

VOTES FOR WOMEN

EDITED BY FREDERICK AND EMMELINE PETHICK LAWRENCE

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THE IRISH SETTLEMENT



WOMAN: "The Gentleman has got to settle with me as well, for the pig belongs to me every bit as much as it does to either of you!"

CONTENTS

Our Cartoon	341	War Against Women in Industry. By Mrs. Sidney Webb	347
The Outlook	341	Women and Home Rule	348
Mother Nature, Feminist. By T. O. Mearns	342	Prisons and Prisoners	349
A Partnership Between the Sexes: Speech by Sir Harry Johnston	343	Votes for Women Fellowship Meeting	350
The Cruelty Case	344	Government Defeat in Leith Burgess	350
The Political Situation	345	The Movement Overseas	351
Votes for Women Fellowship	346	Comparison of Punishments	351
Prison Unvisited: Poem by H. W. N.	347	The Revolt Among Women	352
		General News	353

DEDICATION

To the brave women who to-day are fighting for freedom: to the noble women who all down the ages kept the flag flying and looked forward to this day without seeing it: to all women all over the world, of whatever race, or creed, or calling, whether they be with us or against us in this fight, we dedicate this paper.

THE OUTLOOK

Mr. Galsworthy, the famous novelist, wrote a powerful letter to the *Times* at the end of last week. He pointed out the crying need for legislation to deal with acute questions of human life and of abominable cruelty inflicted on animals, and lamented the fact that the whole time of Parliament was being devoted to purely constitutional questions.

The Care of Children

With much of Mr. Galsworthy's letter we find ourselves in agreement; but we regret that he stops short of propounding the one remedy which seems likely to us to be in any way effective—the inclusion of women in the body politic. Take, for instance, the question of infant mortality and the underfeeding of little children. This is a question on which the mothers of

the country and women generally feel much more acutely than do men. If women had votes is it not certain that they would bring pressure to bear on Parliament to devote some of its attention to these questions? In Australia, in New Zealand, and in the Western States of America, where women have the franchise, these matters have been dealt with, and extraordinary improvement has been effected. We are therefore justified in laying the failure to handle them in this country on the exclusion of women from any representation in Parliament.

The Position of the Widow

Another question which intimately affects women is the national disgrace of our treatment of the poor widow left with young children. When Mr. Lloyd George was drafting the Insurance scheme, with the help of the Friendly Societies, the sickness for men was originally fixed at 5s. a week, but in addition a widow with young children was to receive 5s. a week on the death of her husband, and 1s. 6d. for every child of tender years in her care. When this scheme was converted into a Bill to be brought before Parliament, the sickness benefit for men was increased from 5s. to 10s., and the widow and orphan were entirely omitted! Can anyone doubt that if women had had votes this change would never have been made?

The Case of Mrs. Savage

The position of the working-woman widow has been brought vividly into prominence during the last few days by the terrible revelations in the case of Mrs. Savage, who was sent to prison for six months with hard labour for cruelty to her children. This paper, VOTES FOR WOMEN, has been the means of exposing the true facts. As the result of an investigation

carried out by our own Special Commissioner, we have shown that the true causes were not criminal, but were the hopeless economic position of the hard-working mother, coupled with ignorance and a haunting fear of separation from her children. We are glad to be able to announce that our statements have aroused the most widespread interest. An important debate took place on the case in the House of Lords last Tuesday, in which Lord Selborne, the Lord Chancellor, and the Archbishop of Canterbury took part.

Mr. McKenna Considering the Case

In the Commons Mr. McKenna was questioned on Monday and Tuesday by Mr. Keir Hardie, and on Wednesday by Mr. Touche and Mr. Morrell, with a view to the woman being liberated and handed over to the care of Miss Neal (our Commissioner). Mr. McKenna stated that he had made inquiries and was considering the case, but he had the welfare of the children to consider as well as that of the mother; and the woman had been cautioned some years ago, while her husband was alive. However, he was grateful to Miss Neal for her active interest in the case, and if he found the release of the mother would be the best course he would be glad to avail himself of her offer. We hope that Mr. McKenna will see his way clear to taking this course at an early date, for under Miss Neal's inspection the children will be carefully looked after, while every day during which the woman remains in prison tends to unfit her for the task of taking care of them herself.

The Wider Question

In the House of Lords, Lord Selborne was at great pains to emphasise the point which we made in our

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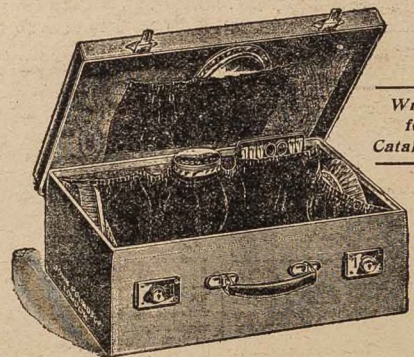
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