

THE VOTE
NOVEMBER 2, 1917.
ONE PENNY.

WHEN WOMEN VOTE.

SEE PAGE 27.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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FRIDAY, NOV. 2, 1917

Edited by C. DESPARD.

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

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PARLIAMENT THANKS WOMEN FOR THEIR WAR SERVICE.

For the first time during the war Parliament has publicly thanked women, as well as men, for the services they have rendered. We remember that it was Lord Kitchener, as Commander-in-Chief, who was the first prominent personage publicly to recognise the importance of the services of women munition workers. We are glad that the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, Lord Curzon, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and others who spoke in both Houses of Parliament last Monday in the tribute paid to the fighting forces, remembered the women, to whose devotion and care the fighting men give grateful and deserved thanks.

The resolution, in which women were mentioned, ran as follows:—

"That the thanks of this House be given to the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the British Armies in the field, and also to the women in the medical and other services auxiliary thereto, for their unflinching courage and endurance in defending the right, amid sufferings and hardships unparalleled in the history of war, and for their loyal readiness to continue the work to which they have set their hands until the liberty of the world is secure. . . ."

It was moved by the Prime Minister who, in the course of a powerful speech, said:—

We should also thank the women, our trained and untrained nurses, whose tenderness and care for the wounded have earned thanks from the lips of hundreds of thousands of poor men whose lives have been saved, and who have been spared much suffering through their tender ministrations. They have not escaped perils. Many have been killed by shell-fire, many of them drowned in hospital ships sunk with the sign of the Red Cross. We all owe them a debt of gratitude. . . . There are hundreds of thousands of sorrowing men and women in this land on account of the war.

In seconding the resolution, Mr. Asquith included in the thanks

Our doctors and nurses, our fellow countrymen and countrywomen enlisted in every department of war work,

who from all quarters of the Empire have, by their ceaseless energy and unbounded sacrifice, ensured the victory of the Allies.

In supporting the resolution, Mr. Eugene Wason, speaking for Scotland, said:—

We old men . . . ought to see that the mothers and the widows and those who have been bereft and those who have been injured in the war shall have ample means to secure something like comfort in their old age.

Sir Herbert Roberts, speaking for Wales, declared:—

"When peace comes we will try so far as we can to forget the ancient forms of party strife," and secure, so far as we are able, those "nobler modes of life and those purer laws" upon which alone the fabric of our great State and Empire can, in days to come, be truly built. In my judgment this will be our best memorial to the heroic dead. This will be the real thanks of this House to those gallant men and women named in the resolution, who have so splendidly played their part in their ever-memorable fight for the freedom of the world.

Lord Curzon, moving the resolution in the House of Lords, said:—

We want our soldiers and sailors, and the men and women who are upholding our Armies in this great struggle, to know that we do not forget what they have suffered. We want to tell them here and now that our hearts are filled with pride and admiration and sympathy for their incomparable services and for their magnificent devotion.

The Archbishop of Canterbury concluded his speech thus:—

The new Europe, nay, the new world, of which we are in search, will insist upon justice, liberty, and righteousness as its foundation, and will welcome durable peace as a companion and friend of those new conditions. It is for the courage, the perseverance, the patience, and the resource of the men and women of our country in their work for the attainment of that end that Parliament expresses its thanks.

Representation of the People Bill.

On October 25 Mr. T. M. Healy asked whether it

is proposed to recommit the Franchise Bill as regards the new clauses concerning redistribution, etc., which have neither been considered in committee nor on the First or Second Reading.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sir George Cave): The procedure to be adopted is under consideration.

In making his statement on October 25 of the business to be taken in the House of Commons this week, Mr. Bonar Law made no mention of the Representation of the People Bill. In consequence the following question was asked and answered:—

Mr. Burdett-Coutts: Are we to imply from the Right Hon. Gentleman's statement that the Representation of the People Bill will not be taken next week?

Mr. Bonar Law: I have not implied it. I have stated it.

Factory Acts (Employment of Women).

Lord H. Cavendish-Bentinck asked whether the general Order issued by the late Home Secretary relaxing the limitations imposed by the Factory Acts on the hours of employment of women and young persons is still in force; and, if so, whether he will now, in the interest of these persons, consider the advisability of withdrawing this Order, which allows female young persons of sixteen years of age and boys of fourteen, subject to the approval of the superintending inspector of factories, to be employed on twelve-hour night shifts, and also boys of fourteen to work overtime to the amount of fourteen hours per diem on three days of the week?

Sir G. Cave: The general Order to munition works to which the Noble Lord refers is still in force, but its provisions are at present under review by the Home Office and Ministry of Munitions, and the points to which he draws attention are receiving consideration.

An Invitation to "Vote" Readers to attend an Indian Performance.

The Union of the East and West is organising a special matinee of "The Maharani of Arakan," a romantic comedy founded on a story by Sir Rabindra Nath Tagore, to take place on Saturday, November 10, at 2.30 p.m., at the Grafton Galleries, Bond-street, W. Some time ago this amusing play was successfully presented at the London Coliseum. Those who look below its surface may find an allegory bearing on the relations of Britons and Indians with regard to mutual understanding and co-operation. The hero and the heroine, casting aside the pomp of sovereignty and the pride of race, meet in the end on the common ground of simple humanity.

Another attraction of the afternoon will be Mr. Edmund Russell, who will tell famous stories of "The Great Women of Indian History."

The Union invites readers of THE VOTE to attend the performance. Fifty free tickets are offered, which can be obtained by applying with stamped addressed envelope to the Hon. Organiser, Mr. K. N. Das Gupta, 14, St. Mark's Crescent, Regent's Park-road, N.W. 1. Applications will be dealt with in order of arrival.

The main object of the Union is to establish a meeting for the East and West in the field of art, philosophy, literature, music, and the drama. The annual subscription is 5s.

Special News from Russia.

Miss Sheepshanks, editor of the *International Woman Suffrage News*, writes as follows regarding special news from Russia which will appear in the November issue of that paper:—

I have received an extraordinarily thrilling article from Russia—the first news that has come direct from the women since the Revolution. It will occupy two or three pages of our paper, and gives a graphic account of how the masses of Russian women besieged the Duma and the Soldiers' and Workmen's Councils, and extorted a pledge from the Ministers to give them the vote. It is a most stirring object lesson to women of all countries, and I feel all suffragists should read the article. Our November issue will also contain an article from Uruguay.

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Women's Freedom League.

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IMPORTANT.—As THE VOTE goes to press on TUESDAYS, will contributors, Branch secretaries, and others kindly remember that all articles, notes, etc., must reach THE VOTE Office, 144, High Holborn, London, W.C. 1, on MONDAYS? Tuesday morning's post is reserved for late and urgent information.

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

Wednesday, November 7.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3 p.m. Speakers: Dr. G. B. Clark, on "What Ought the Next Parliament to do?" and Miss Nina Boyle. Admission free. Tea can be obtained in the Café, at 6d., if required.

Friday, November 9.—Croydon Public Meeting, 32A, The Arcade, High-street, 3.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss Dorothy Evans, on "How Men Mind the Baby."

Wednesday, November 14.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3 p.m.

Saturday, November 17.—Herne Hill and Norwood Branch Drawing Room Meeting, 69, Danecroft-road, S.E., 3.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss Dorothy Evans.

Sunday, November 18.—Discussion Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn. Miss Rebecca West on "The Real Sources of the Inequality of the Sexes." Tea 4.15 to 5 p.m. Lecture 5 p.m., admission by ticket only, prices 2s. 6d. and 1s., from W.F.L., 144, High Holborn, W.C.

Wednesday, November 21.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3 p.m.

Friday, November 30, and Saturday, December 1.—Green, White and Gold Fair, Caxton Hall, Westminster, 2 p.m.—9 p.m. To be opened on first day by Miss Lillah McCarthy—on second day by Miss Eva Moore. Come and buy your Christmas Presents—all kinds of useful and fancy articles. Admission, 1s. before 5 a.m. on Friday, after 5, 6d. Saturday, 6d. all day. Tickets from W.F.L. Office.

PROVINCES.

Monday, November 5.—Middlesbrough, Suffrage Centre, 231A, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road. Branch Meeting, 8 p.m.

Tuesday, November 6.—Portsmouth, Members' Meeting, 7.15 p.m. Public Meeting, 8 p.m., Suffrage Room. Speaker: Mrs. Whetton.

Wednesday, November 7.—Portsmouth, Work Party, 17, Lombard-street, 3 to 7 p.m. Middlesbrough Suffrage Centre, Democratic Club, 8 p.m.

Wednesday, November 14.—Portsmouth, Whist Drive, Unitarian Schoolroom, High-street, 3 p.m. Tickets, 1s. each.

Wednesday, November 14.—Reading, Drawing Room Meeting, 40, Redlands-road (by kind permission of Mrs. Cobb). Speaker: Miss Nina Boyle. Chair: Miss Anna Munro. 3 p.m.

SCOTLAND.

Thursday, November 1.—Glasgow Branch Meeting, 212, Bath-street, 7.30 p.m. Housing Question.

Friday, November 9.—Glasgow, Miss Kate Evans' Concert for the Funds, Central Halls, 7 p.m. Tickets, 2s. 4d., 1s. 3d., 8d.

We draw special attention to

Wednesday, November 7.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, 3 p.m. Speakers: Dr. G. B. Clark, on "What Ought the Next Parliament to do?" and Miss Boyle.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

North London Branch, National Secular Society.—Sunday, November 4.—Debate, St. Pancras Reform Club, Victoria-road, Kentish Town, 7.30. Subject: "Should an Industrial Conscriptio Scheme include Women?" Negative: Miss Nina Boyle.

Saturday, November 17.—Newcastle Literary and Social Club, 7.30. Speaker: Miss Ada Broughton. Subject: "Women's Responsibilities and the Parliamentary Vote."

THEY SUPPORT US.

WHEN WOMEN VOTE. Shall We Make these Laws?

Suffragists have long contemplated the possibilities of the action which must follow on that much-needed reform, the enfranchisement of women; and suggestions for a broad political programme, on non-party lines, have been from time to time put forward in response to many requests. Some time ago a few of these suggestions were laid before a conference of the Women's Freedom League, and were considered sound enough for the branches to be asked to discuss them, with a view to finding out how far feminist opinion, outside purely suffrage lines, could attune itself to such a programme, based on attempts to cleanse and simplify public life; and whether it could be amplified, amended, and improved to secure the support of women voters. The following are some of the ideas embodied in these suggestions:—

1. *Redress of all sex inequalities.*—Right of married women to their own nationality, equal guardianship of children, equal rights in the home, free entry into Parliament, all Government posts and positions (at equal salary with men), all professions, industries, etc.; in fact, complete equality for the sexes in Church and State.

2. *Maintenance and protection of public rights and liberties.*—Such rights as are enjoyed without question, not those conferred by statute or granted by privilege.

3. *Protection of the rights of women of native races in British Dominions,* irrespective of any grant of Home Rule.

4. *Drastic penalties for adulteration of foods and drinks,* and for the sale of unfit foods and drinks.

5. *Automatic revision of the Statute Book,* so as to wipe away antiquated and unfit Acts and bring into line those which overlap and contradict each other (as in the case of the Inland Revenue and Married Women's Property Acts).

6. *Codification of the Criminal Law,* so as to eliminate Vagrancy Acts, Solicitation Acts, etc.

7. *Press law and advertisement law.*—By a continental press law, all newspapers publishing an attack or a statement concerning public movements, bodies, or persons, are bound to give equal space to those interested for a reply. Under a proposed advertisement law, all newspapers and agencies would be held responsible for the genuineness of the advertisements they publish, so that they could be proceeded against if false statements were published concerning the value of articles boomed, such as patent medicines, cleaning preparations, hair dyes, electrical appliances, etc.

8. *Audit of all parliamentary party funds.*—Parliamentary party would not include political organisations which do not control any section of Parliament. It would only apply to those organisations which control or are attached to a definite party in the Houses of Parliament.

9. *Declaration of the source of income* of all men who accept office in the Cabinet.

10. An alteration of the arrangement whereby the hon. treasurer of the party funds, when the party comes into power, becomes automatically Chief Government Whip (a Government appointment) and Patronage Officer.

11. Some national and humane provision for foster-mothers, and homes which shall not be institutes, for children dependent on the State, whether Poor Law, truant and delinquent, neglected, or taken from the parents for any reason whatever.

12. Reform of all regulations for marriages and divorce, and equalisation of all rights, benefits, and penalties relating thereto.

The audit of party funds is now being advocated by other agencies, but has long been put forward by Women's Freedom League speakers. The removal of obsolete Acts from the Statute Book would obviate such scandals as disgraced the courts when Mr. Lansbury was indicted as a "robber and pillar from over the sea"; and the codification of the Criminal Law would wipe out the infamies of bringing women charged with a small offence before a criminal court after conviction by summary jurisdiction, to receive a heavier sentence than a magistrate may give. We have not forgotten the interesting passage between the Common Serjeant and Mr. Bodkin. "Wait a bit, wait a bit, Mr. Bodkin. Are we prosecuting under the Vagrancy Acts or under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1912? We are getting confused!" "We are not getting confused, my Lord; we are confused. It is our normal condition!"

Some such programme as the above would enormously purify public life, simplify its machinery, break the power of the political parties, curb the mischievous activities of the Press, assist the course of justice, and be of infinite protection to the public.

C. NINA BOYLE.

POLITICAL NOTES.

Redistribution in Ireland.

A White Paper was issued on October 29 containing the Warrant of Appointment of the following to act as Commissioners to determine, for the purposes of the Representation of the People Bill now before Parliament, the distribution of members as between counties and boroughs in Ireland, and the boundaries of such counties and boroughs and of the divisions thereof:—The Right Hon. J. W. Lowther, M.P. (chairman), the Right Hon. Sir H. A. Robinson, K.C.B., and Mr. W. T. Jerred, C.B. Mr. Jerred will also act as Secretary to the Commission. The instructions to the Commissioners are as follows:—

In determining the number of members to be assigned to any county or borough and the boundaries of any county or borough and of any divisions thereof the Commissioners will proceed in accordance with the following general rules:—

1. The total number of members of the House of Commons for counties and boroughs in Ireland shall remain unchanged.

2. In assigning members regard shall be had to the population and size of the constituencies.

3. Existing constituencies and the boundaries thereof shall not be altered except so far as appears to the Commissioners to be necessary or desirable for the purpose of these instructions.

The speedy appointment of this Commission, with the issue of instructions, gives reason to hope that the delay in getting the Bill for the Representation of the People through its further stages, owing to the recent decision to include Ireland in redistribution, may not be so serious as is feared in some quarters. Some delay, under the circumstances, is unavoidable; suffragists inside and outside the House of Commons must press for the minimum, and use every possible means to allay the various forms of irritation that may arise over the new discussions, so as to get the Bill over its difficulties as smoothly and speedily as possible.

Criminal Law Amendment.

The Women's Freedom League has reminded the Home Secretary of his promise to receive a joint deputation from suffrage societies before the Criminal Law Amendment Bill continues its career. The Home Office, over the telephone, informed Miss Boyle this week, that "if such a promise had been made, Sir George Cave would certainly keep it." The Political Department is pressing for an early day in which to interview the Home Secretary on this subject, in view of the audacious infringements on the liberty of women almost daily countenanced by the Courts at the hands of police and other officials, and the terrorising of helpless women in all parts of the country.

By-Elections.

Sir Auckland Geddes and Major Peel have been respectively returned unopposed to the House of Commons for the constituencies of Basingstoke (Hampshire) and Spalding (Lincolnshire). Sir C. E. Mallet and Mr. Ben Tillett are to oppose each other at North Salford. All these gentlemen will receive letters from the Women's Freedom League, asking what their attitude is to be towards the People's Bill. Their answers will be published in THE VOTE.

Running a Hospital for Horses.

Messrs. Macnamara's veterinary establishment in the North of London is now being run by women.

SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 32.

THE VOTE.

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To the Secretary—on all other business, including Vote orders, printing, and merchandise, etc.

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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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AGENTS.

International Suffrage Shop, 5, Duke-street, Charing Cross, W.C.; Messrs. Horace Marshall and Co., Temple-avenue, E.C.; City and Suburban Publishing Company, St. Bride's Churchyard, E.C.; E. Marlborough, Old Bailey, E.C.; A. Ritchie, Pemberton-row, Gough-square, E.C.; Simpkin, Marshall and Co., Orange-street, Haymarket; John Heywood, Manchester. Can be obtained at the Book-stalls of Messrs. W. H. Smith and Son and all newsagents.

"WOMAN'S SPHERE IS THE WORLD."

The tentative list published in this issue of THE VOTE of possible acts of legislation which would form a good Reform Platform on which men and women voters could heartily unite, brings into prominence the fact that when women become voters their powers will extend in many directions outside the purely feminine. The equalisation of matters between the sexes, and the settling of the vexed questions of how far women are entitled to claim special protection for themselves from the stronger and more brutal sex, will demand energy and tact; industrial questions will absorb the attention of increasingly great numbers; while the matters ranged under health, education, and infant life protection will always claim the interest of those women whose daily round is specially concerned with homes and children.

But outside all this special and much-needed work there is a wide realm of legislation from which we heartily trust women will not allow themselves to be excluded; in which, in sober fact, we hope to see them take a leading part and introduce new ideals. It would be in the last degree disastrous if women were to allow themselves to be lectured, cajoled, or deluded into the position that "matters affecting women and children" was the "proper sphere" within which the activities of the woman voter should be confined; and that outside those intimate questions man should still stride ahead and be in control. The burning question to-day is the corruption in public life, and the system which prevails of deliberately lying to the people about their own affairs. This corruption has been brought about by men. Women will have to sweep it away.

We cannot conceive a higher task or a greater destiny than to restore to nations the long-obscured ideals of national service. It is inconceivably shameful that it should be said, without dismay, by men in public life, "Politics is a dirty game." Politics is the history of our country in the making, and should be the highest and most sacred concern of every man and every woman. Those who have allowed it to be branded as a "dirty game" should be hounded for ever out of political life. Any measures, no matter how drastic, that will keep scoundrels and tricksters out of the government of the country should claim the serious attention of women voters.

The administration of justice is another matter of the gravest importance. It has sunk to a very low level in the last decade. The disgraceful trials and

sentences on suffragettes brought the Courts into serious disrepute with thinking women, and created a feeling of distrust in regard to all trials, sentences, and legal decisions. The double standard of public morality, which makes a criminal of the woman offender while the male accomplice goes free, has too long usurped the place of real equity.

It was with some surprise that we noted an appeal on these points from Mrs. Acland at a recent gathering at Sheffield. She "sincerely hoped," so the local paper tells us, "that women were not going to plunge for such questions as equal moral standard for men and women, the divorce laws, and similar problems; but that at the first they would concentrate on questions which were essential to the race—the problems of health, the housing question, and industrial conditions. When some of the more essential things had been done, then they could turn to the purely personal women's questions." This raises two very important points: Are moral and spiritual questions less essential to the race than material; and are questions of public honour, morality, and even-handed justice to be dismissed as "purely personal women's questions?" We hope not. We hope to bring into politics a higher view-point than that.

We hold that Mrs. Acland is wrong. Life and Health are great and good things; but Right and Justice are better. Nothing good can be reared on a structure of injustice; and before we rear our new system, we must clear the ground of the old. It is, in our opinion, worse that the people who are born and have lived should be treated with wicked injustice, than that material conditions should be difficult. We admit—indeed we claim—that all should have the right to live decently and self-respectingly, that children should have healthy and happy surroundings, and that none should go wanting bread and wages. But it is more urgently necessary that we should not encourage each other to believe that material well-being is more important than moral and spiritual well-being. If one had to choose between the two, the idealist would jettison the former to secure the latter. Life in itself is nothing. Nature flings it away by the thousand million to secure an improvement of type. Humanity, that sets more store by life than any other creature known, flings life away by the hundred thousand for an idea, an ideal, a religion, a cause, a country. At a time like the present, can women do less? Are we going to set life itself as higher than right and justice? Can we not first of all establish right and justice on a sound footing, before we attend to housing and health? Or must the higher wait on the lower?

What we want to see is that the women voters shall aim at the highest in public life. In the past men have looked on them as mediums for the production of babies and to supply men with the higher forms of pleasure and excitement. The new idea seems to be to look upon them as the medium through which children shall receive proper attention. The woman herself, her needs, her talents, her destiny, is again in danger by being overlooked, even by women themselves. We live in the high hope that women in the future will not allow their activities to be fettered by the sole considerations of health and public safety, and infant welfare; that they will not think themselves in any way the peculiar guardians of material welfare, whether of children or the race generally; but that they will hold aloft ideals of conduct in national life for the uplifting of all government, now and in the time to come, and that in their zeal for child life they will not forget the outcast, the prisoners and captives, the needy and them that have no helper. A crusade against all forms of State injustice and cruelty should precede, not follow, the crusade to improve conditions of life.

C. NINA BOYLE.

SCOTTISH HOUSING.

The Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland is just out. It provides dismal reading, and much food for reflection.

It begins with an outline of the housing problem, and states that of many social problems which after the war will demand treatment and solution none is more pressing or more vital in the interests of the welfare not only of the individual, but also of the nation, than that of housing. No one who thinks will disagree.

Yet, I should like to ask: How many women were on the Commission? Many women gave evidence before the Commissioners, pointing out the disgraceful conditions under which women have to live and bring up families. But how many women were on the Commission? How many will be on the committees which are to be formed to deal with the housing problems? This is woman's work, and the majority of the members of such committees should be competent women, not men who, by their greed, ignorance, and neglect have allowed this appalling state of affairs to arise and continue. It is time they were compelled to consider the question of housing, but they cannot rectify it without the help of women.

Reference is made in the Report to the large number of two-roomed houses in Scotland. These two-roomed apartments are not confined to the towns. In country districts, where land is available, large families are reared in such houses, destitute of water or sanitation. In the Highlands and Islands, where plenty of ground is to be had, I have been in houses which possess no kitchen fireplace or chimney; the fire burns in the floor in the centre of the room and the smoke is led up through a hole in the roof by a tarry rope. I have sat in such a kitchen on a rock coming through the walls of the house for my chair, my feet resting on the earthen floor, my eyes blinded with peat reek. These houses may not be common but they exist; two rooms without water are quite usual. Men have glibly asserted that woman's place is the home. What have men done to make the home a decent place for women? When I did Settlement work in Glasgow I visited indescribable houses; yet people lived in them. I climbed up filthy stairs, narrow and dark; I groped my way along twisting lobbies, with houses opening off them which were overcrowded, dirty and miserable. In the Closets horrible sights and smells greeted both eye and nose: water-closets constantly choked, and evil-smelling foul water running down the stairs. Ten, eleven, and twelve people inhabited these two-roomed houses. Is it any wonder that drunkenness, immorality, venereal diseases, and infant mortality flourish?

Men's eyes are being slowly opened. I have heard many say, "Our sailors and soldiers won't come back to such houses." "Quite likely," say I, "but what about the woman who has to live in them now?" "Ah, I did not think of her," is the usual reply. We do. It is our duty to clamour for housing reform, and to see that women are on the committees that are to deal with these matters.

"Will ye watch the wean, while I do a message?" a soldier's wife asked me, and then she added, "I canna leave her or the rats would have the face ate off her." As I watched beside the child a large grey rat frisked across the floor. "Woman's place is the home." Then give them homes, not hovels. Give them some say in the kind of houses they are to have. What provision in such a home is given the woman to store her coal? Where can she put it but under the bed? These houses have all been planned by men; they are mostly owned by men and approved by them. I hope they are proud of their work. The Royal Commission has made many recommendations, some of them good. But will they be applied

or enforced? I know a block of sixty houses without water or sanitary conveniences that have been condemned for twenty years, but because of difficulties in building nothing is done. The landlord still draws the rents, the people still crowd into his abominable houses, so insanitary that a farmer would not dare stable his cattle in them.

The Commission also deals with the housing of farm servants and rural workers, for which there is much need, especially in summer time when extra hands are engaged. I have seen men and women occupying one barn with a rickety door separating them. Both sides of the barn were equally uncomfortable, the common washing place was the farm pump in the yard.

"What will you do with the vote?" men ask. We shall right the wrongs men have permitted, we shall see to it that if houses have to be kept clean by women they will be decent houses. We shall see to it that children are born and reared in homes, not hovels.

The Minority Report is, I see, signed by one woman and three men. A most inadequate representation; still, it is comforting to see the signature of even one woman.

Let us demand housing reform with women on every committee which deals with the subject. With the vote we shall be able to rectify the abuses under which we have so long suffered, but, being voteless, have been unable to redress. We have worked hard to obtain the vote so as to grapple with such a question as housing reform.

EUNICE G. MURRAY.

OUR POINT OF VIEW.

Women and Housing.

Miss Eunice Murray's article on the dreadful housing conditions that have come under her personal notice should be a spur to all women to stand no more nonsense in this grave matter that is pre-eminently their own concern. Engineers and builders, architects and owners, tradesmen and workmen of all kinds, may be concerned in the building of the houses and in the supplying of the more or less rubbishy materials, of which they endeavour to build them, but it is women who have to live in them, day in day out, year after year—live in them, cook and clean in them, nurse in them, rear their families in them. The woman's stake is infinitely the heaviest, and their voice is the only one that should be seriously considered. "The Londoner," in his peculiar evensong which he chants nightly for Lord Northcliffe, burst forth in denunciation, a week or two back, of slumdom. He wants to "make England fit for the men who shall bring back peace to her." He feels that "out of such houses came the simple men who have fought like victors and lords in France and Flanders and Mesopotamia; they are no homes for these men. . . . The new houses of England must have the noble air that belongs to the houses of brave men." No word has this male critic for the women, the brave, sad women, the toiling, overwrought women, the wives and mothers of these victors and lords, who reared the brave men of Britain in those foul houses, and who are now rearing their children in them. If they are not fit for the brave men, how much less fit are they for the women who breed those men? When shall we get some sense of proportion and of decency into the minds of the male scribes who inflict this kind of claptrap on a long-suffering public?

Women and the Parties.

The Liberal Party has already incorporated its women in the party organisation; and the *Manchester Guardian* tells us of the strenuous efforts that will now be made by the Labour organisations to secure for their party the co-operation of women voters. Women are to be given representation on the

reorganised executive of the Labour forces. Suffragists will see in this tremendous angling for the hitherto despised feminine element a strong and direct vindication of the value of the vote, and of their good sense in fighting at all costs for its possession.

A Serious Matter.

Case upon case of sordid crime and jealousy, dignified with allusions to "honour" and "the unwritten law," have followed on the disgraceful Malcolm verdict. Four women have been deliberately murdered, two more dangerously wounded, and the Attorney-General has publicly pleaded the inadvisability of trying a certain Belgian case in the English courts. A magistrate has further degraded the prestige of the administration of the law in our country by adjourning *sine die* an abominable assault with a knife on a woman by her soldier husband, and sent the would-be murderer back to France. The Women's Freedom League is considering what steps to take in this most serious matter; and in any case is going to ask for the instant dismissal of this magistrate.

THE HOME WORKERS' UNION: Women's Value as Voters.

Mr. James J. Mallon, secretary of the National Anti-Sweating League, had a cordial welcome from the members of the Home Workers' Union at their meeting at Oxford House, Bethnal Green, last Monday afternoon. He congratulated them on their courage and evident cheerfulness after the recent visitations of enemy aircraft. He knew that they realised, in spite of the trials and tragedies suffered by East London during this terrible war, that their lot was easier than that of women in some parts of France, Belgium, Roumania, Poland and Serbia.

Referring to their difficulties in getting food, Mr. Mallon stated that the information on this subject supplied by the members of the Home Workers' Union had been of great help to the Government, and the authorities were making great use of the facts given by their members. The coming winter would probably be a hard trial for all. Everyone might have to go short, but all wanted to be able to say, with the Irishman who had had an unsatisfying meal: "Thank God, and God's mother; if I haven't had enough, I've had as much as another!" Mr. Mallon stated that the present Food Controller knew his work and was making all his arrangements so that in any scarcity of supplies rich and poor should share alike. He was glad to say that the present high price of milk was soon to be lowered.

Dealing with the wages in trades in which the members present were chiefly employed, Mr. Mallon said that the minimum rate was now 4½d. per hour for tailoring and shirt-making. It was soon to be 5d., and later on he hoped it would be still further increased. For card-board boxes the rate was 4½d. an hour, and for match boxes there would shortly be an increase of 20 per cent., giving them 6d. in place of 5d., as now earned. There was nothing further to report at present in regard to the brush trade and book-making, but he hoped before long that home workers would all get more of the good things of life, which they well deserved. Much work was being done among the lace workers in Nottingham. When the lace was taken off the machines it was given out to women to finish. Ten thousand women were employed in this way in and around Nottingham. At one time they could not earn more than ¾d. an hour at this work. Before the Trade Boards Act was in operation a woman, working all night, could only earn 4d. The rates of wages were still very low, and employers often evaded the conditions of this Act. But a Home Workers' Union had been founded there, and women were now realising its usefulness

and joining the Union in large numbers, and the employer who acted unfairly towards these women workers would be brought to justice to answer for his action.

In conclusion, Mr. Mallon declared that there was a striking change coming. As home workers, Members of Parliament were not particularly interested in them, but, as voters, these same members would be full of curiosity about the women. They would want to know in what kind of houses home workers lived, what rent they paid, how their children fared, if they could get what food they wanted, what wages they received; indeed, Members of Parliament would take the most intimate and devouring interest in all their concerns very soon—when they had the vote! The Home Workers' Union would then be a new power in the land, powerful enough perhaps to run their own candidate. Why not their own working secretary? With her experience of their needs they could not have a better Member of Parliament to represent their interests. F. A. U.

OUR "WEDNESDAYS."

The speakers on October 24 were Miss Evelyn Sharp and Miss Eunice Murray, the chair being taken by Miss Boyle, who hoped that some millions of women would vote at the next General Election. At the same time, she recognised that the enemies of the Franchise Bill would use every endeavour to delay the Bill. There was a great danger in delay. If the Bill was thrown out by the Lords, it would be necessary to prosecute a campaign against the House of Lords. This would be a new experience for suffragists, and she saw in it great possibilities. She had heard with regret that it was the intention of the Government to rush through the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. Strenuous opposition must be offered to those clauses of the Bill which would impose upon women penalties which Parliament would not dare to impose upon men.

Miss Evelyn Sharp spoke of the dangers of intolerance. It was easy, she said, to defend freedom of opinion when the opinion for which you demand freedom of expression coincided with your own. Political prisoners had recently been forcibly fed in Ireland as the militant suffragists had been in England. There was no question that both were political prisoners whose rights were disregarded, owing to the fact that their cases had been argued from the point of view of those who held, or who opposed, the opinions of the prisoners. She hoped the suffragists would lead the way towards real freedom and, whatever their own views might be, they would recognise the rights of others to hold opinions opposed to their own. In the past, suffragists had found themselves at the mercy of the gutter press. The same press was treating those from whom it differed to-day with the same virulence and unfairness with which it had formerly misrepresented the Suffrage Movement. Political freedom depended on both sides getting a fair hearing, more than ever necessary in the time of sorrow and anxiety in which we find ourselves. "The denial of freedom is a poisonous thing, which is degrading our public life."

With regard to her tax resistance, Miss Evelyn Sharp said that the proceedings had now been postponed *sine die*, to give her an opportunity of stating her assets. This she felt unable to do, as it would give the authorities the opportunity to obtain the money, which would be tantamount to paying what was demanded. It was only after prolonged deliberation that she had formed the resolution to resist the claims made upon her, and she felt it impossible to draw back from the position which she had taken up.

Miss Eunice Murray explained that she was taking the place of Mrs. Despard, who was unavoidably prevented from being present. She found it difficult

NOT ENOUGH YET!

The list of contributions to the Political Fund is published herewith.

Many thanks to all who have so kindly helped us. A much larger sum is required to carry forward our big push to victory to win success by the end of this year.

We therefore call upon all readers who have not already joined in this Fund to send in their donations without delay and share in the gladness of the final triumph.

E. KNIGHT.

to reconcile the eulogies which were being showered on women with the fact that women's punishments were so much more severe than those meted out to men for similar offences. On a recent occasion a soldier had returned home on leave and, having kicked his blind wife and broken two of her ribs, he was fined 10s. In contrast to this case, she had seen in a London paper that a woman who had bitten another woman's thumb had been sent to prison for six months. She regretted that employers found the woman "docile," since she feared that this meant that they were willing to accept injustice without complaint.

THE INDIAN TEA.

The British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union may well be gratified by the interest shown in the first "Indian Tea," held at the Minerva Café on October 27, and designed to bring the women of the Overseas Dominions into touch with the women of India. There was a good gathering representing the women of Overseas, including Mrs. Olive Schreiner, Mrs. Saul Solomon, and Mrs. W. Turner, of this country and of India, and great interest was aroused by Mrs. N. C. Sen's address dealing with conditions past and present in India. She pointed out that in the far past Indian women played an important part in the life of the community; they wrote parts of the sacred books, were renowned as scientists and poets, led armies into battle, and proved able rulers. The first Manu, a great law-giver, declared that where women were honoured there was happiness. In the present day Her Highness the Begum Sahiba of Bhopal is a wise and capable ruler of her State, and is the third successive woman ruler; Sarojini Naidu is a poet whose gift of lyrical expression has made her name famous in East and West; she is also a devoted worker on behalf of the women of her nation. Indian women are doing excellent service as doctors, writers, editors, teachers, etc. A woman lawyer, Miss Cornelia Sorabji, is employed under the Court of Wards to deal with the legal affairs of purdah women. A great extension of educational facilities for girls and women is imperative, and India needs large numbers of trained Indian women teachers and doctors. Mrs. Sen looked forward to the day when all nations will bring their special gifts to the service of humanity.

Lady Muir Mackenzie, who presided, declared that the association of Britain and India had widened our outlook, and advocated mutual understanding and co-operation between British and Indian women. Mrs. Despard warmly welcomed the new development of the Union, and spoke of India's great gifts to the world.

A special feature of the afternoon was the social intercourse, and the aim of the gathering was excellently carried out in the talks between women of East and West. Among the Indians present were Princess Sophia Duleep Singh, Mrs. Bonarjee, Miss Bonarjee, who has just gained the LL.B. degree of the University of London, Dr. Jhirad, house-surgeon at the New Hospital for Women, Euston-road, and Mrs. M. M. Dhar. Many others expressed their keen interest in the movement; also the High Com-

missioners and Agents-General of the Overseas Dominions, Lady Perley and Mrs. Fisher, and the Woman Suffrage Societies. Other Indian Teas will be held during the winter.

GREEN, WHITE AND GOLD FAIR.

In addition to ourselves, stalls at the Green, White and Gold Fair, to be held at Caxton Hall on November 30 and December 1, will be taken by the Free Church League for Women's Suffrage, Independent W.S.P.U., United Suffragists, and the Women's Freedom League Settlement. Readers of THE VOTE are reminded that the Fair will be opened at two o'clock on Friday, November 30, by Miss Lillah McCarthy, and at the same hour on Saturday, December 1, by Miss Eva Moore. Tickets can now be obtained from the W.F.L. Office, the prices being on Friday, before five o'clock 1s., after five 6d., and on Saturday 6d. all day.

This week we appeal specially for our Handkerchief Stall. Please send to this office plain handkerchiefs, fancy handkerchiefs made into caps, sleeves, aprons, etc., or donations to buy handkerchiefs for this stall. Last year our Handkerchief Stall was one of the principal features of the Fair. Kindly help us by your contributions to make it equally attractive this year.

BRANCH NOTES.

Newcastle-on-Tyne.

On October 22, Mrs. Blanche was invited to address a British Women's Temperance Association meeting at West Moor; Mrs. Robinson presided, and Mrs. Blanche gave an admirable exposition of the new Education Bill, pointing out its weak clauses, and showing how women could materially strengthen the Bill. Questions were asked, and Miss Ada Broughton took part in the discussion. After the address, refreshments were served, which gave Mrs. Blanche an opportunity to speak personally to the women present. In the evening, Miss Broughton addressed the Heaton and Byker Women's Co-operative Guild. She spoke on the "Women of To-day," in which she referred to the splendid manner in which women had discharged their war-time duties, proving their adaptability to new conditions. Women had entered these industries from a military necessity, she must keep them as the right of a responsible human being. Many questions were asked, and a profitable discussion took place on military and industrial conscription. Miss Broughton has been asked to give a series of three addresses on subjects relative to woman's work and responsibilities. On October 24 Mrs. Blanche was asked to speak on the Education Bill at the Coxlodge British Women's Temperance Association meeting. Mrs. Atthey presided. An interesting discussion took place.

Portsmouth.

The monthly members' meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 6, at 7.15 p.m., at the Suffrage Rooms, 2, Kent-road. At 8 p.m. the meeting will be open to the public, when Mrs. Whetton will speak on "The Political Evolution of Woman." Members are urged to attend and invite their friends. The work party will be held on Wednesday, November 7, at 17, Lombard-street, from 3 to 7 p.m. To raise money to buy material for the work party, an afternoon whist drive will be held at the Unitarian Schoolroom, High-street, on November 14, at 3 o'clock. Tickets, 1s. each.

Women's Freedom League Settlement, 1, Everett-street, Nine Elms, S.W.

The Settlement has been visited by Lady Norman and Miss Conway, chairman and honorary secretary of the Women's Work Sub-Committee of the National War Museum, who are recording for the Government the various forms of war work undertaken by women. They were specially interested in the Children's Guest House, and are including our last year's report among the archives of the Women's Section of the National War Museum. For the same Guest House we urgently need more bath-towels and sheets, also some cotton overalls for little boys from two to four years old, and a clothes-horse. Most welcome sackfuls of apples have been sent by Miss A. M. Powell and P. H. Miller, Esq.; and apples and plums by Mrs. Stirling. We thank Mrs. Roberts, Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Clark, Miss Riggall and Mrs. Stirling for other provisions; Mrs. Bennett and Miss Greenville, jumble goods and a needle-case; Mrs. Hughes, chrysanthemums; Mrs. Clark, slippers and soup-basins.

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1917.

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