

Women's Franchise.

No. 18.

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Notice to Contributors and Subscribers.

Articles containing information on the subject of Women's Suffrage should be addressed to the Editor, who will return those not considered suitable as soon as possible if a stamped addressed envelope is sent with the MS. As the paper is on a voluntary basis, and all profits go to help the cause, no payments are made for contributions. Subscriptions for the weekly numbers to the end of March (3s. 3d.), or less if so desired, should be forwarded to the Publisher. Back numbers can still be obtained.

'WOMEN'S FRANCHISE,'

EDITORIAL AND PUBLISHING OFFICE,

13, BREAM'S BUILDINGS, CHANCERY LANE, E.C.

To Our Readers.

A BALANCE sheet is now being prepared, and to those so desiring will be enclosed with the return of the promissory forms on fulfilment of the same. We have been advised to ask our friends to send at once the whole of their promised donations in one sum rather than in instalments, as we ourselves suggested, and we do this having regard to the fact that labour will be saved thereby, and that there is no doubt but that the whole sum promised can be used with advantage, not only in meeting our current expenses, but in further extending our circulation. It is asked that cheques and post office orders shall be made payable to the account of *Women's Franchise* and crossed "The Union of London and Smith's Bank, Chancery Lane Branch." The receipt of all money will be acknowledged through our columns, and should any of our friends prefer, in spite of the consideration advanced above, in the first instance only to send a part of their donation it will be acknowledged as in part payment of the whole sum.

We have every reason to be satisfied with the help hitherto accorded us, but we must continue to appeal to our readers not to relax their efforts to make the publication widely known, in which we will do all we can to assist by the supply of specimen copies, contents bills, &c.

Notes.

THE Prime Minister's references to Women's Suffrage in his speech at Dunfermline on the 22nd inst. are encouraging, but not satisfying. He tells us to "go on agitating and holding meetings and pestering people as much as we can." This is what we have been doing for a long time, and what we intend to continue doing until the goal be reached. We are advised to lay in a plentiful supply of "faith and belief." Enough faith to remove the mountains of prejudice and ignorance ranged against us. But if we had not possessed a practically unlimited supply of these necessary articles, our cause would not be where it is to-day. That it appears to Sir Henry to be within measurable distance of accomplishment seems possible from the well-merited rebuke he administered to those who treated this question as a joke—"I believe" he said "that the time may come much sooner than the laughter of the audience, in which I do not join, seems to imply."

A CORRESPONDENT in *The Daily Chronicle* asks: "What are the first steps to be taken to effect a reform of our lunatic asylums from without?" Referring to this question Dr. Louise Appel writes:—"The answer is simple; will men who are in authority accept it and permit women to work with them in all their deliberations, beginning with the highest—the Commissioners of Lunacy—and ending with the lowest, the Visiting Committees of Lunatic Asylums? Asylum reform requires.....that in all councils and committees there shall be co-operation between men and women members. Will the Commissioners of Lunacy permit this co-operation? The decision rests with them."

THE Metropolitan Asylums Board is proposing to lower the position of matrons from first to second class officials. The Matron's Council of Great Britain and Ireland, which numbers many members, met on the 19th in the offices of the London Medical Society to consider the matter. A strong protest was passed against the proposed change, and some emphatic language was used. It was characterized as "a very serious evil," an "obtuse and senseless action," and "a very foolish and idiotic procedure." The meeting unanimously agreed to protest against the "degrading proposal," and it was decided to ask the Local Government Board to receive a deputation on the subject.

THE women of Australia are always in the van of any movement for the welfare of their sex. The Exhibition of Women's Work opened in Melbourne on the 23rd by Lady Northcote in the presence of the Governor-General, the Governors of five States and an immense number of people, ought to be of great value in impressing upon the world the vast importance of the part taken by women in all the professions and industries in which they have been allowed to work. The thousands of exhibits from all parts of the British Empire are drawing crowds. Special features of the Exhibition are the orchestra, the brass band in which the performers are all women, and the choir of over a thousand female voices, which has been specially trained for the occasion. The work of organization has been most arduous and has taken over a year. The first action of the women of Australia in this, their great effort, was to send a message of loyalty to Queen Alexandra, patroness of the Exhibition.

THIS Exhibition, which we hope will do so much to benefit the professional and industrial position of women, would have been impossible if the women of the country had not occupied the legal position of citizens when carrying out their undertaking. It is instructive to notice how the Australian women's position has improved since their enfranchisement. The women of South Australia were enfranchised in 1903, and since that time sixteen important bills dealing with the welfare of women and children have been passed by the legislature, while their wages, which before their enfranchisement averaged 5s. to 8s. a week, are now 16s. to 20s. for the same work.

THE number of women in France who are being admitted to the Bar is steadily increasing. The latest addition to their ranks is Mlle. Mitopolsky, who recently appeared in the Paris Court of Appeal and took the oath as member of the Paris Bar. This young lady has passed all her examinations most brilliantly, and has obtained successively the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Doctor of Laws from the Paris University. Mlle. Jeanne Chauvin was the first woman to triumph over the prejudices of the members of the Paris Bar; since her admission opinion has changed, and now the ladies are warmly congratulated by their male colleagues. Another lady who entered the lists two years ago is Mlle. Gaillard, who made her *début* at Carcassonne, when she pleaded on behalf of a poor girl accused of murdering her child. She obtained an acquittal. In these cases the help and sympathy of a woman advocate are of such priceless value to helpless and ignorant girls.

WHEN a few years ago a lady desired to become a practising barrister in England—this Land of the Free—the Benchers of Gray's Inn declined to allow her to join the Society for the purpose. It will be remembered that she appealed against this decision, and the Lord Chancellor said that the whole question was one of precedent (a legal and subtle way of informing her that the matter was decided according to sex and not according to merit) and that he could not interfere with the decision of the Benchers of Gray's Inn. The combined wisdom of a Lord Chancellor, a Lord Chief Justice and five judges considered this a sufficiently logical reason for declining to take any steps towards admitting women into a profession in which they are already distinguishing themselves in more enlightened countries.

THE eminent King's Counsel who had been consulted as to the probability of success of an appeal against the decision of *Chorlton v. Lings* (the case which really disfranchised women) has given an adverse opinion as to the probability of success. It must be remembered that his opinion does not militate in any way against the historical facts, compiled through years of toil by Mrs. Stopes, in her 'British Free-woman' and 'The Sphere of "Man."' Another "decision," given by a lawyer who had spoken against her views in the discussion after her paper at Sydenham in May, was "You have all the facts, all the arguments, all the right on your side for the Franchise, but we have the power, and you won't get it!"

A MEETING to urge the Government to take action in favour of Women's Suffrage was held on the afternoon of the 24th inst. at the house of A. J. Grenfell, Esq., Mostyn House School, Parkgate, near Chester, where Mrs. Abraham took the chair. Mrs. Stopes, whose energy in breaking new ground seems inexhaustible, gave a powerful address. Miss Ross, M.A., of Liverpool, ably supported her, pointing out that no woman could perform her work satisfactorily, in aid of temperance or morality, without the help of the vote. Mr. Grenfell spoke warmly and sympathetically of our movement, but confessed that he had been solemnly warned that lending his fine hall for this purpose would be sure to ruin his school.

The Suffrage in Other Lands.

GERMANY.—The Suffrage Congress proved a brilliant success, exceeding even the hopes of its promoters. The large attendance, the official recognition given by the city of Frankfurt, and the space devoted to papers of all parties to its sessions, show the importance attached to what in Germany, at any rate, is a very new movement, since the first Suffrage Association was only founded in 1902.

Proceedings opened with a public meeting at Mannheim, where the principal speakers were Frau Cauer, Dr. Anita Augspurg, Dr. Käthe Schirmather, all well-known pioneers of the Women's Movement, and Dr. Ohr of Tübingen, who supported the reform on the ground of the gain to the nation that must inevitably accrue from the participation of women in public affairs. For the regular meetings of the Congress Frankfurt has been chosen, a town which is distinguished by its readiness to welcome new ideas, and where there is more freedom, at any rate, for women than in police-ridden Berlin. And Frankfurt paid the Suffragists the greatest compliment in its power: it took them seriously, and showed through its press that, whether for good or ill, it was clear that the movement must be reckoned a new and vital force in the land.

At the business meetings the main subjects of discussion were the organization of the Association, which is still in the early stages of its existence, and the question of Universal Suffrage. This subject was introduced by Fräulein Heymann, who pointed out that the word "universal" was almost always a misnomer, and could not rightly be applied to a franchise which was exercised only by half the adult population. Universal Suffrage existed only in Finland, Australia, and a few of the American States. The time was come for a vast extension of the principle.

An animated discussion followed, in which the difference between the Socialist and Middle-Class Suffragists—to use the term commonly used to express the two parties—were strongly emphasized, but the general feeling of the meeting showed a large majority in favour of universal, direct, and secret suffrage. Universal Suffrage, in the limited sense, *i.e.*, applying to men only, of course already exists for the Imperial, though not for the Prussian Parliament.

In connexion with the organization of the Association the composition of the committee was discussed, and after much debating, it was decided that this should consist of both men and women, though the latter must always have the preponderance. The Association itself will be constituted as a union of branches, one of which will be formed in every state where the police regulations permit. On the motion of Dr. Popert of Hamburg, it was decided to include agitation on behalf of local option among the activities of the Society. Another proposal unanimously adopted was made by Dr. Breitscheid of Berlin, who asked the Association to promise all the assistance in its power to those parties who are working for Universal and direct Suffrage in Prussia, where the antiquated system of indirect voting still prevails. Of course the pledge was given, on the assumption that Universal should be interpreted as including women.

The event of the Congress was the large public meeting in the Saalbau, the chief concert-hall of Frankfurt, which was crowded from end to end, and is estimated to hold about 3,000 people. Here the chair was taken by Dr. Anita Augspurg, and the chief speakers were Dr. Gertrude Woker, a lecturer at the University of Bern, and the English delegates, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence and Miss Annie Kenney, who were received with the greatest enthusiasm. In commenting on the methods of the advanced party in England the *Kleine Presse* remarks that they may not be necessary in Germany, since public opinion there seems more ready to accept new ideas than in England. It is not what we have been hitherto led to believe, but we all know that when Germany does move she moves fast. May this prove to be true in the women's cause as well.

A. ZIMMERN.

Women's Suffrage Demonstration at Nottingham.

IN connexion with the Women's Liberal Conference at Nottingham a great meeting, at which Lord Courtney was the chief speaker, was held on the evening of October 16th in the Mechanics' Hall. The Right Hon. J. E. Ellis, M.P. (late Under-Secretary for India), presided, supported by Lord and Lady Courtney, Sir H. Cotton, M.P., Mr. A. Richardson, M.P., Lady Bamford Slack, Lady Dorothy Howard, Mrs. J. H. Yoxall, Mrs. Sheldon Amos, Miss Corbett, Mrs. Martin, Alderman Brownword, J.P., Councillors Fleeman, Ashworth, Tustin, Gregory, and Hobson, and many other friends.

The Chairman, in wishing success to the Women's Suffrage cause, said that everything depended on the tone, temper, and method by which the campaign was conducted. He was all for earnestness and zeal, but earnestness and zeal were not hysteria. Hysteria was only another word for lack of self-control. Like other great causes, the cause of Women's Suffrage had undoubtedly suffered at times from hysteria.

Lord Courtney, recalling that it was more than thirty years since he rose in the House to support a Bill giving the Parliamentary Suffrage to women, said it might be asked whether there was not cause for despondency, and whether it was not time for the supporters of Women's Suffrage to revise their tactics, to be more aggressive and more undiscriminating in their plans of attack and in their methods. There was a great deal to be said for such despondency and for such counsels, but he would have them reflect that after all thirty years was a small scrap of time in the history of nations, and it was nothing at all in comparison with the slow progress of many of our greatest movements. Thirty years ought not, therefore, to make them despondent. In many other movements they had seen years go by without visible results, and then without any perceptible change in the mind or temper of the people that which they had aimed at had been achieved. Looking back, they might well feel comforted; they might well give way to something like a forecast of triumph in the retrospect of what had been done. (Applause.) They had not got the Parliamentary Suffrage for women, but it had come to this, that in all spheres of administrative action, except the House of Lords, women were eligible as voters, and in most cases they were also eligible as representatives. All these steps which had been taken made it more and more difficult to resist the grant of the Parliamentary Suffrage. Last session the House of Lords had to deal with a Bill which enabled women to sit on County and Town Councils, and as the Lords rejected a more modest proposal eight years before he had little hope of it being passed. But the Lords passed it. It makes one really feel inclined to suggest to those who are particularly alarmed about the Lords that they need not get excited before the time, said Lord Courtney. Perhaps after all there may be hopes of recovery among the Lords. (Laughter.) I rejoice in the passing of the Bill, because it tells us that the unexpected may always happen, and that there is no coherence of purpose in the House of Lords, at all events on matters of this character. (Applause.) He would have nothing of despair then. Why, he had been advocating proportional representation for twenty-two years, and such a candid and open-minded man as the chairman of that meeting still hesitated, and even refused to accept that reform. (Laughter.) But, in spite of two-and-twenty years of apparent non-success, he knew that the success of the future was with those who would come after him in the cause, and he knew that woman would yet come to have her rights conceded on an equality with those of man throughout the organization of our political life. (Applause.)

NO ARGUMENTS AGAINST WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

Speaking of the opposition to Women's Suffrage, Lord Courtney said it was extremely difficult to find an argument of any weight against the proposal to deal with women as with men. There were obstacles, but there were no arguments.

The two greatest obstacles—and they might give way unexpectedly, one not knowing how or why—were to be found in prejudice and in the arrogance of man. The best answer to the arguments from prejudice and arrogance was experience. Could one say that here or elsewhere in any sphere where women had their share in administrative or political action they had done badly where man had done well, or that they had done less well than men had done? One might examine the testimony of all lands without discovering any reason for the disqualification of women on that particular ground. In New Zealand the admission of women to the Parliamentary Franchise did not appear to have changed the character of the legislation in any way, though here and there it had no doubt led to a more discreet choice of candidates. (Applause.) That confirmed what he had always thought, that woman's admission to the Parliamentary area would not produce a great political change. For instance, many people would have thought that women would always be great advocates of peace. But during the South African War there were pretty nearly as many women on one side as on the other. He was inclined to think that the balance was not on the side he favoured, even on the part of women.

WHY HE WOULD GIVE WOMEN THE VOTE.

He would be asked why, then, he was so urgent in promoting enfranchisement. In the first place, in the interest of women themselves; in the interest of their education and development; to give a greater range to their ideas, and to make them more energetic members of the community. (Cheers.) In the second place, he advocated this reform in relation to the development of the humanity of man. If one of the main causes of the strength of the opposition to enfranchisement was to be found in the arrogance of man, one of the main effects of enfranchisement would be the development of the humanity of man. (Applause.) To make women greater and nobler, to widen their horizon, to deepen their sympathies, to take them out of the small spheres in which they live—these are the reasons, and when I hear, as I sometimes do from women themselves, the statement, "I am indifferent to it," or "I am hostile to it," I am ready to answer that in their very indifference and hostility I find the greatest reason for pressing enfranchisement, which shall make them see that their indifference was a sin, their hostility a crime, and that they were doing an injustice to their womanhood in denying their sex an opportunity of developing its part in furthering the progress of mankind at large. (Applause.)

Lady Bamford Slack moved a resolution urging the Government to bring in a Bill dealing with the Parliamentary enfranchisement of women during the present Parliament. She described that as no ordinary meeting called to convert those who had been against them hitherto. Rather was it a meeting to demonstrate to Liberal M.P.s and represented Liberals that they thought the psychological moment had arrived when the franchise should be extended to women. (Applause.) They looked forward with confidence to the Government to grant that request, seeing that the Government had already extended to women the right to sit on Borough Councils. The Prime Minister had declared he should vote for Mr. Dickenson's Bill. His speech set the high water mark to the women's movement so far, and it gave it a new phase, because their question had stepped into the charmed circle of practical politics. At the same time this meant harder work, because it meant more concentrated opposition.

This was seconded by Lady Dorothy Howard, and supported by Sir Henry Cotton, M.P., Mrs. Martin, and Mr. Arthur Richardson, M.P., who predicted that before this Parliament was dissolved a Women's Suffrage Bill would be passed. A very cordial vote of thanks to the Chairman for presiding was passed on the motion of Mrs. Yoxall, seconded by Mr. C. L. Rothers.

** Several Articles, Reviews of Books, and Correspondence are unavoidably held over owing to pressure on our space.

National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

OBJECT.—To obtain the Parliamentary Suffrage for Women on the same terms as it is, or may be, granted to Men.

The Union is a Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies in Great Britain.

President: MRS. HENRY FAWCETT, LL.D.
Hon. Secretaries: MISS FRANCES HARDCASTLE, M.A. MISS FRANCES STERLING.
Telegrams: "VOICELESS, LONDON."

Treasurer: MISS BERTHA MASON.
Parliamentary and Organising Secretary: MISS EDITH PALLISER.
Telephone: 1960 VICTORIA.

OFFICES: 25, VICTORIA STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W.

The Union will send Organising Agents, Speakers, or Literature to any place requiring them, its desire being to form a Women's Suffrage Society in every County and Borough. All persons interested in the movement, or desiring information about it, are requested to communicate with the Secretaries. Increased Funds are needed for the growing work of the Union, and Subscriptions will be gladly received by the Treasurer.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 1907.

MISS MARGARET ASHTON
THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR
MISS FLORENCE BALGARNIE
MRS. ALLAN BRIGHT

MR. A. CAMERON CORBETT
MISS EDITH DIMOCK
MISS I. O. FORD
MISS MARTINDALE, M.B. B.S.

CHAIRMAN—MR. WALTER S. B. MCLAREN.
MRS. PECHAY PHIPSON, M.D.
MRS. BROADLEY REID
HON. BERTRAND RUSSELL
MRS. PHILIP SNOWDEN

LADY STRACHEY
And the Hon. Officers,
ex officio.

Current Topics.

THE Annual Meeting of the Central Society will be held on Wednesday, November 6th, at the Caxton Hall, Westminster (two minutes from St. James's Park Station). The Lady Frances Balfour will take the Chair at 3 P.M. Speakers: Mrs. Henry Fawcett, LL.D., Miss Emily Davies, LL.D., and Miss McKee. Non-members wishing to attend can obtain tickets of admission gratis at the office: 25, Victoria Street, S.W. (sixth floor).

One of the most interesting features of the Reading Municipal Elections is the unopposed return of Miss Edith M. Sutton as councillor for Battle Ward in the room of Mr. W. I. I. Brinn, who is to be made an alderman. Miss Sutton belongs to one of the leading families of Reading, takes a warm interest in social and educational reforms, is a co-opted member of the Education Committee, and vice-president of the local Women's Suffrage Society.

The Women's Suffrage movement is making great strides in America. Each state has now its own Women's Association, and they are uniting together to make the vote for women the principal item on their programme.

Annual Council Meeting.

THE quarterly meeting of the Council which was held in Manchester on Friday, the 25th inst., at the Midland Hotel, was also the annual meeting. The following representatives were present, and the proceedings were marked by keen interest and enthusiasm.

SOCIETIES.	REPRESENTATIVES.
BARNSELY	Miss Mary Clarke.
BIRKENHEAD	Mrs. C. Stopes, Mrs. New; Miss Wyse.
BIRMINGHAM	Mrs. Osler, Mrs. Philip, Miss G. E. Southall, Miss E. M. Gardner, Mrs. Dixon.
BRADFORD	Mrs. Waite, Mrs. F. Ackroyd.
BRISTOL	Mrs. Randall Vickers, Miss Hayllar.
BUCKS	Mrs. Boutwood.
CAMBRIDGE	Mrs. Heitland, Mrs. Gwatkin, Mrs. Renold, Mrs. Rhys Davids, Mrs. D'Auguier, Mrs. Meredith, Mrs. Bauer, Miss E. Cox.
CHELTEMHAM	Miss Hutchinson Wright
HUDDERSFIELD	Mrs. Studdard.
HULL	Miss Murdoch, Mrs. Corbett, Mrs. Holmes, Mrs. Kirk, Mrs. Fratson, Mrs. Longman.
LEEDS	Miss Lucy Stables, Miss A. M. Foster, Mrs. George Foster.
LEICESTER	Mrs. William Evans, Mrs. Donaldson
LIVERPOOL	Miss Rathbone, Mrs. Burden, Miss MacMillan, Miss Japp.
LONDON	Mrs. Stanbury, Mrs. Nevinson, Miss Bompas, Miss Swankie Cameron, Miss Kilgour, Miss Leigh Browne, Miss Jessie Green, Miss B. Fairbridge.
MANCHESTER	Miss Hutton, Mrs. Swarwick, Mrs. Mütter Wilson, Miss Lucy Cox.
MANSFIELD	Miss Barringer.
NEWCASTLE	Mrs. Atkinson, and one other.
NOTTS	Miss Jackson, Miss Dowson, Mrs. Dowson.
OXFORD	Miss K. Courtney, and one other.
READING	Miss Cicely Corbett, Dr. Esther Carling, Miss A. E. Evans.
WARRINGTON	Miss Massy.
WARWICK AND LEAM- INGTON	Miss Vellacott.
WHITBY	Miss Pringle, Mrs. Leonard.
YORK	Hon. Mrs. Wilkinson, Mrs. Dennis Taylor, Mrs. Gray, Miss Cudworth.
EDINBURGH	Miss S. E. S. Mair, Miss Chrystabel MacMillan, Mrs. Steel, Miss Houldsworth.
GLASGOW	Mrs. J. R. MacDonald, Mrs. Frame, Mrs. Greenlees.

Mrs. Fawcett, LL.D., President, took the chair, and the following members of the Executive Committee were also present: Miss Ashton, Mrs. Allan Bright, Miss Edith Dimock, Miss I. O. Ford, Miss Hardcastle, Miss Bertha Mason, Mrs. Broadley Reid, Mrs. Richardson, Hon. Bertrand Russell, Mrs. Philip Snowden, Miss Sterling.

In her opening address Mrs. Fawcett alluded to the very important step in advance which had been gained by the movement by the passing of the Qualification of Women Act (County and Borough Councils). Even Lord James Hereford, an old opponent of Women's Suffrage, had declared in the debate on the Bill in the House of Lords that if that Bill passed, where was the man who could argue against the Parliamentary franchise being given to women.

It certainly furnished one more illustration of the great absurdity of denying women the franchise to affirm that a woman could be a mayor, but yet was incapable of recording a vote for a candidate for Parliament. The thanks of this meeting should be given to Miss Annie Leigh Browne and Miss Kilgour for the splendid work these ladies had done in bringing about this victory. (Applause.) Another encouraging feature of their progress was the appearance of the weekly paper, *Women's Franchise*, which had been already of great service to their cause. Mrs. Fawcett expressed regret that *The Tribune*, which had given the movement support early last year, had lately gone back, but she was glad to be able to state that the position formerly occupied by *The Tribune* was now in some respects occupied by other papers, and she was much impressed by the valuable help given by the *Manchester Guardian*. (Cheers.) *The Daily Chronicle* was now giving a column to Women's Suffrage, and *The Observer* would in future give it favourable notice. (Cheers.)

In concluding her address Mrs. Fawcett advised those present to urge upon their men friends to speak of Women's Suffrage at their ordinary political meetings, and instanced the help given by the Prime Minister at his meeting in Dunfermline by his rebuke of those who greeted the mention of Women's Suffrage with laughter.

Mrs. Fawcett called the attention of those present to the forthcoming meeting of the International Women's Suffrage Association in Holland on June 15th, 1908.

Miss Sterling read the Annual Report.
Among the various achievements since last January the following important matters were dealt with:—

1. The weighty Conference of twenty-seven important organizations of women which had met in February to consider the best lines on which a Women's Suffrage Bill should be drafted, and which had passed a Resolution declaring that the law should be equal for men and women, and that neither sex nor marriage should be a qualification or disqualification.
2. The procession through London of women sympathizers in the metropolis.
3. The Mass Meeting in Queen's Hall on March 26th.
4. The Wimbledon by-election, where the Women's Suffrage candidate (the Hon. Bertrand Russell) stood in opposition to Mr. Henry Chaplin.
5. The formation of the Artists' League in support of Women's Suffrage.

MRS. STANBURY moved that a foot-note be added to the report, stating that the work of the Declaration Committee was still proceeding, and that help was needed and funds to carry

on the work of indexing the names. Miss Leigh Browne seconded. The motion was carried.

MISS BERTHA MASON, in presenting the financial statement, made a brilliant and humorous speech. She made an urgent appeal for funds towards the work of the Union, which had so greatly extended during the year. She trusted that the generosity which had been so promptly shown, in placing in her hands within a week of the appeal the 1,500*l.* required for the Wimbledon election, would not fail us at the present vital stage, which the movement had reached.

MISS MASON, who had attended the meeting at considerable inconvenience and difficulty owing to an accident she had met with, expressed the hope that those who were not in the same unfortunately disabled condition, might feel moved to contribute a thank offering. (Laughter and cheers.) At the present moment Miss Mason stated the special funds were almost exhausted, there being only enough money in hand to last two months. She pointed out the urgent need of a regular income, in order that the Union might not be hampered in the continued development of its work.

After some discussion on the question of obtaining subscriptions, it was moved and carried:—

"That it be an instruction to the Hon. Treasurer to ask for subscriptions for five years or until the Suffrage is obtained."

THE Annual Report and Financial Statement were adopted on the motion of Miss Cox, seconded by Mrs. Heitland. Mr. Charles Palliser was reappointed Hon. Auditor for the coming year, coupled with a cordial vote of thanks for his past services.

MISS STERLING announced that an invitation had been received from Glasgow for the January Council meeting, from Edinburgh and Leicester for the July meeting.

MRS. J. R. MACDONALD stated that the invitation from Glasgow would also hold good for October, 1908, if the Council preferred.

It was finally agreed that in view of the opening of the Parliamentary session, that the next Council meeting take place in London.

MISS HARDCASTLE and MISS F. STERLING gave the quarterly report of the Executive Committee. The principal announcements were the final agreement to contribute pages to *Women's Franchise*, instead of bringing out a separate paper.

RE Refusal of Taxes.—Returns had been received from twelve societies in the Union. Only twelve persons out of the whole number were both able and willing to decline to pay them.

MRS. HARRISON BELL moved that no further steps be taken in this direction. This was carried unanimously.

Regarding the possibility of contesting the decision in the case of Chorlton v. Lings, the following report was given:—

THE National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies have had occasion to consider the law as laid down in the case of Chorlton v. Lings (L. Rep. 4 C. P. 374), which decided in 1868, first that by the ancient common law of England, as evidenced by uninterrupted usage, women were not entitled to vote at elections for Members of Parliament, and secondly, assuming this to be the law, that the Reform Acts did not confer any such right upon them, the Union considered that it would probably be hopeless to ask the courts at the present day to allow the question as to the meaning of the Acts to be reopened, but with regard to the common law right it was represented to them that fresh materials had been discovered which were not before the Court in 1868, which showed that women were included with men in the benefits of ancient charters, laws, and privileges, and that there was ground for believing that the Courts might, on a fresh appeal, examine these materials and reconsider their former decision. These materials are principally contained in two treatises entitled respectively 'British Freewomen' and 'The Sphere of Man,' both by Mrs. C. C. Stopes. The Executive Committee of the National Union decided to lay these materials before Sir Frederick Pollock, Bart., and Mr. R. Mortimer Montgomery, and to ask their opinion whether, having regard to the light thrown upon the matter by these fresh materials, there was any hope that another appeal from a revising barrister would end in a decision different from that in Chorlton v. Lings. Sir Frederick Pollock and Mr. Montgomery have now given their opinion. They examine the instances relied on by Mrs. Stopes

in the two pamphlets previously referred to. They consider that the only new authority referred to is the statute 21 Richard II., c. 6, and that this enactment has nothing to do with the House of Commons. They also consider that there is no evidence of women having ever voted in person for knights of the shire or that any woman ever voted in person. As to borough votes no trace can be found in English legal or historical literature of any customs enabling women otherwise qualified to vote at Parliamentary elections. In certain returns relied on by Mrs. Stopes the right exercised in the case of pocket boroughs was the right not of a voter, but a proprietor. A judicial opinion of the early seventeenth century recorded in a manuscript of Hakewill cannot, the learned counsel consider, be treated as of any authority, and it was certainly treated as of no weight by the Court of King's Bench in the case of Oliver v. Ingram in 1738-9.

They conclude their opinion in these words:—

"On the whole we cannot honestly say that in our opinion there are materials for framing an argument for the common law right of women to either the county or the borough franchise, which could be presented to the Court with any prospect of success. We would point out that no single historical fact bearing directly on the issue has been brought to our notice which was not before the Court upon the argument of Chorlton v. Lings."

Short and interesting reports were given by the Societies of work done and of preparations for the winter session.

MISS MAIR gave an interesting account of the Procession in Edinburgh and the deep impression it had made.

DR. MURDOCH reported the arrangements of the Hull Society for a series of meetings to be held in the houses of the working classes.

MRS. HARRISON BELL reported that the N.E. Society had arranged for forty Suffrage debates to be given in literary and debating societies, for which they were supplying speakers.

MISS RATHBONE reported *re* Kirkdale election. The Society had held an educational campaign of forty open-air meetings during ten days. These were attended by large crowds. Some of these crowds were composed of dock labourers and their wives; there was a scramble for literature at the end of every meeting. Throughout the campaign there had not been one disagreeable incident.

The following Resolution, proposed by the Executive Committee, was moved by Miss Dimock:—

"That an active part be taken by the National Union in every by-election, in co-operation with the local branch, where there is one, on the lines indicated in the scheme appended; and that the by-elections be the opportunity taken for organizing Women's Suffrage Societies and for educating the constituencies in the question of Women's Suffrage."

After full discussion it was agreed to omit the words "on the lines indicated." The Resolution was then carried unanimously.

The scheme was next considered, and while meeting with general approval, was referred back to the Executive Committee for further consideration of the details, with recommendations for amendments from the Council.

The following Resolutions were also passed. Moved by the Cambridge Society:—

"That on the occasion of all Parliamentary elections, the support of the Societies forming the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies be refused to any candidate who will not state in his election address that he will take every opportunity to support the granting of the Parliamentary Franchise to women on the same terms as to men."

Moved by the North of England Society:—

"That branches situated in County constituencies be urged to cover the whole Parliamentary Division by means of Corresponding Secretaries or Sub-Committees."

Moved by the Birmingham and Midland Society:—

"That the Council Meetings shall be open to members of the Executive Committees of the Suffrage Societies of the localities where the Council is held and to Vice-Presidents, on the understanding that only delegates can vote or debate on any motion."

During the adjournment for lunch polling for the Executive Committee took place.

The Hon. Officers were returned unopposed.

President: Mrs. Fawcett, LL.D.

Treasurer: Miss Bertha Mason.

Hon. Secs.: Miss Frances Hardcastle, M.A.; Miss F. Sterling.

The following were elected to the Executive Committee: Miss Margaret Ashton; The Lady Frances Balfour; Miss Balgarnie; Mrs. Allan Bright; Mr. A. Cameron Corbett, M.P.; Miss Edith Dimock; Miss I. O. Ford; Miss Martindale, M.B. B.S.; Mr. W. S. B. McLaren; Mrs. Peohy Phipson, M.D.; Mrs. Broadley Reid; Hon. Bertrand Russell; Mrs. Philip Snowden; Lady Strachey.

Women and the Municipal Elections.

Now that women are coming forward for the first time to contest municipal elections, it behoves women voters to give them their utmost support and to put matters relating to the welfare of their sex before any party consideration whatever. It is only by this means that we shall ever obtain improvements in those directions which intimately concern our interest. The greater the number of women who are returned within the next few days, the better will be our chance of removing some of the many and grievous evils about which we have been complaining unavailingly for years.

In a short article it is only possible to mention a few of the most important matters in which the women candidates, if returned, can benefit their sex. First and foremost they will be able to keep a watchful eye on the wages that are given by Borough Councils to the women and girls in their employ. This is particularly necessary, as women workers have rarely any organizations to help them in time of need. Many women are directly employed by the Councils as sanitary inspectors, attendants in public places, teachers and clerks, and their requirements respecting hours and conditions of labour, rate of pay, &c., are apt to be overlooked. It is bad enough when a private firm underpays and disregards the comfort of the women whom it employs, but it is infinitely worse when a public body lays itself open to this accusation. At present the wages given to women are considerably lower than those paid to men. Women are also indirectly working for the Councils, in that the firms to whom orders are given employ female labour, and though there are generally clauses in the contracts stipulating for fair wages to the workers, the share done by women is often underpaid, unless there be someone who will make it her business to see that this part of the undertaking is carried out. The presence of women on the Councils ought to improve matters considerably in these directions.

Many women have qualified themselves for the post of sanitary inspectors, and as the work in many cases concerns the intimate home life of numberless women and girls, it is most important that the appointments of women to these posts should be increased, that full authority be given them, and that their salaries be raised. The women who are already employed have given so much satisfaction that the demand for women's services in this direction is increasing.

A most important matter upon which the help of women councillors will be invaluable will be in the matter of providing public baths at suitable times and on suitable terms for women and girls. It is as necessary for women to take advantage of the opportunities offered them as it is for men, but under an entirely masculine rule their claims have been overlooked, and the men have been given the most convenient hours, and often for lower fees.

The Municipal Councils are responsible for the carrying out of the provisions of the Public Health and Factory and Workshop Acts. These include the inspection of laundries (a most important industry, which is largely in the hands of women), the registration and inspection of home workers, and the supervision of sleeping accommodation in business houses. These matters vitally concern the welfare of thousands of women, and the presence of women on the Councils will be of great assistance in seeing that the laws are carried out.

A heavy responsibility rests with the Councils in dealing

with educational work, and every possible facility should be given to women and girls with regard to technical training. It is here that they fall so far short of men, which is the chief reason advanced for paying them so badly. A great deal of improvement can be effected by women councillors with regard to the trade classes in the various towns in regard to the efficiency of teachers, the hours of work, &c.

The Unemployed Act refers to both sexes alike, and yet the attention which women receive in this connexion compared with men is miserably inadequate. No distress Committee, except London, takes the need of women, apart from those of men, into direct consideration, and London has only gone so far as to provide three workshops.

We clearly realise that if women had had Parliamentary votes these evils would, in many cases, not have arisen; but, until that day arrives, it is every woman's duty to see that the needs of her less fortunately placed sisters are adequately considered and, where possible, provided for. Experience has taught us that this can only be done by the presence of a large number of capable women on the governing bodies.

PROGRAMME OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS. October and November Meetings.

CENTRAL SOCIETY'S LONDON MEETINGS.			
DATE	MEETING	CHAIRMAN	P.M.
31st	Hampstead Committee "At Home," Netherwood Street, L.C.C. School, Chairman, Councillor Osler	Mrs. Stanbury Miss C. Black Mrs. Mevinson Mr. Lancaster Councillor Ashenden	8.10
NOVEMBER.			
2nd	Reigate, Open-Air Meeting		7
4th	Kingsley Club, St. Augustine's Hall, Fulham	Mr. R. F. Cholmeley on 'Women's Suffrage Past and Future.' (Discussion.)	8.30
(Only Members and Ticket-holders admitted.)			
6th	Central Society's Annual Meeting, Caxton Hall	Mrs. Fawcett, LL.D. Miss Emily Davies	3
7th	Public Meeting, Constitutional Hall, Harlesden, Chairman, Mr. Walter McLaren, St. George's Hanover Square, Drawing-Room Meeting, Richmond, Drawing-Room Meeting	Mrs. St. George Reid Lady Frances Balfour	4-6.30
8th	Central Society "At Home," 25, Victoria Street, S.W.		
9th	Lecture, Mildmay Deaconesses Marylebone, Drawing-Room Meeting	Miss Bompas Lady Strachey	
11th	Oxted, Drawing-Room Meeting	Miss Bompas	
13th	Holborn, Drawing-Room Meeting	Mr. R. F. Cholmeley on 'Women's Suffrage from a Man's Point of View.'	8.30
15th	Invitation Meeting, 25, Warwick Gardens, Kensington		
28th	Central Society "At Home," 25, Victoria Street		4-6.30
GENERAL MEETINGS.			
2nd	Guildhall, High Wycombe	Mr. Henry Holiday Miss Edna Lewis	3.30
4th	Huddersfield	Miss Kate Kiltum	8
6th	Sellyoak Progressive Association	Miss G. E. Southall	8
7th	Woburn Sands	Miss Sterling	8
	Victoria Assembly Rooms, Cambridge	Mr. J. Malcolm Mitchell Mrs. Edwin Grey	3
8th	Dorchester (S.Oxon.) Institute	Mr. R. F. Cholmeley, M.A. Hon. Mrs. B. Russell	3.30
	Southampton	Mrs. Philip Snowden	8
19th	Southampton	Miss M. Corbett	8
20th	Whitby	Miss F. Sterling	8
21st	Huddersfield	Miss M. Ashton	8
			A.M.
24th	Church of the Saviour Men's Sunday Class, Birmingham	Miss E. M. Gardner	10
			P.M.
25th	Severn Street Women's Meeting, Birmingham	Mrs. Reid	3
	Hatcham Liberal Club, Portland House, New Cross Road	Miss M. Corbett	8.15

* * * All communications intended for the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies' columns should be addressed to the Secretary, 25, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W., and should reach the office not later than first post Saturday each week.

VOTES FOR WOMEN.

Women's Social and Political Union.

OFFICES: 18, BUCKINGHAM STREET, STRAND, W.C.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Hon. Treasurer: MRS. DESPARD.

MRS. COATES HANSEN
MISS HODGSON
MISS IRENE MILLER
MISS FITZHERBERT

Hon. Organising Secretary: MRS. BILLINGTON-GREIG.

MRS. DRYSDALE
MISS ABADAN
MRS. WINTON-EVANS
MRS. DICE

Hon. Secretary: MRS. HOW MARTYN, B.S.C.

MRS. SANDERSON
MRS. BELL
MRS. HOLMES
MISS MANSELL

Notes.

OUR members will be glad to hear that preparations for occupying our new offices are almost complete. But little remains to be done, and those who have been over the suite of rooms are pleased that we were so fortunate as to secure such convenient offices. We heartily invite all friends and sympathizers with our work to take part in our "housewarming" at 18, Buckingham Street, on Friday next at 4 P.M. Mrs. Fels has kindly consented to declare them open. We have received during the week a roll-top desk, a trestle table, a curtain, three forms, two chairs, and various small gifts of china, spoons, and other necessaries for the social meetings which we shall frequently have during the winter. Cupboards, screens, and small firm tables are still required, and will be gratefully accepted by the committee.

An appeal for financial help, together with a copy of the Constitution, is being sent out to friends this week. We should be glad to supply copies to our members who would like to forward them to their own friends or others interested in the movement. In this way the appeal would reach a larger circle, and must therefore meet with a correspondingly larger return in money and new members.

We should like to draw the attention of our London readers to the series of meetings to be held from November 11th to November 15th. All who can possibly do so should help to make these meetings successful. Special efforts should be made to bring to them women and men who are either opposed to this reform or who are indifferent about its progress. With such speakers as Mrs. Snowden, Mrs. Despard, and Mrs. Billington-Greig, many converts would be made, and fresh workers and subscribers secured.

A great step forward has been made this week. The Prime Minister has answered a question on Women's Suffrage put at a public meeting. The fact that his reply was satisfactory, inasmuch as it incites us to greater activity, is of secondary importance. The reply of a politician at a public meeting is, of course, no indication of his future acts. The point to be emphasized is that he did reply. This necessarily shows a progress in public opinion, gratifying to all workers in the cause, and indicates, as the Prime Minister pointed out, that the day of our enfranchisement is not so remote as some people imagine.

The breaking up of public political meetings by women is a perfectly justifiable act, and was necessary as long as it was the only means of bringing our question before the public. While political speakers refused to answer questions or refer in any way to Woman's Suffrage, such behaviour on the part of women was expedient and necessary. We hope that the Prime Minister, in replying to our Dunfermline branch, has set an example which his Cabinet will not be slow to follow, and that whatever opinions they may hold they will answer questions on this as on other political measures. Every effort should be made at all public meetings addressed by Cabinet Ministers to get them to declare their present attitude on this important political reform, which all must see is now impending.

The Fourth Party.

Do Women Suffragists form a Political Party? Is it true to speak of them as the Fourth Party? I think not. They are indeed, a party, acting independently of all political parties, having as their object to win over, in the country and within the House of Commons, a body of thought, feeling, and opinion strong enough to force events; but until women have achieved this first victory, until they have conquered the right to act constitutionally, and through the vote as men now do, it is quite futile to say that they form a political party. In the last resort the momentous step which will be at least the symbol and harbinger of their emancipation must be taken by men. It might, indeed, be possible—and I would offer this suggestion to the Men's League for consideration—to form a Woman's Suffrage Party, independent of all other parties, within the House of Commons. Let us suppose that twelve men, imbued with the old spirit of knight-errantry which exists still in our country, going before the country with this as their election cry—Removal of sex-disability—let us suppose that, elected on this one issue, they lost no opportunity, in season and out of season, of forcing it to the front—let us suppose that through their insistence, backed up by the movement—the ceaseless agitation carried on by women and men out-of-doors, they broke down the stubborn resistance of old-fashioned politicians—and all this is possible—the difficulty would very soon be solved, and women, with men, would be able to go forward on their great work—the work, as I conceive, of the twentieth century—social reform—the building up of a better order.

This is the Fourth Party for whose advent I am hoping. I believe, from what during these last few months I have heard and seen, that there is enough both of knight-errantry amongst men and of determination amongst women to carry this through. I am aware that it would entail much self-denial on the part both of men and women, great expense, and untiring energy; but it could be done if—and I hope this is coming to pass—a close federal union between all the societies that are working for this cause could be brought about.

I think women have not realized yet either their numbers, their power, or their variety of gifts and possible methods. Our aim is one, and may be summed up in the word which has been dear to Englishmen for generations—Liberty. Our methods may be numerous, and none can prophesy now which of these will win success. Doubtless it will be a combination of all. In the meantime I suggest that an effort should be made to form a Fourth Party, which shall be a party of men, within the House of Commons itself. C. DESPARD.

Winter Work in Clapham.

THAT there is nothing like out-door work for promoting the cause of Suffrage is, we think, a true saying, so whenever there is a Sunday afternoon which is neither too wet, too black, nor too foggy, our Hon. Organizer, Miss Murby, intends to conduct an impromptu meeting on Clapham Common. Even during an English winter there are occasional fine days. Why not utilize them? As for the indoor work, we hope to hold a meeting either in a drawing-room or a public hall once a fortnight. The drawing-room gatherings are to be educational,

and will treat such subjects as 'The Story of the Franchise Movement,' 'The Legal Disabilities of Women,' &c. The public halls we shall use for propaganda work proper, and we purpose to thoroughly canvass the district round each hall before the meeting.
L. E. TURQUAND, Hon. Sec.

A Black Country Campaign.

UNDETERRED by the severity of her reception at Wolverhampton, described in our issue of last week, Mrs. Sproson shortly after held a meeting at Bilston. Mrs. Price, a fellow prisoner, presided, and several thousands thronged round the lorry of the speakers. It was, on the whole, a splendid meeting and fairly free from the abusive element.

At West Bromwich Mrs. Price again presided, and the people flocked round at short notice to hear the claims of the women. One very striking incident occurred which appears to have spurred the speakers to still further efforts. A man deliberately dragged his wife away out of the crowd, thus furnishing the rest of the audience with a capital object lesson in the amount of freedom at the disposal of the British woman.

In speaking of the economic dependence of her sex Mrs. Sproson struck a sympathetic chord, and many of the weary women present made short approving remarks as she described the hardships of their lot.

Mrs. Sproson, in spite of considerable initial opposition, made a capital beginning at Willenhall, a constituency which has been represented by Sir Henry Fowler for twenty-seven years. Denied a lorry, she stood on a box and collected what was said to be the largest open-air crowd seen in the district for years. She thoroughly understood the lines of the lock-smiths who thronged round her, and very soon was on good terms with them and their wives; indeed, the women present formed themselves into a bodyguard and severely criticized all interrupters. She left them amid a storm of invitations to return.

The attitude of the women of Walsall and Stafford was equally encouraging. Mrs. Sproson thought it advisable to make a second circuit of all the above districts, Wolverhampton included, with the result that the suffrage has become a living question throughout Staffordshire, discussed with keen interest in thousands of homesteads. The pluck and energy of these two pioneers has secured for the question a fair hearing throughout the country.

The National Branch.

OUR members will be interested to know that we are carrying out Mrs. Billington-Greig's suggestion that isolated women who live in districts where as yet there is no branch of the Women's Social and Political Union should be organized in a "National Branch."

The advantages of this are twofold. In the first place, the members of such a branch, who under present conditions are debarred from voting through representatives at the Annual Conference, will in future be able to do so, and will have all the rights and privileges to which Branch members are entitled by the constitution of October 12th, 1907; secondly, it is well-nigh impossible for the ordinary staff at headquarters to keep in touch effectively with those members of the Union who are isolated in districts where no Branch exists. In order to obviate this difficulty, a Secretary will be appointed to this National Branch, whose sole duty it will be to keep members in touch with the work of the W.S.P.U., and to aid them in their local propaganda. Leaflets, other literature, including the weekly paper, *Women's Franchise*, can be procured through her at the usual rates, but members will be asked to defray all postal expenses, irrespective of any donation or subscription to the W.S.P.U.

Apart from these two advantages to the members of the Branch themselves, an organization, such as we hope to make the National Branch, will be a great asset to the Women's Suffrage Movement. Every isolated member is a potential

branch in herself, and if we can reach her and encourage her to do pioneer work she will lose no time in educating her district to the principle of "Votes for Women" by the usual propagandist methods. She will begin by enlisting the sympathy of her friends, distributing literature, calling on the local authorities, writing to the local press, and, finally, will arrange a public meeting, inviting aid from headquarters in the shape of their "best speakers," and the result will be an actual local Branch.

Members and intending members of the Women's Social and Political Union, who wish for information or to join the National Branch, are requested to write to Mrs. Eileen Mitchell, Saltburn, Mountfield Road, Church End, Finchley, N.

Dunfermline Branch.

At the meeting, addressed by the Prime Minister, on October 22nd, at Dunfermline, a question from the W.S.P.U. Branch was handed to the Chairman. It ran as follows: "As the Prime Minister believes in Women's Suffrage, would he suggest some fresh methods we could adopt in order to gain our enfranchisement soon." Miss Munro writes: "There was some slight laughter when the question was read, led by the Provost from the chair, but it was sympathetically received compared to the last time that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was in Dunfermline. Then, a query, asking if he approved, was sent up by the National Suffrage Society, which was greeted with a loud outburst of laughter, jeers, and sneers. . . . I suppose we ought to be thankful for small mercies. The Prime Minister's reply was characteristic—a little sympathy, a little discouragement, then a final pat to make the sceptics believe in him again."

The local papers report that "the Prime Minister replied that he did not think he was the proper person to suggest what they should do. He should be very glad indeed to see that movement strengthened, and he believed, as he told them a good many months ago, that it was gaining ground in the country. Some of the methods which they had taken were, he thought, not conducive to the advancement of the cause. They should go on agitating, holding meetings, and pestering people as much as they could. They must hope, they must have plenty of faith—(laughter)—and he believed that the time would come much sooner than the laughter, in which he did not join, seemed to imply."

Daughters of England.

Tune: Norwegian National Air, 'Sønner af Norge,' in Scottish Student's Song Book.

THE CALL.

Daughters of England awake and bestir you,
High be your hearts and with fervour aglow.
Ye too are Britons—and England's the loser
While half of her children their service forego.
Rouse ye, arouse ye, claim boldly your Freedom,
Wives, sisters, mothers of men who are free.
Yours the same blood, the same heritage, history;
Yours the same breeding—the same rights have ye.
Men taunting cry, "Ye are naught to the Empire,
Taking no part in her battles and strife.
We die for our Land." Yet each mother among you
Bravely faced death to give England a life.
Courage ye have, yes, and wisdom—but use them;
Fearless declare 'gainst injustice and wrong;
Old grows the world, and ah, slow is her progress,
Your aid is needed to help it along.
Rise in your thousands, then, liberty claiming
To vote for the laws ye are bound to obey;
Heirs of your fathers, who won the same freedom,
Shall ye be less Liberty-loving than they?

THE ANSWER.

Sisters, we hearken, we come to your calling,
True daughters of Freemen we flock to the fight,
And swear by our womanhood, dauntless, unfalt'ring
To battle for Freedom and Justice and Right.

Repeat.

Yes, we swear by Old England, our Mother, unfalt'ring,
To battle for Freedom and Justice and Right.

MARGARET A. MARTIN.

Burglars or Burgled?

SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN'S sympathy with the women who desire to be enfranchised is, we are glad to believe, genuine. But his attitude is peculiar. He says that he is hardly the right person to give advice as to the best way women should agitate to get the vote. Why not? Has the Prime Minister really never studied politics? Are we to believe he knows nothing about the conditions which precede and justify electoral reform? One begins to suspect that after all he is not converted to the idea that women are asking for their own property, which is being wrongfully withheld from them. His attitude is more that of the respectable householder, who should say to the inquiring burglar: "Oh, I've got what you want, of course; get it if you can; I take a sporting interest in your efforts, but you must not expect me to tell you how to pick my lock, though I cannot help saying for your encouragement that the lock is not quite so strong as it looks."

This is all very well, and as we know that liberties are always wrung from and never granted by the Government of this free country, it is as much as we need expect in the way of help or advice from those entrusted with the Imperial power. But we must really ask Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman to be consistent. If he is not the right person to advise us, then he is not the right person to criticize our methods, as he did in the same breath in which he denied his ability to pose as our mentor. In any case, women will do well not to attach importance to the Prime Minister's utterances, howsoever kindly delivered. Experience has proved that he is unable to influence the Whig Members of his Cabinet in the direction of democratic reform. Experience is proving that women must work out their own salvation, regardless alike of advice, praise, or blame. Experience will prove that future independence of mind, generated by present independence of action, will be an inestimable boon to women when the day of self-government arrives.

The Law of Woman and Man.

This is the Law of Woman and Man,
The Law that Man hath made.
(We, who suffer it, having no choice,
We, when he shaped it, having no voice,
Women—abashed, afraid).

"Toil ye must, and moil ye must
(Worn hand and burning head);
But howsoever ye grind and plan
Ye shall not work for the wage of Man,
But for Bread—and not always Bread."

"Life is ours, and Strife is ours,
Keen air—the good, wide earth;
But your brave blood ye shall tame and still,
Your fierce thoughts ye shall curb and chill,
Because ye have erred at birth."

"Hark ye this, and mark ye this
(The Law's firm corner-stone):
By Man and his gifts shall the Woman live,
And the hand of Man has naught to give
To her who stands alone."

This is the Law of Woman and Man,
The Law that Man hath made.
(We, who suffer it, having no choice,
We, when he shaped it, having no voice,
Women—abashed, afraid.)

CICELY HAMILTON.

Reflections.

DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER.

MR. LEWIS HARCOURT referred the other day to the action of the archbishops and bishops in the matter of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, saying that when he found prelates arrogating to themselves the supreme power of direction in these affairs he would ask them to remember that they were the servants of the Sovereign and of Parliament. We wonder that it never occurs to Mr. Harcourt and his like that from the woman's point of view the attitude of the Church concerning this law is no more arrogant in nature than that of the State. The last persons whose wishes or opinions are sought by our astonishing legislators on this matter is the deceased wife's sister herself. The occasional arrogance of the Church over State is doubtless great, but it is nothing compared with the perpetual arrogance of men over women.

LORD CROMER, in deprecating the sentimental considerations of the internal miseries of Russia being allowed to interfere with diplomatic relations between the countries, reminds his audience of "business men" that one of the surest methods of achieving success in almost any walk of life was to pay attention exclusively to one's own business. Perhaps this is the reason why women do not get their votes. Men cannot see what they themselves will gain by it. It is to be hoped that the race of "business men" will soon die out.

PROGRAMME OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

From October 31st to November 7th.

			P.M.
Thurs.	Central Branch, 25, Wimpole Street	Members and their friends	8
Fri.	Opening of New Office, 18, Buckingham Street Hackney, 24, Lower Clapton Road	Mrs. Fels Mrs. Despard Miss Abadam	8
Sat.	Social Meeting, 18, Buckingham Street Scottish Branches Conference	Mrs. Despard	3
Sun.	Battersea Park Clapham Common		3 3
Thurs.	Social Meeting, 18, Buckingham Street High Cross Institute, Tottenham Central Branch, 18, Buckingham Street	Miss Cox	8 8
Nov. 11th	Letchworth Co-operative Hall	Mrs. Billington-Greig	8
Nov. 12th	Battersea Lower Town Hall	Mrs. Billington-Greig Mrs. Despard Miss FitzHerbert	7.30
Nov. 13th	Hampstead Town Hall	Mrs. Billington-Greig Mrs. Despard Mrs. Nevinson	8
Nov. 14th	Lewisham Parish Church Hall, Ladywell Road	Mrs. Snowden Mrs. Billington-Greig Mrs. Nevinson Mrs. Despard	8
Nov. 15th	Hackney	Mrs. Billington-Greig Mrs. Snowden Mrs. Winton Evans Mrs. Despard	8

* * * All communications intended for the Women's Social and Political Union columns should be addressed to The Editor, W.S.P.U., 18, Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C.

Men's League for Women's Suffrage.

OFFICE: 38, MUSEUM STREET, LONDON, W.C.

Telephone: 9953 CENTRAL.

Notes and Comments.

WE are glad to be able to announce that the Rev. Canon Hicks, of Manchester, a member of the Men's League, has consented to speak at the Queen's Hall meeting on Dec. 17th. Canon Hicks is well known as an earnest champion of social reform, more especially in connexion with various branches of temperance work. His presence derives additional interest from the fact that his pastoral work in a great manufacturing centre has brought him into intimate touch with the needs and the hopes of labouring men and women. He can, therefore, speak with authority on this aspect of the Women's Suffrage question.

WE would draw our readers' particular attention to an article in the present issue by one of our members, Mr. M. R. Emanuel, on the anomalous position of married women in relation to the making of contracts. Mr. Emanuel is the author of an important work, entitled 'The Law of Married Women's Contracts' (Butterworth & Co., Bell Yard, Temple Bar). The value of his article is that it shows not so much the injustice of women's position under the law, as its absurdity—unfairness on the one hand and a sort of contemptuous protection of incompetence on the other.

Married Women's Contracts.

THE disabilities which attached to all women in other spheres of life were, curiously enough, confined to married women alone in the case of contracts. A single woman, or *feme sole*, as she was called in the Norman-French which survived in the Law Courts, though supposed to be incapable of exercising any of the ordinary duties or privileges of citizenship, had sufficient judgment to bind herself by a contract which might involve her in complete financial ruin.

The rule that a married woman was unable to contract was apparently not derived from any legal theory that her marriage was necessarily a sign of mental weakness, but was rather an application of the maxim that man and wife were one—man being the one. The rule was thus of a semi-religious origin, and was in force in the days of the Stuarts and earlier, when passages from the Bible were still cited in court in support of legal arguments.

It might be supposed to follow that any contract of either husband or wife was the joint contract of both; but this was not the theory of the law. The wife's personality was so merged into that of her husband that she had no initiative whatever; any contract which she made was made by her husband's express or implied authority, or else it had no validity. If she ordered clothes or other requisites for herself she did so as his agent; and if they were not such as he might fairly be supposed to have authorized her to order, having regard to his station in life, the order could not bind him, and the tradesman who had parted with his goods had no remedy. "Is the wife to be her own carver," we find a judge asking in 1663, "and judge of the fitness of her apparel, of the time when it is necessary for her to have new clothes, without asking the advice or allowance of her husband, and is such power suitable to the judgment inflicted upon woman for being first in the transgression, 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee.' " Later, the same judge tries to modify his discourtesy by referring to woman's gift of "beauty, fair countenance, and sweet words to make the man obey her again for love."

Few things are more quaint than the language employed in some of the old cases where the husband's liability for his wife's contracts is discussed. To ascertain whether the husband's authority might be inferred it was necessary to learn not only

the husband's actual income, but his "apparent" income, *i.e.*, the style in which he lived, and the judges would gravely consider whether a man kept a "curricie," how many servants he had, whether he drank wine, or allowed his wife to hunt. Curious cases of domestic difference too are often revealed. One clergyman's wife had such a passion for birds that she ordered over 900*l.* worth within a single year. For this it was held the husband's authority could not fairly be inferred, and probably few will disagree with the decision. Another woman, the wife of a small country chemist, ordered 200*l.* worth of clothes in six months, and again the husband's authority was held to be wanting. Another husband was less fortunate; his wife had ordered a great quantity of clothes, when one day the dressmaker called and asked for payment, or return of the clothes. The husband ordered his wife to return them, but the wife, "using very violent language, refused to give up any part of them." This time the judge, with unusual frankness, revealed the true foundation for the legal theories constructed to account for the status of married women; after pointing out that the husband by not returning the goods, had adopted the wife's act, he added, "nor is it any excuse in law that the wife is unmanageable and disobedient, as he must be supposed to exercise his marital rights and regulate her conduct."

Such, generally speaking, was the condition of a married woman with regard to contracts till 1882. It is true there were some exceptions to the general rule. By a custom of the City of London she might contract when she traded within the City; so, again, she might contract, if her husband had been convicted of felony or she had obtained a separation from him, and further modification in her position resulted from the action of the Courts of Equity, and an Act of 1870, but these exceptions were few and comparatively unimportant.

The Married Women's Property Act of 1882 (as slightly modified by the later Act of 1893), though supposed to be revolutionary, was in reality a compromise, and had the weakness of all compromises. In so far as it recognized, at least in theory, the capacity of a married woman to contract, it marked a great advance, but those who framed it were careful to take away with one hand nearly all that they gave with the other. Instead of frankly putting women and men on a footing of complete equality, the Act gave a married woman the right to contract, but only "to the extent of her separate property," and so that no settlements made upon her were to be in any way affected. The full effect of these provisos is of too technical a nature to be here discussed in full; it may be said shortly that it is to hedge round the woman's liberty with so many safeguards as practically to prevent her from making any contracts beyond those of a trifling nature. For example, a man who has been ordered to pay a debt, and has wilfully neglected to do so although he possesses the means, is liable to imprisonment; but a married woman (who incurs no "personal" liability on her contract) cannot be imprisoned for non-payment of a debt, even as a late case shows, in case of an antenuptial debt. So, again, a man who cannot meet his engagements is liable to be made bankrupt, and have his estate divided for the benefit of his creditors; but a married woman can only be made bankrupt when trading entirely separately from her husband, and by various interpretations of the courts, this liability has been narrowed down to the utmost. In fact, the whole of her liability is limited to any property which she may possess independently of trustees. The judges no longer talk of the husband "being head of the wife as fully as the king is the head of the commonwealth," or "controlling and regulating her conduct," nor yet do they pay compliments to the wife's "fair countenance and sweet words," but they speak of the "protection" thrown round her by Act of Parliament. If the old law represented brutality tempered by inanity, the new represents expediency tempered by ineffectiveness.

Perhaps it was felt to be unfair after reducing woman to dependence on her husband, depriving her of that mental training which would have enabled her to hold her own in fair competition with man in all spheres of life, to leave her in respect of all business transactions at the mercy of any one whose experience or unscrupulousness would enable him to get the better of her. But the protection afforded her has its offset in making it almost impossible for a married woman to obtain personal credit. Not being liable to imprisonment for refusal to repay her debts, not being liable to bankruptcy (except in rare cases), and with a certainty in most cases of keeping her annual income intact, whatever may be the result of her business speculation, she possesses such advantages as to prevent a prudent man from entering into business relations with her at all.

The result is that, if a working woman, she must abandon hope of ever doing more than receive a salary or payments for personal earnings where credit is not asked or required, while if a capitalist she is usually content to leave her capital in "trustee" securities, draw her periodical income, and becoming a consumer and not a producer, remain a useless incumbrance to the State.

There can be little doubt that one of the first Acts of women legislators will be to attack so absurd an anomaly, and establish in its place a sane and healthy equality between men and women in business relations, as well as in the ordinary duties of citizenship.

MONTAGUE R. EMANUEL.

Binocular Vision.

ANALOGIES, though certainly dangerous and sometimes misleading, are nevertheless often of the greatest service in clearing up a question, especially when, as in our case, the actual problem is obscured by convention and prejudice. What is wanted in such cases is an analogy, which, while preserving as far as possible the same features as the original problem, is one upon which calm scientific judgment can be brought to bear, and in which neither custom nor religion is involved.

Such an analogy in the case of women's enfranchisement appears to me to be afforded by the familiar process of seeing. We are all aware of the extreme importance of the sense of sight, and that this sense is provided for by our two eyes; but we have not, perhaps, all of us stopped to consider the relation of these two eyes to one another, or the importance of both of them.

An examination of the two eyes shows that while in most respects they are very closely alike, there may be, and generally are, some differences. One eye (usually the left) is generally stronger as a whole in visual power than the other, although alternations of strength occur between them. The blind spots or entrances of the optic nerve in the two eyes are on opposite sides. Where defective vision exists the defects may be of a quite different character in the two eyes. On the other hand, each eye, whether strong or weak, forms its own image, and transmits it to the brain independently of the other. Although their movements are inter-connected and work in harmony with each other, neither eye can be said to control the movements of the other, except by accident in any particular case.

What is the particular advantage of two eyes over one? At first sight it would appear simply to give greater power of vision, and a compensation in the case of injury to the sight of one eye. But these are of much less importance than the fact that the united vision gives us an additional sense beyond that given by either eye separately. Those who attempt to thread a needle or do anything which involves exact judgment of distance with one eye covered, will be actively conscious of the enormous advantage of two-eyed or binocular vision over that of a single eye. Again, every one is aware of the enormous difference between an ordinary photograph and one seen through the stereoscope. The fact is that our whole sense of distance and relief, and therefore of proportion, depends on the formation of two different pictures by the two eyes, looking at the object from two different directions. These pictures are independently transmitted to the brain, which unites them and acts, if required, on the evidence given by them jointly.

Again, the two eyes make up for each other's defects. Their blind spots being on different sides are mutually compensated

and, in the case of defects or differences between the two eyes the composite result from both of them is more likely to be faithful than from a single organ.

The application of this analogy to our question needs little justification. Nature is for the most part dual in constitution. Animals are, as a rule, bilateral, having two each of eyes and ears, hands and feet. We have two mutually attractive kinds of electrification and magnetization, and of sex. Surely the comparison of the relations of the eyes or ears to the brain, with that of men and women to the State, is a fair one. Men and women have sensations which they can transmit to the Government, as eyes to the brain. They have resemblances to one another in their sensations, and are linked together as are our eyes; they have differences in strength or weakness; and their blind spots may, perhaps, be said to be on different sides. It may even be true that one sex is on an average stronger than the other, as the left eye may be on an average the stronger; but does that justify the domination of one sex by the other? Does any one propose that since the right eye is the weaker it should only be permitted to transmit its sensations to the brain through the medium of the stronger? or that it should be covered up, so that vision should only be permitted to the stronger?

But our analogy goes much further. Men, by their confessed inability to understand women, imply that their point of view is different, as that of the one eye from the other. But this, so far from being a disadvantage, was found to be of the most inestimable service in vision, leading to a sense of proportion and reality, impossible with a single view point. Is it not reasonable to suppose that this different point of view in women is just the one thing necessary to correct the obvious lack of sense of proportion which has been manifested in our man-made or one-eyed administration; where the glory of empire is held out as a substitute for the necessities of life; where men, women, and children have been huddled into towns reeking with smoke and dirt to deteriorate and die like flies; and where emigration is encouraged which takes away the best of our men, leaving a large preponderance of women mateless and struggling for bread.

Lastly, one other point. In physiology disuse of any function frequently leads to its atrophy and decay, and the overstrain of some other part. In the case of any want of harmony between the eyes such as is caused by want of balance of the eye muscles, producing squint, the two eyes cannot focus on the same object, and they would consequently interfere with one another. In this case the weaker eye (whichever it may be) generously sacrifices itself; and, although perfectly capable of forming an image, suppresses it for the common good. In so doing, however, it gradually deteriorates, and finally becomes blind; and if this state has existed from infancy, the individual is perfectly unconscious of his one-eyed vision and its disadvantages. If an oculist, by operating on the eye muscles or by optical means, restores the balance of the eyes, before the sight of one of them is incurably lost, it requires the most careful training and coaxing to induce it to perform its function again, and to take up its share of the work of forming impressions and judging proportion. The importance of binocular vision is so much recognized by oculists that the most elaborate means are taken to restore it, even though the patient is quite unconscious of the need for it.

Are we not again justified in applying this analogy to our case? Women, being perhaps weaker (in body, not in judgment), at any rate at certain periods of their lives, and self-sacrificing, have permitted men to see and transmit their sensations to the State, and in the process their own vision has atrophied, and they have no longer felt the desire to take their part. Instead, however, of regarding this as a proof of their inability to take a share in political work, and of suppressing such efforts as they may make in that direction, men, if they are wise, should follow the example of the oculist, and use every effort to induce women to assume their proper responsibility; thus relieving their overstrained vision and restoring that inestimable co-operation or binocular vision, which some of us believe will do more than anything to improve politics and human existence.

C. V. DRYSDALE.

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