

THE ANTI-SUFFRAGE REVIEW

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THE SUFFRAGIST APPEAL TO THE ELECTORS.

IN this REVIEW we have no party politics, so we can extend our sympathy to Liberals and Conservatives alike, to Liberals because of the persecution which their leaders are suffering at the hands of the Suffragettes, to Conservatives because of the persistence with which deputations of importunate non-voters press candidates for pledges that, if elected, they will support "the women's cause." Now many of these gentlemen find themselves in the position of the candidate at Coventry, who said quite frankly that he did not know what the women's cause was. He was prepared to support a woman suffrage amendment to a Reform Bill, if a sufficient number of women really wanted it, but at present he met as many women against it as for it, and what under those circumstances was a poor candidate to do? Well, we can assure him that he and his fellow candidates have our hearty sympathy, and if only they will stick to their refusal to pledge themselves to vote for woman suffrage until a clear majority of the women of England demand it, they shall have our unflinching support, and we will make it our business to demonstrate that at present women suffragists are still "an insignificant fraction" of the women of the United Kingdom.

That the Conservative party, upon whom the Suffragists at present set their hopes, is deeply divided on the question we have upon no less an authority than that of its leader. Mr.

Balfour has often been credited with suffragist sympathies, but he entirely declines to include the question in the official programme of the party, and his statement that individual members are free to hold what view they like will not satisfy those ardent spirits of the W.S.P.U., whose "election address" declares that they have "no faith in the matter being left to be decided by private members." They have not forgotten the faithless four hundred and twenty, whose election pledges were so singularly falsified by subsequent division lists!

So the Liberals are being given a bad time. "Every vote given to a Liberal," we are told, "is a vote for forcible feeding," regardless of the fact that prison discipline is not controlled by Parliament, and that His Majesty's Judges are unaffected by political changes. We fear that in questions of constitutional law the Suffragettes are as weak as they are in history, and that side by side with that fiction of the lost historic privileges of the female voter they will hand on to the "Younger Suffragists" a companion picture of the Prime Minister editing the prison regulations or suggesting to the High Court the terms of its judgments.

Even if a Liberal candidate pronounces in their favour, it is to avail him nothing. Liberal candidates, we are told, when returned to Parliament become mere private soldiers, with neither power nor will to vote except as their leaders tell them. Why this should not equally apply to

Conservative candidates, the W.S.P.U. does not tell us. Mr. Balfour has declined as definitely as Mr. Asquith to pledge his party, and the only logical course for the Suffragettes would seem to be to keep every candidate out, and so to close the doors of Parliament and bring the business of the nation to a standstill.

But could anything be more foolish than this wild talk of a band of irreconcilables? What is it, after all, but a schoolboys' barring out, very amusing while it lasts, but bound to yield to superior force directly that force decides to assert itself, and necessarily followed by unpleasant results for the mutineers. Will the electors be convinced by jeering women outside the doors of public meetings? Will this have any other effect than to make them hasten inside for warmth and sanity? It may make them pitiful—we are all sorry to see so much misguided enthusiasm running to seed—but does it make any of us more ready to entrust the destinies of this country at so perilous a moment to a party with such elementary notions of the difficult art of government?

NOTES AND NEWS.

IN view of the imminence of the General Election, with some aspects of which we deal in our leading column, Lord Cromer, as President of the Men's League for Opposing Woman Suffrage, has issued through the press a strong and forcible appeal. On the chance that there are some of our readers whom it may have escaped, we quote one or two passages which, we fancy, will be most telling as arguments should they be engaged in the task of persuasion. "It is a fact of extreme significance," writes Lord Cromer, "that the largest petition ever presented to Parliament in connection with this subject should have been that of women not desiring to have the vote imposed upon them, and that among the most earnest opponents of female suffrage are included many highly intellectual women, engaged often in certain forms of public work, as well as a

great number of experienced and thoughtful women of the working class. Their opposition rests upon the broad fact that the physiological distinction of sex carries with it the widest divergence of mental and moral aptitudes. . . . The expectation and probably, with reasonable people, the strongest argument, for female suffrage, namely, that the position of women of the working classes will thereby be raised, is negated by an examination of the actual causes that have affected both wages and the conditions of work. A number of the feminist leaders have declared themselves opposed to almost all legislation in which difference of sex is regarded, and, in particular, to laws for the protection of women in factories. The restraints, much needed in the interests of the race, upon the employment of women before and after child-birth have been singled out for special denunciation, by, at all events, some prominent leaders of the suffragist movement." * * *

IN another and an earlier paragraph of his letter Lord Cromer lays stress on the certainty that the bestowal of the suffrage will be followed by a demand for seats in Parliament, and for the appointment of women as Ministers. This is an aspect of the question which is too often pooh-poohed and ridiculed; but it is one which appealed with especial force to Mr. Gladstone. When in April, 1892, he was asked to support a Bill which was then before the House of Commons for extending the Parliamentary suffrage to women, he gave the following among his reasons for declining:—"I am bound in considering this Bill to take into view not only what it enacts, but what it involves. The first of these, though important, is small in comparison with the last. What the Bill enacts is simply to place the individual woman on the same footing in regard to Parliamentary elections as the individual man. She is to vote, she is to propose or nominate, she is to be designated by the law as competent to use and to direct with advantage not only to the community but to herself all those public agencies which belong to our system of Parliamentary representation. So much for what the Bill enacts; now for what it involves. For a long time we drew a distinction between competency to vote and competency to sit in Parliament. But long before our electorate had attained to its present proportions, this distinction

was felt to involve a palpable inconsistency, and consequently it died away. It surely cannot be revived, and if it cannot be revived, then the woman's vote carries with it, whether by the same Bill or by a consequential Bill, the woman's seat in Parliament. If the woman's vote carries with it the woman's seat, have we at this point reached our terminus, and found a standing ground which we can in reason and in justice regard as final? Capacity to sit in the House of Commons now legally and practically draws in its train capacity to fill every office in the State. Can we alter this rule and determine to have two categories of members of Parliament, one of them, the established and the larger one, consisting of persons who can travel without check all along the lines of public duty and honour; the other, the novel and the smaller one, stamped with disability for the discharge of executive, administrative, judicial, or other public duty? Such a stamp would, I apprehend, be a brand. There is nothing more odious, nothing more untenable, than an inequality in legal privilege which does not stand upon some principle in its nature broad and clear. Is there here such a principle, adequate to show that, when capacity to sit in Parliament has been established, the title to discharge executive and judicial duty can be withheld? Tried by the test of feeling the distinction would be offensive. Would it stand better under the laws of logic? It would stand still worse, if worse be possible." * * *

IN point of sheer impudence the demand made by the young woman who assaulted Mr. Churchill at Bristol that her dogwhip might be returned to her is difficult to beat. The only parallel that occurs to us is in a criminal prosecution many years ago, when the question of guilt or innocence turned on the identity of a rather battered hat. If it was shown to belong to the prisoner his conviction was inevitable; if the proof on that point was inconclusive, there was a loophole for escape. The jury took a merciful view, and returned a verdict of acquittal. The prisoner was discharged and told he might leave the dock. He hesitated, however, and looked appealingly to the judge. "Well, my man, what is it?" said that functionary. "Beg pardon, my Lord, but mayn't the police give me back my hat?" * * *

IN the *Englishwoman* for January Miss Clementina Black sums up the year's

progress of the suffrage movement. And it is instructive to find that among discouraging symptoms she considers the most damaging to be the formation of "The People's Suffrage Federation," which is working for adult suffrage irrespective of sex. There are three main dangers, according to Miss Black, in such a demand. (1) It is the experience of suffragist speakers, she tells us, that the great objection brought forward, especially by working men, to the enfranchisement of women, is an objection to the enfranchisement of *all* women. "While very many of them are found ready to favour the immediate enfranchisement of women who are at present disfranchised solely by their sex, *very few fail to be alarmed at the idea of a majority of women voters over men voters.*" (2) The experience of the past shows that when legislation for the enfranchisement of both men and women is proposed, the claims of the women are apt to be dropped, and the men alone enfranchised. "We women suffragists have not forgotten the lesson of 1884 when, under pressure from the most powerful of modern Prime Ministers, no less than 104 Liberal members of Parliament who had declared themselves in favour of women's suffrage voted against it." And lastly, contends Miss Black, even if it is desirable that eventually every woman in these islands should have a vote, it does not follow that it is desirable to enfranchise all of them at once.

THESE arguments may appeal to "the young women of the lower middle class who earn their livelihood in various depressing and ill-paid occupations," upon whom, according to Miss Black, there has come so sudden an awakening of "political zeal and enthusiasm." But they are scarcely calculated to satisfy the vast mass of married women of all classes throughout the kingdom who are to be so complacently excluded in favour of their self-supporting sisters and daughters. However little the working man may like the idea of his "missus" being placed on a voting equality with himself, he is not going to let her be placed at a disadvantage as compared with "young women of the lower middle class."

THE same writer admits that the tactics of the militant suffragists have alienated a considerable number of possible supporters, but, on the other hand,

have attracted persons who otherwise would have remained neutral; perhaps, on the whole, there has been equality of loss and gain. In her condemnation of what she calls the "ill-advised action of the authorities," Miss Black makes no suggestion as to what they could have done with women and girls who are prepared to go to all lengths of violence, who defy every prison rule, and who band themselves together to attempt suicide. Miss Black kindly places on the "credit side" of her account the activity of the Woman's Anti-Suffrage League. Mr. Pickwick envied the facility with which Mr. Peter Magnus' friends were amused, and we are equally envious of Miss Black's capacity for innocent enjoyment. It is sufficient for us to know that our League stepped in at a moment when the anti-suffrage case was going by default, and when it was an article of popular faith that all women of culture, influence, and position were clamorous for the vote. That fiction has been exploded, and the total number of the advocates of the franchise has been shown to bear a very minute proportion to the whole womanhood of the country. The labours, moreover, of those who were employed to obtain signatures to Mr. Massie's monster petition disclosed an amount of fierce opposition to the granting of the Parliamentary suffrage among the wives and widows of working men which astonished even those who fancied they were familiar with every phase of humble life.

A QUESTION of more interest than importance arises out of the fact that several women, either by sheer inadvertence or through the masculine appearance of their Christian names, are included in the Parliamentary register for the current year. It has been ascertained that eight women voted at the last General Election, and there is some variety of opinion as to the duty of a returning officer should a duly qualified female voter demand a ballot paper. The High Bailiff of Southwark, in a letter to the *Times*, urges the necessity for some common agreement being arrived at by returning officers throughout the kingdom. And though there has been no recent judicial ruling on the subject, he is convinced that women can under no circumstances have the right to vote at a Parliamentary election. He has given instructions accordingly that no woman is to be allowed to poll at the stations in the divisions where he is returning

officer. Apart from other considerations, he points out that in the case of a very narrow majority, if it were known that one or more women had voted, the costly process of a scrutiny would almost inevitably follow, which it is clearly the duty of a returning officer to prevent, if legitimately within his province. * * *

BUT the main reasons which have weight with the High Bailiff are derived from the third section of the Representation of the People Act of 1867, and the seventh section of the Ballot Act, as construed by the Courts of Law. The former provides that every *man* shall, if duly qualified, be entitled to be duly registered, and, when registered, to vote, *if he is not subject to any legal incapacity*. The Court of Common Pleas, merged since 1880 in the King's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice, decided in the case of *Chorlton v. Lings*, that a woman was not a "man" within the meaning of the section, notwithstanding the provision in Lord Brougham's Act that words importing masculine gender should be taken to include females unless the contrary were expressly provided. Women, moreover, were subject to a legal incapacity from voting at Parliamentary elections, and therefore fell within the exception contained in the Act of 1867. * * *

THE seventh section of the Ballot Act of 1872 provides that every person whose name is on the register shall be entitled to demand and receive a ballot paper, and to vote, provided that nothing in that section should entitle any person to a vote who is prohibited from voting by any statute or by the common law. It has been contended on these words that the returning officer is bound by the register, though it may by error contain a woman's name. But the Court of Common Pleas, in *Stone v. Joliffe* (decided four years after *Chorlton v. Lings*) held that, though the register was, as a rule, conclusive to the returning officer, exception must be made "in the case of persons who from some inherent, or, for the time being, irremovable quality in themselves, have not, either by prohibition of statutes or at common law, the status of Parliamentary electors, such as Peers, *women*, etc." * * *

MEANWHILE, it seems impossible to kill the fiction that women have in some

remote past been allowed to vote for members of Parliament. We dealt with it last month, and still we find the daughter of so learned an author as Mrs. Stopes alluding to "the vote which we have exercised in the past, and which the law of the land still allows." That any candid disputant should make such a statement in the face of the decision of the House of Lords in the case of the Scottish lady graduates is a melancholy reflection on her logical capacity. We referred to the decision at the time, but it is necessary that we should quote once more the words of the Lord Chancellor in giving his judgment against the claimants. "No authentic and plain case," said Lord Loreburn, "of a woman giving a vote was brought before your Lordships. It is incomprehensible to me that anyone acquainted with our laws, or the methods by which they are ascertained, can think—if, indeed, anyone does think—there is room for argument on such a point. It is notorious that this voting has, in fact, been confined to men." It is a constant reproach brought against women as a sex, and the charge has no small bearing on the franchise question, that they will be bound by no rules which conflict with their sense of what is due to them. The militant suffragettes, whose latest equipment, by the way, is a complete set of burglar's tools, have shown this over and over again in action. The calm denial which Mrs. Stopes opposes to the ruling of the highest legal authorities, is an illustration of the same frame of mind working in the realm of controversy.

* * *

THE writings of Artemus Ward, the philosopher showman, and one of the pioneers of Yankee humour, are little known to the present generation. But in the "fifties" and "sixties" of the last century his shrewd common sense and comprehensive outlook on life were as popular among both branches of the Anglo-Saxon race as are the meditations of Mr. Dooley to-day. History moves in cycles, and we learn that in the days when Artemus Ward wrote and flourished there was a "Bunkumville Female Moral Reformers' and Wimin's Rites Associashun." The members are represented as forcing their way into Mr. Ward's show and treating him much as our suffragettes treat Mr. Asquith. Before their deputation retreated they were addressed by Mr. Ward in a very moving allocution, which we venture to reproduce.

"My female friends," said I, "be ye levee, I've a few remarks to remark; wa them well. The female woman is one of the greatest institoo-shuns of which this land can boste; It's onpossible to get along without her. Had there bin no female wimin in the world, I should scarcely be here with my unparaleld show on this very occashun. She is good in sickness—good in wellness—good all the time. O woman, woman!" I cried, my feelings worked up to a hi pitch, "you air a angle when you behave yourself; but when you take off your proper appairal & (mettyforically spoken) get into pantyloons—when you desert your fire-sides, & with your heds full of wimin's rites noshuns go round like roaring lyons, seeking whom you may devour somebody—in short, when you undertake to play the man, you play the devil and air an emfatic noosance. My female friends," I continued, as they were indignantly departin, "wa well what A. Ward has sed!"

* * *

A CORRESPONDENT writes to us from Albany (N.Y., U.S.A.):—"It may interest your readers to hear something of the impression made on a normal American woman by Mrs. Pankhurst. I heard her first speech (in Boston), a fine one in form and in emotional power, and unspoiled, of course, by anything rowdy. But all that was true and forceful in her presentment of the evils of sweat-shop labour, of the cruelty of a too low age of consent for girls, of the crime of a divorce law that bears harder on the woman than on the man . . . all indeed of her effect was spoiled to a critical mind by her conclusion, 'None of this can be remedied until women vote.' For the very women of Massachusetts to whom she spoke have seen these very evils ably dealt with by men in their own State. . . . If Englishwomen are tempted to despair of men's desire or ability to amend their law, let them consider that in this Union all a woman's property is free from her husband's control in twenty-seven States, and almost all in fourteen more, while in six more only the community property is under his control, and to the latter six belongs *Idaho, where women vote*. . . . That while six non-suffrage States make a woman co-guardian of her children, only one of the four suffrage States does so. That in fourteen States a married woman may be an executrix, as an unmarried woman may in almost all, but that in

three of the woman suffrage States a married woman may not be an executrix. That seats are ordered by law for all female employees in twenty-one States, including only two of the suffrage States. That while thirteen of the non-suffrage States make the labouring day shorter for women than for men, Colorado alone of the suffrage States does so, and that only for girls under sixteen."

POWER, DIRECT AND INDIRECT.

THE influence of women—charming women especially—has always been very great. Consider St. Teresa, who twisted each man she met round her little finger, were he donkey-boy or Archbishop! Before Teresa there was Eve, of whom Adam, her husband, said:—

"The woman—the woman whom Thou gavest to be with me! she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

He was resenting her interference, feeling that he had known better than she did, thinking that, left to himself, he would not have gone wrong. And still, down all the ages, men have gone on yielding to the persuasions of their women; and—at least when things have turned out badly—have been annoyed with themselves for doing so. To-day, if women are wise, they will make very sure of the foundations upon which their influence rests, and will be chary of attempting to stretch it beyond its supports, in directions where it will be resented if not entirely disregarded.

The philosophers are fond of telling us that our power is solely the result of sex. Von Hartmann, for instance, says:—

" . . . This dominion is so great that among all peoples the male sex is subjected to the rule of the female, despite appearances to the contrary. The relationship thus established usually survives the period of cohabitation and impresses its seal on the whole of social life."

We may venture to think the philosophers prejudiced. Accounting for the power of their wives in this narrow fashion, they seem to join hands with the least thoughtful among mankind, who regard women solely as instruments of pleasure. It will generally be conceded that man consults or obeys woman not only because she is his mate, but because he finds her his

spiritual complement—sometimes his spiritual superior. He sees her tender and self-sacrificing and patient; earnest and pure; beautiful in body and in soul; he believes her a sort of goddess set on a shrine above the sordid, rough-and-tumble world of competition and avarice, in which perforce he must spend laborious days. Further, he thinks her a prophetess, divinely illuminated, able to discern wisdom and truth by some mysterious gift of intuition more awful and compelling than his own slow methods of syllogism or induction. Lastly—and this is perhaps the most important point—woman, in the eyes of man, is always the *mother*: mother of his children, still perhaps unborn; the mother who, in his impressionable years of early childhood, set his feet in the path, good or evil, which still he treads to-day. Woman, as mother, sweetheart, inspirer and friend, man accepts and welcomes.

But once she despises these relations, once she ceases to be what he thinks and wishes, once she begins to invade his province, to think his thoughts and to do his work—then his latent jealousy, his latent resentment, will burst into flame, and everywhere there will be a great revolt from female ascendancy, actual or threatened. Then man will point out that woman cannot reason, and that politics, for example, must be guided by reason; that woman is emotional, and that government by emotion quickly degenerates into injustice; that woman, however excellent as a student, is lacking in genius, in imagination, in initiative, in the power of forming abstract ideas, and—he will add—in judgment, which, after all, is but a faculty for putting two and two together.

On all these points, I fear, man has only to appeal to history and science to prove his case. He will show easily that ever since the world has been ruled by intellect, woman has taken the second place. He will explain that she has not the strength of body or of mind to get to the front place; and that where, in isolated instances, she has got near the front, it has been almost invariably with detriment to her success as a mother and a wife. Man will laugh when he sees the weaker creature trying to do double work in the world. He knows that her own work requires a very great deal of time and a very great deal of strength. If she tries to do his in addition, then the work both of man and of woman will be badly done. The children will be ill-mothered, and the

public business will be inefficiently performed, the quality of the masculine work being adulterated by an admixture of scamped, perfunctory, impulsive, *amateur* work, done by women in their spare time, while their vital, really interested thought is on other things. All this man will perceive, and, being jealous and angry, he will say it aloud—perhaps rudely—and will frame his own behaviour to suit his opinion. In public he will reduce even the intellectual women to ciphers; and at home, nursing his resentment, he will very probably try to depose the mother or the wife, on whose head, in earlier enthusiasm, he had set a crown.*

The present agitation for extension of the franchise has ostensibly been undertaken "to improve the status of women"; the question is, Will it do so? Let us all remember the dog who lost his bone in snatching at its reflection.

To jeopardise the influence we already possess, in order to undertake work which I honestly doubt we can perform up to the masculine standard, must be little to our own advantage and still less to the advantage of our loved country, the Mother of us all.

HELEN HESTER COLVILL.

* Of course, many women are spinsters, with more time (if not education) than they can use. But the existence of all these English spinsters is an accident, and we must be careful in generalising from accidents, or in making ideals of them. The fact of spinsterhood does not materially alter the moral and physical constitution of women whom Nature has designed to be mothers; nor does it do much towards bringing them into direct contact with the world's big affairs—commerce, shipping, finance, agriculture, engineering, diplomacy, and war—all of which, for the great majority of women, spinsters or not, are matters of mere hearsay.

AMALGAMATION OF KENSINGTON BRANCHES.

WE are glad to report that the North and South Kensington branches have now been amalgamated, and will in future be known as the Kensington branch. Mrs. Colquhoun and Miss Ross will act as the hon. secretary and hon. treasurer respectively, and all the work will be carried out from the office at 14, Church Street. Lady Webb and Miss Houghton Gray have been invited to join the committee, and we feel that the branch will be much strengthened by the amalgamation. The members of the Kensington branch and the secretaries of the other London branches are invited to an At Home at Kensington Town Hall on January 19th, and an ordinary open meeting will be held on January 26th, when Mrs. Somervell will be the principal speaker.

OUR BRANCH NEWS-LETTER.

THE Christmas holidays made more or less of a break in the activities of the Branches, but in spite of this fact an astonishing amount of work was done, and the enthusiasm of all these hardy offshoots of one large central organisation is increasingly vigorous. The General Election is giving the work rather a different character. Our Election policy of helping the right candidates, and watching against the growth of the wrong forces, whilst staunch to our policy of "quiet influence," is being carried out faithfully by the Branches.

An important debate last month was held in connection with the Manchester Branch on December 9th, when Mr. George C. Hamilton, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Manchester Anti-Suffrage League, met Mrs. Swanwick in Knutsford Town Hall before a packed audience. Mrs. Swanwick, who is the Hon. Secretary of the North of England Suffrage Society, threw down a challenge to us in November, and the result has been a decisive victory for us.

Mr. Ernest Leicester occupied the chair, and Mr. Hamilton's speech contained much shrewd and lively argument. After dealing cleverly with the "physical force" unfitness of the woman as voter, Mr. Hamilton argued that if woman suffrage were granted it introduced at the very root of government by ballot a falsity. The withholding of the Parliamentary vote from women left in the hands of the men of the nation the settlement of such contentious questions as Irish Rule, licensing, religious education, etc., while the falsity of introducing the woman's vote might lead us back to the old way of settling differences—civil war. He stated, on the authority of a letter written in 1892 by Mr. Gladstone, that if the Parliamentary vote was granted to women they must get the right to sit in the House of Commons, or to fill in positions, judicial or executive, under the Crown. If it did come to that, our best women would be required to fill these positions. He quoted: "Woe betide the land which offers its political trusts as premiums for childless women," and argued that our best women at the prime of their life had other work to do—motherhood. The young or middle-aged unmarried women had the possibly larger work of helping those who were married, and of helping in the widest sense of the word the mothering of the nation.

A resolution in favour of woman's suffrage, put by Mrs. Swanwick to the meeting, was negatived by a large majority.

A further report from Manchester and the North states that on December 4th the Teachers' Committee met and passed a resolution, instructing the secretary to write to London, suggesting that a meeting should be held in Portsmouth during the Conference of the National Union of Teachers, sitting there in Easter week. On December 6th a meeting was held at the Exchange Hotel, Liverpool, attended by about thirty people, twenty of whom gave their names as being willing to serve on the General Committee. The chair was taken by Mr. Russell Allen (Manchester), and addresses were given by Mr. G. C. Hamilton and Mrs. Maurice Bear. Mrs. Clarke Currie, Mr. Harding, Miss Fairclough, Mrs. Belcher,

and Miss Owen also spoke. It is hoped that the General Committee will meet early in the New Year, when the Liverpool Branch will be started.

On the same evening Mr. Hamilton addressed an audience of about 120, at the Conservative Working Men's Club, Knutsford, and was listened to with great attention. At the close he answered a number of questions.

On December 10th members of the Debating Society went to the office of the North of England Society for Women's Suffrage to take part in an open debate.

Mrs. M. Bear was in the chair, Miss Walsh, N.E.S.W.S., opened the debate, and Miss Badger opposed, chiefly dealing with the physical force argument. An animated discussion followed, but no vote was taken at the end. Mrs. Simon (of Didsbury) arranged a meeting in the Emmanuel Institute, Didsbury, on December 17th. Miss Simon took the chair, and addresses were given by Mr. G. C. Hamilton and Dr. Arnold Jones. The resolution opposing the grant of the franchise to women was passed by a large majority.

Under the auspices of the Newbury Division of the South Berks Branch, a large meeting was held on December 3rd at the Lecture Hall, Newbury. Mrs. Arthur Thompson, of Stapleton House, who is the Vice-President of the Branch, and Mrs. Herbert Finn, of Phoenix House (hon. secretary), organised the gathering. The chair was taken by Mrs. Benyon, of Englefield House, who was supported by many influential residents of the districts.

Mrs. Benyon said the Anti-Suffrage movement was absolutely a non-party one, there being no political bias or class distinction, and Conservatives or Liberals, rich or poor, could all work to resist the proposal to admit women to the vote.

Mr. F. J. Newman, in a capital speech, skilfully dissected many suffrage arguments, and Mrs. Colquhoun proceeded to traverse the contentions of the suffragists, as enumerated by Mr. Newman, and quoted the opinions of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Deakin in support of her claim that the granting of the vote to women had not made a difference to their welfare. To keep woman's standard flying high, and to avoid the publicity that some sought was the aim and object of the Anti-Suffrage League.

Questions were then invited, but none being asked the resolution was put to the meeting and carried by an overwhelming majority.

A meeting, arranged by the Reading Branch, was held at the Palmer Hall on December 9th. Rear-Admiral Fleet presided, and an address was given by Mrs. Archibald Colquhoun. There was a good attendance, and the platform was an influential one.

The case against woman's suffrage was put before the Chelmsford Discussion Society on December 7th by Dr. Douglas Cowburn, as representing the Men's League against woman suffrage. The lecturer expressed the opinion that the grant of female suffrage would constitute the most stupendous revolution this country has ever seen. Though it might be logical to argue that what was right, just, and expedient for man was equally so for women, he would not admit that it was a case to be decided on a logical basis. The advanced section of the

advocates of woman suffrage had shown that they were incapable of any idea of government; and he contended that no one had a right to vote unless the possession of that power could be shown to be a benefit to the public. The suffrage would lead to a slippery slope down which the country would slide to its destruction. Mrs. Drover opposed the arguments of the lecturer.

The Ealing Branch held a meeting in the Girton Hall on December 2nd, Mr. A. Victor Cowley in the chair, and Mrs. Norris, Mrs. L. Prendergast Welsh, hon. treasurer, Mr. Handel Gear, and Mrs. C. H. Norman addressed the meeting. Mrs. Norris dwelt on the harm and consequent neglect of home that must occur if women occupied themselves much with politics. Mr. Gear, who has lived in New South Wales and New Zealand, stated that only a small number of the women in those countries seemed to take much active interest in politics, and they were also greatly outnumbered by the men. No imperial questions came before them, and Mr. Gear added he might say that never had he been in countries where there were so many wife desertions.

The Ealing Branch (sub-branch Chiswick and Bedford Park) numbered in December eighty members, among whom are working women paying 3d. per annum who have bought and are wearing the League's colours.

A meeting promoted by the Exeter Branch was held in the Franklin Hall on December 8th. Mr. C. T. K. Roberts occupied the chair.

Mrs. Derry read an excellent paper, which dealt with the aims and arguments of the Anti-Suffragists.

A well-attended meeting of the Norwood and Anerley Branch was held at Francesco, Church Road, by Mr. J. E. O'Connor's kind permission, on December 6th. Mrs. Austin, hon. sec., acted as hostess.

Miss Lindsay was introduced by Mrs. Austin, and gave an admirable address, dealing with many of the chief arguments on the anti-suffrage side, and replying to many suffragist criticisms. She took a wide view of the question from the national and imperial standpoints, and touched on women's temperamental disabilities, and on the obvious impossibility of a permanently limited franchise.

Some questions were asked by one of the audience—ably answered by Miss Lindsay. Many ladies present paid in subscriptions as members of the branch before leaving, and a number of leaflets and publications of the League found ready purchasers.

Mr. Kildare Robinson presided on December 6th at a meeting in the Y.M.C.A. Lecture Hall, Brighton.

Mrs. C. M. Dering White said that women could, no doubt, do valuable work with regard to temperance and social morality, but they must look at the question of Women's Suffrage from a broader point of view. If they took this new path, and then found out that it led to disaster, there could be no retracing of steps. The agitators had not yet decided among themselves to which women they would give the vote. Were the laundresses, mill-hands, and factory girls, who composed so large a part of the ranks of the suffragettes, fighting policemen merely to the end of giving a vote to the property owner? No, it would mean that every young factory girl who paid 4s. a week rent

would have the vote under the lodger qualification; it meant that a great number of the disorderly women who haunted and disgraced the streets of our great towns would have the vote under the lodger qualification.

In New Zealand every irresponsible boy or girl of 21 had the same power as the most highly qualified person or the largest landowner. The result was that the Socialist-Democratic party went into Parliament with an overwhelming majority, and had been in power ever since. The gentleman who had been largely instrumental in the extension of the suffrage out there had realised his mistake, and had warned England at one of the Society's meetings to learn a lesson in time. The women of England who paid towards the upkeep of the Government got very good value for their money. During the past forty years they had secured places in the world of art, and science, and politics which would have astonished their grandmothers, and they had done it without the help of the vote. The tender, gentle women had kept alive the spirit of Christ.

A successful meeting was held in Salisbury on December 18th, when Lady Pender and Miss Pott, secretaries of the North Berks Branch, spoke. Lady Pender, in the course of a long address, said women's privileges were infinitely preferable to what they called their rights. The question of the woman who paid her rates and taxes, and had not a vote, was, to the speaker's mind, very simple. The woman had the advantage of the Army, Navy, and the law, and of the work of men who took upon their shoulders all dangerous occupations. The woman who paid her rates and taxes was merely paying her little portion towards the upkeep of all these things that the men were engaged in, and from which she was, happily for herself, exempted. The scrambling of women for places was a very terrible thing. A man by his work could support his wife and children; a woman could only support herself. Therefore if a woman obtained a position in one of the hundred-and-one trades in which women competed with men, it meant one more man had been turned adrift with his wife and family. Supposing the women were to compete with men and get the better of them, it would end in men saying, "If a woman can earn her living, she shall earn it for me." The man would sit quietly at home, and the woman would be forced to work. Women did not understand their privileges.

Newport has declared itself enthusiastically Anti-Suffrage, for a great demonstration against votes for women was held at the Temperance Hall on December 8th. Colonel C. T. Wallis, J.P., who presided, was supported by many of the leading residents of the town.

The Colonel deplored the tactics of the militant suffragettes, and said it was amusing to hear women who had never been outside the confines of their own little spheres talking about what they would do for the women of the Empire if they had votes. Mr. J. Reid moved a resolution that votes for women was opposed to the best interest of the Empire. Miss Violet Markham's brilliant address, setting forth the Anti-Suffrage arguments, was listened to attentively, and our resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority, for though the hall contained an audience of 1,800, there were but six dissen-

tients! Miss Markham, at the close of her address, cleverly answered questions.

Lady Haversham presided at a large meeting in Maidenhead Town Hall on December 7th, when the Countess of Desart, Lord Haversham, Mr. F. J. Newman, Mrs. Arnold, and several others spoke. Lady Desart, in the course of a long and eloquent address, said she believed in the legitimate powers of her sex, and because she was human she was sensible enough to know she had her limits. What a woman could not achieve without the vote she never would achieve with one. Men and women were made to progress along different lines. Woman was not made to compete with man, but to complete him. She was made to be his helpmeet and guide, not his rival and antagonist. Woman did not bring the same logic to bear on the consideration of great questions as did man. If a woman really cared about anything, it became vital; she never did compromise and never would. That showed how unfitted she was for Parliamentary life, the very essence of which was compromise. Women were of spiritual and moral superiority, but of physical inferiority, and they were certain what would happen if they stepped off their own pedestal. They must try and prevent some women rushing in where angels feared to tread.

Work has been quietly proceeding at Birmingham, but, unfortunately, the most active members of the committee have either been laid on one side with illness, or have had their energies diverted into other channels by work for the General Election. A shop, however, was taken in a leading thoroughfare for three weeks, and attracted a good deal of attention, and about 140 additional working women members were obtained. Lady Marshall was good enough to lend her house for the purpose of a bag tea, which resulted in a satisfactory sum being added to the Branch's finances. In spite of the activity of our opponents, the question of women's suffrage has rightly failed to take any place among the great issues of the General Election, and has been relegated to a very back seat. In only one or two election petitions has any mention whatever of the subject been made, but there is still rather a tendency amongst the candidates to refrain from speaking out strongly against women's suffrage, simply owing to the intimidation of the Suffragists.

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RESIGNATION OF THE HON. SECRETARY.

OUR readers will learn with very great regret that our energetic Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Arthur Somervell, to whose strenuous work the League owes so much, finds herself obliged to relinquish the arduous post. She particularly begs that in future all letters on League business should be addressed, not to her, but to the Secretary, Miss Terry Lewis, and, in particular, that no such letters should be sent to her private address.

LIST OF LEAFLETS.

2. Woman's Suffrage and After. Price 2s. 6d. per 1,000.
3. Mrs. Ward's Speech. Price 3d. each.
4. Queen Victoria and Woman Suffrage. Price 2s. 6d. per 1,000.
5. Is Woman Suffrage Inevitable? Price 5s. per 1,000.
6. Nature's Reason against Woman Suffrage. Price 5s. per 1,000.

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8. Woman's Suffrage and National Welfare. Price 2s. 6d. per 1,000.
9. Is the Parliamentary Suffrage the best way? Price 10s. per 1,000.
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15. (3) Votes and Wages. Price 5s. per 1,000.
16. Look Ahead. Price 4s. per 1,000.
17. Why the Women's Enfranchisement Bill (1908) is unfair to Women. 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 (from Mr. F. Harrison's book). Price 10s. per 1,000.
22. "Votes for Women?" Price 2s. 6d. per 1,000.
23. Anti-Suffragist's Letter. Price 6s. per 1,000.
24. Reasons against Woman Suffrage. Price 4s. per 1,000.
25. Women and the Franchise. Price 5s. per 1,000.
26. Woman Suffrage and India. Price 2s. 6d. per 1,000.
27. The Constitutional Myth. Price 2s. 6d. per 1,000.
28. We are against Female Suffrage. Price 2s. 6d. per 1,000.
29. Mrs. Arthur Somervell's Speech at Queen's Hall. Price 5s. per 1,000.

PAMPHLETS AND BOOKS.

- A. Freedom of Women. Mrs. Harrison. Price 6d.
- B. Woman or Suffragette. Marie Corelli. Price 3d.
- C. Positive Principles. Price 1d.
- D. Sociological Reasons. Price 1d.
- E. Case against Woman Suffrage. Price 1d.
- F. Woman in relation to the State. Price 6d.
- G. Mixed Herbs. M. E. S. Price 2s. net.
- H. "Votes for Women." Mrs. Ivor Maxse. Price 3d.
- I. Letters to a Friend on Votes for Women. Professor Dicey. 1s.
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