

Women's Franchise.

FAWCETT COLLECTION

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for the opinion of the Superior Court; this was also refused. Nothing daunted, she went to the Court of Appeal, and that tribunal ordered a case to be stated. It then appeared that the latchkey had been given to her by the landlord after he had refused her previous claim in 1906. The court considered this clear evidence of the intention of all parties concerned that the franchise should be conferred. Few men, or women either, would incur so much expense and trouble for the sake of a vote, and this case shows how urgent is the need for a thorough revision of the registration laws.

AFTER every celebrated trial, complaints are made of the number of women who frequent the law courts when painful cases are being heard. These women are accused of having morbid and degraded tastes, and of lowering the standard of womanhood. This is quite true, and we heartily wish that they would abstain from putting in an appearance on these occasions. But what about the men who crowd in to hear these cases? We hear no word of reproof for them. For one woman there is generally at least ten men, who by their presence also exhibit morbid tastes, and lower the standard of manhood. It is false morality to make distinction between the sexes in this respect. If a case be considered unfit for a decent woman to listen to, it should also be considered unfit for a decent man. In this, as in other respects, there should not be separate standards for the sexes.

WE are often told that the best means of advancing the cause of Women's Suffrage is by engaging halls and calling peaceable meetings in them. The fact that countless peaceable meetings are being constantly held in countless halls all over England is not realized by the average man, who knows nothing about what is happening in the world unless he reads it in the pages of his daily paper. The splendid meeting recently held by the Men's League for Women's Suffrage was ignored by many influential papers who devoted columns to battles, murders, and sudden deaths. It has long been obvious that the Press refuses to report Women's Suffrage meetings "unless they are disturbed or broken up by ruffians generally known as students."

WE have received additional subscriptions to *Women's Franchise* from Miss Dalby on behalf of Sir F. G. Bannbury, Capt. Hon. G. V. Baring, R. H. Barran, Esq., F. Layland-Barratt, Esq.; from a Sheffield Suffragist on behalf of Lord Balcarres; and from Miss F. Johnson on behalf of A. Baldwin, Esq.

MRS. M. ARNCLIFFE-SENNETT notifies her intention of giving 1s. a week towards the expense of publishing *Women's Franchise* until the franchise is granted.

GUARANTEE FUND TO 'WOMEN'S FRANCHISE.'

Already acknowledged	£	s.	d.	Brought forward	£	s.	d.
Brown, Miss H.	82	10	6	Pennyton, Miss M.	86	0	0
Churchill, Miss C.	0	10	0	Richardson, Mrs. F.	5	0	0
Foster, Mrs. G.	0	10	0	Richardson, Miss W.	0	5	0
Hallowes, Miss E.	0	10	0	Soga, Miss J. M.	0	5	0
Heap, Miss H. M.	0	2	6	Stonex, Miss Nelly	0	6	0
Heighway, Mrs. F. W.	0	10	0	Strode, Miss E. L. C.	1	0	0
Merrifield, Miss F. de G.	0	5	0	Williamy, Mrs. K.	1	1	0
Oswald, Miss L.	0	2	0	Wray, Miss C.	1	1	0
Paxton, Mrs.	0	10	0				
Carried forward	£86	0	0	Total	£95	18	0

Notice to Contributors and Subscribers.

Articles containing information on the subject of Women's Suffrage should be addressed to the Editor, who will return those not considered suitable as soon as possible if a stamped addressed envelope is sent with the MS. As the paper is on a voluntary basis, and all profits go to help the cause, no payments are made for contributions. Subscriptions for the weekly numbers to the end of March (1s. 8d.), or less if so desired, should be forwarded to the Publisher. Back numbers can still be obtained.

'WOMEN'S FRANCHISE,'
EDITORIAL AND PUBLISHING OFFICE,
13, BREAM'S BUILDINGS, CHANCERY LANE, E.C.

Notes.

'THE DAILY CHRONICLE' thinks that "The jests at the expense of those women who happen to want a vote are being considerably softened as time goes on. The new 'Suffragette' cracker is an instance of this. Instead of the shrieking hag in prison dress that lately represented the popular idea of any lady who would sooner put a cross against a man's name than tell other people where to put it, we now have a charming and elegant doll-lady, dressed in crinkled paper, bearing in one hand a scroll of paper, with the words 'Votes for Women' on it, and in the other an umbrella. The umbrella is rather gamp-like, perhaps, but it would be difficult for it to be anything else in crinkled paper, and the cracker on her back is even appropriate. No one, for instance, would dream of labelling a sleeping draught as a suffragette mixture. But a cracker makes some noise in the world, and as fast as you silence one, another is ready to explode."

A CASE recently occurred in Ireland which shows how, even when women are accorded a right to the municipal vote, they have to overcome obstacles and incur litigation. A woman who exclusively occupied two rooms in a house, was given by her landlord the latchkey of the outer door, and she therefore claimed a vote as an inhabitant occupier under the latchkey division. Her claim was dismissed by the County Court Judge, and she then appealed to the King's Bench Division for a writ of mandamus to compel the County Court Judge to state a case

Bodkin Warfare.

FOR more than half a century the advocates of Women's Franchise have kept up a persistent, steady, logical hammering on parliamentary portals. To this hammering the slow-moving barriers of Mr. Haldane's brain show signs of yielding, the battered chinks have let in light, and he now states that he sees clearly the necessity ere long of including the question of Women's Franchise in a Government programme.

This is so far good, but he then goes on to defend the action of the Government with regard to the treatment of this subject during the past parliamentary session. He says that our representatives, though pledged to support were irritated by the action of a few extremists, and so the Bill was talked-out!

Such a statement is certainly no compliment to the statesmanlike qualities of our chosen members. Every great cause has an extreme section of supporters, and no well-balanced mind would allow itself to be so much irritated by extremists as to cast aside all claims of honour, justice, and expediency.

Moreover, if our representatives are to shield themselves under the cloak of irritation, surely our extremists may do the same. What can be more irritating than the flippancy, obliquity, and contempt with which our cause has been treated by a Government that professes to believe that "Vox Populi" is "Vox Dei," and yet refuses to allow the larger half of that voice to find utterance?

The Ultimate Basis of Authority.

WHAT is the ultimate basis of authority? We are told that it is physical force, and that therefore it is useless to enfranchise women; for if it should ever come about that men and women are opposed to one another, then the victory must of necessity go to men, in virtue of their greater muscular strength.

Women are being challenged to prove their fitness for the vote by gaining the vote through the exercise of physical force. Let those who are guilty of making this challenge consider well what they are doing. They make it light-heartedly, thinking that in merely doing so they demonstrate the absurdity of women's enfranchisement. Surely they confuse the term physical force with muscular force. But for many a long day muscular force has been subservient to mental skill. If an appeal be made to physical force, the victory will go to the one who brings the greater mental skill and ingenuity to bear upon the fight.

Let us consider the question a step further. In the past, when an appeal has been made to physical force to decide the fate of an ideal, has the final victory always been to those who had the advantage of greater physical force? Not so. If the ideal be one which is bound to be realized in the course of evolution, then history tells us that, though an army be wiped out, the ideal does not die. "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave, but his soul goes marching along." The ideal for which the pioneers fought a losing battle and died may ultimately triumph peacefully. The ultimate basis of authority is spiritual and not physical. Who can estimate the force of a great ideal?

We Women Suffragists wish to win our victory by peaceful means; but the apathy of the public to all argument has goaded a certain number to a display of physical force. Now to this apathy is added a challenge, and responsible men are urging that the ultimate basis of authority is physical force, while taunts are uttered to the effect that the physical force being applied is a mere irritating "pin-prick." The danger is acute, for if women are persuaded to believe that they can realize their ideal by physical force alone, there can be no doubt that women will be found who will resort to other means than pin-pricks, and many a life will be sacrificed.

It is time that all who believe in the power of thought should express their opinion in no uncertain voice, and make it clear that the ultimate basis of authority is not physical force. For although undoubtedly great ideals have been realized with the aid of physical force, the triumph has been in proportion to the enthusiasm for the ideal, and not in proportion to the physical force applied. Moreover, the exercise of physical force sows a separate harvest, which may be reaped in bitterness for many a generation.

Correspondence.

[The Proprietors of "WOMEN'S FRANCHISE" do not necessarily identify themselves in any way with the opinions expressed by their Correspondents.]

SIR,—In Women's Franchise of November 21st is an article signed A. Zimmern, on 'Suffrage in the United States.' Will you correct a statement made in the first paragraph of that article? It says, "The first woman's rights convention met in 1850. Even before this three local conventions had been held," &c. Now the first woman's rights convention ever held in any country anywhere was held in 1848 at Seneca Falls, N.Y. In 1840 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a bride, went with her husband to London, he being a delegate to the World's Anti-Slavery Convention. Lucretia Mott was also one of the delegates to that convention. The convention, however, voted that women could not take seats in the convention proper. Mrs. Mott and Mrs. Stanton sat through these proceedings in the gallery and discussed the injustice of the ruling, and determined to call attention of the women of the United States to their degradation. Upon their return home, however, both women were so occupied that they could not carry out their design, but did carry it out in 1848 by calling this convention at Seneca Falls. This is not very material; at the same time it is well for the historians of the Woman Suffrage movement to have dates properly given.

I enjoy Women's Franchise very much. Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, who is now in this country, is speaking constantly, and doing us a great deal of good.

Cordially yours, HARRIET TAYLOR UPTON,
Editor of Progress, Organ of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

SIR,—I have read with much interest the letter of "A Dame of the Primrose League" in your paper of January 2nd, and as a Unionist and Hon. Sec. of the Portsmouth Branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, I should like to give my experiences of working with Liberal women and also of the attitude of the Primrose League organization towards a question which affects the well-being of a very large proportion of the empire, and in favour of which Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Salisbury, and Mr. A. Balfour have all pronounced, not only for the sake of the women but for the sake of the nation.

In the first place, with two exceptions, all our committee are Liberal women, and our chairwoman the President of the Portsmouth Women's Liberal Association; but the question is never treated as a party question, and more than once have I tried to get support from the other side, but without success; in fact, only yesterday, it was decided that to hold a meeting in a certain hall, which could be had free of cost, was not possible, as the ground would not be sufficiently neutral.

Directly after the first disturbances the Primrose League withdrew its representative from off our committee, and any attempt I have made to get help or support officially is met with the reply that "the time is not ripe." At a Primrose League entertainment at Havant the subject was virtually tabooed—"the time was not ripe," &c. At the personal request of a member of the Primrose League and a supporter of the Women's Movement I myself wrote a letter for publication in the official organ, and she tried her best to get it published; but no, "the time was not ripe," &c. If I want help or support from political organizations I am always driven to seek it from Liberal and Labour. Conservative, Unionist, or Primrose give me the cold shoulder, and now I leave them alone and do not waste my time seeking the inevitable refusal. When I have got up meetings I have sent tickets to the secretary of the Portsmouth Primrose League. I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing her at any. Much as I should like to do so, I make no comment or criticism in this letter. I only state my own personal experience, and I ask the "man-governed Dame of the Primrose League" if the accusation that "they will reap where they have not sown" is not somewhat justified by, at any rate, my experience.

Yours truly,
N. O'SHEA,
Hon. Sec. Portsmouth W.S.S.

HISTORY UP TO DATE AND MORE SO. BY A SUFFRAGETTE PAVEMENT ARTIST

A grid of 10 numbered political cartoons. Each cartoon depicts a scene of political maneuvering and includes a block of text describing the actions of various groups. The cartoons are arranged in two columns of five. The text in the cartoons includes phrases like 'These are the Men that Ignored the Petition that lay in the House that Men built', 'This is the Steward filled with scorn, that Flung out the Maiden all forlorn, that Heckled the Ministers (thinking of Corn) that Jilted the Women, that Worried the Men, that Ignored the Petition, that lay in the House that Men built', and 'This is Conviction newly born, that Seized on the Steward filled with scorn, that Flung out the Maiden all forlorn, that Heckled the Ministers (thinking of Corn) that Jilted the Women, that Worried the Men, that Ignored the Petition that lay in the House that Men built.' The cartoonist's initials 'JCB' are visible in the bottom right corner of the grid.

[Produced and kindly lent to this Journal by Miss M. V. C. BRACKENBURY, 2, Compton Hill Square, W.]

National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

OBJECT.—To obtain the Parliamentary Suffrage for Women on the same terms as it is, or may be, granted to Men.

The Union is a Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies in Great Britain.

President: MRS. HENRY FAWCETT, LL.D.

Treasurer: MISS BERTHA MASON.

Secretary: MISS MARGERY CORBETT, B.A.

Hon. Secretaries: MISS FRANCES HARDCASTLE, M.A. MISS FRANCES STERLING.

Parliamentary and Organising Secretary: MISS EDITH PALLISER.

Telegrams: "VOICELESS, LONDON."

Telephone: 1960 VICTORIA.

OFFICES: 25, VICTORIA STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W.

The Union will send Organising Agents, Speakers, or Literature to any place requiring them, its desire being to form a Women's Suffrage Society in every County and Borough. All persons interested in the movement, or desiring information about it, are requested to communicate with the Secretaries. Increased Funds are needed for the growing work of the Union, and Subscriptions will be gladly received by the Treasurer.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 1908.

Chairman—MR. WALTER S. B. MCLAREN.

MISS MARGARET ASHTON
THE LADY FRANCES BALFOUR
MISS FLORENCE BALGARNIE
MRS. ALLAN BRIGHT

MR. A. CAMERON CORBETT, M.P.
MISS EDITH DIMOCK
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MRS. FLORENCE PHIPSON, M.D.
MRS. BROADLEY REID
HON. BERTRAND RUSSELL
MRS. PHILIP SNOWDEN

LADY STRACHEY
And the Hon. Officers,
ex officio.

Current Topics.

IN view of the approach of the Parliamentary session, several members of the Cabinet have been asked to receive a deputation from the Council of our Union. The Prime Minister is still abroad, but on his return a further communication on the subject is expected from him. Sir Edward Grey has replied that the matter is one which has no bearing on foreign politics; while Mr. Haldane has written that he has so often expressed himself in favour of the movement that no object would be gained by an interview. Mr. John Morley and Mr. Lloyd-George have not, so far, replied; while Mr. Gladstone has intimated that he will give a reply later on. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has consented to receive a deputation, the date of which is still under consideration.

It has occurred to us that many friends of the cause, who through absence from town, and other reasons, may not be able themselves to attend our evening gathering on the 29th, would be glad of the opportunity to give tickets to friends. The speeches that will be made by Suffrage leaders, and the number of our supporters in the House of Commons whom we hope to see, will make the occasion an unusually interesting one. It will be an excellent opportunity for approaching those who are interested, but not convinced. If any of our readers would wish tickets sent to their friends we will gladly undertake to do so, if their names and addresses be sent to us accompanied by 3s. 6d. for each ticket.

Mid-Devon By-election.

THERE can be few constituencies in England where party feeling runs as high as in Mid-Devon. From early morning till late at night we hear nothing but cries of "Up, Bell," "Up, Buxton." Of a morning I find the Committee-room door adorned with the various party cries in red chalk. It is therefore interesting to hear from some of the prominent politicians here that Women's Suffrage is a question of more interest in the election than some of the questions mentioned in the various party programmes.

On Monday 6th, Tuesday 7th, and Wednesday 8th, Mrs. Stanbury, Miss Gardner, and Mrs. Cooper addressed meetings in the parish room at Newton, which were uncomfortably crowded in spite of the bad weather which there prevailed.

On Tuesday Mrs. Cooper addressed a meeting of the railway men during the dinner hour, and had a very good hearing. Miss Gardner, and I distributed literature and spoke to the men and women afterwards. Mrs. Cooper spoke in the parish room in the evening; a number of men came to hear her.

On Wednesday Mrs. Cooper spoke to the railway men again during the dinner hour. Miss Gardner held a meeting at Heathfield brickworks about four miles from Newton. In the evening Mrs. Cooper, Mrs. Stanbury, and I spoke in the

market-place, where a good crowd gathered, and then Mrs. Cooper and Mrs. Stanbury proceeded to the parish room and addressed another audience there.

Thursday mid-day Miss Gardner and Mrs. Cooper spoke to the railway men in another part of the town, and had a very good hearing. In the evening Miss Gardner, Mrs. Stanbury, and I drove over to Chudleigh. The Town Hall at Chudleigh holds 500, and it was packed from end to end, the ante-room and the landing were packed with a surging and interested crowd. Half-an-hour before the meeting began some energetic boys rang the bell in the tower, which no doubt helped to draw the audience. The meeting was most enthusiastic—several questions were put at the end which caused intense interest. At the close of the proceedings, cheers were called for the speakers, which was heartily responded to. Mrs. Cooper addressed two meetings the same evening in the market-place, Newton, which were attended by large crowds, who gave Mrs. Cooper a very attentive hearing, there being no attempt at rowdiness.

On Friday midday Mrs. Cooper and Miss Gardner spoke to a large audience of men at the Heathfield brickworks. They took with them the canvas signboard kindly supplied by the Artists' League, giving the title of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and hour of meeting in scarlet letters on a white ground (the colours of the Union). This notice proved a great attraction, as it could be seen at a good distance away. In the evening Mrs. Stanbury, Mrs. Cooper, Miss Tanner (Bristol), and myself went to Bovey Tracey, where we spoke in the Town Hall to a packed audience. We met with a very stormy reception, the audience being under the impression that we were opposing the Liberal candidate. They began by singing songs, which lasted for ten minutes. Then ensued a perfect pandemonium of yells, laughter, and singing. Eventually, however, we succeeded, after patiently waiting for half an hour to secure a hearing. Mrs. Cooper was listened to without any interruptions whatever, Mrs. Stanbury having asked those present if they would give her ten minutes without interruption, which promise they faithfully kept, and loud applause followed her speech. When we explained our policy, at first we were greeted with cries of "That's a lie," and a chorus of yells.

After Mrs. Cooper had spoken I made a statement again, and said we could easily prove that what we said was true. A gentleman then rose and said it was he who had accused us of telling an untruth, and was sorry, for he was not aware that there were two organizations of women working in Mid-Devon. After that I invited questions, and several were asked, the audience by this time being entirely restored to good-humour; many were somewhat shamefaced at the treatment meted out to us, and after the meeting a number of men came up and shook hands with me, expressing regret at the noisy reception we had been given. Several women also came up and spoke to me, saying they were disappointed that they had not heard more, as they were very much interested in the question.

On Saturday we held our meeting at Moreton Hampstead, where Mrs. Cooper, Miss Tanner, and Miss Gardner were accorded a very good hearing. The schoolroom was packed, and there was no disturbance whatever, though we were warned that we should have a noisy meeting.

Lucinda and Miss Pidge.

On Monday evening we have a meeting in Abbots Kerswell schoolroom, and in Newton an open-air meeting.

I addressed an audience of some forty people at a drawing-room meeting last Monday, by invitation of a lady living in Newton, which was followed by a discussion. Several present were keenly interested in the question.

The by-election is not without its humorous incidents. At a meeting in the market-place, while Mrs. Stanbury was speaking, a big road engine with trucks passed by. Mrs. Stanbury paused during its transit; a voice from the audience shouted "That's Mr. Asquith!" a remark which was greeted with laughter, as was Mrs. Stanbury's reply, "Let us hope his voice is not so unpleasant."

At Chudleigh a man in the audience put the following question: "Do the ladies on the stage think that I, who am unmarried and thirty years of age, ought to help them to get a vote before I have one myself?" The whole room rocked with laughter. An excited elector, who had not been present when I made the statement of our aims in coming to Mid-Devon, jumped up at question time and asked why we had come down there to oppose the Liberal candidate, and when I replied that we had not, he waved a leaflet to me and said "That's a lie; you say here you have." On being asked to show me the leaflet, he replied with a knowing look and a shake of the head, "No, I wouldn't get it back." Much to the delight of the meeting, eventually I persuaded him to read out the name of the Society who issued the leaflet, and on finding it was not ours, he sat down, saying, "I am quite satisfied." There were cries of "Apologize, apologize." Two ladies kindly asked us to come and have coffee with them because we "were such brave women," and Miss Gardner and Mrs. Cooper were offered tea by a working woman at Heathfield on the same grounds.

It is gratifying to see that one of the local papers gave a quotation from *Women's Franchise* of last week of our experiences at Abbots Kerswell.

We have met with much kindness and courtesy at all our meetings, and many who have come into the Committee-room have told me that the National Union policy of quiet propaganda has had a good effect.

EDITH PALLISER.

General Suffrage News.

THERE was a large attendance recently at a meeting of the Open Brotherhood at the Unitarian Church, Swansea, to hear Miss Dillwyn speak on Women's Suffrage. She took the subject from the point of view of the business woman, and she touched with feeling on the injustice of withholding the Parliamentary vote from women with business interests at stake. She, with many other business women, bitterly felt the ignoring of her position. The address was followed by an animated discussion.

The Suffrage demonstration which has been organized by the Women's Liberal Federation, and is to take place in the Queen's Hall on the 24th inst., promises to be a great success. Over a thousand seats have already been applied for by members of the affiliated associations, and representatives are expected from such distant places as Southport, Bristol, Sheringham, &c. Mrs. Falconer will represent the Scottish Women's Liberal Federation, and will speak, as will also Lady Henry Somerset. The meeting will commence punctually at 8 P.M. Tickets, 5s., 2s. 6d., 1s., and 6d., to be obtained from Miss Gladstone, W.L.F. Office, 124, Victoria Street, S.W.

We are glad to hear that the report of the Eccles Women's Liberal Association concludes with the following words: "The Committee sincerely hope that every member will do her utmost to make the Women's Liberal Association a ruling power in the division, and that each woman, by reading and thinking about the questions of the day (many of them very burning questions), will, by her zeal and earnestness, convince our Liberal Government that we are determined to leave no stone unturned by which we may secure the 'Women's Suffrage.'" If all members of every Women's Liberal Association in the country, besides doing this, would go a step further, and make the subject a test question with their candidates, we should be within measurable distance of success.

THESE are the people we want. Young and keen and enthusiastic. They are not the only people wanted for the cause (as a friend of mine loves to call it), but they are worth winning, because what they think, the men of the rising generation and children yet in the nursery may come to think. They are a thoroughly good sort, and have for the most part the courage of their opinions. Then, too, Miss Pidge and her friends and relations are to be found in every class of society and in every civilized country. Why should they grow middle-aged before they realize that Women's Suffrage, for instance, is not "of all stodgy subjects, the stodgiest," as, alas! I once heard it described?

Lord Beaconsfield is not the only man who has made up his mind to serve his country while yet at school, and why should not girls do the same? I lately heard of a lady in the suburbs of London whose presence at any discussion of public interest, and especially at any discussion upon the political status of women, is somewhat dreaded by her more conventional sisters, because she has acquired a habit of inquiring at an early stage of the proceedings how any woman can expect to receive the full rights of the citizen so long as she clings to the generally received convention in regard to certain articles of feminine attire.

People holding such views have doubtless a work to do for our Society, but not more obviously than have Lucinda and Miss Pidge. It may be objected, "But who are these ladies? We do not know them." All of us, however, do know them; but perhaps we have not known their names. They are the heroines of a delightful poem advertising the merits of Messrs. Pinky & Blue's "keep-in" hairpins! They are ladies of judgment, yet the most prejudiced could not call them "unsexed." Lucinda shall speak for herself:—

MY DEAREST PRISCILLA,—I'm writing to-night, in a species of tremble and worry and fright! I have had such a torture to-day in the street, and been fighting the wind till I feel quite dead beat! It was blowing "great guns" (as the men-folk would say) when I started outside on my shopping to-day; I was hurried and flustered, and felt in a fidge, when who should I meet, but our dear friend Miss Pidge. She was asking for you, dear; she's got a new toque, and an elegant-fitting and tailor-made cloak! I felt at a discount—that's truth, plain and fair—for I couldn't shake hands, I was holding my hair! I had been roughly knocked, between pillar and post, till my patience was gone, and my temper quite lost! So, I think you will own, it was good of Miss P., when she asked, "Will you come and take luncheon with me?"... I gladly consented; and, during our talk, I explained that the storm had been spoiling my walk. I told her the worry my hair had inflicted; and she said, "I can see it most plainly depicted! But, my dear, I can give you a splendid suggestion, which will banish all future *hair-hurt* without question." She took out her hair-pin—a matchless affair—and remarked, "That's what ladies of judgment all wear! I get them from Pinky & Blue's upon order, and now I possess a true comfort recorder"... Kind love to yourself, and our dearest Belinda, and believe me to be,

Yours sincerely, LUCINDA.

Please note the enthusiasm and the missionary spirit displayed by Miss Pidge in a cause that has won her approval. Note the consequent propaganda of Lucinda, and how in all probability Priscilla will tell Belinda about the new idea when she gives her Lucinda's love. There are thousands of these girls in England, and there is no reason that because they like to dress well, they need be devoid of higher ideals. With the new year we think of new things. In old days there were Sunday Schools—there are, in fact, still Sunday Schools—but they no longer supply the sole outlet for a girl's enthusiasm. Hockey and golf are supposed by some to have taken their place. It may seem so, but surely a girl who does not play golf and hockey is no more likely, or less likely, than another to teach in a Sunday School. It is a vocation not to be despised, but it is not a vocation for all. Yet the average golf and hockey playing girl, or the average girl who considers the problems of

dress and smartness so graphically described in our poem, is not, as a rule, a stupid girl, nor need she necessarily be one of low ideals? But they want approaching in the right way. They do not like to be priggish, or to seem what is vulgarly called "advanced."

The demand that girls in comfortable circumstances should help those upon whom the burden of life falls heavily is as great—is greater—as it ever was. But it is a time of transition—many feel to have outgrown the old methods, but they want a strong lead to give the courage to study and to utilize the new. The girl who is a real success in her own set is generally worth some trouble to get hold of. No man makes a worse soldier because he can play polo and is "well groomed," and so it is with Lucinda and Miss Pidge. Dowdiness, and an incapacity for the give and take of games, and a lack of the something that commands success in general society are not points that fit man or woman for public service, and likewise, the contrary of all this in a girl should not daunt us in trying to enlist her sympathies for our cause. "Woman's sphere is the home," and to her, the future centre of a happy home, is given the greater privilege of making the State itself more home-like to those thousands of voiceless and oppressed women to whom the clap-trap phrase is at present but a bitter mockery and an insult.

A. HELEN WARD.

Branch Societies.

BOURNEMOUTH.—The Bournemouth Society is very active. A speakers' class has already been started by Miss Kemp Turner. The members are to meet once a week, and good results are anticipated. The last "At Home" given by the Society was such a success, resulting in several new members being enrolled and much interest being awakened, that it has been decided to hold monthly parties during the winter. These have already been begun.

HUDDERSFIELD.—Mrs. Archur Cecil Rennards held a very successful drawing-room meeting at Gledholt on December 11th, at which her sister, Miss Kate Kilburn read an extremely able paper on 'Women's Suffrage.' An animated discussion followed, and two of the ladies present offered their rooms for the purpose in the New Year.

The following extract is taken from the *Yorkshire Daily Observer* of January 8th: "Mrs. Studdard, hon. secretary of the Huddersfield Branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, recently wrote to the secretaries of the local political parties asking that when vacancies arose on the public bodies support would be accorded to women candidates. In reply Mr. W. P. MacGirr, hon. secretary of the Huddersfield Liberal Association, wrote: 'I am in receipt of your letter, and thank you for the resolution enclosed. As you know, the wards themselves select their own candidates, but in all cases where the Central Liberal Association is asked for advice your letter shall receive due consideration.' Mr. George W. Bailey, secretary of the Huddersfield Conservative Association, replied that the resolution had been considered by the Central Council of his association, and he was instructed to say that it would be kept in mind by his Council, who, however, could not at present see their way to make any pledge in connexion with it."

HULL.—The Hull Suffrage Society held a meeting on the 8th inst., in the Oddfellows' Hall, when Miss Murdoch, M.D., the President of the Society, gave an interesting lecture. There was a good attendance, for Miss Murdoch's address had been looked forward to with much interest. Mrs. Whitaker presided.

The speaker specially mentioned Miss Julia Sulter's book 'Britain's Hope,' which is in the form of an open letter to Mr. John Burns. Referring to Miss Sulter's suggested remedy for many evils, freeing married women from factories, she maintained that this was a question for the married women themselves to decide. Miss Murdoch, who is an admirer of Germany, praised its system of national insurance and also the splendid education received by German children; she mentioned the fact that doctors entirely devoted their time to inspecting school children.

A vote of thanks to Miss Murdoch was moved by Mrs. Arthur Marshall, seconded by Mrs. Fred Richardson, and carried with great heartiness.

LONDON.—The number of our members continues to increase in a highly satisfactory manner. In the course of the last quarter 249 new members have joined us, raising our numbers from 1,803 on Oct. 1st, 1907, to 2,059 on Jan. 1st, 1908. We hope to continue this rate of increase throughout the coming year, and to start in 1909 with a membership roll of 3,000 names.

This object, however, will not be attained without the individual help of our members. By far the greater number of them are unable to spare the time to take up active work for the cause, but no member is too busy to give valuable help in bringing personal influence to bear upon those with whom she or he comes in contact. We beg most earnestly to urge our members to use their individual influence, not only in making converts to our cause, but in pointing out to friends the responsibility that lies upon those who, knowing that our cause is just, do nothing to help it forward. If all who are aware of the injustice of the present state of affairs and sympathize with us in the efforts we are making to change it, were to come forward to our support, the numbers would astonish some of our friends in the Cabinet.

In speaking of our membership, we may perhaps be pardoned for remarking that while new friends are valuable assets, old friends are no less so, and for mentioning the melancholy circumstance that no fewer than 100 members whose subscriptions were due last quarter, have forgotten the fact. We can only suppose that they have gone abroad and are unable to procure postal orders, and we must hope that all will have returned to England before the 1st of February.

A ball in aid of the funds of this Society took place on Friday, January 10th, at the Grafton Galleries, and proved an unqualified success in every way. The rooms were beautifully decorated with roses, smilax, and ferns, and the appearance of the ladies who thronged them should dispel for ever the old-fashioned idea that enthusiasm in the cause of Women's Suffrage is incompatible with those womanly arts and graces which our friends of the opposite sex are in so much dread of our losing. The inspiring music of the White Viennese Band and Mr. Benoit's excellent supper contributed to the success of the evening, and dancing was kept up with spirit till nearly 3 o'clock.

Our best thanks are due to those friends who, as patronesses or members of the ball committee, worked so splendidly on our behalf, and in especial to Miss Sylvia Dale, the Hon. Sec. of the committee, who did so much to secure its success.

PROGRAMME OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

January Meetings.			P.M.
16th	Invitation Meeting, 9, Hyde Park Square	Hon. Mrs. Bertrand Russell Miss Sterling Mr. Mitchell	8.30
20th	Marylebone Drawing-room Meeting	Mrs. St. George Reid	
21st	Gospel Oak, Invitation Meeting	Mrs. Hicks	8
22nd	Fleet W.S. Society. Annual Meeting Chelsea, Drawing-room Meeting St. George's, Hanover Square Meeting Bournemouth Society "At Home" 3, The Quadrant	Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Kayser Speaker: Miss Bompas Mrs. St. George Reid Miss Cicely Corbett	8
23rd	London Society "At Home," 25, Victoria Street, S.W. Leeds, 10, De Grey Terrace, Drawing-room Meeting	Miss I. O. Ford	4-6.30 3.30
29th	Bristol, 116, Coronation Road, Drawing-room Meeting	Mrs. Martin	7.30
30th	Redhill, Drawing-room Meeting		
31st	Debate in Wimbledon Parliament Chislehurst Drawing-room Meeting	Miss Bompas	

* * Kindly address all communications relating to the work of Societies in the N.U.W.S.S. and all paragraphs intended for these columns to Miss Harcastle, 25, Victoria Street, S.W.; to reach her by first post Monday.

VOTES FOR WOMEN.

Women's Freedom League (late W.S.F.A.).

OFFICES: 18, BUCKINGHAM STREET, STRAND, W.C.

Telephone: 15143 CENTRAL.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Hon. Treasurer: MRS. DESPARD.
MRS. COATES HANSEN
MISS HODGSON
MISS IRENE MILLER
MISS FITZHERBERT

Hon. Organising Secretary: MRS. BILLINGTON-GREIG.
MRS. DRYSDALE
MRS. EILEEN MITCHELL
MRS. WINTON-EVANS
MRS. JOSEPH CLAYTON

Hon. Secretary: MRS. HOW MARTYN, B.Sc.
MRS. SANDERSON
MRS. BELL
MRS. HOLMES
MISS MANSELL

Notes.

CATSPAWS.—A strong and energetic body of women are doing Mr. Chamberlain's work for him, quite regardless of the fact that that gentleman appears to class women with cats, dogs, and other domestic animals. Truly women will never tarnish their souls with the sin which caused the fall of Lucifer. It is our duty to point out to these lady Tariff Reformers that, however much the trade of England may require protection, the women of England require it more. For instance, there is a slump in the marriage market. Women are going dirt-cheap. The commodity is thus depreciated, owing to the fact that there is no duty on wives, and because parents are allowed to dump their cheap female goods on to the market till it becomes overstocked. A man (any man) has but to raise his finger in intimation that he wants a wife to be surrounded by applicants enough to stock a harem. We must raise the price of the article by diminishing the output. Cheap foreign food may be undermining England's greatness, but cheap English wives will be her ruin.

After all we can throw our surplus food to the pigs, but our surplus women are flung into the gutter. We say not a word against Tariff Reform, but we assert that electoral reform, marriage reform, and man reform must come first. The men may develop and protect their home industries if they like, but it is our duty to see that those home industries do not flourish on sweated female labour. One woman is of more value than many tariffs.

HANDMAIDENS.—We are glad to see that the Labour Party acknowledges the services rendered to it by the Women's Labour League, and we observe that as a reward the women are to be allowed to attend their meetings, to take part in their discussions, "to assist the Party," but "not to vote for the Executive." We hear of no secessions from the Women's Labour League, so we conclude that they feel amply rewarded. We are told that it is a good sign that women should be admitted to the discussions. Surely it is only a sign that men are discovering that women's brains and eloquence may be utilized to "assist their Party." The Tories found that out a long time ago; but we fail to see how the cause of our sex is to be advanced by these means. It is true that the Labour men tell us that if we are very good now and help them, there will come a very happy time for us in a dim but glorious future. Some day, they tell us, when all men have got all the things they want, then there will be time to attend to women. Nevertheless, some women are suspicious enough to insist upon having their innings now, thinking it probable that when men have won the game, they will draw the stumps and proclaim play over. When the grand final match is played we must be in it.

LIBERAL REBELS.—One more insult from the Government will, it is to be hoped, convert the Women's Liberal Federation into an enthusiastic Suffrage Society. The astonishing thing is that they have been patient so long. The policy of the Federation has not been a slavish one. It has helped the Liberal Party, but only in order to advance the cause of Liberalism. Those who have attended the meetings of the Federation must have been struck by the purity of the politics, and the high-minded independence of the views advocated by the members. What surprises one, therefore, is that keen and intellectual women should have been unable to see that in helping the Government they are tightening its hold upon the very reforms they desire to obtain.

Women Pay the Piper, Men Call the Tune.

It is, we think, known already to the readers of *Women's Franchise* that this year we are starting, as a League, our passive resistance to the unjust conditions under which women live and do their work in the world.

We have shown that we do not shrink from actively opposing the laws to the passing of which we have not consented. We have protested publicly against the trial of women in courts of law administered solely by men. Having no other means of making our voice heard in the councils of the nation, we have tried to bring our grievances personally before the House that is supposed to represent the people, and have been imprisoned for making the attempt. While ready, in season and out of season, to pursue still these active forms of protest, now, at the opening of the Government's financial year, we are sending back our income and inhabited house duty tax papers, and are declining to satisfy the demands of the authorities.

I hope many women will take this course, and I think many will; for, as a fact, nothing could be more reasonable. I only wish it was possible for the heavily mulcted wives and mothers on whom falls the burden of indirect taxation to take the same course. For my own part, I cannot but feel that, in making my protest, I am representing them as well as the direct tax-payers.

We women pay and pay. We pour money into the coffers of the State. I think, as I write, of the housekeepers all over the nation who are paying their pence daily and weekly on tea and sugar alone. I think of the women who earn their own income as teachers, clerks, journalists, artists. I think of the women who possess property in various forms, and I try to estimate the magnitude of the sum that the women of the nation pay yearly into the national exchequer. I wish that for one year only this sum might be withdrawn. I wish that the hint we are offering by not attending to this citizen-duty might be a foretaste of the general strike that may be necessary if those who are convinced of the justice of our claim do not soon rouse themselves to the necessity of doing promptly what they confess to be right.

A general strike! That has been seriously proposed in international labour congresses, and we try to imagine, but in vain, the paralysis that would ensue; the general disorganization; the inconvenience, and the wide-spread misery. If women were to strike, not only refuse to pay their taxes, but refuse to bear children, to administer homes, to perform any citizen duties, I hope it will not come to that. Meanwhile, there can be no moment so propitious as the present for the hint of what we could do if we would. A Liberal Government in power. Liberal! What does that mean? Open, I suppose to justice and reason; guided by the ancient principle: "Those who pay the piper should call the tune." They have said that again and again, and in every possible form. The people pay; the people elect those who administer their funds; the people, at least so they say, decide the great question of how the money is to be spent. But should not a party be true to its own principles? We women—do you dare to say, you statesmen, that we do not belong to the people? We pay just as you men do. Let me take my own case. I have no husband or son to represent me before the world, yet the tax-collector sends regularly for my quota to the State; and I have paid regularly. I have never even delayed until now. This year I enter my

protest. I help to pay the piper, I say : I expect to have my voice in calling the tune.

I hear—and it gives me great satisfaction to know this—that many other women are doing the same; are preparing to take, if not joyfully, at least with a brave heart, the spoiling of their goods. It is one way of awaking the public mind not only to the wrong that is being done to the women of the land, but also to the fact that they are beginning to be keenly conscious of the wrong from which they suffer. With the deepest interest I am looking for developments in the direction of passive resistance. Now is the moment to act!

C. DESPARD.

A Record to be Broken.

ON January 29th the Liberal Government will enter upon another session, but the Liberal Government, according to Mr. Lloyd-George, has not the slightest intention of devoting any part of this, its third session, to the consideration of the claims of women to the franchise.

Yet the past year has been marked by an unprecedented activity on the part of the numerous societies which are working for Women's Suffrage. The record of work done for the cause has been broken in every direction. More Suffrage meetings have been held than ever before.

In 1907 the number of women imprisoned for demanding votes was larger than ever before, and last February for the first time mounted police were called out to guard the sacred precincts of the House from women.

Record work has been done, too, at the by-elections in placing before the electors the case for Women's Suffrage. Yet, like the ostrich in the fable, politicians bury their heads in the sand, trying to believe that the issues are solely concerned with Tariff Reform or Free Trade—anything rather than the women's demand for citizenship. The by-election work is, however, bearing excellent fruit.

The record procession for Women's Suffrage was held just before the opening of the last session of Parliament. The Government was not ashamed that its unworthy inaction on this question forced women, who have lived lives devoted to the public service, to march through the muddy roads of London demanding a right not withheld from the male drunkard and released convict.

During last year a large quantity of special literature has been issued. One weekly newspaper and a monthly paper have been started. In addition, the Press has given more space than ever before to articles, reports of meetings, correspondence, and paragraphs dealing with Women's Suffrage. Unfortunately, however, the Press still prefers the sensational and advertisement side of the movement, and almost ignores the solid and serious work which is always going on.

The year 1907 saw the birth of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage. The existence of this Men's League emphasizes the fact that this question is not one of sex warfare—in the sense that every man is against us, every woman for us—it is, as Mr. Zangwill wittily and truly said, "A duet, not a duel."

The Women's Freedom League, besides continuing the old methods of protest, has initiated some new ones. It is organizing a plan of *Passive Resistance to Taxation*.

The women who have been to prison have realized more clearly than it is possible for those who have not had this experience the grave wrong which the administration of the laws by men alone entails upon women. This injustice naturally presses most hardly on the poorer women and those who are least able to protest. Not only are there no women police, magistrates, or jurors, but there are no women doctors in Holloway, and the visiting Committee is composed wholly of men. These and other reasons justify our policy of *police-court protests*, which must be continued until it is impossible to try a woman in any police or law court throughout the length and breadth of the land without a protest being made.

We appeal to women to come forward in larger numbers than ever before to work, march, and demonstrate.

A vigorous agitation should be kept up, until the so-called representatives of the people are unable to meet, except under continuous police protection. Records are only made to be

broken, and during the year 1908 it lies with women to take care that meetings, processions, imprisonments, passive resistance, police-court and special protests, shall exceed in number and magnitude all past achievements. EDITH HOW MARTYN.

Liberal Revolt.

THE Highbury and Islington Branch had a very successful and useful drawing-room meeting on the 9th inst., at the residence of Dr. Winifred Patch, who acted as Chairman.

In the absence through illness of Mrs. Sadd Brown, Mrs. Owen Thomas took her place at a few hours' notice.

Both ladies are active members of the North Hackney Liberal Women's Association. Mrs. Owen Thomas dealt chiefly with the recently inaugurated forward policy of Liberal women, who, though they have been slow in realizing the situation, are now rapidly becoming awakened to the futility of their previous efforts.

Following the successful example of industrial workers, Liberal women as political workers would have to come out on strike, and unanimously refuse to canvass for or otherwise assist any candidate for Parliament at any election, either general or by-election, for Parliament, making the concession of the vote a condition of their returning to work.

The late Mr. Gladstone had said that "it was the duty of statesmen to anticipate the wants of the nation;" but the statesmen at present in power had shown no desire to anticipate the wants of their faithful women supporters.

Let the 80,000 odd women who composed the Women's Liberal Federation at election times remain at home, which they were so frequently reminded was their "proper place"; they would save themselves much unprofitable labour and unappreciated zeal in their endeavour to secure votes for men, and they could reserve their energies for a better cause.

The association in Hackney to which the speaker belonged, numbering some 200 members, at a recent meeting passed a resolution, not to work for candidates at elections until the Government gave them the Suffrage.

At the recent conference at Caxton Hall of the Liberal Women's Federation, the speaker went prepared to introduce a resolution adopting this policy in relation to by-elections only, but was surprised to be forestalled by another delegate with the more advanced and drastic resolution that the members should not canvass for the Liberal Party either at by-elections or at a general election. To her intense delight this was carried with acclamation. She hoped to put a similar resolution to the present audience, many of whom were local Liberal women.

Personally she would not work for a candidate, even were he her own husband. (Applause.)

She had nothing but admiration and encouragement to offer to the militant section of Suffragists, sincerely believing the present position of the cause to be entirely due to their self-sacrificing efforts; but on the other hand she commended the policy she had outlined to those women who were prepared to adopt an attitude of passive resistance and non-compliance, which, if persisted in, would undoubtedly force the Government to seriously consider and revise its position before facing a general election.

The resolution was put to the meeting and carried with one dissident. Several new members gave in their names.

The Guarantee Fund.

THE following members and friends have promised to help the Fund, in addition to those already announced:—

Mrs. Larkcom-Jacobs	5	0	0	per year.
Mrs. Holmes	1	1	0	" "
Miss Marie Lawson	1	1	0	" "
Mrs. Stansfield	1	0	0	" "
Mrs. Margaret Giles	5	0	0	" "
Mr. Harry Jones	2	6	0	" "
Mrs. Errington	2	0	0	" "
Miss Annie Bawden	1	0	0	" "
Mrs. Mustard	10	6	0	" "

Scottish Notes.

THE arrangements for the opening of the Scottish headquarters are completed, and everything points to a thoroughly satisfactory gathering. We are to be disappointed only in one particular—the records of the gramophone speeches will not be ready for use on Thursday, the 16th.

Mrs. Despard is to be in Scotland only three days. The Hill-head branch will be well started on its way by her first night's work. Leith and Edinburgh will be visited on the second day, and on Thursday the two gatherings at the new Scottish headquarters will be under her presidency.

We intend to make great progress with our literature sales from 30, Gordon Street. Our illuminated night advertisement will be specially devoted at first to calling attention to our pamphlets and books, and to *Women's Franchise*. A very great deal more literature ought to be sold through the Suffrage societies. There is a demand for it, constant and increasing but so far no society has been daring enough to risk experiment or to employ sufficiently modern methods when they have recognized the need and tried to meet it. Though our first efforts may be very humble we shall take and make every opportunity in order to aid the work of distributing widely the literature of the cause.

The Edinburgh branch of the League has in hand the arrangements for an inaugural meeting for an Edinburgh Men's League for Women's Suffrage. The Glasgow stalwarts are sending a delegation of speakers to convert their brethren of the East, and the promoters also hope to secure the services of one or two prominent speakers. It is whispered that the gramophone records may also be heard at the meeting. Dundee is also making an effort to take the same useful step. A number of names have been collected, and the arranging of a preliminary meeting will follow as a matter of course.

Two or three of our best Scottish workers are going to travel south within a few days, in order to help in the special organizing work which will need to be done there within the next month.

T. B. G.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'WOMEN'S FRANCHISE.'

DEAR MADAM,—I should like to heartily support your correspondent *re* political women who put party first and the Suffrage second. To me it is one of the most perplexing mysteries, how capable intelligent grown-up people can prefer the game of "playing politics" (and what else is politics to those without a vote) to the real serious responsible work of gaining political power. I tried it myself for about fifteen years, and found it most discouraging; but during that time I also belonged to a Suffrage Society, so that I was doing what I could to work out my own salvation.

D. B. FOSTER.

MADAM,—I read with great interest Miss Turquand's letter "To Women of All Political Parties" which appeared in *Women's Franchise* on January 2nd. To me, it is strange indeed that women should be unwilling to do for their own cause what some men have so gladly done for it. Some members of the Men's League have given up their political party to help win votes for women.

Surely the attitude of the Liberal, women in particular, savours of ingratitude to these men, and ingratitude to man is the last thing of which I thought Liberal women capable.

The letter from "A Dame of the Primrose League," appearing in the same issue as Miss Turquand's letter, is, to my mind, another proof that the Liberal Women hold the key of the position.

Why does not "A Dame of the Primrose League" join the W. F. L.? She will find we do not make votes for women a party question.

DOROTHY K. ARTER.

Branch Notes.

Central Branch.—The next meeting, to be held at 18, Buckingham Street, Strand, on Thursday, January 16th, will be addressed by Mrs. Nevinson, who will speak on 'The Poor Law in relation to Women.' The Committee extend a cordial invitation to all members and friends.

Our Business Meeting on Thursday, January 9th, was convened for the purpose of instructing the delegate for Conference; and this business was proceeded with as far as time permitted. The further discussion was adjourned until Thursday, January 23rd, at 7 P.M., when it is hoped that all members will make a point of attending. M. L.

The Battersea Branch discussed the possibility of holding weekly working parties to make clothes for the March Sale of Work. All members present signified their intention of working or of providing material for others to make up.

The Glasgow Western Branch held a most interesting meeting on Wednesday night, when the political policy of the W.F.L. was discussed very fully, especially the attitude of independence maintained towards all parties.

Mrs. Gemell presided, and among those who took part in the discussion were Miss Burnet, Miss Wilson, and Mrs. Slater, President of the Women's Liberal Association, Partick.

A motion to change the present policy was defeated by two votes.

Next meeting will be of a social nature, January 15th.

JEANIE K. M. DENNY.

The Despard Debating Society.

THE above Society has been formed by the Women's Freedom League, and the first debate is to take place at 18, Buckingham Street on Monday next. Mrs. Despard has kindly consented to lend her name to it. Further particulars concerning the membership, rules, and frequency of meetings will be found in these columns next week.

PROGRAMME OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

From January 16th to January 23rd.

			P. M.
Thurs.	Social Meeting, 18, Buckingham Street		3.30-6
	Central Branch Meeting, 18, Buckingham Street	Mrs. Nevinson	8
	Glasgow, Opening of Scottish Office	Mrs. Despard	
	Fulham Meeting, 88, Shorrols Road	Miss Gardiner	8
Fri.	Committee Room, Hackney Baths	Miss M. Smith	8
	Heriot-Watt College, Edinburgh	Miss Cicely Hamilton	8
Sun.	Harrogate, Public Meeting	Miss Menzies	8
Mon.	Debate, 18, Buckingham Street	Mrs. Billington-Greig	8
	Co-operative Guild, Burton-on-Trent	Mrs. Sproson	8
Tues.	Parish Room, Mansfield Road, Kentish Town, N.W.	Mrs. Hicks	
		Mrs. Nevinson	
		Mr. Joseph Clayton	
		Miss A. Schofield	
	Cottage Meeting, 302, Upper Brook Street, Manchester	Miss Milne	
	Essex Hall (women only)	Mrs. Despard	8
		Mrs. Billington-Greig	
Wed.	Stamford Hill Congregational Debating Society	Mrs. How Martyn	8
	Tottenham Branch Meeting, 133, Mount Pleasant Road	Miss Cicely Hamilton	
Thurs.	Central Branch, 18, Buckingham Street	Mrs. Tweedy	8
	Social Meeting, 18, Buckingham Street	Gramophone	3.30-6
	Public Meeting, Bromley, Kent	Mrs. Billington-Greig	8
		Mrs. Despard	
		Miss Margaret MacMillan	
	Women's Suffrage Society, 25, Victoria Street, S.W.	Mrs. Despard	4-6
	Co-operative Hall, Wolverhampton	Mrs. Sproson	

* * * All communications intended for the Women's Freedom League, columns should be addressed to The Editor, W.F.L., 18, Buckingham Street Strand, W.C.

Men's League for Women's Suffrage.

OFFICE: 38, MUSEUM STREET, LONDON, W.C.

Telephone: 9953 CENTRAL.

Notes and Comments.

We rejoice to see that the Women's Liberal Federation is holding a big meeting in the Queen's Hall on January 24th. We trust this meeting will be a great success, in order that the Government may realize the position more fully than they are apparently willing to do. The argument that the vote should not be granted to women till it is proved that the majority of them want it is neither very substantial nor very courageous. If the Women's Liberal Federation speaks definitely enough, the argument will hardly appeal any longer to Liberal audiences. The debt which candidates have owed in the past to women workers is incalculable. Those women workers are *ex hypothesi* the cream of their sex from the candidates' point of view. If they are found as an organization to be earnestly at work for enfranchisement, what will the election agents say to the party caucus or candidate who opposes their earnest and legitimate desire?

The meeting is for women. But the organizers have expressed the hope that a number of men will act as stewards. Will those who are prepared to help a meeting which may have immense significance in the eyes of the Government, and will necessarily, if successful, strengthen the hands of those Members of Parliament of every party who support our cause, communicate without delay with the Hon. Secretaries at 38, Museum Street?

We have received a number of letters in relation to the articles on and excerpts from the works of Aphra Behn and Mary Astell, and also several relating to the article on the press notices of the Queen's Hall Meeting in last week's issue. With some of these we shall deal next week; in the meantime we crave indulgence for the delay, and thank our correspondents for their interest and valuable suggestions.

An interesting debate on Women's Suffrage, organized by Mr. F. R. Cana, a member of the League, was held in connexion with the Debating Society of the Trinity Presbyterian Church, Notting Hill, on Tuesday last. The chair was taken by Mr. James Hardie, and the speakers were Miss Sterling, Mr. Cana, and Mr. Mitchell in the affirmative, and Mr. Samuel in the negative. The motion was carried with six dissentients.

An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex.

WRITTEN BY A LADY.

By Mrs. Mary Astell—1668-1736.

THE defence of our Sex against so many and so great Wits as have so strongly attack'd it, may justly seem a Task too difficult for a Woman to attempt. Not that I can, or ought to yield, that we are by Nature less enabled for such an Enterprize, than Men are; which I hope at least to show plausible Reasons for, before I have done. But because through the Usurpation of Men, and the Tyranny of Custom (here in *England* especially) there are at most but few, who are by Education, and acquir'd Wit, or Letters, sufficiently qualified for such an Undertaking. For my own part I shall readily own, that as few as there are, there may be and are abundance, who in their daily Conversations approve themselves much more able, and sufficient Assertors of our Cause, than my self; and I am sorry that either their Business, their other Diversions, or too great Indulgence of their Ease, hinder them from doing publick Justice to their Sex. The Men by Interest or Inclination are to generally engag'd against us,

that it is not to be expected, that any one Man of Wit should arise so generous as to engage in our Quarrel, and be the Champion of our Sex against the Injuries and Oppressions of his own. Those Romantick days are over, and there is not so much as a *Don Quixot* of the Quill left to succour the distressed Damsels.

I shall leave Pedants and School-Boys to rake and tumble the Rubbish of Antiquity, and muster all the Heroes and Heroins they can find to furnish matter for some wretched Harangue, or stuff a miserable Declamation with instead of Sense or Argument.

I shall not enter into any dispute whether Men, or Women, be generally more ingenious, or learned; that Point must be given up to the advantages Men have over us by their Education, Freedom of Converse, and variety of Business and Company. But when any Comparison is made between 'em, great allowances must be made for the disparity of those Circumstances. Neither shall I contest about the preeminence of our Virtues; I know there are too many Vicious, and I hope there are a great many Virtuous of both Sexes. Yet this I may say, that whatever Vices are found amongst us, have in general both their source, and encouragement from them.

Our Company is generally by our Adversaries represented as unprofitable and irksome to Men of Sense, and by some of the more vehement Sticklers against us, as Criminal. These Imputations as they are unjust, especially the latter, so they savour strongly of the Malice, Arrogance and Sottishness of those, that most frequently urge 'em; who are commonly either conceited Fops, whose success in their Pretences to the favour of our Sex has been no greater than their Merit, and fallen very far short of their Vanity and Presumption, or a sort of morose, ill-bred, unthinking Fellows, who appear to be Men only by their Habit and Beards, and are scarce distinguishable from Brutes but by their Figure and Risibility. But I shall wave these Reflections at present, however just, and come closer to our Argument. If Women are not qualified for the Conversation of ingenious Men, or, to get yet further, their friendship, it must be because they want some one condition, or more, necessarily requisite to either. The necessary Conditions of these are Sense, and good nature, to which must be added, for Friendship, Fidelity and Integrity. Now if any of these be wanting to our Sex, it must be either because Nature has not been so liberal as to bestow 'em upon us; or because due care has not been taken to cultivate those Gifts to a competent measure in us.

The first of these Causes is that, which is most generally urg'd against us, whether it be in Raillery, or Spight. I might easily cut this part of the Controversy short by an irrefragable Argument, which is, that the express intent, and reason for which Woman was created was to be a Companion, and helpmeet to Man; and that consequently those, that deny 'em to be so, must argue a Mistake in Providence, and think themselves wiser than their Creator. But these Gentlemen are generally such passionate Admirers of themselves, and have such a profound value and reverence for their own Parts, that they are ready at any time to sacrifice their Religion to the Reputation of their Wit, and rather than lose their point, deny the truth of the History. There are others, that though they allow the Story yet affirm, that the propagation, and continuance of Mankind, was the only Reason for which we were made; as if the Wisdom that first made Man, cou'd not without trouble have continu'd that Species by the same or any other Method, had not this been most conducive to his happiness, which was the gracious and only end of his Creation. But these superficial Gentlemen wear their Understandings like their Clothes, always set and formal, and wou'd no more Talk than Dress out of Fashion; Beaus that, rather than any part of their outward Figure shou'd be damag'd, wou'd wipe the dirt off their shoes with their Handkerchief, and that value them-

selves infinitely more upon modish Nonsense, than upon the best Sense against the Fashion.

To proceed therefore; if we be naturally defective, the Defect must be either in Soul or Body. In the Soul it can't be, if what I have hear'd some learned Men maintain, be true, that all Souls are equal, and alike, and that consequently there is no such distinction, as Male and Female Souls; that there also are no innate *Idea's*, but that all the Notions we have, are deriv'd from our External Senses, either immediately, or by Reflection.

Neither can it be in the Body (if I may credit the Report of learned Physicians) for there is no difference in the Organization of those Parts, which have any relation to, or influence over the Minds; but the Brain, and all other Parts (which I am not Anatomist enough to name) are contriv'd as well for the plentiful conveyance of Spirits, which are held to be the immediate Instruments of Sensation, in Women, as Men. I see therefore no natural Impediment in the structure of our Bodies; nor does Experience, or Observation argue any. We use all our Natural Faculties, as well as Men, nay, and our Rational too, deducting only for the advantages before mention'd.

(To be continued.)

The Great Gulf Fixed.

A DIALOGUE.

We were total strangers, but the carriage was far from warm, and with an exchange of criticisms regarding the past, present, and possible future of the British climate and home railway shares, we drifted into general conversation. It appeared that he had been in Glasgow and had heard Mr. Haldane's remarks on Women's Suffrage. Disguising the fact that I am a confirmed supporter of that cause, I lit a cigar and tried to remember the catechetical method of Socrates.

I. And what did you think of his views?

He. They seemed to me to be very sound. He admitted, though without much enthusiasm, that Women's Suffrage must come, but he said also that there was a great gulf fixed between man and woman by law and by nature, implying that it was a bad thing that women should have the vote.

I. But is not law the antithesis of nature?

He. I don't quite understand.

I. Well, let us consider law and its origin. Is it not true that most men dislike law because it limits their freedom and compels them to behave themselves?

He. Undoubtedly.

I. But that which a man wants to do is generally to better himself and his friends; and very often this is done at the expense of those who are weaker and less cunning than he. Or would you say it is otherwise?

He. No, I agree.

I. Well, but it follows, does it not, that the force which prevents him from thus doing good to himself at the expense of others is a human or artificial contrivance by which the natural strength or cunning of these selfish persons is checked.

He. Yes; I suppose so; but I do not see what you are driving at.

I. It is perfectly clear. We have found that laws are made by society to overcome the inequalities of natural gifts. Law is intended to correct nature. If, then, Mr. Haldane was right in saying that nature has fixed a gulf between man and woman, that gulf is just one of the many gulfs which law is accustomed to bridge over. Our forefathers have often said that nature had made gulfs. It was their favourite way of excusing themselves for their natural selfishness, and many of those gulfs have been bridged by laws made either by good men willingly or by bad men against their will. Even Aristotle believed that some human beings were by nature slaves; yet the gulf between the slave and the free has been bridged. Does it not follow that no wise man will talk about gulfs fixed by

nature as though it must be wrong to bridge them, or about gulfs not yet bridged by law as though they were permanent barriers? Why, you might as reasonably say that because Russia has no democratic constitution now the reformers should sit still. No doubt King John frequently said to his personal cronies that Magna Carta was out of the question.

He. Yes; I see that is absurd to say a thing is good because it is natural, and also that laws are only gradually evolved. Therefore it is that women who are physically weaker than men are now better treated than they were in uncivilized communities, and I hope that the laws which have brought this about will soon be made complete. But why does not Mr. Haldane see this?

I. As a philosopher, he must see it. But he is a politician, and politicians do not always say what they think. The philosopher is not always the best statesman either.

He. But he said also that a big change, like the abolition of the sex distinction, could not be made till the country wanted it. Was he not right?

I. Perhaps he was as a general rule. But in this case there are two special features. Firstly, till women have the vote they will never be able to say effectively what they want, and it is unjust that women should have to wait for the vote till the present voters—i.e., men—want them to have it. And a general election would only show what the men voters want. How would it show what the women want?

He. No, of course it would not.

I. Secondly, is it not the case that out of 670 members of Parliament, about 420 are pledged supporters of the women's cause?

He. It is so.

I. And all these were elected by men who were acquainted with their views on this question?

He. If the electors did not know, it was their own fault.

I. And you think that Women's Suffrage is a just thing?

He. I cannot see why not, I confess.

I. Then I do not think that there could be any objection to those 420 members compelling the Government to bring in a Bill and voting for it, so that it would become a law. At the next general election those people who disliked the new law would propose to annul it, and then the opinions of both men and women would be discovered. That is the only way of finding out what the whole country wants, and it is fair to both men and women. Do you not think so?

He. Yes, I see that Mr. Haldane was not right in what he said, and also when he spoke of women breaking down the sex distinction by smoking cigarettes and wearing divided skirts, he was talking flippantly and not as a statesman should.

I. Yes, philosophers and statesmen should not make silly jokes, especially about people who are being treated unjustly. Some men, I am told, wear corsets, but it would not be polite to drag that into a political speech. Besides, those women who do what some people call "mannish" things are not necessarily the same as the women who really want votes. Or, perhaps, you would say they are?

He. No, I should not say so. Many of the Suffragists work very hard for the poor or for their living, and are much better citizens than those who don't want the vote.

I. Then it seems that Mr. Haldane was mixing up two very different kinds of people just to make people laugh. That also is rather undignified for a statesman.

He. Yes, I fear it is. And that reminds me that the *Saturday Review* actually said that the women who made protests in the police-courts did so with the same motives as those who go to listen to big murder cases. I cannot see any similarity.

I. Nor can I. It seems to me that the opponents of Women's Suffrage are sometimes neither courteous nor clever. I am afraid that some of the women will think that some of our sex are . . .

A Voice. All tickets, please.

J. M. M.

** All communications intended for the Men's League columns should be addressed to the Editor, 38, Museum Street, W.C.

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