

THE ANTI-SUFFRAGE REVIEW

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The Albert Hall Meeting.

SIMULTANEOUSLY with the publication of the first number of this little journal, but too late for comment, an event occurred which has been of enormous advantage to the cause of those who are fighting the advance of Woman Suffrage. We refer, of course, to the Albert Hall meeting, and to the disgraceful scenes enacted there, which have had such a remarkable and, as we hope, such a decisive effect on the Suffrage agitation.

Two things happened at that meeting. First, Mr. Lloyd-George, speaking as a Cabinet Minister, repeated what was already well known, that in the coming Reform Bill of the Government, the House of Commons, if it pleased, might insert a Woman Suffrage clause, that the House would be left free to vote upon it, but that if it were passed the Government would forthwith adopt it and press it with the same energy as the rest of the Bill. The message was not new; it merely repeated a former statement by Mr. Asquith, but the first appearance of a Cabinet Minister on a party platform, as at once expounding the Premier's policy and advocating the cause itself, gave it some fresh importance. Mr. Lloyd-George told us that two-thirds of the Cabinet, and, in his belief, a majority both of the Liberal and Conservative parties were in favour of the Suffrage; but that the minority on both sides was strong enough to prevent either party from taking it up as a plank in their platform. All this was interesting, if doubtful. That a majority of the Liberal party throughout the country is at this moment in favour of Woman Suffrage is certainly most disputable; that a majority of the Conservative party is in favour of it is, we believe, entirely untrue. The signs throughout the country are all the other way, in spite of the rise of that Conservative Suffrage Association, which all members of the Anti-Suffrage League, Conservative or Liberal, so deeply regret.

As to the arguments by which Mr. Lloyd-George endeavoured to justify his appearance as the principal speaker at a Woman Suffrage meeting, they were—so far as the noise and uproar which enveloped the speaker allowed them to be heard—entirely unworthy either of his ability or his position. The Chancellor's arguments, however,—their feebleness or their strength—were not what will make the Albert Hall meeting long memorable in the history of the controversy. The ugly violence of the women who came to break up the meeting, the disgraceful scenes which made a pandemonium of the hall, which destroyed all free speech, and prevented a great audience from hearing what it had made so many efforts and sacrifices to hear—it is *this* which has made an object lesson of the Albert Hall, and has sunk, as we believe—as the Anti-Suffrage League in particular has good reason to believe—into the mind of England. Everywhere English people are saying to each other, 'This is how women will behave if ever they are admitted to the Parliamentary vote, and to full political participation with men.' For does anybody suppose that these tactics will be laid aside when, if ever, the vote is gained? What we are watching is, in

truth, the letting loose, on the ground of politics, of certain illimitable capacities for excitement and hysteria—coupled with imagination and ingenuity—which are the permanent other side, the inevitable shadow, so to speak, of woman's special powers and functions in the State. Once give them full scope in the political and Parliamentary field, and English public life will be irretrievably injured and degraded, to the loss of English womanhood first and foremost.

This the Albert Hall meeting has in some measure brought home to England, and as women we record it with shame and regret. But as members of the Anti-Suffrage League we feel that the whole unseemly spectacle has served our cause as nothing else could have done. On all sides men and women are joining the Anti-Suffrage Societies, 'because of the Albert Hall meeting'; new branches of the League are springing up perpetually; 'We have five hundred enrolled members of the League already,' writes the hon. secretary of the Bristol branch, 'and by the time of the meeting here on the 29th we shall have a thousand.' Another member writes that, before the meeting, while the majority of the women of her neighbourhood had signed the petition, two women of property and considerable local influence had held aloof; since the meeting they have joined the League. While from other parts come striking reports of house to house canvassing among the poor. 'I take round an Anti-Suffrage petition,' says a member of the League, 'and ask the women to sign. At the sight of the word "Suffrage," and the sound of the word "Vote," a darkly suspicious look comes over the face, and the door begins to close. "No; don't want nothing to do with *that!*" "But," I say, very shortly and clearly, "it is for women—who—*don't*—want votes. Do you want a vote?" "Not me!" "Then will you please put your name here?" And then I am invited in, and asked to sit down while the opinion of another woman worker starts on its journey to the Government.'

Let us, then, press forward while this tide of feeling—of just condemnation—is at the full. If we take all the advantage of it we should, the Albert Hall meeting may yet rank as a white-letter day, not in the annals of an aggressive attack, but in those of a successful and triumphant defence.

* * *

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE Albert Hall Meeting of the 5th of December is already ancient history, but

its consequences are bound to be far-reaching. We have dealt above with Mr. Lloyd-George's speech, but the significance of his declarations is entirely dwarfed by the behaviour of the riotous women in the audience. 'Such sight in England ne'er has been and ne'er again shall be.' 'My poor rhetoric,' exclaimed the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 'is quite unable to cope with lunacy and hysteria.' Grown women and young girls, timid, shrinking creatures as their friends described them, fought, screamed, bit, and scratched like the termagants of the slums. We are told of one lady being carried from the platform on the shoulders of four stewards, her clothing disarranged, her hair streaming, her face purple with rage. Another is seen wildly struggling to remove the hands that gag her, and utilizing her seconds of freedom to shriek insults at Mr. Lloyd-George. In one of the boxes a woman of the new model is slashing right and left with a dog-whip. The most degrading spectacle on this planet is generally supposed to be the ejection of a drunken female from a public house, but the Menads at the Albert Hall had not even the excuse of inebriety; and these are the special champions of the Suffrage movement, bent on showing that women can approach great national questions, calmly, with dignity and common sense.

It would be impossible to sum up the result of the Albert Hall meeting in language more appropriate than that used by Lady Maclaren, who presided over it. 'The cause that suffered was the cause of womanhood. No one could look at these faces full of wild excitement; no one could hear the storm of offensive clamour from women's mouths without shame and sorrow. . . . Did any one try to drop a veil of pity and sorrow over this exhibition? No one. The photographers took the portraits of these ladies; the Press reporters made a note of every insult . . . even the lady with the dog-whip stayed to have a satisfactory interview with photographers before she tripped down the staircase.' And in an eloquent passage Lady Maclaren points out that 'every violent interrupter did more damage to her cause than all the Anti-Suffragists together. The Suffragette Party say they have declared a war, but even in war there are things which are not done. One thing is to poison wells. I contend that by violence women poison that spring of pity and trust which wells up in the heart of men and women towards the unenfranchised sex.' Alas! the scenes in the Albert Hall are only the climax in a long process which has been undermining that old chivalrous respect for woman as woman which used to be our national pride. Woman has gone down into an arena for which she is physically incapacitated, having deliberately divested herself of her natural armour. Time was when the presence of a woman on a platform could restrain the roughest crowd, when a woman could gain a hearing where the most eloquent and most respected

male speakers were shouted down. Ladies with bells and dog-whips have changed all that, and the pity of it is that the innocent must suffer with the guilty.

The appeal of the lady-graduates of St. Andrews who claimed to be placed on the roll of Parliamentary electors for the University has failed, as it was bound to fail. The appellants, who appeared in person before the House of Lords, argued their case with a moderation and a dignity which honourably distinguished them from the police-court 'Portias.' But the Lord Chancellor and his learned colleagues, Lord Ashbourne, Lord Robertson, and Lord Collins, did not even call upon the respondents for a reply. Lord Loreburn put aside the contention of the appellants with uncompromising brevity. 'It is incomprehensible to me that any one acquainted with our laws or the methods by which they are ascertained can think, if indeed any one does think, that there is room for argument on such a point.' The ladies had maintained, in the first place, that there was evidence in ancient records of women having enjoyed the right of voting, and, secondly, that the Reform Act of 1868 implicitly conferred upon women graduates in Scotch universities the right of voting for university Members. It might be, said the Chancellor, that there are traces in the venerable documents buried in our public repositories of women having taken some part in Parliamentary elections. A few equivocal instances from the dim and distant past had been cited, together with two *dicta* of English judges, derived from an ancient MS. of no weight; but 'no authentic and plain case of a woman giving a vote was brought before your lordships.' The disability of women had always been taken for granted; it was based on constant tradition, constant practice—the whole fabric of the common law has no other foundation. Only the clearest proof that a different state of things prevailed in ancient times could be entertained by a Court of Law in probing the origin of so inveterate an usage.

The alternative argument rested on the wording of Section 27 of the Act of 1868 (31 and 32 Vict., c. 48), which provides that every *person* shall, if of full age and not subject to any legal incapacity, be entitled to vote; whereas in most of the other enfranchising sections, though not in all, the word *man* was employed to denote the voter. Here again their lordships brushed away the quibble by pointing out that the claim of the women was expressly met by the limitation 'subject to any legal incapacity,' an incapacity which women shared in common with peers of the realm and with Bishops, who are without a seat in the Upper House. 'Momentous and far-reaching changes,' added Lord Loreburn, 'are not effected by furtive processes.' A touch of comedy is added to the constitutional controversy by the lady

who contends, in the columns of the *Times*, that women must once have had the franchise because 'both burghers and *burgesses* were summoned to Parliament in the reign of Henry III.' The suggestion that burgher is an early English feminine of burgher is indeed delightful, if unscientific. Is Miss Tomlinson aware that the universities of Oxford and Cambridge are to-day represented in the House of Commons by burghesses? And has she forgotten that 'last measure of wine, which the burghesses voted by common consent was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent?'

Mr. A. E. SHIPLEY, F.R.S., Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, and a well-known zoologist, has put forward an ingenious theory with regard to the outbreak of hysteria among the disturbers of the Albert Hall meeting. His researches into insect organizations have caused him to examine the phenomena of tarantism, the dancing mania of the middle ages, which was supposed to originate in the bite of the tarantule, a poisonous spider. And he is inclined to think, after reading the accounts of the scenes on December 5th, that 'we are witnessing a revival of the recondite mental disorders which afflicted so many Western countries from the 14th to the 16th century. In the severer cases there were "howling, screaming, and jumping," and patients affected, although "they had not a complete control over their understandings," yet were sufficiently composed "to obey the directions they had received." The persistent, monotonous, and rhythmical utterance of a word or a short sentence, and the abandonment of self-control, were equally characteristic of the distemper.' Mr. Shipley's interesting speculation must be taken with a liberal allowance of salt; but men of science and physicians who are most conversant with the obscure diseases of the brain look with pity and concern upon the Suffragettes with their parrot cries and paroxysms of fury.

In view of the misleading descriptions of the Suffrage movement in the United States which are finding acceptance on this side of the Atlantic, we venture to quote a few sentences from a letter addressed to one of the most distinguished of living English writers on behalf of the executive of the New York State Association opposed to Woman Suffrage, by an American lady. 'It is quite certain that the situation here is not at all appreciated in your country. Unless one is in the United States it is impossible to realize how artificial is the whole agitation. You will be told by the Suffragists that the Anti-Suffrage movement amounts to nothing because we work so very quietly. Until very recently we have had no occasion to appear in public, except at the Legislative hearings. Now the Suffrage propaganda has received a new impetus, chiefly owing to the fact that it is being largely financed by some restless, rich women. In other

words, it is for the moment a fashionable fad. We are not seriously worried by this phase, but we are annoyed, as it makes it necessary for us to be more in evidence to remind the unthinking that many women prominent in philanthropic, literary, and social life have not been swept off their feet by this wave.'

So far, indeed, the Woman Suffrage movement in the United States has been wanting in the spectacular and sensational methods to which we have grown accustomed over here. This is largely due to the fact that the American police would not tolerate for a moment the violent methods practised by the ladies in London and Leeds. But the leaders of New York society who crowd to the Suffrage meetings in toilets and diamonds more suggestive of the opera house on a gala night than a political gathering, are being exhorted to prepare for 'martyrdom' and to share the honour of their English sisters; and the 'forward movement' is not to be one of passive resistance only. A minister of religion, recently transferred to the States from the North of England, is reported to have declared that the Suffragettes 'are ready to spill blood, undergo penal servitude, and sacrifice their lives' in the task of righting 'an intolerable wrong.' This pernicious nonsense, we are told, was cheered to the echo; it is time, indeed, that the sober-minded women of America should make it clear that they are in the vast majority.

The reluctance of the 'average woman' to assume the burden of the franchise, and her reluctance to abandon house-work and office-work for the labour of counter-organization, demonstrations, and the rest, are admirably expressed by Miss M. E. Simkins in an article in the January *National Review*. 'A twenty years' experience of steady work,' she writes, 'has led her to the conclusion that it will be a cruelty to impose on women of her class the triple burden of wage-earning, house-keeping, and political responsibility. What such women workers want when their present double task is accomplished is not political excitement, but rest and quiet.' The Suffragist argument, she contends, 'is based on the capacity of the exceptional woman to undertake that most exceptional task, so exceptional that we have only in rare instances seen it attempted—the discharge by one person of a man's functions as well as a woman's. Is it fair to require of the average woman what it has not yet been proved that the exceptional ones are capable of performing?' And Miss Simkins points out the heavy disadvantages in which the average woman is placed in the attempt to 'do really effective work against so many women who have clearly no definite duties and who as clearly possess considerable means, or they could not have spent the time in the streets that they have lately expended there, or held Suffrage "At Homes" day by day as they are now doing.'

THE Woman's National Anti-Suffrage League, and this 'Review,' know nothing of party distinctions; and the executive committee of the League as well as its rapidly growing roll of membership, contain women of the most diverse political opinions working harmoniously and enthusiastically side by side. We feel no scruple, therefore, in recording our deep regret at the attempt which is being made by certain prominent Conservatives to make 'Votes for Women' a plank in the party platform. The reckless unwisdom of the movement is admirably exposed by Mr. Leo Maxse, one of the two or three ablest Unionist writers of the day. 'Our blinder wire-pullers fondly and foolishly imagine that by enfranchising women ratepayers, a propertied and Conservative class, they could "dish the Whigs," while other Unionists, who are above mere wire-pulling considerations, seek to erect a permanent barrier against Universal Manhood Suffrage, Socialism, and many other objectionable *'isms*. . . . It would be impossible to devise a flimsier obstacle against Manhood Suffrage than limited Woman Suffrage, because the very fact that the limited female vote was believed to be Conservative and "churchy" would incite and indeed compel the Liberal Party to extend the Suffrage; and they would have an irresistible argument for amending a system which excludes the bulk of married women. Ultimately, as a result of Conservative "tactics" the country would find itself involved not only in Universal Manhood Suffrage but Universal Womanhood Suffrage to boot—the avowed goal of the Labour Party.'

The exceeding urgency of this latter point, when we remember there are at this moment a million and a half more women than men in England, must be our excuse for continuing our quotation from Mr. Maxse. 'Woman Suffrage is impossible and unthinkable in this country simply because there is a great preponderance of women, and if one party begins by enfranchising one adult woman, some other party will end by enfranchising every adult woman. If we embark on this slippery slope, it will be impossible to stop before we get to the bottom. There is no halfway house between remaining as we are and Universal Adult Suffrage, i.e., a nation of hopelessly outnumbered men, and sooner or later, internal convulsions or external disaster. That is the answer to the aggrieved ladies of the Primrose League who would persuade their party to take up Woman Suffrage because they are denied the political status of their outdoor servants.'

This 'groom and gardener' argument has been used in our own hearing with effect. And to take a concrete instance, the name has been mentioned of Lady Wantage, who, since her lamented husband's death, has carried on the management of her great estates, and been the generous friend

of every deserving cause. If ever there was the case of a woman who would use the franchise well and worthily, it is that of Lady Wantage. Yet we find her name among those present on the platform at a meeting of the Woman's Anti-Suffrage League held a few weeks ago at Wokingham, and she is undertaking the formation of a branch of the League in East Berks.

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BRANCH NEWS.

BIRMINGHAM.

Active work has been going on all this month, the committee having secured a temporary office in New Street, where signatures are being obtained and literature is being sold at prices just over cost. The hon. secretaries are Mrs. Saundby and Mrs. E. Lakin-Smith, Mr. Phelps taking the less onerous position of treasurer. The committee are obtaining men's signatures to the petition as well as women's; the response is most satisfactory, and by the end of the month several thousand women's signatures will be forwarded to the head office to swell the total. Experience has taught the committee one singular fact, namely, that scores of women pass the office taking it for granted that it has been opened by one of the Suffrage Societies, and this in spite of the very telling cartoon prominently displayed in the window. A visit has been paid by two of the leading members of the W.S.P.U., one of whom had previously declared her intention of wrecking the office, in which characteristic method of showing her zeal for the movement which she adorns she was possibly frustrated by the accidental presence of a commissionaire and a male member of the committee.

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STAFFORD.

ON December 8th a debate took place in Siemen's Institute in connection with the Literary and Debating Society on 'Votes for Women.' Mr. Lee Murray presided, and the hall was well filled.

The Chairman stated that the motion before the meeting was 'That in the opinion of this house Suffrage should be granted to women on the same terms as it is granted to men, or may be granted in the future.'

Mr. J. Hirst opened the debate in favour of the motion, and was supported by Mrs. Gladice Keevil, of N.W.S.P.U. The motion was opposed by Mr. J. F. Crowley, supported by Miss Fothergill, of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage, and was lost on a division, the voting being: for, 99; against, 107.

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KENNINGTON.

A FULL drawing-room meeting took place on December 10th in St. Mark's Vicarage, Kennington Oval, S.E., to discuss the formation of a Kennington Branch of the Women's

National Anti-Suffrage League. The speakers were Miss Fothergill, Mrs. Mortimore and Miss Stuart, also Mrs. Darlington, who opened the meeting with a short address, clearly and eloquently giving her reasons against the vote.

The Resolution to form a Branch was unanimously passed by the meeting. Mrs. Darlington was elected president, Miss Beck, hon. secretary, Mrs. Millington, hon. treasurer. A committee of ten was also appointed.

Kennington should be a 'go-ahead' Branch. Mrs. Darlington, a daughter of the late Dean Farrar, has already organized a large successful meeting on behalf of the League, held last month in St. Mark's Hall, the special speakers on this occasion being Mr. Heber Hart (chairman), Sir William Brampton Gurdon, M.P., and Miss Fothergill.

The committee met on December 18th to plan further developments and meetings for January.

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EDINBURGH.

A PRIVATE preparatory meeting was held in the Caledonian Railway Hotel on Thursday, December 10th, some 224 ladies being present. Mrs. Parker-Smith, wife of the late member of Parliament for Partick, presided. Among those present were:—The Dowager Lady Kinross, Countess of Moray, The Lady Ruthven, Lady Mackenzie, Lady Oliver Riddell, Lady Rennie Watson, Lady Fraser, Mrs. Clark Hutchison (wife of the Conservative candidate for Argyleshire), and Miss Kinnear (sister of Lord Kinnear).

Letters of apology and sympathy were read from the Duchess of Montrose, Lady Christison, Lady Borthwick, Hon. Mrs. Baillie-Hamilton, Marchioness of Tweeddale, Lord Rosebery, and others.

After addresses from Mr. Sydney Durrant and Miss Falconer, it was proposed by the Countess of Moray, and seconded by Mrs. W. K. Dickson, and carried, that a Branch of the League be formed for Edinburgh and district. The committee will consist of Marchioness of Tweeddale (president), Lady Christison, Mrs. W. K. Dickson, Mrs. Stirling Boyd, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Geikie, Miss M. A. Farquharson, Mrs. Hume Maclaren, Miss Smith Cunningham. Joint hon. secretaries, Mrs. Johnstone, 19, Walker Street, Edinburgh, Miss Kemp, c/o Mrs. Stirling Boyd, 6, Magdala Place, Edinburgh. Hon. treasurer, Mrs. Paterson.

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PADDINGTON.

A MEETING was held on Thursday afternoon, December 10th, at 1, Orme Square, under the presidency of Lady George Hamilton, to consider the formation of a Branch of the League in Paddington.

Mrs. Somervell explained the objects of the League, and said that they came forward most reluctantly to combat the fallacies put forward by the Suffragists. The franchise was the symbol of the male power of the nation to enforce its will, and the use of it had been slowly evolved in the last 700 years. All government rested upon force, and war was the determining factor in the life of nations. War must be dependent upon men, and it was generally acknowledged that he who paid the piper might call the tune. It was contended that women lived under a despotism, but it was impossible to pass a

law against their good sense and judgment. A good law represented the highest common measure that could be forced upon the worst people in the country, the sweeping up of the rearward of progress. It was woman's work to lead the van, not to drive along the rearward, to improve the lot of the coming generations. They inspired men to invent things and to raise the standard of life. The Suffragists urged that men and women should be economically equal, and called the family the outworn and earliest grouping of the race, though at the same time they imagined the vote would tend to raise the marriage tie. The so-called equality of women and men struck at the marriage tie and encouraged a loose divorce law, and this once established, a nation was doomed. Economical arguments were largely used. It was stated that the average weekly wage of the working woman was 7s., but from figures compiled by the Local Government Board it was clear that the average weekly wage of woman in industrial occupations was 12s. 11d. and of girls 6s. 5d. It was claimed that the franchise would raise women's wages, but women themselves were responsible for the low rates paid to them. They preferred to do unskilled work at starvation wages and be free, which meant getting their board and lodging from a male relation. In the case of skilled work in which women did not compete with men they earned as much as £2 per week, and in domestic service (allowing 8s. 6d. for board and lodging) they earned from 13s. to 15s. a week, and high-class servants (allowing 10s. for board and lodging) 24s. to 31s. 6d. per week. The wages of the domestic servant had risen fifty per cent. of late years without the Suffrage.

Miss Frances Low, who had been a Suffragist in early life before she became a wage-earner, said that she had been charged with being inconsistent because, while objecting to women taking part in public life, she spoke at public meetings. The charge of inconsistency was equally true of the Suffragists. One demanded that the vote should be given to educated women only, another that small sections of workers should be favoured, another objected to married women being enfranchised, another advocated the thin end of the wedge. Miss Low contended that property was too heavily represented already; adult suffrage meant the government of women. The granting of the vote was a revolution. She would mention the chief reasons brought forward. (1) When women legislated the laws would be absolutely good. That some laws affecting women—notably the divorce laws—needed alteration all would allow, but all women were not angels nor all men villains. (2) Under existing conditions women were dumb. They all knew great women in history and in literature who were not dumb. (3) Women were slaves. Most of the disadvantages under which women suffered had their origin in the protection of women. (4) It would give women more opportunities for companionship with men; they would have higher interests. (5) The vote would raise wages. Thousands of women joined the Suffragist ranks for this reason, which was wholly false. Women were not meant to be wage-earners at all. Yet girls were told they should be ashamed to be dependent. But in later years what became of the bachelor girl? of the clerk of 40? (6) Women had no part in making the laws.

Surely their influence on society and on children was infinitely more important than any amount of political voting. Woman could make her influence felt in moral questions to-day, and had a thousand ways of expressing herself.

At the close of the meeting a resolution was passed to form a Branch of the League in Paddington, and an executive committee was appointed.

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REIGATE.

WITH the object of considering the formation of a branch of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League for the Reigate Parliamentary Division, a meeting was held on Wednesday afternoon, December 2nd, at 'Beechwood,' Reigate, by invitation of Mrs. Stone. The attendance was very encouraging, and among those present were Mrs. Rundall, who had been mainly instrumental in organizing the meeting, Lady Colman, Miss MacMaster, Lady Cunyghame, Dr. and Mrs. Stone, Mrs. Wilfrid Ward, Mr. G. W. Rundall, Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Lemon, Capt. Groves, Mrs. F. C. Pawle, Mrs. Barton, Miss Cook, Mrs. Secretan, Mrs. Barwell, Mrs. Gardiner, Mrs. Arthur Brown, Mrs. Millard, Mrs. Macaird, Miss Nicholson, Mrs. Mott and Mrs. Alfred Mott, and many others.

Mrs. F. E. Lemon presided, and in opening the meeting, said that the question of 'women's rights' or 'votes for women' had been with them for two generations or more, but the phenomenal prominence attained by the movement during the last two years had unfortunately made it necessary for those who were opposed to the extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women to let their opinions be known.

Mrs. Wilfrid Ward, of Dorking, so well known as one of the most interesting and attractive of Roman Catholic writers, made an eloquent speech dwelling on the supreme importance of women's natural work in the world. From the earliest moment of man's creation his life was in a woman's care. It was by the woman's hands that his character was fashioned, and it was the woman to whom he looked for support in the struggle of life, and for comfort in his declining years.

A short paper on the position of women in New Zealand, written by a Miss Wilson, who has been recently paying a visit to this country, was then read by Mr. Rundall, and proved very interesting and instructive, giving a very good idea of the effects of the vote in New Zealand, as compared with the probable effects which the extension of the franchise would have in England. The argument that politics would be made purer if women had the vote, was not, according to the writer of the paper, borne out by New Zealand experience, and the granting of the franchise to women would not change human nature.

Capt. Groves also addressed the meeting on the Imperial question, and on how the granting of the Parliamentary franchise to women would be likely to affect it.

The resolution when put to the meeting was carried.

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TAUNTON.

THE Hon. Mrs. Portman, of Hestercombe, presided over a very large and influential gathering held in the Municipal Hall, at

Taunton, on Thursday afternoon, December 10th, in connection with the Women's Anti-Suffrage League. Mrs. Portman was supported by Miss Mary Angela Dickens (a grand-daughter of the great novelist), Mrs. Charles Lance, and Miss Janet Vaughan, of Staplegrave. Among others present were the Mayoress of Taunton (Mrs. Frank White), Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Badcock, Miss Mary Badcock, Miss Meade-King, Mrs. R. G. Sommerville, Miss Paget, Miss McGowan, Mrs. L. H. C. Birkbeck, Mrs. W. A. Wrenn, Mrs. Fort, Miss L. Badcock, Mrs. Tite, Mrs. Rawlins (Bishop's Hull), Miss Macdermott, Mrs. A. E. Newton, Miss Allen, Mrs. C. Webber, Miss Trood, Mrs. J. P. T. Allen, Mrs. Hitchcock, Mrs. Pearce, and many others from the town and district.

Mrs. Portman, in her opening remarks, expressed the hope that all the ladies present that afternoon would give their support to a cause which must appeal to the heart of every woman. She thought that the women of England were hardly yet alive to the importance of this matter, an importance which was becoming greater every day. In these days of demonstrations, processions, and even rats—(laughter)—some ladies might be chary of joining such a League as this, and might be unwilling to come to the forefront at all, but all that was asked for was their names and a small subscription. They should always remember that one woman alone had no power, but that women in combination were irresistible.

Miss Dickens then gave a very lucid and forcible address on the formation and constitution of the League.

Mrs. Portman proposed 'That a Taunton Branch of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League be formed.'

This was seconded by Miss Janet Vaughan, and agreed to unanimously.

Mrs. Portman was elected president of the Branch.

Mrs. L. H. C. Birkbeck, of Church Square, Taunton, was elected hon. secretary, and Mrs. R. G. Sommerville, of Ruishton House, Ruishton, hon. treasurer.

A considerable number of ladies afterwards joined the Branch.

WORCESTER.

A MEETING of the Worcestershire Branch was held on Friday, December 4th, at the King's Hall, under the presidency of the Countess of Coventry. About fifteen members of the general committee were present. It was decided, in view of the great interest shown throughout the county in this movement, to change the title to the Worcestershire Branch, including as it does both city and county. The ladies' names which were added to the general committee include Lady Godson, Mesdames Acworth, Adams, Acton, Boucher, Hollins, Charles Long, Eliot Howard, de Peyster Chance, R. H. Murray, Rudge, Knox-Little, F. A. W. Simes, Constance S. Southall, Ollard, Lea-Smith, Leonard Winter, Domville Wynter, Whinfield, Charles James, Rice, Martin, Littleton Wheeler, Albert Webb, Thurston, Courtenay Lord. An executive committee was elected from the general committee representing both city and county. The following ladies were elected vice-presidents: Lady Temple, Lady Sandys, Lady

Douglas Galton, Lady Catherine Berkeley, Lady Lechmere, Lady Hughes, the Mayoress of Worcester, and Mrs. Wheeley Lea.

BRISTOL.

THERE was a crowded gathering at the Queen's Hotel on December 15th, when the members of the Bristol and Clifton Anti-Suffrage League were received by Miss Long Fox at afternoon tea, and a meeting was held in the adjoining hall. Mrs. Greenwood took the chair, and congratulated the members on the crowded meeting and the fact that, although they were only six weeks old, already more than 630 members were enrolled. Miss Long Fox, the hon. secretary, then made a short statement of the initiation and development of the Branch, and begged all to work earnestly, and Bristol would cease to be termed, perchance falsely, the Suffragists' stronghold. On January 29th she hoped they would give a crowded greeting to Mrs. Humphry Ward, who was coming to address them. Miss Price gave some general statistics of the League and its rapid development, and spoke of the famous names, both of women and of men in diplomacy, literature, science, and art, that were inscribed in their roll of membership. Mrs. E. Budgett gave, as her first public speech, an effective and delightfully-phrased address, asking if the women were going to sacrifice their womanhood to politics? That, indeed, would be a national disaster. It was woman's destiny to influence voters; a mystic power to persuade men was theirs. Were they to throw aside that power? The utter incapacity of the Suffragettes to respect law and order must urge them to strive to get wrongs righted constitutionally, and to retain the chivalry and respect due to true womanhood. This speaker, who was frequently applauded, was followed by Mrs. Trapnell, who dwelt upon their methods of work and the necessity of working swiftly. *They must prove by their numbers that the women of England did not want the vote.* The first male speaker, Prof. Ferrier, then addressed the gathering on the economical side of the question, and denied that a vote given to women would increase women's pay. Supply and demand regulated women's, as men's, wages, as illustrated by the fact that factory girls' wages were low because girls were plentiful who entered this life, whereas servants' wages had risen greatly because the supply was limited. One of the vain claims of the Suffragettes was that votes would affect wages. A goodly number of ladies entered their names as members.

GLOUCESTER.

AN invitation meeting in connection with the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League was held in the Assembly Hall at Northgate Mansions, Gloucester, on Thursday afternoon, December 3rd, when Miss Mary Angela Dickens, the organizing secretary for branches, attended to explain the arguments and objects of the League.

Mrs. Grimké-Drayton presided over a good attendance, and in opening the proceedings said she agreed with those who held that the interests of women were quite safe in the hands of Englishmen, as they always had been.

She contended that the grant of Parliamentary votes to women would infinitely decrease their influence, which at present was untold.

Miss Dickens then explained in detail the aims and objects of the League, and said that the real difficulty in the path, the enemy against which they had to bring to bear all their forces, was not the enemy openly arrayed against them in the person of the most militant Suffragette, but the traitor in their own camp—the indifference of women themselves.

On the motion of Mrs. Grimké-Drayton, seconded by Mrs. Nigel D. Haines, it was unanimously resolved 'That a Gloucester Branch of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League be formed.'

It was agreed, on the motion of Mrs. Robertson seconded by Mrs. Samuel Bland, that the committee be asked to appoint a lady to be president of the Gloucester Branch.

On the proposition of Mrs. G. Embrey, seconded by Mrs. J. T. Wright, it was resolved that Mrs. Naylor be appointed secretary and Mr. W. P. Cullis treasurer of the Branch.

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SPILSBY.

MRS. RICHARDSON, wife of General Richardson, of Halton Holegate, presided over a good gathering in the Spilsby Drill Hall, on Tuesday evening, December 15th, when a meeting was held under the auspices of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League. The speakers were Mr. Leo Maxse and Miss Stewart, of London. Many well-known people in the neighbourhood were present.

Mr. Leo Maxse, speaking from the point of view of a 'mere man,' said he understood the suffragist question had not been seriously thought of in the provinces, and the women of Lincolnshire regarded the ladies as lunatics engaged in pranks for the entertainment of the readers of the halfpenny newspapers. (Laughter.) But it was time they woke up, for they were confronted by a grave issue which might end in a revolution. The speaker moved 'That this meeting protests against any extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women until the question has been submitted to the electorate.' It was carried with one or two dissentients, but many people refrained from voting at all.

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NEWCASTLE.

MISS STUART, of 6, Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea, and Miss Cropper, of Tolson Hall, Kendal, at a meeting held at Jesmond Dene House, on Saturday afternoon, December 10th, under the auspices of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League, gave various reasons why the Parliamentary franchise ought not to be extended to women.

Miss Noble presided, and explained why this particular movement had been commenced. The League, she said, had asked ladies to take the matter up in different constituencies. She herself represented Newcastle.

It was, in her opinion, better that no change should be made, but that women should continue to exercise their influence in carrying on the affairs of the country just as they did at present.

Miss Cropper reminded her audience that the Prime Minister had asked the women of England to give him their opinion. She admitted that, twelve years ago, she signed a petition in favour of women having Parliamentary votes if they had a stake of any sort in the country. But since then they had been given four votes. They could now vote in connection with Town Council, County Council, Parish Council, and Board of Guardians Elections.

These had provided them with quite enough to do. They had a voice with respect to subjects which they understood most about, and it was for them to see that the laws appertaining thereto were carried out in their respective districts.

Miss Stuart said she did not regard this as a political question; it was a women's question. There were, she pointed out, about ten and a half million adult females in the kingdom, and only half a million had asked for a vote. From the other side there had been sent up this year a petition containing two thousand signatures.

'But,' added Miss Stuart, 'we have got a petition containing 30,000 names lying at the office now, and all over the country there are bundles ready to be forwarded. Nobody,' emphatically declared the speaker, 'can thrust a vote upon us if we do not want it. Mr. Asquith is going to ask the women of England what they want. Let us show, however earnest those of the other side may be—however keen, however clever, however expert—that these women are not speaking for England.'

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NOTTINGHAM.

OWING to the strong interest taken locally in party politics it has been found difficult to persuade people to take a definite position with regard to the Anti-Suffrage League. But, among supporters of both political parties, and both in Nottingham and the country round, there is a strong feeling of sympathy for us. After the public meeting arranged for Wednesday, January 13th, this sympathy should find active expression and there should be no difficulty in forming a good executive committee. Many letters have appeared in the Nottingham and Newark papers, by courtesy of the editors; and we have to thank the political agencies—with one exception—for helpful suggestions although they were officially unable to take any active part. We hope to be able to give news of a Notts Branch in full working order for the issue of the next Review. It will be much easier to work up the W.N.A.-S.L. in the future when the Men's Committee is more fully organized to support it, and so to combat the not unusual suggestion to 'let the women fight it out among themselves.'

* * *

MEN'S COMMITTEE FOR OPPOSING FEMALE SUFFRAGE.

Offices:—

Palace Chambers, Bridge Street,
Westminster.

At a meeting held on December 3rd, 1908, at Caxton Hall, it was resolved to form a men's association for the prevention of the

extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women under the above title, and an executive committee was appointed for carrying out the purposes of the association. This executive committee, which has power to add to its number, consists of the following:—

Mr. J. Massie, M.P. (chairman),
Mr. J. Bertram, M.P.,
Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., P.C.,
The Hon. Ivor Guest, M.P.,
Lord Haversham, P.C.,
Mr. J. Lloyd Morgan, K.C., M.P.,
Sir Edward O'Malley,
Mr. G. W. Prothero,
Sir West Ridgeway, P.C., G.C.B.,
Mr. Arthur Somervell,
Mr. J. St. Loe Strachey,
Mr. R. Whitehead, M.P.

Hon. Secretary: Mr. George Calderon.

Treasurers: Lord Welby and Mr. Heber Hart.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

To the Editor of 'The Anti-Suffrage Review.'

MADAM,—There are, I believe, two main objects for which our League is bound to work:—

1. To urge the claim that so profoundly important a change in the position of women, and so heavy an addition to their responsibilities as would be made by the Suffrage, ought not to be imposed upon them without their express consent.

2. To make it clear that in our judgment the true political function of women is consultative, not legislative, and to show how easily and safely a constitutional channel for its exercise could be provided.

(1) The claim that so great and burdensome a change in our position and responsibilities should not be made without our consent seems scarcely to need, or to leave room for, any argument in its favour. It is a claim which we may appeal to all women to support, for the Suffragists could not oppose it without stultifying themselves. The only objection likely to be made against it is the practical difficulty of carrying it out. But that difficulty would quickly disappear before any clear and united protest against the entire disregard of our wishes. I cannot believe that a petition by the Anti-Suffragist League praying for this one thing—viz., a pledge that the vote shall not be imposed upon us without a deliberate attempt to ascertain whether or not we consent—could fail to arrest the headlong plunge into a new form of oppression with which we are threatened. So manifestly reasonable a demand could not well be refused, and would, I believe, be welcome to many a perplexed member of Parliament.

Whether the object in view would best be attained by a referendum or otherwise would be a question for legal or constitutional experts, and could not, I think, present any insuperable difficulty. It is clear that the

spontaneous signing of petitions is not a fair test of the wish of the majority of women, the scales being unequally weighted by the forwardness of one party and the retiringness of the other. The question to be decided is not one which ought to turn entirely on the wishes of women themselves, for the good of the nation as a whole is the one object to be considered, and nothing can be rightly done which does not commend itself to the men as well as the women of whom the nation consists. But for a masculine legislature to impose the Suffrage upon the whole feminine population without taking any measures to ascertain the wish or to obtain the consent of the majority of the women concerned, and even in spite of a grave protest from an important section of the feminine population, would be an act so despotic that I cannot believe any British Parliament to be deliberately capable of it. Therefore our first object as a League ought to be to press home our right to be consulted. That once acknowledged, the battle would, I believe, be won.

(2) For the great mass of our countrywomen desire, I am convinced, to be counsellors, not combatants—trusted and invited counsellors, giving of their best wherever and however they can help the men whose office it must always be to bear the burden of government; not struggling to obtain for themselves a share of political power.

This office of counsellors is, strictly speaking, incompatible with the strife for power. It is not a question of romantic sentiment or picturesque ideal (though these things are not to be despised), but an obvious dictate of hard common sense that an adviser must keep out of the fray. The only position from which advice has any chance of being listened to is that of an outsider. The position hitherto by common consent assigned to women is that of a personal aloofness from the struggle of party politics. It is from this position, and mainly in virtue of its dispassionate detachment, that they have exercised so incalculable an influence for good on the public life of our country.

It may well be that the time is come when this office should be more distinctly recognized, and provision should be made for its authorized and constitutional exercise. From several quarters the suggestion has been made of a Consultative Chamber of Women, elected by women only, and meeting during the session of Parliament to consider and offer suggestions on such Bills as either House might at its own discretion think fit to lay before it. Such a Chamber, while without legislative power, would assuredly exercise immense influence. It might have power to suggest as well as to criticize measures specially affecting women, children, the sick, and the poor. Its discussions would be fully reported, and for the first time we should hear a really feminine voice in national affairs—a voice which we must remember that the

Suffrage can never give. Few women surely would really care very much for the power to choose between John and Thomas as their representative; and even if Parliament were thrown open to women, the members would be elected by a mixed constituency to a mixed assembly, in which we may be very sure that the woman's view would be swamped by that of the man.

This is the inevitable result, not of any human arrangement, but of Nature's own laws. For even with universal Suffrage, comparatively few women would ever care, or could possibly find leisure, to devote themselves to public affairs; and these few would be interested only by a comparatively small part of Parliamentary business.

Yet there are a few women possessed at once of leisure and experience who could bring to bear on the few legislative questions specially interesting to them a really expert knowledge, of which men would be the first to recognize the special value. Such women also might contribute to the national counsels a wisdom and a tenderness scarcely to be preserved in the turmoil of party strife. That their voice should be distinctly heard would, I believe, be a great gain; but a gain to be attained only by the Separate Representation of Women.

I am, &c.,

CAROLINE E. STEPHEN.

To the Editor of 'The Anti-Suffrage Review.'

MADAM,—As a woman who sees neither justice nor logic in the proposal to co-operate women as partners in the government of this great Empire, I venture to address you.

All women of all shades of political opinion must deplore, in the interest of their sex, the sad exhibition of the Women's Albert Hall meeting. It added little to our knowledge of Government intentions on the subject of Women's Suffrage; it revealed once more what happens when women descend into the political fray, and what is always likely to happen. For the point of hysterical emotion and unreason is always nearer with women than with men. It is not to their discredit that it should be so. Women's feelings are, and should be, more easily stirred than men's, while the mass of her nerve force is slighter.

Of all the arguments used by Suffragists, the one which is surely the highest is that women would introduce into public life 'sweeter manners, purer laws.' Are they doing so to-day? Have we any reason to suppose that if they had the vote to-morrow it would quiet or appease them?

Mr. Lloyd-George is reported to have spoken of the vote as a means of raising women's wages. Surely that is an old fallacy. We do not find that argument in Mr. Fawcett's Political Economy. Was it the Parliamentary vote or the Labourers' Union which raised agricultural wages? If all the domestic servants had votes, would the Chancellor pay his parlourmaid the same wages as his butler? There are many more business women in France than in England; I have

not heard that they demand the vote; their success is proof that their disabilities are not considerable.

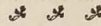
This question of the woman's vote is a revolution; nothing like it has been tried in the world's history. We have a right to ask that our politicians should look further than the mere tactics of the hour, and show themselves to be statesmen. The country has not demanded this great change; it has never had the issue placed before it. Many Liberals are anxious about the next budget, and consider old age pensions and all that that step involves as of first importance. We may imagine how the German Chancellor is chuckling over the suggestion of a huge untried electorate—and what of India?

The constitutional ladies have brought the situation on themselves. They have encouraged the irresponsible women, and have not been reluctant to accept any advantages that might accrue from Suffragette advertisement. But the old saying remains true, 'that it is not well to do evil that good may come.'

I am, Madam, faithfully yours,

ETHEL HARRISON.

Hawkhurst, Dec. 8th, 1908.

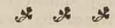


LIST OF LEAFLETS.

2. Woman's Suffrage and After. Price 2s. 6d. per 1,000.
3. Mrs. Humphry Ward's Speech. Price ½d. each.
4. Queen Victoria and Women's Rights. Price 2s. 6d. per 1,000.
5. Is Woman's Suffrage Inevitable? Price 5s. per 1,000.
6. Nature's Reason against Women's Suffrage. Price 5s. per 1,000.
7. Shall Women Receive the Vote? Price 3s. per 1,000.
8. Women's Suffrage and the National Welfare. Price 2s. 6d. per 1,000.
10. Women of Great Britain. Price 2s. 6d. per 1,000.
11. Latest Phase of the Woman Suffrage Movement. Price 5s. per 1,000.
12. Why Women should not Vote. Price 3s. per 1,000.
13. Women's Position under Laws made by Man. Price 5s. per 1,000.
16. Look Ahead. Price 4s. per 1,000.
17. Why the Women's Enfranchisement Bill (1908) would be unfair to Women if it became Law. Price 5s. per 1,000.
18. Married Women and the Factory Law. Price 5s. per 1,000.
19. A Suffrage Talk. Price 3s. per 1,000.
20. A Word to Working Women. Price 2s. 6d. per 1,000.
21. Votes for Women, by Frederic Harrison. Price 10s. per 1,000.

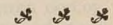
PAMPHLETS.

- A. Freedom of Women. Mrs. Harrison. Price 6d.
- B. Woman or Suffragette. Miss M. Corelli. Price 3d.
- C. Positive Principles. Mrs. Simon. Price 1d.
- D. Sociological Reasons. Mrs. Simon. Price 1d.
- E. Case against Woman Suffrage. Price 1d.



TREASURERS' APPEAL.

The League is in need of Funds to carry on its daily increasing work. We beg our friends to be generous. Five subscribers of £100 each are still needed before we can claim the promised £100 from Lord Airedale and Sir Hugh Bell.



THE PETITION.

We print below the form of petition finally adopted for presentation to the Prime Minister. Signatures are coming in rapidly, and the response is most encouraging. At the same time we must call on all our members to use their utmost efforts to secure as many names as possible:—

'We, the undersigned, pray your Honourable House to reject any measure having for its object or one of its objects the grant of the Parliamentary suffrage to women. We fully realise the importance and value of Women's Work in our National Life—especially in Education and the care of the Poor—but we believe that the danger which might arise from the concession of woman-suffrage, in the case of a State burdened with such complex and far-reaching responsibilities as England, would be out of all proportion to the risk run by those smaller communities which have adopted it. We hold that the admission to full political power of a number of voters debarred by nature and circumstance from the average political knowledge and experience open to men, would weaken the central governing forces of the State, and be fraught with peril to the country.'

The Editor of 'The Review' proposes to have an 'Answers to Correspondents' column, and invites readers, should there be any point upon which information is desired, to communicate direct to the address given on the first page, marking the envelope of such a communication 'For "The Review."'

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