THE VOTE MAY 11, 1917. ONE PENNY.

Our Lost Armies!

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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Edited by C. DESPARD.

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

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

"DROP THE BILL" CAMPAIGN.

GREAT MASS MEETING.

CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER.

On Tuesday, May 15, 1917, at 8 p.m.,

To demand the Withdrawal of the Bill and the Postponement of all Attempts to deal with Prostitution by Legislation until Women are Enfranchised.

Speakers:

Miss LIND-AF-HAGEBY Miss EVA GORE BOOTH Lady EMILY LUTYENS Mr. JOHN SCURR

Chair:-Mrs. DESPARD.

RESERVED SEATS, 2s. 6d. and 1s. (Tickets from Women's Freedom League, 144, High Holborn, W.C.) ADMISSION FREE, COLLECTION FOR CAMPAIGN EXPENSES.

. Come and Crowd the Hall next Tuesday Evening!

In addition to the Central Hall, Westminster Meeting, Special Local Meetings are being held in St. Pancras, the constituency of Mr. W. H. Dickinson, M.P., who is pressing for the scandalous Clause III., and in Kingston, the constituency of Sir George Cave, the Home Secretary, the parent of the Bill.

PROTEST MEETING.

British Schools, Kentish Town Road, N.W. Fife Hall, Fife Road, Kingston-on-Thames. FRIDAY, MAY 11th, 1917, 8 p.m.

Miss ESTHER ROPER

Miss TALBOT Miss JORDAN

Mr. MAURICE GREGORY

Chair: Miss F. A. UNDERWOOD.

PROTEST MEETING.

MONDAY, MAY 14th, 1917, 8 p.m.

Mrs. DESPARD

Miss RICKARDS

Mr. MAURICE GREGORY

Chair: Miss F. A. UNDERWOOD.

The Campaign will continue until the Bill is Dead.

Women's Freedom League.

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Secretary—Miss F. A. UNDERWOOD.

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



DARE TO BE FREE.

Friday, May 11.—Poster Parade round House of Commons, leaving International Suffrage Shop, 5, Dukestreet, Adelphi, W.C., 2 p.m.—Croydon Branch Meeting, 32, The Arcade, High-street, 3.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss Underwood. Poster Parade to advertise St. Pancras Meeting, leaving W.F.L. office, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 6.30. Public Meeting to demand the withdrawal of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, British Schools, Kentish Town-road, N.W. (opposite Prince of Wales'-road), 8 p.m. Speakers: Miss Esther Roper, Miss Talbot, Miss Jordan, Mr. Maurice Gregory. Chairman: Miss F. A. Underwood. Admission Free.

Reserved seats 1s.

Saturday, May 12.—Despard Arms, 123, Hampstead-road, Pound Day. Music, recitations, etc., 6 to 9 p.m.

Monday, May 14.—Poster Parade round House of Commons, leaving International Suffrage Shop 2 p.m.—Public Meeting to demand the withdrawal of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, Fife Hall, Fife-road, Kingston-on-Thames, 8 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Despard, Miss Rickards, and Mr. Maurice Gregory. Chair: Miss F. A. Underwood. Admission Free. Reserved seats 1s.

Tuesday, May 15.—Poster Parade round House of Commons, leaving International Suffrage Shop, 2 p.m. Public

Tucsday, May 15.—Poster Parade round House of Commons, leaving International Suffrage Shop, 2 p.m. Public Meeting to demand the withdrawal of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, Central Hall, Westminster, 8 p.m. Speakers: Miss Lind-af-Hageby, Lady Emily Lutyens, Miss Eva Gore Booth, and Mr. John Scurr. Chair: Mrs. Despard. Admission Free. Reserved seats: Tickets 2s. 6d. and 1s. from W.F.L. Office.

Wednesday, May 16.—Public Meeting, Caxton Hall, 3 p.m. Speaker: Mr. Laurence Housman on "Peaceful Slumbering; or, Mental Paralysis in War Time." Chairman: Miss F. A. Underwood. Admission Free. Tea can be obtained in the Hall at 4.30 p.m. (6d.). Croydon. Drawing-room Meeting (by kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Smerdon, 51, Sherwood-road, Addiscombe. Speaker: Mrs. Ackroyd, on "The Criminal Law Amendment Bill," 3.30 p.m.

3.30 p.m.

Thursday, May 17.—Clapham Branch Meeting, 15, Clapham Mansions, Nightingale-lane, S.W., 7.45 p.m.

Monday, May 21.—John Stuart Mill Commemoration Meeting, Central Hall, Westminster, 7.30 p.m. Speakers: Dr. G. B. Clark, Mrs. Fenwick Miller, Mr. John Scurr. Chair: Mrs. Despard. Admission Free. Reserved Seat tickets, 2s. 6d. and 1s., from W.F.L. Office.

Wednesday, May 23.—Public Meeting, Caxton Hall, 3 p.m. Speaker: The Rev. W. Major Scott, M.A., "The Upward Thrust." Chairman: Mrs. Despard.

Friday, May 25.—Croydon. Sewing Party and Discussion

riday, May 25.—Croydon. Sewing Party and Discussion. The Criminal Law Amendment Bill." 32a, The Arcade, High-street, 3.30 p.m.

Saturday, June 16 .- Magna Carta Celebration.

PROVINCES.

Monday, May 14.—Middlesbrough. Branch Meeting, 7.30 p.m., 231, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road.

Wednesday, May 16.—Middlesbrough, Suffrage Club Discussion, 7.30 p.m.

We call special attention to-

May 11.—Public Meeting, British Schools, Kentish Town-road, N.W., 8 p.m. Speakers: Miss Esther Roper, Miss Talbot, Miss Jordan, Mr. Maurice Gregory. Chair: Miss

F. A. Underwood.

May 14.—Public Meeting, Fife Hall, Fife-road, Kingstonon-Thames, 8 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Despard, Miss Rickards
and others. Chair: Miss F. A. Underwood.

May 15.—"Drop the Bill" Protest Mass Meeting, Central
Hall, Westminster, 8 p.m. Speakers: See Front Page.

May 16.—Public Meeting, Caxton Hall, 3 p.m. Speaker:
Mr. Laurence Housman, "Peaceful Slumbering; or, Mental
Paralysis in War Time." Chair: Miss Underwood.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL. Demand for Deputation.

On Wednesday, April 25, immediately after the combined Conference of eleven Women's Societies at Caxton Hall, the Women's Freedom League wrote to the Home Secretary asking him to receive a joint deputation from the Societies on the subject of the Bill, or to arrange for it to be received by the Lord Advocate

Beyond a formal acknowledgment no answer was received. On the following Wednesday, May 2, after the combined conference on that day, the Women's Freedom League wrote to the Lord Advocate, who was in temporary charge of the Bill, repeating our urgent request for a joint deputation to be received before the Bill should again come. before Parliament.

This brought on Friday the following reply: -

Lord Advocate's Answer.

May 3, 1917.

Madam,—The Lord Advocate asks me to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 2nd inst., and to say that the proposal that he should receive a deputation only reached him on the morning of the day on which the Criminal Law Amendment Bill was to come up for Report, which was too late for arrangements to be made.

I am directed to add that some little time will probably elapse before proceedings on the Report stage are recommenced, and, in these circumstances, no useful purpose would, in the opinion of the Lord Advocate, be served by receiving a deputation just at present.

The Lord Advocate will, of course, bear in mind the views which are represented by the Resolution passed at Caxton

I am, madam, your obedient servant, (Signed) p. M. MILLAR CRAIG. B. Herd.

A Parliamentary Promise.

On Thursday, May 3, Mr. Booth asked, "May we take it that no attempt will be made to occupy the time of the House next week with the Criminal Law Amendment Bill in view of the storm of opposition from all the women of the country?"

Mr. Bonar Law replied: "I have already given

the business for next week, and it does not include

And What it is Worth.

In spite of this statement, and two days after it, the Official Notices (published last Saturday) of Motions and Orders for this week include for Friday. May 11, as a Government Order of the Day, the adjourned debate on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill.

The Women's Freedom League therefore wrote to the Lord Advocate as follows, again pressing for a deputation : -

May 7, 1917.

Sir,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favour of the 3rd inst., in reply to ours of the 2nd, asking you to be kind enough to receive a deputation from eleven Women's Societies on the subject of the Criminal Law Amendment's Bill. I notice that you can that "Government" enough to receive a deputation from eleven Women's Societies on the subject of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. I notice that you say that "some little time will probably elapse before proceedings on the Report stage are recommenced, and, in these circumstances, no useful purpose would be served by receiving a deputation just at present." I also note that in a reply to a question put by Mr. Booth last Thursday, Mr. Bonar Law said that "I have already given the business for next week, and it does not include that Bill," but on page 1571, Notices of Motions and Orders, published on Saturday last, I find that there is down for Friday, May 11, as a Government Order of the day, the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, adjourned debate. I should be grateful if you would kindly explain this apparent discrepancy, and, in the event of this Bill being dealt with next Friday, I would urge you to receive our deputation before that date.

As I explained in my last letter, the Societies pressing for this deputation represent many thousands of organised women, and we think it cannot but be of mutual advantage if you will kindly accede to our request without delay.

I am, sir, yours faithfully,

The Rt. Hon. J. A. Clyde, K.C., M.P.,

Lord Advocate's Chambers

The Rt. Hon. J. A. Clyde, K.C., M.P., Lord Advocate's Chambers, Dover House, Whitehall, S.W.

THEY SUPPORT US!

OUR "WEDNESDAYS." Miss Lind-af-Hageby on the Social Evil.

"We cannot have social without moral hygiene," said Mrs. Despard, when presiding over the large audience which gathered at the Caxton Hall on May 2 to hear Miss Lind-af-Hageby on "Women's Part in Promoting Moral Hygiene." In the course of a powerful address, in which the whole subject was treated from the point of view of definite help in solving an ancient problem, the lecturer said: It was a question whether the social evil was still to be dealt with, as of old, only from the man's point of view which, however honestly intended, had failed lamentably. She strongly advocated the abandonment of the old way of regarding the prostitute as the sole source of infection and disease, and of believing that penalties, compulsory segregation and examination were the only remedies. The new way recommended was woman's way: the causes of prostitution, not only the prostitute, must be investigated and dealt with, for prostitution is a root question where women are concerned, including many other problems: poverty, housing, industrial and economic conditions, child life, etc. Till this was done and the mother's point of view had practical power, all Acts of Parliament were mere tinkering. She urged, therefore, that the Criminal Law Amendment Bill should be postponed until women were enfranchised. Efforts were still being made to revive the principle of the discredited Contagious Diseases Acts, but, said Miss Lind, in Scandinavia, in France, and Germany, where regularisation existed, there was degradation of the prostitute class beyond anything known in this country, and very lax ideas among men and boys as to their relations with women. She protested strongly against a double standard of morality with tacit approval on the part of women, and insisted that public opinion must be created to demand that men be as clean as women. Sex education of the young, though difficult, must be undertaken. She urged the need for women magistrates and women police with full power of arrest, who would deal with unfortunate women as human beings, and act as human helpers. The present Parliament, she maintained, ought not to deal with the question, for it could only be solved when women came into political power, and with full sex consciousness refused to tolerate the sacrifice of a whole class of women. An informing discussion followed

Protest Meeting and "Drop the Bill Resolution.

Following "Our Wednesday," on May 2, a protest meeting was held, presided over by Mrs. Despard, at which Miss Eva Gore Booth, Miss Jordan, Miss Underwood, Mr. Maurice Gregory and Mr. Roper spoke in support of the resolution. Miss Gore Booth insisted that the Bill was on the wrong tack; women were not to be mollified by restriction of clauses to common prostitutes; all girls were of the same human nature. If the homes to which girls were to be sent were so "nice," why was there need for compulsory detention? Compulsion Iowered the standard of any home, however nice. Miss Jordan pointed out that if the Bill becomes law it will be possible to register and regulate prostitutes. Gregory said that the resolution was just such a one as Josephine Butler would have drafted.

The following resolution was passed unanimously: -

"That this meeting of women's societies protests against the Government amendment to Clause III. of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill on the grounds that its result would be as mischievous as that of the clause it replaces.

"We protest against (1) the establishment of an inquisitorial committee to enquire into 'the mode of life and associations' of prostitutes, and (2) the power given to the

court to detain compulsorily girls of 16 and 17 in a home for two or three years.

"We see no reform in substituting compulsory detention

"We see no reform in substituting compulsory detention homes for prisons, and deny the right of any Government to deprive these girls of all civil rights on the ground that they are prostitutes. We regard the whole Bill as based on the dangerous fallacy that compulsion and punishment are the means of 'helping' an already friendless and penalised class, and are convinced that no amendments can make any difference to that penal principle which underlies the whole

"We'therefore demand the withdrawal of the Bill and the postponement of the consideration of the whole subject until women are enfranchised."

women are enfranchised."

The resolution was agreed to unanimously by representatives of the following societies:—British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union; Catholic Women's Suffrage Society; Fabian Women's Group; Free Church League for Women's Suffrage; Independent Women's Social and Political Union; London Women's Council of the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants; Manchester, Salford and District Women's Trades and Labour Council; National Industrial and Professional Women's Suffrage Society; United Suffragists; Women's Freedom League; Women's International League.

Electoral Reform Bill.

According to the Parliamentary correspondent of the Daily Telegraph, the Electoral Reform Bill has been drafted, and received the approval of the Cabinet. "It will probably be introduced in the House of Commons next Tuesday, May 15, by the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Walter Long, who, as President of the Local Government Board in the last Ministry, was mainly instrumental in bringing about the Speaker's Conference."

In Hyde Park.

A very successful meeting was held near the Marble Arch last Sunday at noon. Miss Eggett's address from the chair soon drew a large crowd, which remained standing for more than an hour, in spite of the bitterly cold wind, to listen to Mrs. Despard and Miss Hodge. The former spoke most eloquently upon the terrible effects of the war upon women, and the latter described the monument at Bloemfontein with and the latter described the monument at Bloemfortein with its striking record showing that 26,000 women and children died from the effects of that war and less than a quarter that number of men. Both speakers pleaded for a truer standard of values, and Miss Hodge pointed out that where women voted life was more valuable than property. Both speakers drew striking contrasts, between the infant mortality in Australacia (where warmen veta) and Great Britain, where they are unenfranchised. The audience, intensely interested and most sympathetic, would have listened for much longer, but the meeting was closed by the Chairman, as Mrs. Despard had to speak again at 2.30.

Women's Freedom League Settlement, 93, Nine Elms Lane, S.W. 8.

Readers are cordially bidden to our House-Warming on Saturday, May 19th, 4 to 7 p.m. We have fixed on a Saturday as the afternoon when most people have an hour to spare, and we hope they will come and spend it with us and see our new house before the newness wears shabby. His Worship the Mayor and the Mayoress of Battersea have His Worship the Mayor and the Mayoress of Battersea have promised to be present, and Mrs. Despard and Mrs. Corner will speak. Tea from 4 to 5, with wheatless cakes. Gratefully acknowledged: Nutmegs from Mr. Delbanco, flowers from Rosie, Gemma and Patty Harrison, Miss Tollemache, Mrs. Clark, Miss M. Holmes; Dr. O'Brien, straw; Miss Riggall, 1s.; Mrs. Delbanco, cheese; Miss Hobson, R.I., a water-colour drawing; Mrs. A. Gascoigne, potatoes and 2s. 10d. from potato sales.

The Despard Arms, 123, Hampstead-road, N.W. 1.

If every reader will bring us one pound of sugar for our "Pound Day" on Saturday, May 12, 6—9 p.m., they will help to keep us smiling—very necessary in these days—and our soldiers and other customers happy! Other "pounds" of anything eatable will be most acceptable. Come and spend a pleasant evening with us: music, recitations, games, etc. Miss Julie Huntsman and other friends will be there

Will friends also help, after the "Pound Day," by buying sugar for us in pounds or half-pounds, which we will buy from them? They can be left at The Despard Arms or at 144, High Holborn. The Sugar Commission say we are outside their sphere, so we have to get inside someone else's sphere!

SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 216.

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THE VOTE

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EDITORIAL.

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OUR LOST ARMIES.

We use the word "armies" in its largest meaning, which is not that either of the recruiting sergeant or the conscriptionist. Not food for cannon, on the one hand, nor the organising and administrative faculty that can use it most profitably for destruction. is the loss we deplore when we see in the figures and maps of towns and rural districts that appear in Local Government Board reports what havoc is going on amongst our children.

For we know that there are other than military armies. Industry, art, life, creation and maintenance, teaching, organising, legislating—all these might have been found in the armies that, year by year, are vanishing. Amongst them, perhaps, some specially gifted as pioneers, inventors, discoverers. None, indeed, can tell how the new-born child will develop. Ruskin has said finely: "As the son of a king, lying in the cradle, holds within itself all the awful potentialities of royalty, so is every child born into the world." He goes on to say that the question of what the child is to be—its station in life—is unimportant; ploughboy or king, born in slum or palace, its royalty is inherent. If this, or anything like this, is the truth, we must surely look back with shame and contrition on our "rake's progress" as a

Here, in black and white, are a few of the statistics on infant mortality, from birth to the age of five years, during the period 1911-14. They are prefaced by some strong words from the Medical Officer of the Board. He says-and this should make us think: The one outstanding fact is that the centres of excessive child mortality are those in which the chief

industries of the country are being carried on."
- Looking over the report we find the districts given over to coal-mining, glass and chemical manufac-tures and iron foundries peculiarly inimical to infants' lives. In some of the cotton towns in Lancashire and Yorkshire the percentage is very high. It would be impossible to exaggerate the importance to the country of coal-mining, iron foundries and the textile trades; and yet in the centres where these industries are being carried on conditions are so bad that mothers, in many cases, cannot rear their children. The Board's Medical Officer asserts that the association between these trades and infant mortality is not inevitable. Indeed, in some of these

centres a great reduction in the death-rate has been already secured. Had the number of child-deaths in 1911-14 been as high as in 1901-10 there would have been 144,000 more deaths than the 575,078 which actually occurred. The latter figure is quite appalling enough

Let it be understood that the report deals only with the deaths of children up to five years of age. There is an interesting figure, showing the "total deaths at age periods from infancy to old age" during the years with which the report deals. The lowest deathrate is from 10 to 15. Then the scale rises gradually to 70 and over, when there is a great leap up. The rate, however, is not much higher than that given for the first year of life. Therefore, when we speak generally of the deaths of children and young people, there is an even greater loss and leakage than the figures we have quoted represent. Add to these the enormous number of men and women who for their whole lives have to battle against disease, or who are born with defective organs, and we may gain some faint conception of the loss sustained by the nation long before she was called upon to sacrifice her sons and daughters at the altar of the war-fiend.

What are the causes of this life-destruction? We have all heard the careless superficial answer. The mother, especially the working-class mother, is the worst sinner. Of course, her surroundings are not all that one would wish them to be; but if she was a little wiser, and more careful and thrifty, she would not lose so many children. That is the way in which one set or one class excuses itself for its shortcomings and throws the blame upon others. We are glad to find that the Medical Officer of Health is not so futile. "The working-class mother," he says in his preface, "is too often accused of ignorance, which it is furthermore assumed is much less prevalent among well-to-do mothers. This is a facile and unbalanced explanation." And he refers to one of the sections of his report in which are set out the "circumstances of environment favouring excessive child

With regard to the mothers it is shown that the mother in comfortable circumstances is able to secure for her infant advantages which the infant of the poorer mother cannot obtain. The latter is singlehanded; if she is able to get milk-which is, for the most part, impossible now-it is often stale and impoverished, and she has no appliances for the wholesome keeping and cleanly preparation of her children's food. If she is ill, the child suffers with her. If her child is ill she cannot always get near at hand the necessary assistance and advice; for, although maternity centres and school and baby clinics have increased since the war, they are not nearly sufficient in number to meet the necessities of great industrial towns. Further, "infants and nursing mothers are rapidly influenced by their surroundings. If the mother is overworked and suffering from chronic fatigue her infant must suffer.

The suggested remedy is what we of the Women's Movement have been preaching for years, "that the environment of the infant of the poor should be levelled up towards that of the infant of the wellto-do, and that medical advice and nursing assistance should be made available for the child of the worker, as promptly as for that of persons of higher social Here in principle we come back to Ruskin. Reverence for every human infant, religious perception of the truth that it is "a child of the Divine World-Father, an inheritor of the ages.

Much more valuable information is given in this remarkable report. It deals, we must remember, with that which existed before the war. Since the autumn of 1914 far-reaching changes have taken place; and much of the energy and enthusiasm which were thrown then into combating disease, bettering life conditions for the workers and saving child-life have been absorbed by war activities. All the greater

the reason that we chould be watchful and vigilant now. Hour after hour, day after day, life is being poured out upon the battle fields of Europe. What woman can read without shuddering the story of the recent advance? "Battle of two million men," we quote from the Daily. News of Friday last. "Through binoculars we could see ant-like figures swarming slowly across open patches of ground, and when a shrapnel puff that temporarily obscured them had settled away some of the poor figures would move no more." More silently but none the less disastrously the lives of our children are passing. They go by their ones and twos, no one caring but the poor mother who has not been able, with her helpless arms, to hold them back from the grave. Only when in statistics their numbers are given does any one realise how momentous the loss is.

One of the facts set before us by the report is that the case is not hopeless. Our armies at the front we cannot recall; however keenly we women may feel, we have no voice that can be heard; we have no power to stop the butchery. In the past we have had practically as little power over the armies of young ives that conditions cruel as machine-guns are destroying. But-we feel, we know-the day of our

powerlessness is passing. The difficulty encountered by the Government in forcing forward the "Criminal Law Amendment Act" against the will of large numbers of organised women is an indication of the fact that the hour of our enfranchisement is near. For that hour we must prepare ourselves. Even now we can educate public opinion by forcing attention upon the plague-spots of our civilisation. Then, when the nations awake from their nightmare of agony, we, standing side by side with our brothers, must give ourselves neither rest nor pause until we brought about such a state of society as will enable us to keep for love and service the vast armies of children that are perpetually passing through our

Open air, sanitation, wholesome and plentiful food, above all healthy and comfortable homes, all these are needed if we are to preserve the lives of our infants. To carry through measures which will make these great changes possible we must have laws of release and not restrictions. This, too frequently, our male legislators forget. It will be our part to remind them. Then, the great forces of earth and labour set free, we shall have no more lost armies.

C. DESPARD.

POLITICAL NOTES.

"The Grille is there," said Mr. Charles Roberts in the House of Commons last week. "We do not know why it persists, except by force of its own inertia." A very discreditable anachronism, an indignity unworthy of the democracy of the present day, Mr. E. Harvey's verdict, and he proceeded to relate that the origin of the "Grille" was due to a scandal in the eighteenth century when a well-known beauty of the time insisted on keeping her place on the floor of the House to which she had been admitted! He did not think there was any danger of the incident being repeated. Mr. Watt took the view that the Grille was a relic of the past and ought at once to be removed. Mr. Llewellyn Williams referred to what he called "the unfortunate incident in 1906 when a suffragette chained herself to the Grille." Personally he could not understand why women were so anxious to come down to hear speeches in the House of Commons, but paraphrasing Mr. Robert Lowe's dictum of "Let us now educate our masters (after the extension of the franchise to men in 1867), declared his suggestion now to be "Let us see our rulers!" as they were told that they would soon be ruled by women. Mr. W. H. Dickinson said he was convinced the Grille could be removed by nothing short of an earthquake or a war, and proceeded to give the following history of the Grille:-

For many years the House of Commons was visited by ladies. During the sixteenth corrections For many years the House of Commons was visited by ladies. During the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they used to come down to the Debates of the House of Commons, and places were assigned to them. On great occasions, we read in the records of the House that they came down in such numbers that they poured outside their own seats allotted to them into the seats allotted to Members of Parliament. On February 2, 1778, there was a great political debate which so attracted the ladies that they came down and actually took the seats of the Members of Parliament. That offended the equanimity of a certain naval captain, who drew attention to the fact that there were strangers in the House. An Order was made for the exclusion of all strangers. The officials had great difficulty in executing that Order. The ladies in question refused to move, and for two hours, I believe, the House had to suspend its deliberations whilst the ladies protested that they were excluded absolutely, and for about fifty years no woman was allowed to come and listen to the Debates in the House. I believe that Mrs. Sheridan had to appear dressed in man's clothes in order to come down and hear the great speech by her husband.

her husband.

That exclusion went on for about fifty years, until about the beginning of the nineteenth century an arrangement was made whereby certain ladies were allowed to come in and take places on the roof of the House and peer down through two ventilating shafts. That particular arrangement, which

has been described by Miss Edgworth, was very uncomfortable for the ladies. They could only see the tops of the hats of Members who sat below, and hear very little of what was going on. Fortunately for them, the fire took place, and in 1835 the Houses of Parliament were burnt down, and by that fire they were relieved from their purgatory.

After the fire a Select Committee arranged with the architect for the present ladies' quarters, and Mr. Dickinson could only surmise that the Grille was constructed to prevent conversation between the ladies in the gallery and the Members of Parliament seated on the side galleries. Yet another instance of the authorities penalising women to secure the good conduct of men! Mr. Dickinson went on to say:

I cannot help thinking that when, if we do, we have to solicit the votes of the ladies themselves, we shall have a very great difficulty in justifying a system which seems to treat them either as wild beasts or as ladies of the harem.

Mr. Butcher was rather nervous lest "impulsiveness for reform " should lead to any rash action in this matter. He pointed out that it was not merely a question of structural alteration—it implied something more. Just so, and apparently Mr. Butcher's nervousness was shared by other members of the House, for the proposal is that in some way "a ballot of the opinion of the House" is to be taken on this matter, the Speaker declaring that he would be very sorry to take the responsibility upon himself!

The New Budget.

Mr. Bonar Law proposes to increase the entertainments tax, including a tax upon complimentary tickets, to put an extra tax on tobacco, and to increase the Excess Profits Duty, the daily expenditure of the Government now being just over six and a quarter millions, 26 per cent. of which was payable by taxation. Mr. Bryce was very concerned about the extravagance of working women. He told the House that one woman "living in a £30 house, had paid in cash just before Christmas sixty guineas for a fur coat." Cheap jewellery was being largely purchased by "young ladies who are earning money in munition works," and as this often consumed a fair amount of gold, he thought it would be a good thing if the Chancellor could manage to get it into the Bank of England instead of going on the persons of these young ladies." Since vomen have to help to contribute towards the salaries f Members of Parliament who do not represent them, we think that it scarcely behoves a Member of Parliament to criticise the way in which women spend their earnings.

FOOD, FAMINE, AND OUR LEGISLATORS.

"Eat less, spare bread, save food!" These are the frenzied words of politicians and orators. Yet as we read the words we feel mystified, because the various voices do not or cannot agree. Lord Devonport, the Food Controller, assured the House of Lords "that the nation must decide whether it would ration itself sufficiently by voluntary retrenchment, and so avoid compulsion; if within the next six or seven weeks the public did not respond there would be no alternative but to apply compulsion." Serious words, yet two days later Mr. Lloyd George, as Prime Minister, sings another tune. He tells us not to be uneasy, all is going well, for "Sir Joseph Maclay has already made arrangements by which we shall get three times as many new ships this year as we lost last year. I am not sure . . . we shall not get four times the number. Although we are losing heavily in ships, assuming we still continue to lose at the same rate, in July we can bring more cargo tonnage into our porter than its March. am not sure . into our ports than in March.

If this is so, if we are to have more available ships in July for the carriage of food, why do we require to begin compulsory rationing in June or July? Why is there this diversity of opinion amongst those who meet in daily consultation? We have by now grown accustomed to the lugubrious wails of the daily newspapers; we eat our porridge as we scan the headlines: "Save Food or Starve!

Lord Strathelyde adds another note. "Save!" he cries. "This is a woman's job! Upon their exertions the war will be lost or won!" The King, too, has raised his voice, and has issued a Proclamation exhorting "our loving subjects to economy and frugality." Upon the top of this comes another voice Lord Curzon's. Deprecating the pessimistic utterances of the Press, he says: "There is no cause for panic or excitement," and goes on to ask why the Press is so low-toned, for "it will cause the enemy to exult and mislead him as to our actual position.

Who is right, Lord Devonport and the men who speak as he does, or Mr. Lloyd George and his followers? It is baffling to the lay mind.

But suppose economy is necessary, why is it all to be practised by the public? Why is the Government not to do its bit? How can the nation believe there is danger of famine, as long as they know that we are daily consuming in the manufacture of beer alone no less than a thousand tons of grain that might be used to feed either humans or cattle? How can the people believe famine is near when hunting has been permitted-when until a week ago horse racing was sanctioned? Captain Bathurst reluctantly allowed. when questioned in Parliament, that it took as much grain to keep one racehorse as it would to supply grain for twenty or thirty humans. It was after much hesitation that our Legislature forbade horseracing. Do they hesitate to stop babies dving for want of milk? Farm labourers are called up, and in self-defence farmers put away their cattle, with the result that the children lack the milk which is necessary for their subsistence.

The Glasgow Herald, a staunch supporter of the Government, asked on April 21, "Does the Government see the facts clearly? What is the use of pleading with the public to cut down the consumption of food and threatening it with compulsory rationing if it continues to shrink from its own duty? Assuming, on Captain Bathurst's showing, that the same materials are used for brewing as last year, that would mean 367,220 tons of barley, 21,420 tons of grits. 44,200 tons of sugar for the production of 10,000,000 standard barrels of beer. If matters are serious, upon what reasonable basis can the use of hundreds of thousands of tons of foodstuffs be defended?

It is pitiful to reflect that our fate is in the hands

of these incompetent, vacillating men, who cannot even agree as to whether or not we are in danger of

Two and a half years ago the Women's Freedom League laid before the Government a scheme whereby, through laying in wheat, tilling the ground, and adding to our home supplies, the food of the nation would be conserved. It included also communal kitchens, and urged that competent women cooks should look after the food of the people. Like many other food schemes it was scornfully rejected. Men required no guidance, no help from women. To-day these same men appeal to women to save the country. Had women been, as they should have been, upon the National Councils, food would have been stored up, the land would have been made to yield its crops, and the gaunt spectre of famine would not now haunt us.

To-day we clamour for representation no longer simply upon the ground of abstract justice, but because men have failed us in our hour of need. They have proved that it takes both men and women to legislate and look ahead. It is men's want of foresight that has brought us to this present pass. It is time women took the matter of food within their own

Let us demand the vote with renewed vigour, since we realise how fatal for the nation is woman's voteless condition. EUNICE G. MURRAY.

"DAMAGED GOODS."

At the moment there are four theatres in London playing nightly to full houses; St. Martin's, with Damaged Goods," is one of them. It is a play with a purpose, one of a trio by M. de Brieux. It deserves to be characterised as a stap in the bicker (stave in the porringer) of the social purity crusade. The play rather reminds one of the old miracle plays or mysteries with their set characters and somewhat lengthy speeches; this is specially true of the third act. All Freedom Leaguers should make a point of seeing the play, for it deals with realities and in a realistic way. A young man, who knows he has syphilis, determines to marry against the urgent advice of the doctor, who shows him frankly the danger to others which is likely to result. The doctor's forecast proves correct, the marriage bringing misery and suffering in its train. The third act reveals something of the ramifications of the disease by introducing various people who come to the doctor for treatment.

Damaged Goods" is produced by a Society ad hoc. As people are turned away from every performance, we wish the Society could be persuaded to take a larger theatre. There are usually large numbers of men in khaki in the audience. The management of the London Opera House gave the military a thousand free places to see "Aladdin's Lamp" a year ago. Why should not they have that number to see "Damaged Goods" every night and free performances on Sunday afternoon and evening during the war and demobilisation. If our race is to continue an Imperial race, the production of damaged goods must cease. The Board of Education gives the number of our physically and mentally defective children as one million. Lord Lytton has calculated that we lose twelve babies every hour. Secret diseases that damage the goods are the greatest cause of infant mortality. The doctor in the play has much to say about the part played by ignorance. Never was the great dictum of Socrates more true than in this particular connection: "Ignorance is vice; knowledge is virtue." Believing this and remembering that the age of consent is still 16, we hope that the notice of the management, "a play for adults," includes young

URGENT APPEAL.

FRIDAY, MAY 11, 1917.

At this moment the Women's Freedom League is involved in a double struggle; to kill the pernicious Criminal Law Amendment Bill and to win the Vote. Parliament has renewed its life for six months, women must be enfranchised before its end. Upon every member of the League and every friend of women and of liberty we must rely for the help that will bring success-without money we cannot continue the fight, failure is not to be thought of, but our need of money now is pressing and immediate. All contributions will be gratefully acknowledged. E. KNIGHT.

persons of that age of both sexes. At a later stage the company will go on tour in the provinces. We believe that a highly useful career awaits this play and that a reform in sexual morality will result. Of such a reform let us hope we may say what a courtier observed of the youthful Louis XIV., Il se mettra tard en route, mais il y arrivera.

C. S. BREMNER.

BRANCH NOTES.

Clapham. An exceedingly enjoyable drawing-room meeting was held last Saturday afternoon at 15, Clapham Mansions, by kind invitation of Mrs. Corner. Mrs. Tanner presided, and in her speech introducing the speakers, emphasised the need for women to throw themselves zealously into the great work of reconstruction for which there is now unprecedented opportunity. Mrs. Mustard spoke on "True versus False Democracy," pointing out that men had not used their vote to secure real democratic representation, as is shown by the existence of such instruments of injustice as party funds, etc. Women must use their new power to build up a democracy based on righteousness and justice. Miss Abadam said that the vote was simply a needful tool; if women took an equal share in government with men war would be almost an equal share in government with men war would be almost impossible, a new impulse would be given to religion, the double standard of morality would be abolished, and the avenues of wealth and opportunity would be opened to women. The splendid attendance and the interest with which the speeches were heard shows the need which is felt.

Croydon Office, 32a, The Arcade, High Street. In a limited space it would be impossible to report the most able and educative address that Miss Abadam made on "Feminism and Morality" at a well-attended meeting at the Public Hall on April 27. The speaker went to the root of the social evil; she keenly criticised the more than unsatisfactory Clauses of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, and then showed what determined the medium of the social evil; she keenly criticised the more than unsatisfactory Clauses of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, and factory Clauses of the Criminal Law Amendment Din, and then showed what deterrents might be useful and the many essential changes needed to put down vice and reduce, although slowly, the terrible diseases that follow immorality. Mrs. Ackroyd, a local Poor Law guardian, presided, and, before introducing the speaker, made some very thoughtful and telling remarks on the subject, in which, as a public worker, she is greatly interested and continually studying.

More goods for our May Jumble Sale are wanted. They

More goods for our May Jumble Sale are wanted. They should be sent to the hon. secretary at 9, Morland-avenue. One new member joined this week.

A drawing-room meeting will be held at 51, Sherwood-road, Addiscombe, by the kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Smerdon, on Wednesday afternoon, May 16. Mrs. Ackroyd (Poor Law Guardian) will speak on "The Criminal Law Amendment Bill." Chair will be taken promptly at 3.30

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

Mr. Coates's interesting address on "Proportional Representation" on April 30, evoked many questions, great interest being shown in the subject. Future work for the next few months will have to be chiefly in the open air, Volunteers to help with this work, speaking, chalking, and Vors selling are urgently requested to send in their names.

Sunderland, Organiser, Miss Dorothy Evans. By the kindness of the Women's Co-operative Guilds their oint meeting has been thrown open to the public. It will be held in the Co-operative Hall on Monday, May 14, at 7 p.m. Miss Dorothy Evans will speak on "Food Prices and the Housekeeper's Vote." Mrs. Witherington will give an "At Home" in her house, 4, Cedars Park, on Wednesday, May 16, at which Miss Evans will speak on "Economy of our Human Capital."

At the jumble sale held in the Ragged Schools on April 27 we realised about £7, which is to be given towards the funds of the Girls' National Club. Our thanks are given to all those who helped to make the sale a success by kindly sending articles and by helping to dispose of the goods

Successful Meeting at Darlington.

A most successful joint meeting was held in the Spiritualistic Hall, Darlington, on April 30. That faithful friend to our cause, Mr. Gobat, represented the Church League, and made a courageous stand for an equal standard of morality for men and women. Mr. Gibson spoke for the Friends' League very movingly in defence of freedom. Miss Dorothly Evans, representing the Women's Freedom League, brought out the urgency of the cause, the country's great need now for women in national affairs, and the danger involved in allowing such questions as the relation of the sexes to be decided by men's representatives only. She urged that women's organisations were our only protection against immoral legislation, and urged all unorganised women to streugthen them by joining at once. Mr. Edward Backhouse presided over the meeting, and, weighing the pros and cons of the Reform Bill's chances, he gave pause to the too optimistic and inspired the disheartened to further efforts. As a result of the meeting new members were enrolled into the W.F.L. Offers of drawing-rooms and gardens for other meetings were sent to the organiser. Miss Luck has kindly offered to sell The Vore every week, so that friends can apply to her for their copy if unable to obtain it in other ways. Successful Meeting at Darlington.

OUR OPEN COLUMN PROBLEMS OF ORGANISATION

To the EDITOR OF "THE VOTE."

Madam

Madam,

As I am greatly interested in the progress of the W.F.L. I should like to offer a few suggestions on the question of organisation. I have felt for a long time that there is so much misdirected expenditure of effort in the propaganda work of our League. (I speak as an associate.) Organisers are dumped down in districts, spasmodic campaigns of a few weeks or so are run, sensational meetings are held, and everybody thinks great progress has been made. After the spurt branches relapse into a period of quietude and wait for the next "campaign." I think this is tackling the problem at the wrong end. The chief sign of real strength in a branch is its steady and consistent influence on the life and opinion of the district in which it is situated. There is often scant attention paid to the regular branch meeting of members. The business to be transacted there is considered "dull," and that being the attitude of mind the business inevitably tends to be dull. In my judgment there can be no organisation worth a moment's consideration unless the branch members meet regularly, apart from public meetings, and discuss and plan ways and means of influencing their constituents, and attempt in every direction to stamp the mind of the branch on all the town's activities, besides contributing their local quota to national administrative and legislative problems. Policies should be periodically decided upon, and, if need be, periodically changed, strings should be pulled, ideas set in motion, and the press and public influenced by a compact, determined body of capable women meeting regularly at their branch business meetings, the development of which, I expect, should be one of the chief aims of the leaders and organisers of the W.F.L.

In stressing these points I do not for one moment wish to discount the value of the public meetings which will always be, I hope, a great feature in any progressive movement. I wish merely to emphasise the necessity of attending to a paramount but somewhat neglected side of organisation among

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FRIDAY, MAY 11, 1917. ONE PENNY WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

FOR SALE.

The articles enumerated below can be seen at "The Vote" Office, 10 to 5 daily, 10 to 12 Saturdays.

ERMINE NECKLET; latest fashion;

OLD GOLD SELF COLOURED BROCADED DRESS LENGTH of 5 yards; cost 5s. per yard; 14s. 6d. the piece,

PAIR SOROSIS TAN LACE BOOTS, size 4½; 9s. 6d., cost 18s.

LIBERTY ART PEWTER TEA and COFFEE SET, with tray; £5 15s., or would be sold separately. VASES to match, 25s. each, or £2 2s. the pair.—Mrs. S., c/o "The Vote" Office.

BLACK SPANISH LACE SCARF;

NAVY SERGE COSTUME, full skirt, short sacque coat, double-breasted; good condition; very cheap, 8s. 6d.

BEAUTIFULLY HAND-EMBROIDERED BEDSPREAD; 22s. 6d.; wash perfectly.

INDIAN DELHI-CARVED SOLID IVORY BULLOCK-CART, with drivers and attendants; 12in. long, 7in. high; exquisite and perfect; £15 or offers.

FOUR YARDS MAUVE (in two pieces) superior quality CASH-MERE DE SOIR; 7s. 11d. per yard, cost 12s. 11d.

ORIENTAL DESIGN PINK and YELLOW VELVET PORTIERE or SOFA COVER, 2½ by 1½ yards; £2 2s.

PAISLEY SILK TAFFETA COAT; new; 30s.; very cheap.

SUPERIOR QUALITY NEW TAILOR-MADE COAT FROCK, stock size; £2 18s. 6d.

NAVY BLUE SERGE COSTUME DRESS LENGTH; 7s. 11d. yard.

SHOT TAFFETA, wine colour and black; width 20in.; 10 yards for 10s. 6d.; very cheap.

BLUE and WHITE STRIPED SILK SCARF; 26in. wide, 23 yards long; new, 8s. 6d.

SEVERAL SEMI-EVENING or DINNER FROCKS; new; cheap.

ELECTRIC SEAL COAT, three-quarter; £3.

COSTUME LENGTH, DARK HELIOTROPE GABARDINE, 5 yards; 56in. wide; 7s. 11d. yard.

USEFUL Hair-stuffed COUCH;

MOLE-COLOURED GABARDINE, 7 yards; 7s. 6d. yard.

FOR SALE-cont.

IRISH LACE BLOUSE; 15s., cost

GREY VELOUR VELVETEEN, 7½ yards; 14s. 6d.

BLUE SILK DAY DRESS; Mourning.

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GREY SATIN DAY DRESS;

LARGE SIZE LACE and NET BLOUSE; 30s. Mourning.

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SALMON PINK EVENING COAT, lined cream satin, deep cape, edged swansdown; new; £1; very cheap.

BLACK SILK CREPE (9 yards); 46in. wide; 9s. 11d. per yard; would be cut.

NEW, STOCK SIZE WHITE VOILE DRESSES entirely handworked; tucks and embroidery; ornamental silk buttons.

CHINE SILK EVENING COAT; skirt draped at sides, double collar, bodice lined cream satin, dark colouring; condition as new; only 25s.

NAVY BLUE SERGE COSTUME LENGTH (5 yards); new; cost 10s. 11d.; now 7s. 11d. per yard.

K NITTING MACHINE (Harrison's Flat), 13-guinea model, in perfect order; knits socks, vests, coats, &c.; with all accessories and half-guinea instruction book, £7, or part exchange. Seen by appointment.

FOR SALE, an excellent undeveloped Business in Ladies' Hairdressing and Babies' Hand-made Frocks and Garments; suit one or two ladies. Hairdressing may be closed, worked separately, or terms include tuition. Connection established well. Owner can show good reasons for selling at once. Price about £250.—Apply Box 55, "The Vote" Office.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE will hold Public Meetings at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, every Wednesday afternoon, at 3 o'clock. May 16, Mr. Laurence Housman, "Peaceful Slumbering." Admission free. Tea can be obtained at 4.30 (6d.).

MISCELLANEOUS-cont.

64-PAGE BOOK ABOUT HERBS AND HOW TO USE THEM, free. Send for one.—TRIMMELL, The Herbalist, 144, Richmond-rd., Cardiff. Est. 1879.

THE HANDICRAFTS, 82, Highstreet, Hampstead, N.W.—Handweavings, Hand-made Laces, Homespuns, Jewellery, Basketwork, Pottery,

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SUFI SOCIETY, 86, Ladbroke-road, W.—Lecture, Sunday, May 13, at 8 p.m., Mrs. Despard on "Love and Death"; Tuesday, May 15, Mrs. F. E. Smith on "Astrological Symbolism of the British Union Jack." Admission free.—Full particulars of other lectures from Secretary, as above.

SITUATIONS VACANT.

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