

THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST

Organ of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, 55, Berners Street, London.

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August 15th, 1916.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Daughter of the ancient Eve,
We know the gifts ye gave and give;
Who knows the gifts which *you* shall give,
Daughter of the newer Eve?

—Francis Thompson.

THE SUFFRAGE CAMPAIGN IN IRELAND.

BY CHRISTINE O'CONNOR.

When one recalls the fight that the Irish have made for their creed and their nationality, and the sacrifices that they are still, and ever will be, prepared to face, one wonders why militancy, once kindled, did not blaze throughout the land like a prairie fire.

This is a reflection which must often have found place in the mind of an English-woman, or even of an Irishwoman long from home, and at first sight it offers no explanation. We have but to read the lives of our national heroes to see what militancy has done for Ireland, and how it is regarded. William O'Brien, a political prisoner, refusing to wear prison dress, and held down by some half-dozen warders whilst the clothes were torn off him, reminds us forcibly of some of the experiences of suffragists in a similar position.

I think, then, that we may dismiss the idea that there is any horror of militancy as such.

After broaching the subject to various classes, as far as one can gather, the explanation seems to fall under two heads:—

(a) Domestic Conditions.

(b) Ignorance of the English situation.

With regard to the first (a):—

(1) The country is thinly populated. Reduced every year by emigration, and now still further by the demands of the war—men for the army and women munition workers and nurses (a large number have been drawn from this country)—the human resources are drained. There are not many leisured women in Ireland, and this alone, taking into account the scattered homes and want of convenient communication, renders

concerted action most difficult. Something has been done, and more could be done, in Dublin, Belfast and Cork cities, but this is too isolated to be long sustained. Without the rural population at their back to support and reinforce them, the efforts of militants in small cities must needs meet with but partial success.

(2) To this down-trodden and long-suffering nation the enfranchisement of women does not seem such an urgent domestic necessity. With many women Home Rule is the first consideration. All the grievances under which they labour are "Made in England." Their troubles are certainly not so obviously the outcome of male domination as in the sister country. Then, again, that aloofness between the sexes, so common in England, is not general here. Life is different—more free, easy-going, unconventional. Agriculture is the chief industry, and in this men and women take an equal interest. From the estate of the gentleman farmer to the shed of the humblest peasant, there is work and scope for all members of the family. In the case of the landed proprietor the wife takes a personal interest in the tenantry. There are no set rules regarding the distribution of work. A farmer's wife may, or may not, concern herself with the dairy; the pigs may claim her special attention. But, as a rule, she is wanted somewhere, and badly, as well as all available sons and daughters, for labour is scarce. The tradesman is equally glad of her co-operation, and perhaps of her dowry. It is obvious, then, that the interests of the

women are not so separate from those of the men. The average Irish wife is more of a partner—hard-working enough indeed, sometimes, but cheerful and self-interested.

(3) A further point worthy of consideration is the way in which Irish marriages are arranged. With regard to this a misconception often exists. Indeed, unless one has the opportunity of residing in the country, with access to Irish homes, it is difficult to form a true idea. No people are more reticent concerning their family affairs—a reticence prompted by pride. A casual observer might go away with the impression that marriages are made here much as they are in foreign countries—that is, arranged by the respective parents without much consideration for the feelings of the parties concerned, especially the bride. But it is not so. Most marriages certainly seem to be arranged by third parties, but a knowledge of the working reveals the fairness and the sense of the custom. Generally speaking, an Irish girl is not left unprovided for, as in England, to earn her living at some unskilled or cheaply-learned employment, or to find herself a husband to make her a home. To illustrate what I mean I shall take the case of a farmer. If he have much land he will apportion to each child its share—perhaps reserving the chief farm for his eldest son. It is obvious that to sub-divide the land among many children would not be feasible; some must be bought out. One or two of the sons may take their share in the form of education, and qualify for a profession. A daughter may enter a convent, taking her dowry with her. Let us suppose that this leaves one son and two daughters on two moderate farms. Should all wish to marry one daughter will obviously be “de trop.” There are many ways in which this can be settled. The son’s wife will bring a dowry (approximating half the value of the land), and this can be advanced to buy the younger sister out. The parents will probably remain with him. The younger daughter now sends someone (a father, brother or uncle) match-making. They must find an eligible farmer, and report on his land, family, etc. If it seems a desirable union the parties meet (if not already acquainted), and should there be a mutual feeling that they would be likely to

pull well together the courting begins. Intricate and complicated are the workings of this match-making machinery, but it all comes to the same thing in the end—a daughter must be provided for as well as a son, and her material interests protected. The position of the wife, note, is not one of absolute dependence on the husband, as is usually the case in England.

(4) There is yet another consideration: Ireland is undoubtedly a more moral country than England, thanks in a great measure to the influence of the priests. The horrors of the White Slave Traffic, therefore, do not strike home with the same force. A man is known to his neighbours, among whom he has grown up from childhood, and he would get the character he deserves, and perhaps have to emigrate to find a wife, if he led the life of too many Englishmen. They may not all be better men, but at home they have more deterrents.

(5) The political situation, moreover, is rather unfavourable to Irish Suffragists today. Every conviction and every principle is sacrificed to the chance of Home Rule. Unhappily the best of the race have been driven to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Let us hope that they will return to their Motherland in her hour of need, like dutiful sons and daughters, bringing home their wealth and influence.

(6) Regarding the propaganda itself, Irish Suffragists have not received the same incentives to violence. It must be remembered that the Dublin militants were placed in the First Division, and were not treated with that brutality which prevailed in the English gaols. Amongst the Irish people, at any rate (I cannot speak for officials), they have not been subjected to the same intolerance and insolence. The expression attributed to an English Cabinet Minister, viz., that he would as soon give a vote to a dog as to a woman, could not emanate from an Irishman. Perhaps I should not take this as a case in point—it rebounds upon the author, as does every insult. Suffragists should not be troubled by invective. It is harmless. Does not Seneca wisely remark that flatterers are the worst species of enemies.

(Continued on page 79).

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Since our last issue the Government finding the Registration question beset with difficulties, proposed to appoint a Select Committee to deal with the matter. The motion was withdrawn, after Mr. Samuel’s remarkable speech, in face of the cold disapproval of the House of Commons. The Cabinet is once more considering the question, and as we go to press, is still doing so.

* * * *

The following is an extract from the letter sent by the National Union to every member of the House of Commons upon the question of Registration and Franchise Reform:

“ . . . Any alteration in the basis of the Franchise, whether it be of a permanent or temporary nature, which would enfranchise a fresh class of men, would be a grave and renewed injustice to women, unless their claims at the same time receive the full and impartial consideration which has been so often promised by the Government.

This consideration we know to be a great difficulty at the present time. No one deprecates the revival of controversy more than ourselves, but we feel that if the question of the basis of the Franchise is raised in Parliament controversy becomes inevitable.

We do not propose to lay before you now the arguments of our case, but we wish to remind you of the fact that our case exists, is as strongly held, as passionately believed in, and even more obviously proved than before the war.

If it is true that Members of the House of Commons contemplate the possibility of giving votes to soldiers and sailors and munition workers because of their service to the country, it must be impossible for them to forget that the women of this country have also taken their full share of national service. . . . Fourteen constitutional societies, including our own, having asked the Prime Minister to receive a deputation led by Mrs. Fawcett; at his request a letter has been forwarded to him.

The Registration question has made one thing quite clear—that the suffrage movement was never more alive than at present.

* * * *

It is interesting to note that Miss O’Connor, like Miss Mahon, is of opinion that the suffrage will be won in Ireland by peaceful methods, and both agree that our colleagues of the Irish Catholic Women’s Suffrage

Association will be able to render much help in breaking down opposition. That great interest is taken in the question we have been able to judge; whenever our zealous paper-sellers, the Misses Cochrane, have sold the *Catholic Suffragist* in Dublin they have had record sales—as many as 48 copies in half an hour.

* * * *

The *Woman’s Journal* announces that Dr. Rhoda Erdman has been appointed Lecturer in Biology at Yale—the first woman to hold the appointment. Miss M. A. Czaplicka has been appointed Mary Ewart Lecturer in Ethnology at the Oxford School of Anthropology. And in Spain the great feminist and renowned author the Condesa Emilia Pardo-Bazán has been appointed Professor of Literature at the University of Madrid. It has been reported that the Condesa was made a member of the Spanish Academy, but on enquiry at the Spanish Embassy we find that the report is incorrect. Emilia Pardo-Bazán has worked many years for the advancement of women. It is said of her that she is essentially Catholic; she does not serve a party, she defends a conviction. The distinction does not always make for popularity.

* * * *

A recent issue of the *New Southern Citizen* (New Orleans) contained an article entitled “St Catharine of Siena, Suffragist,” a claim based on the review of Miss Anthony’s life of the saint, which appeared in the March number of the *CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST*. The same article gives an account of the St. Catharine Welfare Association, a powerful society of Catholic women formed to work for better social and economic conditions for women and children. This society has been devoting its energies to obtaining the suffrage, being convinced that the vote is necessary to secure and to retain reforms. Further, as anti-suffragists seemed to derive consolation from classing suffragists with atheists, free-lovers and anarchists, the time seemed opportune to identify with the suffrage movement a group of women whose patron saint is St. Catharine of Siena, one of the great political reformers of the fourteenth century. The article goes on to say that the Catholic clergy of the States were circularised on the suffrage question, with the result that the list of Catholic pro-suffrage priests is probably longer than that of any other denomination.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY,

Office: 55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON.

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

IMPERIAL CONFERENCE OF WOMEN.

BRITISH DOMINIONS WOMAN SUFFRAGE UNION.

It requires no particular courage to meet in conference during a world upheaval to discuss proposals for future commercial and material prosperity. It requires great moral courage, I should like to say "suffragist courage," to call a conference to discuss measures of social and moral reform. But this is what the leaders of the British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union have accomplished with notable success, in spite of almost insuperable obstacles.

The conference (second, Biennial) was held in the Great Central Hall, Westminster, on the 5th, 6th and 7th of July. Delegates came from women's organisations of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. Fifteen Suffrage Societies, including our own, sent representatives.

The events of these two years have accentuated the need of reforms for which we agitated in times of peace.

The first conference on the "Loss of Nationality through marriage with an alien," brought out the grievous hardships suffered by wives deprived of the protection of their own country. Miss Chrystal Macmillan put the case very lucidly. She said we knew well that when lawyers wish to simplify laws as affecting married couples it meant treating the wife as a nonentity—against that the whole suffrage movement sets its face. Miss Nettlefold spoke from the legal point of view, stating the complications which would arise in the law courts if husband and wife were of different nationality. The whole question would have to be treated internationally.

Spain and Venezuela are the only countries which have not come into line. One hopes that these countries will continue to remain out of line on this point. Though it may surprise some people to hear it, Spain does respect the personality of wives, no Spanish wife merges her personality in her husband to the extent of losing even her name. Wives retain their names, and the children take the names of both parents. A custom ingrained in the Spanish character.

Mr. Laurence Housman said it was an insult to ask an English woman to register. A resolution of protest against the loss of nationality on marriage was passed with one dissent.

The second day was devoted entirely to moral questions. The following resolutions were passed unanimously:—

1. "That in the opinion of this conference compulsory measures of legislation dealing with Venereal Disease aggravate rather than lessen the evil to be dealt with."

2. "That while recognising the value of the report of the Royal Commission on Venereal Disease, this Conference deplors the absence of any allusion to the low political and economic status of women and the intimate connection of this fact with prostitution."

3. "That this Conference recommends all Women's Organisations to insist that: The whole question of Venereal Disease and inequalities of administration of law in cases of sexual crime be thoroughly ventilated at public meetings and in the press."

There were many able speeches.

Miss Maude Royden dealt briefly with the painful subject of prostitution. She begged some reformers not to speak as though no woman ever went on the streets unless driven by economic pressure; she begged others not to speak as though economic pressure had no connection with prostitution. If it has no connection how comes it that the vast majority of prostitutes are recruited from the poorer classes? Does anyone suggest that the poor are more wicked than the rich? People should have some imagination. Though they may have just enough to keep body and soul together, many young girls are starved of everything which makes life tolerable. Often enough they go astray from a thirst for adventure, or some pleasure to relieve the drab monotony of their wretched existence. The economic subjection of women is intimately connected with the social evil, said Miss Royden.

Miss Evelyn Sharp dealt mainly with the increase of crimes against children, and the terrible leniency of magistrates in dealing with crimes against little girls. A leniency due to the low value placed on women.

At the afternoon session a resolution was passed protesting against the persistent ignoring of questions of sex in the moral and intellectual education of the young, and calling on all Women's Organisations to promote confidential and wholesome relations between parents and children, and between teachers and children on this subject.

Miss Marsh, B.Sc., said that when children come to their parents for information they should not be put off with fairy tales, but be told the truth in simple language suited to their childish minds, and gradually taught the beauty and wonders of nature. Dr. Barbara Tchazkovsky spoke of the conspiracy of silence which the suffrage movement has done so much to break down.

Miss Abadam, speaking with her usual eloquence, approached the subject in a more general way. As women became economically independent, she said, they would exact a higher standard of morality from men. The sacred wells of life had been poisoned. She would like to see health certificates produced before marriage is entered on.

The third day was given to industrial problems, which were discussed by such able exponents as Miss Margaret Ashton, Miss Susan Lawrence, Miss Anna Martin, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, Mrs. Pember Reeves. Among the speakers from overseas were: Mrs. Beamish Lane and Miss Britton (South Africa), Mrs. Sydney Herring (New South Wales), Mrs. Bracher (New Zealand). The Conference re-affirmed the principle of equal pay for equal work, and demanded that a wife should be legally entitled to a share in her husband's property and income, and be given equal guardianship of her children.

Resolutions were passed against child labour under the age of 14; and in favour of pensions for widows with young children.

Mrs. Despard brought the conference to a close with a few eloquent words. She bade her audience not to despair at the gigantic task which lay before reformers. She put her trust in the universal brotherhood of man; we should abolish the word alien.

For us the tenet of universal brotherhood has been summed up in the sublime words of the great Apostle: "There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female. For, you are all one in Christ Jesus."

L. DE ALBERTI.

We regret that lack of space prevents us from giving a report of the public suffrage meeting held in connection with the conference.

OFFICE RENT FUND.

£35 9s. 2d. is now in hand towards the sum of £40 which is required to pay for the rent, etc., of our office. More subscriptions needed.

DONATIONS UP TO 31st JULY, 1916.

	£	s.	d.
Previously acknowledged	32 9 8
Anon.	0 5 0
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B. GADSBY,
55, Berners Street,
Oxford Street, W.

"COME OVER AND HELP US."

Those of us who were present at Mrs. Anderson's lecture on July 15th, given by kind permission of Miss Forbes Robertson, at Museum Chambers, cannot fail to have felt our hearts stirred by her message. For it was the call of our poorer sisters, "Come over into Macedonia and help us!" The Macedonia of back streets and courts and alleys, of ignorance, of struggle and helplessness, such as many of us have difficulty in comprehending. These poor souls, whom we so often hear blamed for extravagance, drink, untruthfulness, dishonesty! We are even reprimanded if we stretch out a friendly hand;—we are "pampering," "spoiling," "making them more and more dependent,"—we should steel our hearts; question, doubt, put them on the operating table, and without the chloroform of a little kindness, a little sympathy, use the knife freely. The knife of a doubting tone, of a cold, dubious expression, of a dictatorial, superior manner. In this way, after a certain time has elapsed, during which some of them have gone very "short," we shall sift out the deserving cases, and after another lapse of time, during which the information we have gathered passes through other more official hands, and is sat on by Committees, we may obtain some help from one or other of the many charities to which the public have subscribed so freely.

How vigorously Mrs. Anderson brought before us the views so frequently expressed by many really kind-hearted people.

"But they are better off than they have ever been!"

"They have never had so much money in their lives!"

"See how they drink!"

To the first two objectors she pointed out the present value of the £1 as compared to the former value, and the increase in the price of necessaries. To the last—the "drink" objector, I would ask: Who places the occasions of sin in their way? Who keeps raising the taxes on tea and cocoa, whilst avoiding, as far as possible, interfering with the publican's pocket?

In New Zealand, where I lived for many years, no public house is open on Sunday, and the price of wines and spirits is such, that unless you are really wealthy, you only

get them in cases of need. It is harder to get drink there. It costs more. In passing, I may remark, that *women have the Franchise* in that enlightened spot. And if you do want to keep women from drinking here, why do you begin by trying to make them *save*? Have you seen their homes? Have you taken any interest in their children? If so, have you not wondered what pleasure they can have in life? Have you never felt, alas! the pity of it, that the attraction of the public house must be considerable. They have over-strained nerves, these poor sisters, they are often ill-fed and anæmic; and a little artificial cheering and soothing, a temporary ease, holds out alluring hands.

How indeed, as Mrs. Anderson asked, almost with passion, *dare* we ask them to save? We worry them to get spectacles for their children, to have teeth, tonsils, adenoids seen to, and to pay a little for the treatment if possible; and we are right,—this is safeguarding the health of the rising generation—but *save* on their poor separation allowances, with their large families, their clothing, boots, rent, coal, gas, and the large increase in food prices, how can we, any of us, have the immense impertinence to ask them to save?

No, rather let us teach them to *spend*, wisely and well; to improve the poor homes that are dear to them—to buy soap, towels, sponges, brushes, disinfectants—things without which cleanliness cannot be accomplished, and yet which cost so much,—so much to those who are sometimes short of food.

Let us show them, as Mrs. Anderson is doing, how to cook economically, how to make the most of what they can afford to buy—and if there is a little margin, let us encourage them to bring a little,—I will not say beauty, but prettiness, into their poor, poor lives. A little more china, a change of muslin curtains, a bit of clean linoleum, a picture or so, but let us not "grind the faces of the poor" by trying to wrest from them their few extra pennies, if they have them, and force them to live without *any* of the amenities of life.

Many years ago I heard a sermon from a priest in New Zealand, the only words of which, that I remember, were, ". . . and

then there are the poor—God's poor"; but if I could express the tender reverence of the intonation "God's poor" I think the message would travel far and wide. It was as though he said "God's darlings."

God's poor, not the neglected poor, not the trodden on, or at the best, set on one side, poor. No, but "God's poor," treated as He would have them treated, helped to independence, self-respect, cleanliness, and other blessings that go to make life what it ought to be.

And this, not by charities cautiously or incautiously doled out, but by a living wage, the right of our poorer sisters, which we are out to win for them.

What do we really want the vote for? If it is for place and power, if it is that we may neglect the home—the woman's sphere—then, as one of our speakers said recently, may we never have it; but if it is, as we believe, to right the wrong, to safeguard the home, to fence round with needful care the nursing mothers, and the children on whom the future of our Empire depends, then let us press forward, without haste, without impatience, without excitement—but also without rest, without pause, without weariness, remembering always that it is the cause of "God's poor" we are fighting for, that justice may be done to them.

MARION NORTHCOTE.

LONDON AND BRANCHES.

The Office, 55, Berners Street, London, will reopen on September 4th.

Holy Mass will be offered for the intentions of the Society at St. Patrick's, Soho, at 10-30 on Sunday, September 4th. Many thanks to all who sold papers on the route of the women's procession on the 22nd ult., also to Miss Forbes Robertson and Miss Ivy Bonn, who sold over seven dozen copies of the paper at Soho, and to Miss Mardel Ferreira, who has joined the ranks of our permanent paper-sellers.

PLYMOUTH AND DISTRICT.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Kingdon, 5, Tamar Terrace, Devonport. We regret that our Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Kent, is leaving Plymouth, and take this opportunity of thanking her for her zeal in working for this branch of the C.W.S.S. Mrs. Kingdon has very kindly undertaken the office of Honorary Secretary.

STIRLING BRANCH.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Murray, The Sheiling, Stirling.

Copies of answers from M.P.'s. to the Hon. Sec. of Stirling Branch of C.W.S.S., on 8th July, 1916.

From Mr. Arthur Ponsonby, M.P. for Stirling Burghs.

"10-7-16. Dear Madam—Thank you for your letter. So far as I can gather there is no chance of a Registration Bill being introduced, so the question

of Woman's Suffrage will not arise on this. The existence of a Coalition Government would certainly seem a favourable period for dealing with what has so often been declared to be a non-party question. The urgent problems of the moment, however, obscure all other issues. You may rest assured that should any occasion arise when the cause of woman's enfranchisement can be pressed I shall be ready to give what assistance I can.

Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR PONSONBY."

From Dr. W. A. Chapple, M.P. for Stirlingshire.

"17-7-16. Dear Mrs. Murray, I have always supported the cause you advocate and will continue to support the claims of women to the franchise whenever the opportunity presents itself. I think the need of this reform grows ever more urgent.

Yours sincerely,
W. A. CHAPPLE."

(Continued from page 74).

In summing up these six causes which seem to account for the fact that militancy has not appealed to Irish Suffragists, I hope I have not conveyed the impression that Irishwomen do not need the vote, for they also suffer grave injustices and disabilities. They need it to-day, and they will feel the want more as time goes on. Their disenfranchisement is a disgrace to Irishmen, unworthy of their history. My endeavour is to impress the fact that an educational campaign is the first necessity, and that, for obvious reasons, the society best suited to the work is the Catholic Suffrage. It is most important that literature be circulated in this country, and that English suffragists keep in touch with their Irish friends.

Referring to (b), the English situation, it must be borne in mind that this is often tactlessly explained. Irishwomen are invited to join hands with their English militant sisters and help them in their struggle for freedom. But they are apt to reply that their English sisters gave them no help or sympathy during the famine, or in bad times when they with their children, were ejected from their homes. Let Catholic suffragists preach a common cause, and appeal to Irish patriotism rather than to Irish prejudices. Let them *above all* impress upon this people that it is *not an anti-religious movement*, as it has too often been misrepresented, both in England and in this country, sometimes consciously, with intention to deceive, by those who preach truth!

"Let seeds be sown in this fallow ground
Where the soil is rich and the hearts are
sound."

THE NORTHERN MEN'S FEDERATION FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

The Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage have sent the following resolution and letters to the Prime Minister and Leaders of the Coalition Government:—

RESOLUTION PASSED BY EDINBURGH EXECUTIVE.

WOMEN AND THE PARLIAMENTARY REGISTER.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Northern Men's Federation, held on Thursday, a resolution was passed unanimously calling upon the Coalition Government "to incorporate women on equal terms with men in the Parliamentary Register, and announcing their determination to oppose by that we would strongly resent any alteration of the franchise which does not so include women." A copy of the resolution has been sent to Mr. Asquith, Mr. Bonar Law, and Mr. Arthur Henderson.—"The Scotsman," Edinburgh, Saturday, July 15th, 1916.

Berwick-on-Tweed Branch of N.M.F.,
21st July, 1916.

Sir,—We, like all other Suffrage Societies, have been following the deliberations of the House of Commons on the question of a new Registration Act with the keenest interest, and I have been authorised by the Berwick-on-Tweed Branch of the Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage to inform you that we would strongly resent any alteration of the Register which does not make full provision for the enfranchisement of women on the same terms as men.

We feel that, after the noble way in which the women have come forward to help in this great crisis, it would be an ignoble and dastardly act for any minister, or government, to ignore the just and righteous claims of the women to have the franchise.
(Signed) R. K. GALL, Hon. Sec.

Glasgow Branch, N.M.F.

Sir,—Since the commencement of the War we, the members of the above Federation, have refrained from active work on behalf of our claim that women should have the vote on the same terms as those enjoyed by men.

Our earnest desire that nothing should be done to imperil the unity of all parties in the prosecution of the war impelled us to keep our activities in abeyance.

We now learn that a Franchise Bill is to be brought in which ignores the claim of women, and as such a measure will be both an injustice and a betrayal, it will be met with uncompromising opposition from this Federation.

For our action the Government must be held responsible, as the introduction of such a measure will violate the understanding that matters of a contentious nature would not be brought forward during war time.

If it be thought, which we do not admit, that the right of women to share in the conduct of our affairs, National and Imperial, could not be urged with the same cogency prior to the start of hostilities, we now hold that equality of service, self-sacrifice, financial burden and personal loss demand equality of representation: and towards that end we shall at once begin to work if a bill be introduced which refuses justice to women.

(Signed) ROBERT FERGUSON, Hon. Sec.

Manchester and East Lancashire.

Sir,—The Manchester and East Lancashire Branch of the above Federation are watching with the keenest anxiety the reports of Government and other proposals to reform the Franchise.

I am instructed to say that *any attempt* at revision of registration, etc., which does not include provision of votes for women on as democratic a basis as that

for men will be the call to an agitation on our part that not even the war and its needs will be able to check.

Do not let it be said that women are to be again put off with "compliments *minus* justice."
(Signed) J. DARBYSHIRE, Hon. Sec.

C.W.S.S. MEETING.

By kind permission of Miss Forbes Robertson a meeting of the C.W.S.S. was held at 9, Museum Chambers, W.C., on July 15th. The speakers were Mrs. Anderson, lecturer to the National Food Economy League, and Miss Fennell. Miss Gadsby, B.A., who took the chair, spoke of the suffrage crisis. It had seemed at one time likely that the Government would have conferred votes on more men while still ignoring the claims of women. Our society had joined with many suffrage societies in urging the Prime Minister to receive a deputation, and we had circularised all Catholic Members of Parliament. The Registration Bill was for the moment shelved, but it was no time to relax our efforts or our vigilance, we had to make it impossible for our claims to be ignored in the settlement of the question. Mrs. Anderson, formerly Honorary Secretary of our Liverpool Branch, gave an account of her work for the National Food League. She has given over 300 lectures in London and the provinces, and has been struck, she told us, by the eagerness of the working women to learn something of food values. While the price of meat and fish is prohibitive, it is essential that the poor should be taught that peas, beans, lentils, etc., are a good substitute. The more she saw of the wives of our soldiers and sailors the more she was amazed at the tales which had been spread abroad of their thriftlessness. It was futile and impertinent, said the lecturer, for prosperous looking men and gaily dressed women to go about preaching to the poor and telling them to invest in war loan. What they wanted to know is how to eke out their miserable pittance to provide food for themselves and children. The patience, cheerfulness, and good will of the poor is a lesson to us all. Miss Fennell, of our Wimbledon Branch, said she was an optimist, she thought that the prospect of women had never looked brighter. She felt that dawn had broken, that men had come to realise at last the value of women's work, and of their co-operation, and that the time was not far distant when we should stand side by side with men as free citizens. But there was danger that the chorus of praise might lull us into a false security. It is not the time to sit down quietly, it is a time for action, we must be ready to seize every opportunity of assisting in the work of reconstruction.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.—Hon. Sec., Miss T. M. Browne, M.A., University Hall, Fairfield, Liverpool. Our Society joined with the Liverpool Society for Women's Suffrage, the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association, and the Church League for Women's Suffrage in organizing a meeting at the Picton Lecture Hall on July 27th. Mrs. E. Stewart Brown was in the chair, and Mrs. Henry Fawcett, LL.D., Councillor Eleanor Rathbone, and Mrs. Allen Bright were the principal speakers. The following resolutions were moved and were adopted unanimously by a crowded and enthusiastic meeting: (1) "That this meeting, holding that a Parliament elected upon a register from which women are excluded is wanting in moral authority and does not represent the opinion of the nation at large, urges Parliament, if called upon by the Government to alter the basis of the franchise, to include women in the electorate." (2) "That as women are vitally concerned in the problems of reconstruction after the war, this meeting demands the adequate representation of women upon all local authorities and all bodies dealing with reconstruction."

REVIEW.

SYMBOL SONGS (Erskine Macdonald, 2/6). There can be no doubt that Miss Mary Richardson has a true gift of poetry, and her symbol songs have an original and individual note; she says in her "Foreword" that whatever their shortcomings, "they are real because they came to me," and this is obviously true, but they are strangely unequal. When she fails, it is due to a mistaken theory of the art of poetry. "Each line is there because it was born there," she says, but if a line is born in the wrong place it is for the artist to remove or alter it until it is right. Inspiration is, of course, the main thing, but every poet knows that on the hill of vision the very pebbles shine like diamonds, and the fairy gold gathered there too often turns to withered leaves when solid earth is reached, and the seer would translate the vision into words. It is for the artist to use discrimination and separate the gold from the dross. Miss Richardson too often allows a weak or commonplace line to mar a fine poem. The following is Miss Richardson at her best:

Bury me in Thy beauty, O my God,
And make this feeble clod
Enraptured by a pure idea of Thee,
Enhale me!
So that the hours pass by my living eyes
But cyphers leading on to paradise,
And let my coming to and fro each day
Be but the moving of Thy Being's Ray,
Thy finger of fine fire direct through me,
That I beholding each, my brother's, sister's face
May summon them to think on Thy pure grace.
O make me as the hill-top daffodil,
Full of Thy golden beauty,
Turned at will
To drink each drop of sun, of Thee,
For Beauty only can set beauty free.

"The Trysting Place," the meeting of the soul and God, opens very finely, but is an example of Miss Richardson's mistaken idea of inspiration; a little painstaking craftsmanship brought to bear upon it might have made the rest of the poem as fine as the beginning.
A.D.A.

National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (Annual Report, id.). This report affords a clear idea of how much good work of national importance can be carried through by a society as effectively organised as the National Union. The work of the N.U.W.S.S., especially in connection with the Scottish Hospitals, is too well known to need repetition here, and the Union may well claim that though since the outbreak of war they have done little direct suffrage propaganda, suffragists have done work of first-rate importance to the interests of women and to the furtherance of the cause of their enfranchisement. And we all know how true it is that the Union has been vigilantly watching the interests of women in Parliament, especially as regards any measure which might prove prejudicial to the suffrage.

All who read this report, and those of other suffrage societies, will agree that if instead of helping in social reconstruction all the energy and ability of suffragists are to be concentrated again on obtaining a simple measure of justice, which the bitterest anti knows can only be delayed, the loss to the nation will be incalculable.

HASTINGS AND EAST SUSSEX BRANCH.—Hon. Sec., Miss Willis, Mount Lodge, The Mount, St. Leonards-on-Sea. Several of our members attended a drawing-room meeting on July 24th, at the invitation of a local Women's Suffrage Society, the meeting being called for the purpose of considering the Prime Minister's answer to the request of the Women's Suffrage Societies in connection with the new Parliamentary Register. We were invited specially to represent the views of our C.W.S.S. on the subject. Our Hon. Sec. said we were fully prepared for any emergency, though our next step must depend on the Government's action. Catholic members of Parliament had been memorialised, and she personally had been instructed to write to the M.P. for Hastings. She had done so, and the letter had been acknowledged by Sir A. Du Cros' Secretary.

After a very interesting discussion the following resolution was put to the meeting and carried unanimously: "That, in the opinion of this meeting, any alteration of the Franchise which did not include the removal of the sex disqualification would be a violation of the principles of justice and constitutional liberty; it therefore calls upon the Government to include women on the same terms as men in the new Parliamentary Register."

Copies of this resolution were sent to the Prime Minister and to the Borough member, as well as a letter to the latter questioning him as to his attitude at the present crisis.

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