

THE VOTE,
MARCH 26, 1920.
ONE PENNY.

MINERVA CLUB OPENING.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 1920.

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

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A WOMAN'S ELECTION.

Miss Susan Lawrence, who is opposing Dr. Macnamara in North-West Camberwell, holds a magnificent record of public work as a basis from which to build upon in the Parliamentary campaign which she opened last week. She has been a member of the London County Council, representing Poplar, since 1913, the Committee in which she takes most interest being the Housing Committee. Amongst other public offices Miss Lawrence has been elected Alderman of the Poplar Borough Council, and assistant secretary of the Women's Trades Unions League. She has worked a great deal for the National Federation of Women Workers, and has taken an active part in the question of arbitration for women's wages discussed at the well-known Tribunal of 1916-18. She is also a member of the Executive of the National Labour Party.

"Besides being probably the most important by-election since the General Election," said Miss Lawrence last week to a representative of THE VOTE, "this is specially a woman's Election. I consider that the strength of my position lies in the discontent of the people, and particularly of the women, with the present state of affairs. Prices will play an extremely important part in the contest. In this constituency the women voters on the register number 12,109 out of an electorate of 29,959, and since women are now beginning to take a real interest in politics—many of them having been forced to consider these questions by the ever-increasing rivalry between wages and prices—I expect much from their support. That well-known story we all used to hear in the suffrage days of the old lady who said 'she never troubled politics, as politics never troubled her,' no longer holds any meaning for any of us. Politics are troubling all the old ladies now.

"People have accused me of holding 'bread and butter' politics, and I frankly admit the charge. Bread and butter politics mean human happiness and human health. I am heartily in sympathy with the aims of the Women's Freedom League, and have consistently stood for equal pay for women and men in the industrial, teaching, and civil service worlds."

WOMEN CIVIL SERVANTS.

A Mass Meeting, organised by the Federation of Women Civil Servants, was held on Thursday, the 18th inst., at the Central Hall, Westminster, to urge the National Whitley Council for the Civil Service to amend the Reconstruction Report so as to give real and practical equality to men and women in the Service.

The Federation was supported by a number of women's organisations, the list of speakers including Lady Astor, M.P., Mrs. Oliver Strachey, Miss Esther Roper, B.A., Miss Ethel E. Froud (National Federation of Women Teachers), and Miss Christine Maguire (Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries). Several women from within the Civil Service also spoke to the Resolution, which read:—

"That this meeting expresses grave dissatisfaction with the failure of the Reorganisation Committee of the National Whitley Council of the Civil Service to recommend real equality of treatment for Women with Men, and calls upon the National Whitley Council to amend the Report in this respect."

The large Hall was packed with women Civil Servants, who were most enthusiastic in their support of the campaign for equality. The speeches were to the point, and the case for the women was extremely well put. Strong disapproval of the recommendation to institute Selection Boards instead of competitive examinations for new women entrants was shown. One of the speakers laid stress on the fact that women did not ask for favoured treatment, but wished to compete on equal terms with men. Once given equal opportunity equal pay could not be withheld.

The Meeting was a very definite mandate from the women in the Civil Service to the Federation Executive to carry on the agitation for equality, and was a most encouraging demonstration of solidarity. The first fruits of the campaign were reaped the following day, when it was announced that the National Whitley Council had decided, while adopting the Report, to reserve the right to reconsider the sections that affect women.

HOUSING REFORMS.

Speaking on the subject of "Housing" last Wednesday, at the Minerva Café, Mrs. Earengy referred to the apathy of most women home-makers in the past, who accepted the inconveniences of present day housing as for the most part inevitable. Housing had hitherto been one of the neglected great issues. Most houses in the past had been mere places of drudgery for women. Even in large houses where there were plenty of servants, and where no one was overworked, much unnecessary labour was accomplished. All work nowadays needed to be productive and labour-saving, whereas formerly time and trouble were wasted in houses which might have been put to better purpose. Public opinion, however, was rapidly changing on this matter, and at last opportunities were being given for reforms in Housing. The whole question, indeed, was fast assuming a national importance, for the Government were being forced to consider it. Women's Societies could help greatly in this respect by making representations to the Government of the type of house which was really necessary. Women were becoming increasingly interested in the subject, as was evidenced by the Housing Conference at Olympia last month, at which over a thousand women delegates attended, all of them brimful of enthusiasm and suggestions. Certain practical details were put forward at this Conference, such as a scullery-kitchen where all rough work could be done; a minimum of three bedrooms; no outside sanitary conveniences, and no bath in the scullery! A recess for bicycles or a perambulator, and space for box room were also included in the suggestions. Labour-saving devices were then discussed at the Conference, and it was agreed by all present that these were just as important as the planning of a house. Electricity was far preferable to either coal or gas, which affected the atmosphere. Indeed, the whole world was waiting for a scheme by which electricity could be cheaply and easily obtained for domestic use. The abolition of the kitchen range was an essential towards lightening domestic work. There was also need for greater development of the co-operative element in domestic life, so that facilities could be accelerated for communal cooking, washing, care of children in nursery schools, libraries and amusements. Good housing led to good town planning, and eventually a whole community benefited. Mrs. E. M. N. Clark presided, and an animated discussion followed the close of Mrs. Earengy's address.

FUTURE OF THE CINEMA.

Cinematograph exhibitors, to the number of some hundreds, from all parts of the country, assembled in London last week for the annual meeting and conference. In these islands alone the cinema industry employs 150,000 persons, and the enormous potentialities of its future are being rapidly revealed. The standard of cinema production is rising steadily, and its popularity is increasing daily. The best kind of literature is now being required by the trade, and there is no standard of dramatic achievement which is beyond its power. Its influence over the half-developed and uneducated races of the world was alluded to by Viscount Burnham at a Public Dinner at the Connaught Rooms, who described the interest of the South Sea Islanders in travel pictures, and the Chinese in pictures of scientific experiment and discovery, whilst the Javanese, it appeared, concentrated most of their attention upon the pedal sewing machine in a series of films. Lord Beaverbrook, on the same occasion, referred to the amazing progress and development of the cinematograph business since the war, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., prophesied that in twenty years time there would not be a city in the world that had not its illustrated evening cinema paper. He advocated that a cinema should be attached to every elementary school in the kingdom, and maintained that in the future there was no sphere of life in which it would not play a great and beneficent part.

WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Richmond's Candidate.

Mrs. Margery Corbett Ashby, who has been adopted as the Liberal candidate for the Parliamentary Division of Richmond, Surrey, is the wife of Mr. A. B. Ashby, barrister. She took the classical tripos at Cambridge from Newnham College and her B.A. degree at Dublin. She is vice-chairman of the Wandsworth Board of Guardians, hon. secretary of the London branch of the National Council of Women, vice-chairman of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, and president of the Wandsworth Liberal Council.

J.P.'s as Sociologists.

It is expected that many of the new women magistrates will attend the forthcoming National Conference of Justices of the Peace, which will be held in London some time next month. The primary purpose of the Conference is to initiate a Magistrates' Association—the first ever formed in this country—and to establish a central bureau of information that will form a kind of criminological clearing-house, especially for dealing with the reformation of offenders. It is hoped that the meeting will be fully representative of all parts of the kingdom, and that the justices in every quarter sessions area will send delegates.

Jean Ingelow, Poetess.

Miss Jean Ingelow, whose centenary was celebrated last week, enjoyed an extraordinary popularity in the 'sixties, and still retained it well on into another generation. The *Manchester Guardian* pronounces her a poetic pacifist, for no line she ever wrote justified, much less praised, war. Miss Ingelow had Scotch blood in her veins, as her name testifies, but she was Lincolnshire by birth and a Londoner by adoption.

A New Indian Paper.

We have received the first number of *The Young Collegiate*, a new educational monthly from Bombay, which started in November of last year. This magazine is the outcome of a long-felt want by college students and others interested in college education. Its chief features will be views of leading educationists on matters of the moment affecting education, contributions from men and women students from all parts of the country, and reviews of educational publications. The first number contains a dedication, with portrait, of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, poetess and suffragist.

Employment of Married Women.

Dr. Marie Stopes, in her recent speech at the Women's Industrial League, on the employment of married women, spoke up eloquently on behalf of the "penalised wife." The restriction of married women to the home, she argued, was not of benefit either to the community or to the race. At present the hours for work outside the home had been entirely arranged to suit men workers, but Dr. Stopes saw no reason why there should not be an adjustment for married women. The names on colliery pay sheets exceeded by one-third the number of each day's workers, and it would be simple to make a similar arrangement where married women were employed, even in shops or in offices.

A Great Loss.

The death of the Hon. Mrs. Evelina Haverfield, from double pneumonia, is reported from Serbia. She went out there last September to take charge of an orphanage for Serbian children at Bania Bashta, and was working there until within a few days of her death. In the winter of 1914-15 she accompanied the late Dr. Elsie Inglis to Russia, where she acted as commander of the motor transport section of the Scottish Women's Hospital Unit. The following year she went with Dr. Inglis to Serbia, and from that time onwards devoted all her energies and income to helping the devastated country and its people.

WOMEN AND CRIME.

"I am not a Police Court Missionary," said Miss Rebecca West, in prefacing her remarkably interesting address last week at the Minerva Café, on "Women and Crime." Nor was she in agreement with Mrs. Gascoigne Hartley's views expressed in her recent book, "Women's Wild Oats," which professed to prove that women nowadays had too much liberty. Restrictions on women's liberty might easily lead to a Purdah system, and Miss West had no intention of advocating that women should be kept out of temptation, and under lock and key for fear that some of them might get into mischief, any more than she would prevent women from becoming shop-assistants because in a few rare cases women had robbed the till. Her contention was that when women were protected by seclusion they frequently found ways of being far more mischievous to society than when their abilities, ambitions and powers were given free play and encouragement in the community; and she certainly gave good grounds for her argument from Spanish ecclesiastical history. There had been nuns in Spain who could only find an outlet for their genius and energy in a life of fraud and imposture. They had exploited religious life for their own purposes, had been guilty of disgusting blasphemy, and had acquired enormous influence, but had succeeded, in reducing Spain to a second-rate Power. It would have been far better for that country, said the speaker, if its women had been granted full liberty to train and exercise their undoubted gifts!

Miss West was evidently of opinion that restraint and seclusion had manufactured women criminals, and was responsible for much of their former capriciousness, emotionalism and general tiresomeness. "To put it quite frankly," she said, "I think that we are probably much nicer than our great-grandmothers. We are no longer baulked or denied the opportunity to express ourselves."

"It was a real terror of women that led Dickens into enthusiasm over semi-idiots like Dora, and Thackeray into the creation of 'vegetables' like Amelia in 'Vanity Fair.' The much-extolled early Victorian woman was probably often a dragon in real life, simply because of her lack of freedom. Women must regard themselves as responsible human beings, and then they will have a proper sense of right and wrong."

In conclusion, Miss West remarked that they had got to face the danger of another anti-feminist movement from a quarter none of them expected—Labour. They could see this by the unsympathetic attitude of male labour to female labour, and by the fatuous suggestions Labour had made that women should return to their highly-supposititious homes.

CHILD SLAVES.

At a Mass Meeting in Trafalgar Square, presided over by Mr. Aneurin Williams, M.P., on Sunday, March 14th, the following resolution was proposed by Dr. J. M. Yonan, seconded by Miss Emily J. Robinson, and carried unanimously:—

"That in view of the fact that a multitude of Christian women and little girls, after the slaughter of their protectors and parents, have suffered forced conversion to Islam and have been enslaved in Turkish harems, the Government insist upon a Commission of European and native Christian members which shall examine into the facts and rescue of such victims and return them to their own homes."

The Resolution was forwarded to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and the Peace Conference.

There may be women voters who do not realise the meaning of this, and it is to them we would appeal, for if we do not use the power which enfranchisement gives us, are we worthy to possess it? How can we use this power more profitably than in securing the release of our shamefully ill-treated sisters?

IN PARLIAMENT.

Sugar.

Housewives who have given in their orders for sugar for jam-making purposes are now informed that the price will be 1s. 2d. per lb. Women are becoming very suspicious about these high prices, and are asking whether the fact that jam manufacturers have a great surplus of jam which they want to dispose of may not have something to do with this new advance in the price of sugar. Over and over again it has been stated in the House of Commons that there is a scarcity of sugar; but surely women who take a walk through the West End, or, we are told, near any of the big shops in the Provinces, must be extremely credulous to attach any weight to such statements. The confectioners' and sweet shops are crammed with the most expensive cakes, sweets and chocolate Easter eggs. We have seen displayed in shop windows chocolate eggs between three and four feet high and proportionately broad—all rich solid chocolate. In view of these costly exhibitions, is it not a little ridiculous for Mr. McCurdy to make the solemn statement in the House that "in considering a reduction of the amount of sugar allotted to confectioners we have been very strongly influenced by the fact that sweets of the cheaper variety are a substantial addition to the sugar ration of the juvenile population"?

National Kitchens.

Mr. McCURDY, in reply to a question by Mr. GILBERT, stated that the Ministry of Food is responsible for three national kitchens, all of which are in London. They have been run on a self-supporting basis.

Compulsory Work for Men and Women.

Mr. WILL THORNE asked the Prime Minister if he thought it right that every man or woman who was able to work should be compelled to do some useful work of some kind? Mr. Lloyd George seemed to think that was an interesting point of view, so Mr. Thorne, with the object, apparently of giving further information, asked him if he was aware that it had always been a principle laid down by the trades unions that every man or woman who was fit to work should be compelled to work?

It is a little difficult to reconcile this principle, so far as women are concerned, with the Pre-War Practices (Restoration) Act, for which the Trades Unions were responsible, unless we are also to understand that while all women should be compelled to work, men Trades Unionists reserve to themselves alone the right to decide what kind of work all women must do.

Board of Health (Wales).

Mr. ALFRED T. DAVIES asked the Minister of Health whether a woman had been appointed to the Welsh Board of Health; if any responsible positions under the Board had been allocated to women, and whether, in making appointments of staff, the Minister will give equal consideration to the suitability of persons of both sexes?

Dr. ADDISON replied that no woman had been appointed to the Welsh Board of Health. The organisation of the Board and its staff had not yet been completed, and due consideration would be given to the points raised in the hon. member's questions.

It is curious how frequently the Minister of Health has to be reminded of the fact that there are competent women available for work in which women have a special interest.

Resolution sent to Ministry of Health.

The National Executive Committee sent the following resolution to Dr. Addison:

"That this Committee strongly protests against the action of the Ministry of Health in reducing the height of rooms, and of limiting the number of Parlour Houses to be provided by local authorities, the health and efficiency of future generations being thereby seriously menaced."

In view of the fact that young people are, under the new Education Act, to continue their studies until they are sixteen or eighteen years of age, it is surely necessary to have one room, in which they can get some measure of quietness to do their work!

THE VOTE.

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EDITORIAL

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

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THE BASTARDY BILL, 1920.

We are not at all enamoured of the provisions of this Bill. In the first place we think the word "bastardy" should be deleted from our vocabulary in its application to illegitimate children. We are also of the opinion that the Workhouse and the Police Court should, if possible, be eliminated from the lives of unmarried mothers and their children. At present the Workhouse is the only refuge an unmarried mother can claim, if she is friendless, at the time of the birth of her child, and she can only get an Affiliation Order through a Police Court, and after the birth of her child. We do not think that the Provisions of the Bastardy Bill, 1920, will do very much to alter these particular difficulties.

We would suggest that, as every Municipality has now its Health Committee, and a Maternity and Child Welfare Committee, when a girl finds she is about to become a mother she should be able to apply to a member of the Maternity and Child Welfare Committee, who would do her best to persuade this girl to give the name of the father, and be empowered through the Municipal Authorities to secure from him some monetary assistance to help the girl over her confinement, the Affiliation Order to be obtained through the same authorities when the child's birth is registered. Maternity and Child Welfare Committees should have a Maternity Hospital, where, at the birth of the child both mother and child can have every necessary attention, and they should not be turned adrift immediately afterwards. In our opinion Municipalities should have hostels (which could easily become self-supporting if they were run properly) where an unmarried woman could stay with her baby, leaving it to be cared for during the day while she went out to earn its and her own living.

With regard to the Bastardy Bill itself, if this passes into law, we think it should be considerably amended. We are strongly opposed to the penalising of a woman if she refuses to give the name of the father of her child. Everything that can be done should be done to persuade her to disclose the man's name; but we know that in some cases nothing will induce a woman to do this, and we are strongly against any penalty being imposed upon her in such a case. In the interests of the freedom of the individual we are opposed to such a penalty; and if it is insisted upon we are confident that it will lead to blackmail.

We think also it should be made clear in the Bill that the amount to be paid by the father should be in accordance with his financial position, and that he should be required to give particulars of this position.

Clause 22, which makes all illegitimate children Wards of Court, and practically takes away from the unmarried mother the guardianship of her child, should, in our opinion, be deleted. The Children's Act provides

for any case in which there is neglect of a child, and the child can now be removed from an unfit guardian. We do not think that special laws of this nature should be made in respect to the guardianship of children whose mothers are not married. What we should like to see is a better administration of the existing laws for all children where neglect occurs.

Clause 26 enacts that proceedings taken under this Act shall be in camera if both parties consent, or if the Court in its discretion so order. These last nine words certainly ought to be deleted. We do not think this matter should be left to the discretion of the Court.

With regard to Schedule A, we think it would be advisable to delete the demand for the names and addresses of the witnesses, and also the enquiry as to the date of first and last connections. We think that everything that is possible should be done to keep these cases out of Police Courts, and we do not think that these last questions are suitable to be asked at the stage at which Schedule A is filled up.

It seems to us that the matter of Unmarried Mothers and their Children is essentially one to be dealt with by local Health Committees, or, preferably, by Maternity and Child Welfare Committees; and not as at present by the Workhouse authorities, Magistrates and Police Courts. We want to find some means of averting the sordid tragedies, so frequently occurring, of women and girls driven to desperation under our present system, to attempts to take their own life and that of their child; and we are strongly inclined to think that any extension of our present system, even under this new Bastardy Bill, will in the end do far more harm than good.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BILL.

In our issue of January 16th last we pointed out the unwisdom of making the contributions, and consequently the benefits, unequal for men and women under this new Insurance scheme. During the past week the Bill has been considered in committee, and our thanks are due to Mr. Burton Chadwick for the efforts he has made to secure an equal rate of benefit for unemployed men and women. The Law of the Medes and Persians was not more rigid than the idea imbedded deep in the minds of most of our legislators that whether women are working or unemployed the payments made to them must be less than those made to men. Members of the Government are still proclaiming that it costs less for a woman to live than it costs a man. We suppose that they will never be convinced of the fallacy of this opinion until women hold equal rank with themselves in Government positions. For their own sakes they will not then be likely to press for inequality of payments to themselves and their women colleagues. In the meantime, what they most need is a little imagination to help them deal with matters affecting men and women workers in other grades of society.

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III.—RACE MOTHERHOOD.

THE FUTURE OF THE SEXES.

The preceding article dealt with Professor Ward's account of woman's fall from her original high estate of Race Preserver to that of a parasite on society, contributing little, if anything, to the quality of the human species. "In fact most leisure class ideas tend in the direction of making the women of that class as useless as possible." Thus it is woman throughout historical times who has occupied a position tending to fix in the human mind the idea of her eternal subjection and of man's eternal superiority. "So universal is this attitude that a presentation of the real and fundamental relation of the sexes is something new to those who are able to see it, and something preposterous to those who are not. The idea that the female is naturally and really the superior sex seems incredible, and only the most liberal and emancipated minds, possessed of a large store of biological information are capable of realising it."

But already, more than a century ago individual women in various countries raised their voices and used their pens in an attempt to rally women to a study of their actual socially degraded position, and urged united action, having for its object the attainment of rights which should give them some share in the government and administration of the affairs of the world. But little headway was made, for

parasitic women

were in many cases their own enemies; until economic causes came into play, which have, as we see of late years, entirely revolutionised the status and position of women. Economic forces have always been at the root of the social changes and the higher development of the race, forcing it along the path of progress; and just as in the past those women who did their share in the world's work prevented the whole of womanhood from becoming parasitic, so in the recent crisis of a world-war the fact of women everywhere having had to take over the actual everyday work of the world, has done more in five years to make them conscious of their latent powers and of their mission as co-workers and co-administrators with men than did all the devoted suffrage propaganda of several generations. Several years before the war Professor Ward wrote: "A single glance at the last two centuries of the historic period, compared with the centuries that preceded them, shows such an immense change in woman's condition as to suggest that the vast downward curve has more than reached the lowest point, and that the ordinates have begun to shorten. . . . Not only this, but a closer scrutiny reveals the fact that the curve does not lie wholly in the same plane, and that the figure has three dimensions. In other words, it is not a cycle or circle, but a spiral, and the ends will never meet and restore a true gynæocracy. With the completion of a revolution both

man and woman

will find themselves on a far higher plane, and in a stage that, for want of a better term, may be called gynandrocatic, a stage in which both man and woman shall be free to rule themselves."

This is an almost prophetic forecast of the stage on which we are now entering. But it will require much conscious and wise self-development on the part of women before they will be fitted to undertake, with the best results, the full duties of Race Motherhood. Under Androcentric rule, property, and the protection of property, has become the basic inspiration of governments. Women must now, having undertaken new rights and responsibilities, see to it that Life, and the protection of Life, shall become the basic inspiration of both Legislation and of Administration. Women have learnt through the bitterest of experience that it is not enough to be a mother in the Home only; she must follow the young son and daughter out into the world, and must help consciously to make that world a place of security and of peaceful development. The destruction and deterioration of life in war and in war's after effects

is terrible enough to contemplate, but the destruction and deterioration of life in pre-war times was, though less apparent and catastrophic, equally race destructive. A recently published Report on the medical examinations of men of military age between November, 1917, and October, 1918, states that "only 36 per cent. could be regarded as up to the normal standard of health and strength for their age." And one of the medical examiners remarks caustically: "It is not good hygienic economy to aim at immense commercial and industrial success if by so doing you produce a race of seniles at forty."

Lady Astor remarked when she took her seat in "the Mother of Parliaments" that she knew no place which more required the influence of women. She was no doubt realising subconsciously that she was in the presence of a traditional and absolute androcracy, which had for generations been crushing out relentlessly all aspirations of conscious Race Motherhood. She must have realised that these men with whom she was surrounded had for long ages exercised sole control on the conditions of life. They had made laws, not only about armaments, commerce, political and international questions, but also about social, domestic and economic questions, without consulting the subjected sex as to their wishes or interests. Child-bearing, the education and rearing of children, questions of food purity, food supply and distribution, which questions all intimately concern the

mother and the home-maker

were being decided by men, in a way to suit male commercial and military pursuits, not in a way to favour the best and highest interests of the race. Under the long discipline of past ages, the female in nature, "being the race," developed maternal courage, and maternal efficiency. Some of this courage and efficiency has naturally been stultified under more recent androcentric rule, but if women will now study and learn from the past, and apply their knowledge and mother-wit to the problems of the present, they will be laying now the sure foundations of that gynandrocacy which Professor Lester Ward foresaw as being the new, conscious leap forward of the race, and will fulfil the saying of the French writer, Letourneau:

"The condition of women may even furnish a good criterion of the degree of development of a people."

DORA B. MONTEFIORE.

[It is impossible in the limits of a newspaper article to do any sort of justice to the scientific arguments adduced by Professor Lester Ward in support of his gynæocentric theory. The Minerva Press is, therefore, publishing shortly a pamphlet on the subject, giving in popular form the theory and its implications. Those interested in these short articles should obtain the pamphlet, price 6d.—D. B. M.]

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT FUND.

We must have Women in Parliament, and if we want them we must send them there. The best of Candidates cannot do everything. Election expenses have to be met and they are very heavy. Remember it takes several hundred pounds to run one election, but it has to be done. I must therefore call upon you who understand our aims and read our paper to send me your contribution (as much and as often as possible) so that our special Women in Parliament Fund will be all ready for immediate use.

E. KNIGHT,

Women's Freedom League, Hon. Treasurer,
144, High Holborn,
London, W.C.1.

MINERVA CLUB OPENING.

A Public Dinner and House Warming was held at the new Minerva Club in Brunswick Square on Saturday evening, and was attended by some sixty guests. At the close of an attractive and daintily served dinner, Dr. Knight rose to propose the health of this latest venture of the Women's Freedom League, which she described as a new limb of the Society, that in due course would be followed by many similar ones. She briefly reviewed the early activities of the first Vegetarian Restaurant at the League's offices in High Holborn, which, starting some years ago in a single room that served for kitchen as well as dining-room, soon overflowed into two public restaurants with a kitchen overhead. The third was now being started in Brunswick Square in connection with the new club, and was already being largely patronised by Bloomsbury residents. Membership of this club was open to all men and women who were in sympathy with progressive thought, especially in its application to women's efforts to secure full equality—political, social, and economic—with men, and showed their sympathy in a practical way by their membership of the Women's Freedom League. The chief object of the club was to stimulate by discussion, debate and social gatherings a live interest in political and social questions and in the literature and drama of the day. The subscription was £1 1s. annually, payable from March 1st, and an entrance fee of 10s. 6d., which was suspended for the first 50 members.

Miss Underwood reminded the audience that the new venture was entirely due to the energy and public spirit of Dr. Knight and Mrs. Fisher, who had long had this project in mind as a means of increasing the League's influence. She also pointed out that although many of the objects which the Women's Freedom League had been striving for were now obtained, the fight for women's rights was by no means finished, and much ground still remained to be covered. Women now entering public life stood in need of training, and even those who were not called to any definite work required to understand public events, so as to take an intelligent interest. Much educational work, therefore, still remained for the League to do, and this they were now endeavouring to increase by means of a Model Parliament at the offices in High Holborn, which it was hoped to commence before long.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the poetess, a picturesque figure in Eastern draperies of black and gold, paid a graceful tribute to the work of the League, in beautiful English and poetic phraseology. She particularly thanked its members for their sympathy and active efforts on behalf of the political freedom of Indian women, and advised them to dedicate their new venture to Pallas Athena, as the name of the club implied, just as Indian women consecrated similar efforts to the Indian Goddess of Wisdom.

Mrs. Nevinson, in a speech which provoked much laughter by its dry humour, described how the League originally broke away from the "papal claims" of the W.S.P.U., and traced its various vicissitudes through days of obloquy and much hurling of missiles to its present emancipation as a leader of public opinion.

Miss Normanton, B.A., praised the dinner, but put in a plea for more potatoes in the menu on a future occasion! Mrs. Mustard and Mrs. Pierotti also spoke, and Miss Elsie Mitchell (manageress) and Miss Cohn (hon. secretary) briefly described the extent of accommodation afforded by the Club, for resident and non-resident members.

The Minerva Club has twenty-three bedrooms and four reception rooms, including the pleasant Café dining-room. Most of the rooms overlook Brunswick Square. The great idea of the originators of the scheme has been to make the club as home-like as possible. Residents bring their own furniture for their own private rooms, whilst the public rooms are artistically and prettily furnished. In time it is also hoped to form a good general library specialising in feminist books.

BOOK REVIEWS.

The Women's Victory—and After: Personal Reminiscences, 1911-1918. By Millicent Garrett Fawcett, LL.D. Cloth 3s. 6d. net; paper 2s. 6d. net. (Can be obtained at this office.)

This is the long-looked-for sequel to Mrs. Fawcett's first book on "Women's Suffrage: A Short History of a Great Movement," which was issued in 1911. In the present volume the history of the seven intervening years is brought up-to-date ending with the historic date, February 6th, 1918, when the Royal Assent was given to the Bill which enfranchised all women over thirty. The fate of the various Suffrage Bills before the final triumph of 1918 is fully traced, the turn of the tide, in Mrs. Fawcett's estimation, being the great Pilgrimage organised by the National Union of Women Suffrage Societies in 1913, coupled with Miss Emily Davison's tragic sacrifice on Derby Day of the same year. The growing sympathy of the Press also coincided with this special period. The faithful allegiance of the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Aberdeen Free Press*, and *Punch* are gratefully acknowledged, and the growing sympathies of the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Standard* (under its new editorship) are sympathetically alluded to, with, above all, the famous *Times* American Supplement "on the Pacific Coast," which, to the amazement and joy of suffragists, wrote most warmly in praise of the complete success of women's suffrage on the whole Pacific seaboard. The suffrage plays composed by well-known women writers, such as Miss Cicely Hamilton and Miss Elizabeth Robins, and the equally valuable, because more subtle, support of dramatic critics such as Mr. Bernard Shaw, Sir James Barrie, Mr. Arnold Bennett, and M. Brieux, are also mentioned in this connection as leaveners of public opinion in favour of the women's cause. The world war and women's war work as it affected public opinion occupy important space in Mrs. Fawcett's review. Perhaps the most illuminating chapter for present-day suffragists is the one towards the end showing "The Difference the Vote has Made" by the number of measures effecting large improvements in the status of women which have rapidly gone through all their stages in both Houses of Parliament since the passing of the Reform Act of 1918.

Selected Poems. By Lady Margaret Sackville. (London: Constable and Co. 1919.) 6s. net. (Can be obtained at this office.)

This beautiful volume hardly needed Mr. Wilfrid Blunt's "Foreword" to commend it to all intelligent and beauty-loving readers of poetry. Its intrinsic merit is such that it stands alone. Its contents are of such a high order—so chaste and so varied—that we linger lovingly over them, not knowing which to select as favourites.

A considerable part of the book is occupied with *Dramatic Poems*. These alone might well have held more than a column by way of review, and, sad to say, they are too long for our little space. But mention must be made of the sonority and power of "Orpheus Among the Shades," which is handled with a great breadth of imagination. More playful and (from our point of view) hardly as satisfactory is the poem entitled "The Poet at the Court of Pan"; but it is a light and dainty piece of work. "The Wooing of Dionysius" marks, in our judgment, Lady Margaret Sackville's high water-mark both of conception and achievement.

Here is beauty of versification linked with dignity and fineness of thought in a quite remarkable degree. Here, too, is brought out—perhaps more than anywhere else in her work—the notable love for nature in most of her moods. The poet is evidently a lover of the sea and of the seasons. Here Spring is fittingly celebrated, Summer, Autumn, and the crisp greyness of Winter; each in turn is sung. But Dionysius, on the whole, seems to be a bit of a prig.

Women's Freedom League.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS, W.F.L.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Wednesday, April 14.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn. Speaker: Mrs. Tanner. Subject: "The New Education Act."

Friday, April 16.—Model Election, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn. Particulars later.

Tuesday, April 20.—Public Meeting, Richmond. Speakers: Mrs. Chas. Beatty, C.B.E., Miss F. A. Underwood. Subject: "The League of Nations." Chair: Councillor (Mrs.) Edwards. Admission free, 8 p.m.

Saturday, April 24.—Women's Freedom League Annual Conference, Council Chamber, Caxton Hall, Westminster, 10 a.m.

Friday, May 7.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C. Debate: "That only very exceptional women are fitted to sit in Parliament." Opener: Councillor Margaret Hodge. Opposer: Miss Helena Normanton, B.A. Admission is. 7.30 p.m.

PROVINCES.

Saturday, March 27.—Portsmouth. Jumble Sale, Unitarian Library, High Street. Helpers, 2 p.m. Public, 3 p.m.

OTHER SOCIETIES

Monday, March 29.—Redcar. Mrs. Schofield Coates will address Women's Section of Labour Party on "Mothers' Pensions." 3 p.m.

Wednesday, March 31.—Thornaby-on-Tees. Mrs. Schofield Coates will address Women's Section of Labour Party, on "Mothers' Pensions." 3 p.m.

BRANCH NOTES.

MONTGOMERY BOROUGHS.

On Thursday, March 4th, over 500 members and sympathisers of the Women's Freedom League attended an "At Home" in the Scala Theatre, Newtown, to do homage to Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, who came to speak on "Women in India." The theatre was decorated very beautifully with flowers and plants (kindly lent by Sir Ed. Pryce-Jones), and the colours of the League. The tea was given by members and friends. Major David Davies, M.P., was unable to attend, but sent a message to the meeting, and Dr. Owen Morris, M.A., presided. Dr. Morris's views on full equality of opportunity between men and women are well known in the county, and his very eloquent speech voiced his sincere convictions. Mrs. Naidu received a great ovation, and her magnificent speech, which lasted for over an hour, was listened to with rapt attention, her remarks being punctuated with frequent applause. The brilliancy of her oratory and her enthusiasm and burning love for India roused the great admiration of all present, and we are looking forward to hearing her again at an early date.

A very cordial welcome was given to Mrs. Richard Jones, Pendas, who spoke on the Women's Freedom League platform for the first time, and in a delightful speech proposed a vote of thanks to the speakers, which was seconded by Miss Patty Hamer. The musical items were of a very high order, and our best thanks are due to Miss Beatrice Gettins, L.R.A.M., Miss Betty Jones, Miss Jean Alexander and Mrs. Barratt, who contributed to that part of the programme.

On Friday, in Llanfyllin Town Hall, a similar meeting was held, when Mrs. Cartwright very ably presided. Mrs. Naidu again spoke, and captivated her audience. Tea was given by the members and friends, and the musical part was sustained by Miss Harbridge, who brought her cello and delighted us all, as also did the Misses Davies, Wynn and Astley. Mrs. Louis Jones, M.A., proposed a vote of thanks to the speakers, which was seconded by Miss Mabel Watkins, and the singing of "Land of My Fathers" brought to the close a most successful meeting.

ALIX M. CLARK, Hon. Secretary.

PORTSMOUTH.

Miss Frances Prewett gave an excellent address on "Woman—Past, Present and Future," at our monthly Public Meeting on March 17th. A large audience followed her remarks attentively and appreciatively, and expressed the hope that she would come again. A resolution was passed and an animated discussion took place on the Medical Officer's report on Venereal Disease. In aid of the Election Fund a Whist Drive and Dance is being arranged. Particulars will appear later.

OUR TREASURY.

NATIONAL FUND.

Amount previously acknowledged, October, 1907, to December, 1919, \$33,542 6s. 2d.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Amount previously acknowledged				180	3	10
Special Emergency War Fund—						
"A Friend"				1	17	6
Women Members of Parliament Fund—						
Miss M. Considine				2	6	
Per Manchester Branch:						
Miss A. E. Hordern				10	0	
Swansea Branch				2	0	0
				212	6	
Mrs. Despard				20	0	0
Miss Janet L. Buntin				3	0	0
Mrs. Schofield Coates				3	0	0
Mrs. F. Earengy, B.A.				5	0	
Miss Raleigh				5	0	
Miss M. I. Saunders				5	0	
Mrs. Caird				3	6	
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Mrs. Trickeys				2	0	
Miss Helen F. Church				1	0	
Miss Lowe				1	0	
Miss F. K. Morris				1	0	
Mrs. Price				1	0	
Miss Sturton				1	0	
Mrs. Young				1	0	
Collections				7	14	9
Tickets				2	4	0
Sundries				1	0	0
Branches—						
Westcliff				6	10	
Branches Capitation Fees—						
Swansea				2	0	0
				£225	15	11

Cheques to be made payable to the Women's Freedom League, and crossed "London, Provincial and South-Western Bank, Ltd."

NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS' CONFERENCE, MARGATE, Easter, 1920.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE CAMPAIGN.

For the last eight years the Women's Freedom League have held a campaign at the above Conference. For many years our battle-cry was "Votes for Women"; then at the Conferences in Cambridge, 1918, and Cheltenham, 1919, "Equal Pay for Equal Work" was our cry; but when the resolution "Equal Pay for Equal Work" was passed by a majority of thousands in Cheltenham last year we thought our work in that direction was finished. Now the National Union of Teachers have gone back on their own policy and adopted the Burnham Report, which gives very unequal pay to men and women, and is an intolerable insult to the women teachers of our country. The Women's Freedom League will be in Margate this year, and a public meeting will be held in the Congregational Schoolroom either on April 6th or 7th (definite date announced next week), when Mrs. How Martyn, B.Sc., and others will speak on Equal Pay for Equal Work. We shall also have the great pleasure of hearing Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, who will speak on "Women in India."

We are bringing out a special Educational Number of THE VOTE with articles by well-known educationalists. Contributions towards the expenses of the campaign are urgently needed. Please send them as early as possible to Dr. E. Knight, Hon. Treasurer, 144, High Holborn, London.

TOTTENHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

We are delighted to learn that Miss Rosa F. Cox, an old member of the Women's Freedom League, is standing for election to the West Green Ward. Polling takes place to-morrow (Saturday). Miss Cox has our wholehearted good wishes for her success in this contest. For fifteen years she has been a Head Teacher under the London County Council, has been a life-long resident in the Parish of Tottenham, and is standing as an Independent candidate, urging that the woman's point of view should have a chance of direct expression in local administration.

MISS MAUDE ROYDEN.

Kensington Town Hall. Fellowship Services on Sunday, 3: Dr. Percy Dearmer—"Five Quarters"; 6.30: Miss Maude Royden. Subject: "The Meaning of Palm Sunday." Master of the Music, Mr. Martin Shaw.

FRIDAY,
MARCH 26,
1920.

THE VOTE

ONE
PENNY
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

TO SAVE THE WOMEN & CHILDREN!

A few years ago the question of Venereal Disease, Promiscuous Intercourse, the White Slave Traffic, and all the allied problems were spoken about with bated breath as something altogether too dreadful to be talked about, and especially were they tabooed for discussion between men and women.

Now the pendulum seems to have swung to the extreme opposite, and not only (and quite rightly) are these questions discussed openly and freely in public, but it is actually suggested by the Medical Officer of Health for Portsmouth and accepted by the Health Committee that a knowledge of the use of prophylactics and self-disinfectants shall be disseminated among the men of this town. In other words, the sons, husbands and brothers of the women of Portsmouth, after an appeal to them to be clean and moral, will be told how to prevent any ill-effects from acts of immorality. And the argument for this is, "To save the women and children!" Are the women willing to be saved at such a cost?

Those belonging to the Portsmouth Branch of the Women's Freedom League certainly are not, and we are vigorously protesting against any such measures being introduced, and are asking other women's organisations to do the same.

The following resolution has been sent to the Mayor and Town Council: "That this meeting of the Women's Freedom League protests strongly against the proposals for the prevention of venereal disease as outlined in Dr. Fraser's report. The meeting is of opinion that the adoption of these proposals will lead to the impression that casual intercourse is being made safe and is countenanced by the State, and will also lead to sex excesses and moral degeneration. As preventive measures the meeting is strongly in favour of the constructive policy advocated by the Medical Women's Federation, i.e.:

- (1) Facilities for early marriage.
- (2) An equal moral standard for men and women.
- (3) Equal pay for equal work.
- (4) Adequate housing reform.
- (5) Provision by Public Authorities of opportunities for both sexes to enjoy rational recreation together, and share their social and public life.

(6) The recognition of the important part played by alcohol as an ally of promiscuous intercourse, and so of venereal infection."

Women of Portsmouth must refuse to have their town dragged into such doubtful fame, and must demand that, even though it may take longer to show actual results, this plague shall be tackled at the root by the insistence that men shall live up to the same standard of morals as women.

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