-*

paper). What's this?—(*reads*). "Tax Resistance. Sale of Furniture." By Jove, I could almost wish—hem, hem! (*Checking himself, coughing violently*). Goodness forgive me for being such a Philistine—Louis Quinze furniture—in the family for ages (*sighs, resumes reading*). Well, these Suffragettes have pluck!—hem, hem! That won't do in this house either. How shocked poor Rachel would be if she knew how I admire them. (*Defiantly*). Yes, I do admire them—there now! I've said it. But who could imagine Rachel a Suffragette? And my niece! What a proper young lady she has grown up—so prim—so domesticated—so devoted to this furniture which we have held in sacred charge for her since her grandfather's death—and which has absorbed all my wife's best energies. Well, well, let them dust, let them rub (*crescendo*), let them polish—let them do what they like so long as they don't ask me to sleep on that sofa. (*Rolls over and falls asleep*).

LOUISE (*stops dusting and approaches a few steps to look at him and listen to his snores*): Well, this is a lively place for a girl to come to! I'd give six months wages to be back where I came from (*sighs*). Miss Edith—I'll never forget her to the end of my life. And these meetings of hers! Talk about education! The best education I ever got was hearing her and these others speak on the platform of that little hall (*takes out badge and looks at it earnestly*). My poor badge! No, no. I feel as if one word of Suffragism would cost me my place. (*Looks at Uncle*). The old gentleman looks worse than all the rest put together. (*Tragically*): I'll keep it in if it chokes me!

(Enter AUNT RACHEL.)

AUNT RACHEL: Are you there, Louise? Here is a little cake I bought for tea. I'll leave it here—you'll remember?

LOUISE: Yes, Mrs. Furness.

AUNT RACHEL: And when you are finished here, come to the drawing-room and I will show you how to set about the dusting of the old furniture, especially the sofa. (*Picks up newspaper which Uncle has dropped and scans it eagerly*).

LOUISE (*aside*): The furniture! the sofa! It's getting on my nerves! You'd think the house belonged to the sofa! I'll scream in another minute!

AUNT RACHEL (*aside*): Ah! here it is—(*reads eagerly*). "Tax Resistance—Sale of Furniture." (*Becomes engrossed in paper after furtive glance over shoulder at Uncle*).

LOUISE (*stands before cake which Aunt has left on cabinet*). (*Aside*): What a lovely cake if it were only iced! I'll never, never forget the one I iced for Miss Edith's party—the Suffrage colours and "Votes for Women" worked in cherries and citron round the top. It was glorious!

AUNT RACHEL (*aside, excitedly*): Good, good!

LOUISE (*struck with sudden idea*): I'll do it! I won't be a coward! I'll announce my principles by prop—prop—propaganda! I'll ice this one "Votes for Women" and down it goes on the tea-table—let them swallow it how they can. (*Gesticulates vehemently*).

(AUNT RACHEL looks round and LOUISE goes on dusting, expressing delight by gestures in back-ground.)

AUNT RACHEL (*aside, with clasped hands*): Oh! I'm so glad! They held out! Oh when I read of actions like these I could do anything—I could refuse to pay Carlo's tax! (*Embraces small lap dog tremulously*). But—but—I daren't say what I think. (*Glances over shoulder*). Jeremiah hates Suffragists. And my niece—what a prim girl she has turned out! I had hoped—

(*sighs*). Just the Conservative, domestic, feminine type. And this suite of Antique Furniture to live up to—this family tradition—(*agitatedly*) this fearful respectability!

LOUISE (*aside, sketching in air with feather brush*): "V-O-T-E-S"—down it goes in the biggest cherries I can get. Oh! I think I see their faces! (*bursts out laughing and stuffs handkerchief in mouth*). Oh, I'm bottled up! I'll burst!

AUNT RACHEL (*aside*): But they'd take the furniture! Well, suppose they did (*defiantly*). Suppose they took—suppose they took—(*hesitates, frightened at herself*). Suppose they took the sofa (*hysterically*). Oh! I'd be glad—yes, glad (*looks over shoulder*). Oh! how shocked Jeremiah would be! But it's true. All my life I've been smothered under these things (*hankerchief to eyes*).

LOUISE (*aside*): Right in the centre of the table! Oh!—oh—(*hugs herself*).

AUNT RACHEL (*aside*): Respectability—the family—the—the sofa—these are the things that have crushed me and made

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me a coward—like nine-tenths of women—till I daren't say how I hate it all. (JEREMIAH awakes—she dries eyes hastily). Oh! this is sacrilege. Not a word of this to Jeremiah (approaches timidly).

UNCLE (stretching): Well, Rachel, what have you been about?
AUNT (primly): I have just been having a look at the drawing-room suite, Jeremiah.

UNCLE (drearily): Oh! to be sure—the drawing-room suite—(With forced interest). No sign of the dust from the window affecting it? (Aside). How I wish my wife took some interest in something outside the house.

AUNT: No—I'm thankful to say. (Aside). How I wish Jeremiah wouldn't speak to me as if I was—a feather-headed mop! (Goes to window). There is young Mr. Staunton coming up the drive. Go down, Louise. (Exit Louise). Jeremiah, dear, I'm so anxious to be friendly to this young man. You know, he and Beatrix met in London and I'm quite sure he takes more than an ordinary interest in her.

UNCLE: And she in him, eh? Well, I haven't seen much of him since his people settled here. How does he strike you?
AUNT: Oh! to all appearance a most decorous young man, and belongs to an old Conservative family. (Aside). Jeremiah will like that.

UNCLE (aside): That will please Rachel.
AUNT: His uncle is M.P., for Cornton, you know, Jeremiah. You remember he rather distinguished himself last summer by his speeches denouncing—denouncing—

UNCLE: What! Staunton, the Anti-Suffragist?
AUNT (with suppressed feeling): Yes. (Aside). See how glad Jeremiah is.

UNCLE (aside, fiercely): Bigoted old bounder, that's what I call him. However, that will suit Rachel—and Beatrix.

AUNT: And they say he has inherited his father's artistic tastes. It was Mr. Staunton, senior, who edited for several years, "Aesthetics in the Home." You remember his articles on "Femininity in Furniture."

UNCLE: Yes, yes (aside), old stick! Hammers the modern woman because she claims something more from the Universe than a cushioned chair to work a sampler on.

AUNT: And young Staunton goes on sketching-tours and all that. Just the sort to admire æsthetic surroundings. Dear Beatrix will be indeed fortunate to have someone to share her enthusiasm for her beautiful furniture (sighs).

UNCLE: Especially the sofa (sighs, aside). Well, I shouldn't grudge her that.

(Enter LOUISE):

LOUISE: Mr. Staunton is in the drawing-room.
AUNT RACHEL: I'll go and bring him up. (Exit).

UNCLE: Yes, yes, by all means—let's have the æsthetic, artistic anti-suffragist and get him over. I'll take a smoke first and that'll help me to stand him (rises, feeling for pipe).

(Enter BEATRIX, running eyes over room).

BEATRIX: Ah! you have it. May I see the paper, Uncle?
(UNCLE gives it as he leaves the room).

BEATRIX (eagerly searching): Here it is—"Sale of Furniture—Suffragists stirring at Hinchley." (Reads)—Good! it's always one more. My turn will come next—then how can I hide it longer from Aunt Rachel? (Pondering). But there's no use anticipating. It won't be for a time yet. Let me see. How long is it since I refused payment? (Goes to desk and looks at papers).

(Enter AUNT RACHEL and PHILIP STAUNTON).

STAUNTON: As you say, Mrs. Furness, it is a very rare suite—very—ah—quaint.

AUNT RACHEL: Especially the sofa—don't you think so, Mr. Staunton?

STAUNTON: Oh—ah—yes, yes. Especially the sofa.
AUNT RACHEL: My niece has such a taste for things of the sort?
STAUNTON: Indeed? (Aside). More's the pity. But I'd try to cultivate that and anything else she liked.

AUNT RACHEL: Here's Beatrix. I'll go and tell your Uncle.
BEATRIX (gives her hand): Mr. Staunton.

STAUNTON: So glad to see you again. (Aside). When she looks at me like that I could—I could swallow that sofa. (Aloud). Mrs. Furness was kind enough to show me your old furniture (with assumed enthusiasm), your charming old furniture.

BEATRIX: You admire it? (Aside, sighing). He, too! I had hoped he wouldn't be that sort.

STAUNTON: You are indeed fortunate to possess such a treasure—especially the sofa.

BEATRIX (drearily): Yes—it is much praised by connoisseurs.

STAUNTON (aside): What restrained enthusiasm! One can picture her—calm-eyed, gentle creature, goddess of the home—surrounded by works of art—and that sort of thing, you know. If only I wasn't so sick of Artistic Furniture. But I'll try—yes, I will. (Aloud). The carving of the—er—hind-legs is—er—awfully nice. (Aside). Doesn't sound right, somehow.

BEATRIX (absently): Ah! awfully (making an effort). And the brocade is so—so—what's the word?

STAUNTON: Jolly?
BEATRIX: Yes, yes, that's it. Jolly. (Aside). Now, I know what he thinks of furniture. What about the other question? But it's a foregone conclusion. What would the nephew of the anti M.P. think if he knew that I have been guilty of "Non-payment of Imperial Taxes"? Oh! I'll tell him after I know him better, perhaps—not yet—(agitated) not yet—I do like him so much.

STAUNTON (aside): If I could change the subject! If I could find something on which we really agreed! There's that question of the Vote. But may as well put that out of my head. She a Suffragist! Look at her.

BEATRIX (aside): And yet he looks so—so open-minded—so fair—so modern. Look at him. (Both look round at same second and lower eyes when they meet).

BEATRIX (with effort): I suppose—I suppose you devote most of your time to that sort of thing?

STAUNTON: Well—er—I need so much time for that gol—Ah—that is—I mean to give more time to it now—(pause). (Aside): It's a pity! I always hoped that when I—that my—I mean, that she would care more for seeing wrongs righted than for polished furniture.

BEATRIX (aside): I'm so disappointed—so sorry. I would like my—I mean I like men to show chivalry and to put Justice and Freedom and Pity before old rose-wood and mahogany.

STAUNTON (aside): If I could tell her how my mother thought and spoke of the thing long ago—how she stood out alone practically—against her relations. (Wistfully). Suppose I tell her?

BEATRIX (aside): I can't risk it.—Yet—
STAUNTON (aside): It's too risky. Let me try first to win her good opinion—then—

(Loud cries outside).

LOUISE (calling excitedly): Miss Beatrix! Oh, Miss Beatrix!
(They start up as LOUISE rushes in).

LOUISE: Oh, Miss Beatrix—oh! (Panting). I couldn't stop them! They've took it!

BEATRIX: Stop whom?
STAUNTON: Took what?

LOUISE (sobbing): Men—men—men with a paper.
BEATRIX (aside, suddenly struck): Ah!
STAUNTON (at door): Shall I go? What! burglars? What did they take?

LOUISE (beside herself): The sofa! Loopy-kans!
(BEATRIX sinks on to seat).

STAUNTON (preparing to rush out): Atrocious! In broad daylight!

BEATRIX (faintly): Stop, Mr. Staunton—
STAUNTON (imploringly): Miss Furness! Beatrix! Don't look like that! (Aside, Bewildered). It can't be arrest for debt?

LOUISE (aside, wiping eyes): Poor Miss Beatrix. She set such store by that sofa, ugly bowlegged old thing! Well, I'll have all the less to dust now.

BEATRIX (to Staunton, who tries to comfort her): Leave me a moment. Then I will tell you.

(He goes to window recess and BEATRIX walks about in great agitation).

BEATRIX: What will Aunt Rachel say? How dare I tell Uncle Jeremiah? Put up for auction, this sacred article, round which so much tradition elings! And for such a cause! Sacrilege! sacrilege! (Slowly). For myself, I am glad the crisis

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has come—glad, yes, glad it was the sofa. A weight seems to be lifting.

(Noise outside. AUNT'S voice calling—Beatrix! Beatrix! Jeremiah!).

BEATRIX: It is poor Aunt Rachel. She has seen it. (Meets her at door). My dear Aunt.

AUNT (violently agitated): Oh! my dear, my dear, how can I tell you?

BEATRIX (quietly): I know it, Aunt Rachel. (Aside). My heart bleeds for her.

AUNT: What? You saw it, too, from the window! (Aside). Ah! poor girl, how quiet she is! Her heart is broken (weeping), and how wicked of me to feel (in whisper relief)!

(They clasp each other and comfort each other).

BEATRIX: Oh! how cruel I am.

AUNT: My fault—my fault—
BEATRIX: How could it possibly—
AUNT: Oh! I don't know, I don't know! Law is such a curious thing! Sheriff's officers! They've got wind of what I said about Carlo—and so—

BEATRIX (amazed): Carlo! What can he have to do with it? (Aside). She is distracted with grief.

AUNT: The sofa! Beatrix's sofa! On a cart with Sheriff's officers!

(Enter UNCLE).

UNCLE: What's this? What's this? What's on a cart with Sheriff's officers?

BEATRIX (calmly): The sofa, Uncle Jeremiah.

UNCLE (bursting out): Hooray—a—er—ahem! (Blustering). Monstrous! Atrocious! Who has dared—(aside) poor Rachel—poor Beatrix. But Beatrix, what does this mean? Sheriff's Officer's? (Aside). What a blessing they hit on the sofa!

BEATRIX (resolutely): Listen, Uncle, listen, everyone. It is time this was explained. (Slowly and distinctly). I am a Suffragist. (All petrified with surprise). I am a passive resister.

UNCLE (in a thunder of astonishment): Beatrix!

BEATRIX (signing him to silence): The Government has confiscated my sofa for non-payment of Imperial Taxes.

UNCLE (aside): Good! d—d good! Who would have thought it of Beatrix?

STAUNTON (aside): Splendid! I see it all! The old people are Antis!

BEATRIX: I have hidden this to escape your disapproval. I have been a coward.

AUNT (suddenly flinging her arms round her): Brave, good girl!

BEATRIX: What! Aunt Rachel?
AUNT: I will keep quiet no longer. My darling, I have longed to do what you have done—longed, but dared not. (They embrace with emotion).

UNCLE (aside, stunned): Rachel! Is it possible?
STAUNTON (aside): Splendid! I see it all! The old gentleman is a red hot Anti. (Advancing and taking place beside Beatrix and Aunt). But I'll back them. Mrs. Furness, Miss Furness, will you let me congratulate you on what you have done? If I could only tell you how glad I am—

BEATRIX: But—but—your uncle—
STAUNTON (quietly): I have been a Suffragist since my childhood—(They clasp hands).

UNCLE (restraining himself): By Jove! Well Louise, have you anything to say?

LOUISE (with dignity, draws out badge and pins it on): My place is here—(walks forward and takes place beside others). Miss Beatrix, I meant to tell—you'll see that—at tea-time (mysteriously), but I was rather frightened.

BEATRIX (taking her hand): Poor little girl! We're friends now.

UNCLE: So—Suffragists, all of you. Tax-Resisters—Rachel! Aunt (jacing him): Yes, Jeremiah, what have you to say to me?

UNCLE: This—that Beatrix wasn't the only coward—that I've been so afraid of your opinion as you were of mine—that—that I never was so glad in my life! (Embraces RACHEL).

BEATRIX: What, Uncle—you don't disapprove?
UNCLE (embraces her): Disapprove!

BEATRIX: But remember we have lost the sofa.
UNCLE: Hooray! If you knew how I loathe it—

BEATRIX: Then you pretended—that too. But poor Aunt Rachel—
AUNT: My dear, that furniture enslaved me; Yes, it is true. I hated it, but you, poor child—

BEATRIX (radiantly): Then it only remains for me to declare that I have always hated and detested this Family Furniture—these symbols of Respectability, Propriety, Femininity, Anti—everything-that-lives-and-moves—I abhor them all—especially the sofa.

AUNT AND UNCLE: Especially the sofa.
BEATRIX: And Louise?

LOUISE: Oh! Miss Beatrix. I could never abide that Loopy-kans.

(All laugh).

BEATRIX (with wistful glance): But poor Mr. Staunton—you find yourself surrounded by Philistines.

STAUNTON: Miss Furness—I—Look here. I was a sneak to say I liked old furniture—I hate it—I know nothing about it—

BEATRIX: But why—why?
STAUNTON (casts down eyes): I wanted to please you.

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(THEY slip apart from others and go into window recess. Exit LOUISE).

AUNT: Oh Jeremiah, how blind I have been. To think I was afraid of you—

UNCLE (humbly): Forgive me, Rachel. I don't know my own wife.

AUNT (tenderly): We are closer together now.

UNCLE (explosively): By Jove, Rachel, if ever you pay another half-penny tax on that dog of yours, till the Vote be won, you are no wife of mine!

AUNT: What time we have lost—all because we feared to trust a conviction.

UNCLE: The truth is, Rachel, we have failed to recognise the fact that the very air around is charged with Suffragism. Here we are hesitating, fearing lest we find no sympathy—one honest word and behold—five good fighters for the Cause!

AUNT: And five so different. A silly, timid old woman nursed in propriety—

UNCLE: An ill-tempered, old-fashioned old curmudgeon. (Enter LOUISE with tea-tray)—a nice little house-maid—a— (STAUNTON and BEATRIX approach smilingly).

STAUNTON: A young man surrounded by relatives bristling with prejudice, anti-suffragism—

BEATRIX: And a "little paradox, half Quakeress, half militant Suffragette"—

STAUNTON: Beatrix!
BEATRIX: Yes, Philip, these were your very words—
AUNT AND UNCLE: Philip! Beatrix! What does this mean?
STAUNTON (leads Beatrix to them): It means that I have just asked Miss Furness a question—

BEATRIX: Which she will answer in the affirmative on receiving her guardians' approval.

AUNT (kissing her): My dear, I am so glad. (Hand-shaking).

UNCLE: Something like union at last. (LOUISE triumphantly presents cake to Beatrix).

BEATRIX: You good girl! Look Uncle, look Aunt.

UNCLE: Just in the nick of time—but no tea to-day. This calls for something stronger (produces champagne from cabinet).

AUNT: Come, now all—you too, Louise—we'll have toasts.

UNCLE: All right! I'll drink anything—except the Memory of the Sofa! (Glass in Hand). To ourselves! To our happiness!

BEATRIX: No—no, Uncle (raises glass). To that to which we give ourselves and which shall include our happiness to the end of our lives!

ALL (with raised glasses): To the Cause!

ARE WE MILITANT?

At the close of another year the work, policy and position of the Women's Freedom League necessarily comes under review, and its members find themselves looking round and taking stock of their assets and liabilities. Beyond a doubt, the League stands well in the favour of the public, even allowing for the peculiar confusion with which the public seems to be afflicted when asked to discriminate between Suffrage organisations. Lately, however, this confusion appears to have thickened into an entire misapprehension in regard to the position of the Women's Freedom League, and on two or three occasions the general secretary or branch secretaries have found it necessary to address letters to press organs contradicting the assertion that the League is a non-militant body.

So quickly, in the rush of modern life, do impressions fade from the public mind, that it would seem that the term "Militant Suffragist" conveys no idea to-day save of an aggressive destroyer of public property. It is part of the creed of our League to refrain from all adverse criticism of fellow-workers with different views and methods; so it is sufficient to say that while we do not judge or condemn those who use more violent forms of militancy, we do not participate in them. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the term "militant" was earned and adopted by the advanced wings of the Suffrage movement long before a stone was thrown or a window broken by any Suffragist; and that the Women's Freedom League remains what it has always been, one of the militant Suffrage societies which no longer plead for, but demand insistently, equal rights for women with men within the King's dominions.

In the early days of the militant movement, women were termed disorderly, were mobbed, stoned and imprisoned, for taking the ordinary steps—steps taken as a matter of course by any man—to ensure attention for their political grievances. The first imprisonments

took place for holding a meeting of protest against the brutally violent ejection of women from a Liberal meeting. Other militant demonstrations took place in Parliament-square, Downing-street, the House of Commons, Trafalgar-square, the police-courts, and elsewhere, to show how the constitutional rights of women in regard to taxation and representation, petition to the Crown, deputation to the Cabinet, trial by their peers, entry to public functions, and many other important matters, were denied and curtailed by unconstitutional interpretation and administration of the law. In all of these the Freedom League played its part. The picketing of the House of Commons, the Grille protest, the Ballot-box protest, the Census and Tax Resistance campaigns, were Freedom League work. Freedom League workers were among the first prisoners. Until November, 1911, no militancy entailed attack on the public or on property, and it was not until the Prime Minister's threat to grant manhood suffrage and leave women out that Suffragists of any society embarked on a campaign of deliberate damage.

The term "militant," therefore, does not depend on the amount of damage inflicted, and was not brought into existence by throwing stones or burning houses. It marked the new departure in 1905; and although late events have somewhat overshadowed with their sensationalism the militancy of the Women's Freedom League it remains a militant society. Were its policy of resistance to taxes and to all new laws, its protests against fresh injustices and improprieties, joined in heartily by every Suffrage organisation—a course that would be strictly in accord with historical and constitutional precedent, and that carries with it no slur and no offence—there can be no shadow of doubt that victory would have been in sight long ere this.

C. NINA BOYLE.

MATTHEW AND I AND THE VOTE.

Old Matthew finished stating his views somewhat after this fashion:—

"No, ma'am, since you asks me, I don't hold as what was good enough for ma grandfather is good enough for me. Things ain't the same as they was when I was a young 'un. Eddication's come, cost of living gone up, and folks won't do now with what they used to."

I nodded. "That's so," I observed. "Times have changed, and our ideas with them. Tell me, what are your opinions on Woman Suffrage?"

His face lost its keen look of interest. "Oh, that!" he said. "Best ask the missus on that. She ought to know, having brought up eight little 'uns on it."

I beamed. "Bravo! I'll go and call on her. I didn't know Votes for Women had made such headway in the country villages."

"Votes for—." No ma'am, if you'll excuse me, I don't hold with such like. Downright wickedness I calls it. My missus—she's a good wife I'm not denying it—but she ain't never forgot her duty that far, nor never will, please God."

"But I thought you said she believed in it, had brought eight children up on it!" And then light dawned on me. "Oh," I cried, "you thought Woman Suffrage was a patent food for children!"

"Well! if it ain't that word on the tins it's something like it," he said, and looked disapprovingly at my untimely mirth.

"Look here, Matthew," I said gravely, "all you people in the village know I'm out for Votes for Women, don't you?"

"We do, ma'am, and if you'll pardon the liberty of my mentioning it, many's the time I've heard it said down at the 'Maypole' 'twas a rare pity, seeing what a kind lady you was, ready to help any of us in the time of trouble."

"Good," I answered. "Now tell me this. Would you rather have me here to give a little charity when it's needed; five shillings to old Mrs. Pyke to help

her with the rent, soup for the sick, a few warm clothes for the kiddies, and so on; or would you rather see me with the power in my hands to go to your Member of Parliament and say to him, 'You must put your whole energy into raising the wages of the agricultural labourer—say from fourteen shillings to sixteen shillings a week—see that better cottages are built, see that our water supplies are better and healthier.' You know," I added accusingly, "how many cottages have nothing but surface water drained from the land for drinking purposes, and that one at least of those ponds is infested with rats. Come, Matthew, honestly, which is most useful, my small doles of charity, or the power to help and insist on all these things—of utmost importance to your welfare—being put in a better position?"

Old Matthew shook his head. "If we couldn't do that with our vote 'taint likely the women will with theirs."

"Certainly not, if they follow your way of voting," I agreed. "You're so anxious, aren't you, to jump into the first fine motor that comes to take you to the poll; you're so ready to believe all that these gentlemen from Westminster tell you. Now we've had a little experience of that. We know they will do nothing unless they are forced to, because we have had to learn that lesson by heart in our fight for the Vote. You allow them to put a programme before you. We shall do the exact opposite, and put a programme before them. If they refuse it, we refuse them our votes. Matthew," I said, "have you ever noticed at the time of an election how keen those gentlemen are to represent you? Don't they butter you up? They tell you you are 'Sons of the Soil! Sons of the Empire! The Backbone of the Country!' Oh, I've heard them, and you've heard them. Both sides do it, Matthew, both sides make such big promises. Matthew, it's peculiar to human nature to want to be a Big Man, to want to fill an important place in the country. Matthew, for some time past it has dawned on the women who want votes that that peculiarity in human nature has a huge value. We see that because this is so the Vote is a power for good or for evil."

"Maybe the women will use it for evil"—and he cocked his bright blue eyes at me in a cunning way.

"Some of them," I said cheerfully, "may, like a few of you men, sell it for a pint of beer. But not the greater part and for this reason. You will grant me, won't you, that women have to do with the bearing and rearing of children more than the men?"

"Some ways yes, and some ways no," he said cautiously.

I laughed. "Anyhow, it's the woman who brings the child into the world with pain and suffering and sometimes danger to her own life. Now it's only common-sense to say that what you have brought forth in pain and suffering will be more precious to you than what you are presented with as a free gift, without any pain and suffering at all. In other words, women who produce life hold it more valuable than those who have no actual knowledge of the mental and physical strain it needs must be to create and bring forth."

"I won't say but what the woman is the first to go without for the sake of the little 'uns," he conceded.

"Good. Don't you see, then, you have no right to try and keep back a power from women which will help them to make better conditions for the children who will presently be men and women to have children in their turn?"

Matthew shook his head sadly. "You have a powerful clever way of putting things from your own side," he said. "But it won't do, ma'am, it won't do. Women was meant to attend to our homes and not go gadding about voting for what they knows nothing of."

"Are the children who shall be the future nation, and their children after them, nothing?" I asked.

"There you go, twisting the words till it almost seem as if I was talking nonsense. Ma'am," he said, solemnly—and I caught a faint, grudging look, of a queer sort of pride in me—"I wouldn't be in nowise

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surprised if when you do get the vote—which God forbid—you wasn't one of the first women to get into Parliament."

"Matthew," I said, equally solemnly. "I have often thought so myself. And as it won't be long before we do get the vote, I here and now invite you to tea with me on the terrace of the House of Commons." The old man shook the hand I held out to him, and, what's more, shook it heartily, leaving me with the impression that if his stubborn old tongue could have brought itself to do so, he would have added: "I wish yer luck, ma'am, I wish yer luck!"

ISABEL C. TIPPETT.

"HIAWATHA" AND OTHER PLAYS. Dates to be Noted.

As requests have been made from headmistresses and headmasters for another performance of "Hiawatha," a special *matinée* for schools will be given at the Cripple-gate Institute on Tuesday, March 24.

Also on Tuesday, March 3, at the same Institute, an evening performance will be given of "Madame Marcelle," by Miss C. Maud, and "Courage," a Dutch play, by K. H., for Mrs. Despard's School Clinic. Will members of the League please keep these dates free and make them as widely known as possible? Full particulars of both performances will be given early in the new year.

PUPPET PLAYS.—It is gratifying to know that the Working Women's Legal Advice Bureau and the Industrial Law Committee have gained good financial help from the Puppet Plays given recently at Crosby Hall, Chelsea. The Ilkley Puppet Players have devised an exhibition which is particularly interesting from the artistic, literary, and historical points of view, and carried out in an exceedingly clever fashion. The speaking was excellent and the movements of the Puppets most realistic.

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WEDNESDAY, December 24, 1913.

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EDITORIAL.

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

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THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN.

Long ago, in a simpler society than ours, a company of men and women, not distinguished by the world's favour or endowed with the world's wealth, had a dream. So far as, through the intervening centuries, we can disentangle truth from fiction, the dream seems to have been of a kingdom such as the world had never known. They called it the kingdom of righteousness, and claimed that, when it arrived, the will of the Holiest would be done upon earth, even as it is done in heaven.

These simple folk had a firm belief that One who had been with them upon earth, and who had lived the life and showed the way of righteousness, would come again, and, by His sweetness and power, compel an alien world to listen to His message.

It seems all to have been what we moderns would call childish and visionary. He would come with clouds, suddenly, as a thief in the night. Strange natural phenomena would precede His appearance; signs and wonders would be seen upon earth and in the heavens; and these would give notice to the true world-lovers that their redemption was drawing near. Otherwise society would be blind and deaf; mankind would live in great cities, eat and drink, marry and be given in marriage, cheat, exploit others, and sit idle under oppression till the moment of revelation. Then (moved by some tremendous inner force) they would "look upon Him whom they had pierced, and mourn."

Does all that seem to us, in our cynical, terrible, fighting world, too far away, and altogether too fantastic, to be taken seriously? Those dreamers have gone to sleep, and all things continue as they were. There is no sign, nor would any be regarded if it came. In this scientific age, the learned have a reason for everything. They tell us what apparently unnatural phenomena mean, and we accept their dictum, as we accept many other things—convention, prejudice, or even what wise Mr. Asquith stupidly calls "natural distinctions."

And yet there are moments, especially at such seasons as this, when something which, not knowing its name, we may call the Human, awakes within us and will not be denied. Then love and imagination arise and speak; then haunting stories, heard long ago, when life was young, fall like an echo of some past loveliness upon a myriad simple souls; then the dream, old as eternity, is dreamed again.

No one would suspect it. We look much as usual. We go into the streets thronged with busy crowds; we gaze into shop windows; we think of our friends, and wish we had money to supply them with one-hundredth part of the pretty and useful things we see; we lay our plans for holidays for ourselves and others; and, all the time, we are dimly conscious that these things are symbols or illusions. They engage the surface of our life. Down in its hidden depths far other forces are moving.

Whither do they tend?

Possibly this may be a good moment to put the question to ourselves. So far as our special activities are concerned this is a season of rest. "Wait until Christmas is over. Wait until the New Year opens—1914—said to be fateful. Wait until Parliament re-assembles," we are told.

We know that a little rest and recreation is necessary if we are to do our work with anything like satisfaction to ourselves and others.

Meantime, looking back to the story of the past, let us use our breathing-space as did the men of old time, in considering the signs of the times, in estimating the momentum of the forces behind us.

One of the most significant of all the signs is the resurrection of woman. A modern mystic writer, seeking, like many others, to understand this great mystery, says that he cherishes "the exquisite dream of a woman-redeemer, who will be very near to every one of us, because she will have in her heart the blind tears of the child and the bitter tears of the man, and the patient tears of the woman, who will be the Compassionate One."

For this, it seems to some of us, is the sign of the new order, of the real peace and goodwill which, so long ago, was promised: compassion, general, universal, unstinting as nature; feeling with that deeply ingrained sense of unity which prevents those who have it from resting while any suffer unnecessarily.

Those of old time looked to see the Sign of the Son of Man in the heavens. That is with us to-day. For it means the coming of the real Humanity—not man, not woman; but man and woman together.

The truth is that a new thing is being seen in our time. It is embarrassing to-day. Even the wise and strong hardly know how to deal with it. Tomorrow, when the little things that mark our strife are forgotten, it will have a free course and prevail over every difficulty.

That new and wonderful thing is a Social Conscience. It has had its spiritual birth in the sense of unity which marks our age. The individual to-day cannot be satisfied by, as the old Church Catechism puts it, "doing his duty in that station of life to which it shall please God to call him." He feels himself enslaved in the enslavement of his fellow-beings. What but this has made gallant men, as well as women, lay themselves open to trial, imprisonment, torture of forcible feeding, and the ridicule of many of their companions? We have lately heard of Captain Gonne—hero of many fights—being committed to Lewes Gaol because, while women are denied their rights, he would not pay towards the maintenance of the Government—which released him after forty-eight hours without rhyme or reason. These, to the horror of the conventional, go outside their own station, claiming that all stations are theirs.

Herein lies our hope. Dimly there grows upon us the conception of a new mankind, which must, in whatever pain and sorrow, be brought to the birth—"a mankind which will not know force or fraud, hatred or fear." And—a new religion. For the tragedy of to-day is that we cannot be free of the guilt of our brothers' and sisters' blood. Everywhere it cries out to us. From adulterated food, from sweated clothes, from the robbery and extortion of finance, from the devious ways of politicians, from hospitals where young women and little children pay in pain and humiliation for the base pleasures of a degraded social order, that cry arises. None of us can escape from our share in the guilt of the community.

That this is being felt constitutes our hope. It is the Sign in the heavens; the standard round which, when the times are ripe, all will gather. Let the party politician do his best, or his worst. Before this great new force he will be helpless. Gauge its momentum? We cannot. But we know that, when free, and guided by wisdom, it will, in very truth—

Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

C. DESPARD.

The Sign-Post.

This Way to VOTES FOR WOMEN

Whether intentionally or not, the Press is continually holding up for women nice little pointers, which those who run may read. A recent one is of special interest, for the finger that points is that of a ghost—

The Ghost of Poor Old Lord Coke!

He has been dead and gone 300 years, but, sure, anyone must respect so antiquated a ghostly finger!

The person at whom he points is a
And there are other than ghostly Modern
fingers that would fain point at her Young
and her comrades. Woman.

In the meantime, living learned men shelter themselves behind that welcome finger as gladly as ever ancient Greek greeted a timely *Deus ex machina*.

"You may be a Queen,
my good though misguided young woman; a Regent;
even, if hard pressed, we might allow you to be
Keeper of the Great Seal! Also, you may attain to the
glory of being a Mayor, a sexton or a churchwarden;
but you may not be

—no, the door cannot be opened that admits you to
the rank of attorney or solicitor!"

Why not? I will tell you.

"The long practice of antiquity is against it."
"There is a pre-existing disability on the part of women
to be solicitors or attorneys." Yes, yes, there is—
"an uninterrupted usage which is the foundation of
the greater part of the Common Law of this country,
and which, beyond all doubt, we should be loth to
depart from." That is the opinion of Lord Coke,
"and his opinion of what is and what is not Common
Law needs no other sanction!"

Did the shadow of a grin pass over the Ghost's face?
After all, he had been the Other Side 300 years.

Did the Young Woman Allow Herself a Smile?

Maybe. Woman's logic is so defective; no wonder
they cannot be attorneys or solicitors! But the
learned judges, beneath their wigs of wisdom, maintained
a dignified calm.

The Master of the Rolls

of to-day, with kindly look, peeped from behind the
shadowy form of

the Ghost of Lord Coke.

"I grant you," he said, "that you women may be,
in point of intelligence, education, and competency,
quite equal, even a thought better than many male
candidates, but"—(up went the warning finger of the
Past)—"Lord Coke said you could not be an attorney,

He said it 300 years ago,

and he referred to a book called 'The Mirror of Justice.'

What can you want more?

Such a pretty title—'The Mirror of Justice'!

What Do Women Want More?

Unreasonable women! Only a little of the real
thing—not a reflection "seen through a glass darkly."

MARY MAUD.

"NO LADIES ADMITTED."

"No ladies admitted." One of two stalwart
policemen barred the public entrance to our local
police-court—bland, polite, but firm. My companion,
an official in the Civil Service, momentarily nonplussed,
and murmuring a request to me to wait a minute while
he interviewed the magistrate's clerk, disappeared,
leaving me to take a seat on an adjacent bench.

The corridor was not crowded, but a stream of officials
emerged and re-emerged from one or other of the big
doors which give on to the main vestibule, where some
half-dozen or so—four women and two men—waited
evidently, like myself, for admission to the court for
some particular purpose.

A group of men of a sub-normally developed
type clustered before the policemen who had barred my
entrance. Towards the stroke of eleven, the foremost
amongst them pushed their way inside till the stentorian
"Full up!" rang through the court, and several low-
browed, undersized loafers, varying in age from sixteen
to twenty, turned on their heels to seek entertainment
elsewhere.

My friend returned.

"Two unsavoury cases are to be taken first, and no
ladies are to be admitted. The magistrates are at
present trying a child in the Children's Court. No one
is allowed there. They will not be long."

I protested that it was a strange thing that women
should not be permitted entrance to the Children's
Court, but that at least, the public in general being
excluded, the monstrosity of the arrangement is less
apparent than in the case of the police-court itself.

My friend—though one of those who would have
spared all women painful knowledge and sordid sights
if it were possible—agreed. I dismissed him, assuring
him that I had plenty to think about and to watch.
He was to return for me when the time should come that
"ladies were admitted."

The glance of the policemen doorkeepers fell upon me
frequently as I sat lonely in the somewhat chilly hall.
Did they, I wondered, regard me as one unduly curious
about things not properly my concern? or as a journalist
in search of copy? or as perhaps a Suffragette? Did
they by any chance think of me as in some way of
another world, another class, almost another clay to the
poor creatures of their work's underworld? And did
it seem to them entirely natural, entirely right, entirely
fitting, that I, and such as I, should be kept outside a
door which, by order of their superiors, they were to
open to any male member of the community, however
young, however old, however vicious, however weak?

To me the thought recurred how that I had given
work and strength and time to help forward the passing
of the very Act under which the miscreants in the dock
would probably be punished. That I was a woman,
come to years of discretion, with advantages of education
and up-bringing that would provide me with a shield
against possible contamination, which the boys and
youths admitted to court did not possess, and though
the atmosphere is one which no normally constituted
woman could by any manner of means enjoy, I became
more and more convinced, as I meditated outside that
door, that the exclusion of women when cases under
the White Slave Traffic Act are being tried, however
well-intentioned, is a mistake, and is a practice for
which justification is hard to find.

The days when ignorance was confounded with
innocence are too rapidly passing.

A woman crossed my path. How shall I describe her?
It seemed that all she wore, pitifully inadequate clothing,
was set on awry, that she herself had no straight line of
limb, no straight gait, no straight vision—she neither
shambled, nor shuffled, nor walked—it was as though
a corpse was jerked forward by an invisible cord. I
learnt that she was a witness in the case—so bruised,
so cruelly ill-used, so maimed in every part of her body,
that the matron had hardly dared to replace her clothes
on the wounded body after examination. As she left
the corridor I caught a glimpse of her face. My God!

what terror, what a world of sorrow in those haunting rolling eyes! I, her sister, was "not admitted."

E. M. FRANCIS.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT. AN ALLEGORY.

There was once a beautiful and fertile island, set in a silver sea. People called it a rich country, and they spoke truth, for it was the richest country in the world. It had the largest navy, because its great vessels were needed to protect its shores and its many colonies. It traded with countries all over the world. The men were brave in war and generous in times of victory. They were lovers of liberty and called their land free, but this was an error, because only the men were free, the women, who were more numerous than the men, were slaves. The reason of so strange a case was, that the rulers were full of pride and vain glory, and would not take counsel with the women when they made the laws, so many of these laws were very unjust to the women and little children.

For a long time the women submitted to their lot because they were ignorant, and some of them did not even know that they were slaves. Others knew it, but they could not break their fetters because they were not strong enough. During this time the women suffered greatly. Their task masters were harsh and cruel, and made them work very hard for such very small wages that they never had enough to eat, nor warm clothes to wear; and because they were obliged to work for such long hours, they were always weary, for they had not time to take the rest and sleep which they required; and many of the little children died, because their mothers could not buy food for them.

Then there were other slaves in this land which was called free; and these were far more unhappy even than the half-starved and hard-worked women. These slaves were all young and innocent and pure, and many of them were very fair. Men of evil passions, like wild beasts of prey, lay in wait for them, caught them, and put them in fetters so strong that they could never break them. The grief of the mothers of these young girls was so great that many of them lost the precious gift of reason.

At last the women began to ask that they, too, might be free like the men. Those who had wisdom taught the ignorant to rebel against this cruel tyranny, for the sake of the little children, for the sake of the fair young girls, and also for the sake of the men themselves.

Chapter 4

It's Getting Old-fashioned to scrub clothes on wash-day.

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They said, moreover, "Many of the men are only ignorant and stupid; they have kind hearts, and will help us when they understand our sorrows."

Then the good men who were only slow of understanding were sorry for the poor women slaves; they sighed and said: "Ah, if we only knew how to help you; we do not approve of your slavery, and sympathise greatly with you, but we think that if you are patient and wait a little longer you will find deliverance." This made the women very angry; they had been patient for so many many years, and when they thought of the children and the young girls in such cruel bondage, they resolved that they would openly rebel. They made answer to these dull-witted men, that *deeds not words* were what they wanted. At last the men's consciences were awakened. The good courage and long-suffering of the women made them ashamed, and they resolved to fight for their deliverance. They formed themselves into Guilds of Knight Templars, and made a vow that they would not rest until the women were free. Many of them were true men, but others were false.

The true men took charge of their own consciences, the others gave theirs into the keeping of the rulers of the country, who swore that the women should not be free.

The women, whose banner was Justice, and whose motto was "Dare to be Free," feared not the wrath of their enemies, and were not dismayed by their false friends; but they honoured their true friends. They tried many times to see the chief ruler and to appeal to his clemency. This man, who made long speeches in the Council Chamber, telling the people that their land and their institutions were free, refused to see the women, and commanded them to go back and look after their homes. Many of them could not do as he commanded, because they had no homes. Then the rulers gave orders that they should be cast into prison and suffer torture.

Now, this country which was called free, was also called Christian; but this was another great error, because those who call themselves Christians must be "true and just in all their dealings."

The people of this country had a King to reign over them; he was kind and gentle and willing to make the people happy, but he had no kingly power; he grieved when his subjects suffered wrong, but he could not help them, the rulers had all the power.

There lived in this island country three women, the name of the one was Knowledge, because she had much wisdom and taught the people; the name of the second was the Scribe; she also was wise, and all her writings were published in a journal for the people to read. The rulers were very angry, and tried to suppress the journal because it told the truth. And how unjustly the women were treated! But they tried in vain. There were many other scribes in the land, but alas! they did not speak the truth in their journals, but deceived the people; for their minds were set on mischief. The reason of this was that they did not know the "New Commandment." The third woman was called the Gleaner, because she tried to glean wisdom from the lips of the wise ones, that she, too, might become wise. They were grieved at the sufferings of their sisters, and said one to another, "Let us go into yonder far country, and see if the women there are slaves also—happily they have a king, powerful and great, and to him we will plead our cause that he may help us also." They passed through many countries; in some of them the women were free, but in most of them they were still slaves. They travelled on until they came to the country they sought, which was full of beautiful lakes and mountains, seeking always the king; for the people said he was full of loving-kindness and tender mercy, and of a sweet pity for all who suffered. The path was strewn with great stones and boulders, which sorely impeded their progress; moreover, it was steep and narrow; but with the aid of a stout staff which each woman carried, they kept straight on, although they were often obliged to stop and take breath. And

lest at any time they should slip back because of the steepness and roughness of the mountain path, they wore stout shoes studded with nails, wherewith to grip the ground more firmly. Each woman wore a shield, inscribed with the words of their Order: "*Dare to be Free.*" This gave them courage to overcome all obstacles. When they had climbed half-way up the mountain, they began to feel very weary and footsore, so they sat down to rest awhile. There was a great stillness. The birds had gone to roost, and no human habitation was near; a sense of peace fell upon them, which, however, soon gave place to one of fear. "Did you hear that?" inquired the Gleaner. "Yes," answered her companions. They listened; the low, fierce growl was repeated. They rose to their feet. "Come," said Knowledge, "we must know where and who our foe is, before we can fight him." The others willingly assented to her wise counsel. They gripped their staves in their right hands and held their shields more closely to them for protection, and went in the direction of the sound. As they approached nearer to a cave in the rock, the growl grew louder and more fierce, still they saw nothing. "Let us wait at the mouth of the cave," said the Scribe, "if we do not fight this foe, he may do grievous harm to poor wayfarers who carry no armour." It was as though the unseen foe had heard her voice, for immediately there appeared at the mouth of the cave a dragon so hideous that all three women started back in surprise—not in fear. Then a strange thing happened. A peal of merry laughter—not mocking, as you might suppose—but a sweet, tuneful laugh, a cadence of pure joy broke from the throats of all three women at once. It awakened the echoes in the mountains; it ascended, was caught up to the clear blue sky above, and mingled with the music of the spheres. "Why! it is only 'Prejudicion'!" they cried all together. At the sound of his name the monster growled again, but did not come out to meet the three armed women, who stood fearlessly before him ready to do battle; he kept well within the shadow of his dark cave. Their bright shields hurt his eyes, and seeing the words upon them, inscribed in letters of gold, he shrunk away in fear.

His fearless laughter angered him. He had hoped by his growling to frighten them; but they knew him too well; they had met his species in many countries through which they had travelled, but he had never been able to do them any harm. Night began to fall, and the women lighted their lamps; and they had no fear in the darkness.

BEATRICE KENT.

(To be concluded.)

FRENCH WOMEN AND THE VOTE. What Really Happened.

The following letter was sent to *The Times* for publication by Miss Mary Sheepshanks, editor of *Ius Suffragii*, giving the truth about the recent Parliamentary debate in which votes for women was reported to have been negatived by a large majority. *The Times* has not inserted the letter and Miss Sheepshanks sends it to us for publication. We are very glad to give it space; the facts are very important.

Your Paris correspondent, in a communication of November 12, under the above heading, gives, if I may say so, an entirely erroneous impression of the debate and vote in the Chamber on November 11. I have the official report of the debate before me, from which it is clear that no such defeat of Woman Suffrage took place as he reports.

M. Andrieux, in the discussion on proportional representation, proposed an amendment to give women the vote on the same terms as men. He spoke well and convincingly, and asked for a vote on the principle of Woman Suffrage. M. Ferdinand Buisson, however, the well-known supporter of Woman Suffrage and President of the Committee for Universal Suffrage, spoke on behalf both of the supporters of proportional representation and of the Women Suffrage societies, and pointed out that the introduction of the Woman Suffrage amendment was entirely irrelevant to the question of proportional representation, and that it was contrary to the wishes of the Suffragists themselves that the question should be introduced under such unfavourable circumstances. He and other well-known supporters of Woman Suffrage demanded, therefore, that Woman Suffrage should be considered separately from the question of proportional representation. The Chamber accordingly voted for separating M. Andrieux's amendment from the discussion on proportional representation. This was not intended, and is not to be taken as in any way a defeat for Woman Suffrage. It was simply

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decided not to consider the question on that occasion, and those who supported this decision united in agreeing that an early date should be found for a full and worthy discussion of the women's question.

The corrected figures for the vote were—for separating M. Andrieux's amendment, 302; against, 117.

Your correspondent remarks that there is no demand for the vote among French women. This is certainly open to argument. As some evidence of the demand for the suffrage, it may be mentioned that there is about ten suffrage societies in France. We receive in this office eighteen French suffrage newspapers, and the French League for the Rights of Men, with a membership of 80,000, and of which the President is M. Francis de Pressense, has declared for Woman Suffrage.

NORTHERN MEN'S FEDERATION FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The following letter has been sent to His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury:—

My Lord Archbishop,—We represent the Church members of the different centres of the Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage and beg to inform you that we are looking to you as the head and front of the Established Church in England and the representative of the Christian religion in our country, to assume responsibility for what we hold to be a Christian movement, believing as we do that the spirit of Christianity can never be eliminated from the spirit of politics if politics are to bring peace on earth, goodwill towards man.

We beg to inform you that the members of the Federation who belong to the Established Church in Scotland are approaching all the Presbyteries of Scotland and expect those bodies to take up their Christian duties and save women from coercive measures inflicted on them by His Majesty's Government. When things have reached such a crisis, that a fearful measure like the Cat and Mouse Bill is placed upon the Statute-book, and the terrible degradation of forcible feeding is instituted in British prisons by the Government that has betrayed the women they coerce, it is obvious that the subject of Woman's Enfranchisement has passed out of the realm of politics into the larger realm of Christianity itself.

My Lord, we have the last few years seen women tricked, cheated, and then betrayed by politicians. We have seen them forced into the market place to plead their cause. We have seen them stoned and handed over to mob rule. We have seen them put into the pillory by a powerful Press, for the mentally unfit to jeer at. We have seen them preached at

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by the Scribes and Pharisees, and we know that Pontius Pilates live to-day to crucify great movements.

We look, therefore, for the Established Church, born of the Crucifixion, to come forward, in a Christian spirit and give its sanction and protection to this newborn cry of women for justice. We look to the Church to uphold the traditions of its great Founder who was born of woman and to show some gratitude and grace to women who have helped to build the edifice and have worked to maintain it, all down the ages.

We look to the Lords Spiritual to give a spiritual lead to the Lords Temporal in the Upper House, and we respectfully beg to inform you that unless we can have some assurance from your Grace, that we may look to you for spiritual guidance in this great question which is animating the world we shall withdraw our support from the institution of Christian civilisation as one that has failed in its purpose.

Awaiting the favour of a reply, we are, my Lord, yours obediently,

M. ARNCLIFFE-SENNETT, Founder and Hon. Organiser to the Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage.

N. BROWN, Hon. Sec. for Edinburgh Centre.

ALEXANDER ORR, Hon. Treasurer for Edinburgh Centre.

A. M. SERVICE, Hon. Secretary for Glasgow Centre.

ANDREW SLOAN, Hon. Treasurer for Glasgow Centre.

ROBERT R. GAUL, Hon. Secretary for Berwick-on-Tweed Centre.

JOHN DARBYSHIRE, Hon. Sec. for Manchester Centre.

JOHN R. AITKENSON, Hon. Sec. Newcastle-on-Tyne Centre.

Enthusiastic Meeting in the Constituency of the Secretary for Scotland.

A remarkable meeting was held in Burgh Hall, Springburn, Glasgow, on November 28, 1913, in Mr. McKinnon Wood's constituency; ex-Baillie Rae presided, and the speakers were: Councillor P. J. Dollan, Glasgow; Councillor Crawford, Edinburgh; Mrs. Kathleen Gatty, London; ex-Baillie Gordon, Edinburgh.

The Chairman said that many men now felt that they ought to take a more active part in the movement for demanding the franchise for the women of this country. It would be a great surprise to John Stuart Mill if he could come back and find that this question, for which he worked so hard in his day, was not yet settled.

Councillor Dollan called on the men to sink party politics and help the women of this country in their struggle for the vote. Political parties, he said, will play with the demands of the women because they are voteless, but the men of the country must show that they would no longer allow the Government to refuse justice to the women. Referring to the present strike of book-binders in Glasgow, Councillor Dollan pointed out that the Press was misrepresenting the real question at issue, which was that the men were demanding, not so much that the women be put out of the trade, but that the employers should pay the women the same rate of wages as the men for the same work, instead of at present about one-third of the amount men are paid. In all classes of work this kind of thing is done; even in the Government departments men are paid much higher wages than the women who are doing exactly the same work. Exploitation of women's work will only be stopped when the women have the same right as the men to go to the poll and register their vote. He moved the following resolution:—

"That this meeting of voters demands that Woman Suffrage, on equal terms with men, be incorporated in the King's Speech in 1914. It further demands the immediate repeal of the infamous Cat and Mouse Act which Mr. Asquith has forced on the women as the only alternative to his broken pledges."

Councillor Crawford, of Edinburgh, in seconding the resolution, said he brought greetings from the Edinburgh Branch of the Federation to their comrades in Glasgow. Mr. Asquith was Prime Minister of this country by the votes of the men, and it lay with the men to say whether or not he would remain. He told of the meeting the deputation of Northern Men to London, and said they had put the Prime Minister to flight, and made the London Press take notice of their constitutional deputation and the treatment they received.

Mrs. Gatty pointed out how the voters of the country could be of great service to the women in the present struggle they were having for their freedom.

Ex-Baillie Gordon, of Edinburgh, told how in the Federation there were Tories, Liberals, and red-hot Socialists, and he did not consider it any miracle, but the most natural and reasonable thing imaginable. He also pointed out the position of woman in the eyes of the law. She is not a "person," she is not one of the "people," she is not an "adult." Then what is she?

The resolution was passed unanimously and with great enthusiasm. Copies were forwarded to the Prime Minister, Home Secretary, and Mr. McKinnon Wood, the member for St. Rollox. A good collection towards to the funds of the Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage was taken.

The meetings held by the Federation in the four Parliamentary Divisions of Edinburgh have been very successful. Prominent men have advocated a wide extension of the work in other Parliamentary Divisions to convince the Government that a non-possimus attitude towards Woman Suffrage would not be tolerated by voters. A vigorous campaign is being carried on in Edinburgh, and in Glasgow the Federation is making itself felt in the constituencies of Mr. McKinnon Wood, Secretary for Scotland, and Mr. McCallum Scott.

THE APOTHEOSIS OF THE SPIRIT.

The sweet sound of the Christmas bells ringing in the early morning brings again a reminder of the old familiar message, "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men." It is a message that has grown so old, so familiar, that it has almost ceased to have for us a meaning.

What other great truth did Christ stand for besides the supremacy of the law of love, the law of peace and goodwill? He stood, indeed, to testify in a material age to the omnipotence, the omnipresence of the Spirit. The story of the birth and growth of Christianity is the recital of the power of the Spirit, moving through and beneath the material life, moulding and shaping it. Each Christmas as it passes sees somewhere in the world the mystical commencement and secret growth of some movement for the betterment of mankind, making, like Christianity, its appeal to what is spiritual in man, and trusting to the power of the Spirit against all the material forces dominant among mankind.

We are, says Maurice Maeterlinck, on the verge of a great spiritual epoch; for there are times when the spirit life rises very near to the surface of humanity and the soul draws very near to the surface of life. Who that looks around, noting the signs of the times, can doubt the truth of the saying? To what else can we attribute the awakening of the princess from her sleep of a hundred ages? Woman, called from her long slumber by the nearer approach of the spirit, wakes to feel the sweet, cool breath of morning on her face, looking forward to a long day, not of ease, but of labour; not of sport, but of responsibility, yet conscious of her inward strength and her supreme fitness for her tasks. Behind her lies her childhood, and through the tears and joys, the errors and lessons, of her childhood she has grown to what she is. Already the princess moves; a fresher wind blows through the palace, and a thousand sounds of life and activity murmur through the gardens and the halls.

Happy are those who wake with her and hasten to accompany her in her labours in the new day. We are on the verge of a new spiritual epoch. To what else can we attribute the great awakening of conscience among all nations to the falsity and narrowness of our old conceptions of peace and goodwill—towards men! To what else can we attribute the growing conviction that we are each his brother's keeper? What power in a Christmas that is not followed by a day of Calvary! What growth for the seed that does not fall to the ground! The day of Calvary comes indeed, but above it glows the brightness of the spirit-light that shines on through death and is not quenched in eternity.

H. S.

BRANCH NOTES.

NATIONAL OFFICES, LONDON, 1, Robert-street, Adelphi, W.C.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.—East London.

The next Branch meeting will be on Thursday, January 8, 1914, at 37, Wellington-buildings, Bow, at 8 p.m. Miss Gunner will read a paper on "Militancy," and a discussion will follow. Please send orders for home-made marmalade. We hope to hold a social in January. The hon. secretary will be glad to receive suggestions for items and volunteers of help.

PROVINCES.—Middlesbrough.

An enjoyable time was spent last Monday night by members and friends at the Whist Drive and Dance held in the school-room, Peacock-street. Miss Edith Moore won the Christmas goose. A very good syllabus of meetings has been arranged for next year. It has been decided to have business meetings regularly on the first Mondays and "At Homes" on the last Mondays of each month. The first business meeting is to be held January 12, in Hilton's Cafe.

Sheffield.

We have finished the year 1913 with a very successful sale on which we have realised a profit of £6. The goods, made at the fortnightly meetings made a brave show with the gifts of members and friends; the cake and candy stall was admirably stocked with dainties which realised a good profit. Other attractions were a cake competition organised by Miss Gillett, a hoop-la table, and a bran-tub. One of our generous men friends undertook to read character from handwriting, and so helped to swell the profits. A member of the League who has a laundry lent her premises for the sale, so that we had nothing to pay for the room, and we are grateful to all who helped to ensure so decided a success. We hope all our members will attend the annual meeting in January, at which final arrangements will be made for Miss Anna Munro's visit and for our social evening.



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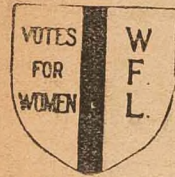
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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L. LONDON AND SUBURBS. 1914.



DARE TO BE FREE.

Wed., Jan. 7.—STREATHAM, 67, Greyhound-lane (by kind invitation of Mrs. Macgregor), Whist Drive, 7.30 p.m. Tickets, 1s.
Thurs., Jan. 8.—W.F.L. OFFICE, 1, Robert-street, Mid-London Branch Quarterly Meeting, 7.30 p.m. East London Branch Meeting, 37, Wellington Buildings, 8 p.m. Miss Gunner on "Militancy."
Fri., Jan. 9.—CANTON HALL, Tango Practice Class, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., under the auspices of the London Branches Council. Tickets 2s. each, (including tea) from Mrs. Huntsman, W.F.L. OFFICE.

Sat., Jan. 17.—CANTON HALL, W.F.L. Carnival, 3 p.m. till 10 p.m.
Mon., Jan. 19.—W.F.L. OFFICE, 1, Robert-street, Discussion Meeting, 8 p.m., to be opened by Madame Malmberg. Subject: "Is the Woman's Movement identical with the Eastern Revolutionary Movement?"

Wed., Jan. 21.—Canton Hall, 3.30 p.m. Public Meeting. Speakers: Miss Cicely Hamilton and others.
Wed., Jan. 28.—CANTON HALL, Public Meeting 3.30 p.m., Sur-Gen. Evatt, C.B.: "Florence Nightingale."

Mon., Feb. 2.—W.F.L. OFFICE, 1, Robert-street, Discussion Meeting, 8 p.m., to be opened by Mrs. Nevinson. Subject: "That men having sole political power are to blame for the present muddle of Society."
Wed., Feb. 4.—CANTON HALL, Public Meeting, 3.30. Mrs. Nott Bower: "Reforms urgently needed in Criminal Law."

Sat., Feb. 7.—CANTON HALL, Tango Practice Class, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., under the auspices of the London Branches Council. Tickets, 2s. (including tea) from Mrs. Huntsman, W.F.L. OFFICE.
Tues., March 3.—CRIPPLEGATE INSTITUTE, Performance of *Madame Marcella*, by Miss C. Maud, and *Courage* (a Dutch play), by K. H. (Evening).

Tues., March 24.—CRIPPLEGATE INSTITUTE, Performance of *Hiawatha* (afternoon).

PROVINCES.

Wed., Dec. 31.—Southsea, Derrynane, Aston-road, 7.30 p.m., Whist Drive.

1914.
Fri., Jan. 2.—Fawley (Hants), The Rectory (by kind permission of the Rev. Gore Browne). Drawing-room Meeting, 2.30 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Leigh Rothwell.

Mon., Jan. 12.—Middlebrough, Hinton's Cafe Branch Meeting, Tues., Jan. 13.—Portsmouth, Castle Tea Rooms, 7.30, Members' Meeting. Speaker: Miss Phillips.

Mon., Jan. 19.—Middlebrough. Hinton's Cafe. Speaker, Mrs. Schofield Costes.

Mon., Jan. 26.—Middlebrough. "At Home." Rev. T. C. Gobat (Darlington). "Ethics of Woman's Suffrage."

Tues., Jan. 27.—Portsmouth, Lower Albert Hall, 8 p.m., Public Meeting. Speakers: Rev. G. W. Thompson and Miss Nina Boyle. Chair: Mrs. Whetton.

Wed., Jan. 28.—Portsmouth, Dockyard Gates, Dinner-hour Meeting. Speaker: Miss Nina Boyle. Southampton, Morris Hall, Public Meeting, 8 p.m. Speakers: Miss Nina Boyle and Mr. Laurence Housman. Chair: Mrs. Rothwell.

Fri., Jan. 30.—Bournemouth, St. Peter's Hall, Hinton-road, 8 p.m., Public Meeting. Laurence Housman, Esq., and Miss Nina Boyle. Chair: Miss Underwood.

Mon., Mar. 2.—Chester, Public Meeting. Speaker: Mrs. Despard. 1914.

SCOTLAND.

Thurs., Jan. 8.—Dundee. Whist Party.
Wed., Jan. 14.—Edinburgh, 90, Lothian-road, 7.30 p.m., "At Home." Speaker: Mrs. Murray.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Fri., Jan. 9.—Wallington, WOMEN'S ADULT SCHOOL. Speaker: Miss Munro.

Fri., Jan. 16.—THORNTON HEATH PARLIAMENT. Debate, "That this Parliament Provide for the Representation of the People by Granting Votes to Women Without Delay." Affirmative: Miss Nina Boyle. Negative: Miss Mabel Smith.

Sun., Feb. 8.—Kington Humanitarian Society, 7 p.m., Miss Anna Munro, W.F.L.
Tues., Feb. 17.—WEST ESSEX WOMEN'S FRANCHISE SOCIETY, Buckhurst-hill Hall, 8 p.m. Miss Nina Boyle, W.F.L.

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THEY THAT ARE DEAD.

They that are dead return to bless
The workers in the wilderness;
They that were pierced by every thorn
Of sneers and laughter, wrath and scorn,
Who fought old customs, evil chance,
And all the weeds of ignorance,
Are with us now to help our cause
To urge reform and purer laws.
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AN APPEAL.

"THE VOTE" ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT (Extract from the Report of the Directors.)

An examination of the details of the Trading Account has shown that a fairly creditable average has been maintained in the Advertisement Department, but in order that the accounts may be held and increased, it is necessary that the Advertisers shall be well patronised, and the Directors appeal to all members to support those firms who support the paper, to regard the Advertiser not merely as an ordinary trader knocking at the door of the consumer, but as one of the most important factors in building up "THE VOTE."

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NOTICE.—The ACTRESSES' FRANCHISE LEAGUE announce that the BIRTHDAY PARTY at the Empress Rooms, on Thursday, December 18, has been unavoidably POSTPONED TILL JANUARY 29, 1914.

LITERARY.

HAVE YOU READ?—"LIBERAL CANE," by EUNICE MURRAY, 1d. "PREJUDICES OLD AND NEW," by EUNICE MURRAY, 1d. "WHAT IS WOMANLY?" by LAURENCE HOUSMAN, 4d. If not, send to the LITERATURE DEPARTMENT, 1, Robert-street, Adelphi, W.C.

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