

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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FRIDAY, SEPT. 26, 1919.

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

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HACKNEY'S PROTEST MEETING.

Law but not Justice.

A crowded and deeply sympathetic audience assembled in the Town Hall, Hackney, on Monday night, at a public meeting, convened by the Women's Freedom League, to demand the immediate release of the W.R.A.F. clerk, Elsie Kathleen Smith, now imprisoned in Holloway for attempted child murder.

The Chairman, the Rev. C. Fleming Williams, briefly outlined the girl's story, which was narrated in last week's VOTE. He said that during the whole course of a long life he had never been brought in contact with such a sad case, and he was deeply grateful to the Women's Freedom League for so energetically taking it up. This young girl, like thousands of others, had answered her country's call to service, and like thousands of others had been brought in contact with

Unaccustomed Temptations.

The judge was disposed to be lenient in consideration of the girl's physical condition at the time of the attempted murder, but, instead of trusting his humaner instincts, in order to impress some potential criminal in the future, he had treated her as if she had acted with cold calculation in endeavouring to do away with her infant. It was a grave miscarriage of justice when a penalty did not fit a particular case, and it was a particularly fatal happening when the law of a country was publicly discredited in the popular mind by association with injustice. When the judge withdrew his first intention, and substituted instead a mere legal techni-

nicity, he had sinned not only against mercy, but against justice. Another cruel injustice was the non-attendance in court of the father of the child. Why was he not standing side by side with the mother and taking his share of the responsibility incurred in creating new life? This pertinent query received loud applause from the hall.

Miss Alix M. Clark read letters of apologies from the Mayor of Hackney, L. Stanley Johnson, Esq., M.P., Major Gonne, Miss Margery Fry, Miss Gertrude Eaton, (Penal Reform League), Councillor Greenaway, &c., for being unable to attend that evening's meeting.

Mrs. Mustard put the following resolutions:—

This Meeting Demands:

(1) The release of the W.R.A.F. clerk, Elsie Kathleen Smith, who is now serving four months' imprisonment in Holloway Gaol, having, while still weak and ill, 'attempted to smother' her one-week-old baby girl; the father of the child, a Canadian officer, having deserted her and returned to Canada;

(2) That the law shall be altered so that in future cases of this kind the name of the man shall be published as well as the name of the woman; and that both the father and the mother shall appear in court and be held equally responsible for the care of their children."

She said the League, to which she had belonged ever since its inception eleven years ago, stood not only for women's political equality with men, but also for their economic and social equality. At the present time men and women were not socially equal. In cases of children born in wedlock, the father was held responsible and had the sole rights over a child, but in the case of "unwanted" children the entire responsibility rested with the mother. One of the objects of the League was to enforce that both parents should shoulder the responsibility for their children, whether married or unmarried. Elsie Smith had not got her baby with her in Holloway. She preferred to leave it behind in the Salvation Army home, which she (the speaker) had personally visited so as to see the child for herself. It was a poor little infant, prematurely born, and the young mother had undergone an

exceptionally trying ordeal.

At such critical times it took very little to unbalance the mind of a newly-made mother, and this poor girl had had more than enough to cause her to become distracted. There was not only the shame and loneliness, but the unkind letter from her relatives, saying they would receive her back again if she came without the child.

No stigma whatever rested with the child. The word "illegitimate," of which we had all heard so much, needed to be applied to the parents, not to their offspring. Legislation in this country only acted when the pressure of public opinion forced it to move. This social inequality between the sexes must be abolished once and for all. The time had passed for society to point the finger of scorn at the mother of an "unwanted" baby and let the father go free. Immorality could not be confined to one sex only. A pure family life could only be attained by individual purity in both sexes alike.

Mrs. Nevinson, L.L.A., in seconding the resolution, referred very graphically to the many sources of temptation which had been multiplied during the war by the creation of the women's armies. France had recognised this danger far more clearly than we had, and had refused to allow her women to be so exposed. England was the only country which had instituted them so light-heartedly, and it was now paying the penalty in tragedies such as they were then discussing. The Government had done absolutely nothing to help cases like Elsie Smith's. Girls who got into trouble were given a

month's notice and dismissal,

and at present the only refuge these young mothers had was the workhouse, thus throwing additional burdens on the rates. The lying-in hospitals were all overcrowded. In Queen Charlotte's Hospital alone 90 mothers were now being cared for, when the accommodation only allowed for 60. Good foster-mothers, too, were practically non-existent. They had been frightened away by the "Infant Protection Act," which obliged them in future to have their homes inspected. Under present workhouse rules a girl was not allowed to leave her baby behind, and this severely handicapped her for earning a living.

Mrs. Despard, who was received with hearty applause, said, in support of the resolution, that the first thing to do was to get the girl out of prison. The Women's Freedom League did not intend to let the matter drop after that night's meeting. She then described some graphic personal impressions of prison life in Holloway experienced in earlier suffrage days, to illustrate the extreme unfitness of such an environment for one whose case rightly belonged to the care of a doctor and nurse, not that of a prison warder. Mrs. Despard concluded by pleading with deep spiritual conviction the cause of penal reform and the vital necessity for sex instruction and national purity.

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously, and a vote of thanks to the chair, proposed by Miss Clark and seconded by Dr. Knight, closed the meeting.

D. M. N.

THE MILK ORDER.

It may not be generally known that there is in existence an Act of Parliament known as the Milk (Mothers and Children) Order, which provides for milk to be supplied to necessitous cases at costs varying with the necessities.

This Order dates from 1918, and has been in force for over a year. It would be interesting were a plebiscite taken as to how many people know of it, and how many are aware of its provisions. Yet the Order only costs a penny, and can be got as readily as any other Government paper.

During the past eight weeks many farmers have been compelled to send their milkers to the market because of the lack of grass, etc., and their inability to get other feeding stuffs. Surely the Government ought to have had a little *prévoyance* if they really intended to secure supplies of milk during the next seven months. They should, for example, have supplied farmers with feeding stuffs (at a reduced price if necessary, or have kept cake from soaring from £20 to £26 per ton), and as a *quid pro quo* prevented any milking cows being sent to the butcher.

Undoubtedly, the price of milk at 1s. per quart is the result of many factors—(1) the killing off of too many heifer calves in the past three or four years; (2) farmers going out of the milk business because of the varying orders issued to them by officials in London; (3) increase in wages and costs of materials; (4) shorter and restricted hours; (5) this year's considerably reduced harvest, especially of hay, roots, and smaller corn (oats) crops with shorter straw.

To get back to a lesser price there must be a comprehensive farming policy adopted which should take a long view—you cannot produce milk, meat, etc., on the hand-to-mouth policy. Cows and land, like most things, must be treated well and regularly if good returns are looked for.

There would have been a world shortage of food-stuffs to be exported to this country had there been no war. The past terrible conflict simply accelerated and accentuated the shortage. Therefore, our duty to the mothers and children of this country is to press the Government to go in for a thorough reconstruction in agricultural policy—develop the resources in the soil to the utmost, and it will surprise all what we can produce in this country after ten years of enlightened treatment of the soil.

COUNCILLOR J. T. MUSTARD.

REMEMBER! OUR GREEN, WHITE, & GOLD FAIR AT CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER. FRIDAY and SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28 and 29.

SEND us Goods for Christmas Presents,
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Paper and String Goods Stall : : Mrs. Evans and Miss Dorothy
Evans
Penny Stall : : : Miss White
Vote Stall : : : (In Memory of Mrs. Snow, kindly
provided by Mr. Snow)

The Friends of Armenia, the Independent W.S.P.U., the Women's Freedom League Nine Elms Settlement, League of the Church Militant, Women's International League, and Catholic Women's Suffrage Society will also have stalls at this Fair.

WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Women Workers in Demand.

According to recent official reports from the big centres of industry, the output is being handicapped in many instances by an actual shortage of female labour. The *Board of Trade Gazette* describes a shortage of woman labour in factories turning out woollen and worsted goods, silk and hosiery, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, Leicester, and Scotland. The Lancashire cotton trade is suffering from a shortage of weavers, of whom a big percentage are women, and the Dundee jute trade is also in need of workers. Many male operatives in the Northampton boot factories are working short time in some of the departments as a result of inability to secure a sufficient number of women machinists. Leeds has plenty of work for women in the ready-made clothing and in the shirt and collar trades. There is a marked scarcity of women machinists, especially in London and Manchester. In all branches of dressmaking and millinery, in London, Manchester and Glasgow, there is a demand for machinists' finishers, and wholesale mantle, costume, and blouse makers are in a position to employ many more women. A similar report comes from the corset trade.

A "People's Palace."

The re-opening of the "Old Vic" next week brings back to mind that it is now close upon forty years since Miss Emma Cons founded her "People's Palace," in what was then known as "The Royal Victoria Hall," and more latterly as the "Old Vic." This house of many memories was first built in 1816, under the name of "The Coburg Theatre," and was nightly filled with large and fashionable audiences, who crossed the river to see Edmund Kean, Henry Kemble or Booth in Shakespeare. Their carriages, it was said, were escorted across Lambeth marshes by guards provided by the theatre. Since Miss Cons' experiment the theatre has undergone yet another change, and to-day, under the management of Miss Lilian Baylis, provides a South-East London audience with a feast of classical drama and grand opera, interspersed with illustrated lectures.

Women and the Clothes Problem.

The National Conference of American Women Doctors has recently held an absorbing discussion on the question of clothes. Everyone present was said to be exceedingly well posted upon the subject! Dr. Edith Swift, of Boston, said there were two extremes in clothes—those worn by women who used them as a means of luring the opposite sex, and the useful and hygienic clothing adopted by the professional or business woman. Shoes and boots came in for some earnest discussion, the boot which won most approval being one with a broad, low heel and a wide toe. The corset was banned, and all present agreed that the normal woman should so train her muscles as to be able to dispense naturally with any artificial support.

Unremunerative Church Work.

The present rate of pay of Anglican deaconesses and Biblewomen in far too many parishes is nothing short of a scandal. There are many devoted church women who to-day are quite unable to live upon their salary of £60 or £70 a year. The Church Pastoral Aid Society and the Women's Board for the diocese of London are making very creditable efforts to raise the prospects and status of women so employed, but the whole question of salaries needs thorough overhauling. The best type of women are needed for spiritual work, and surely it is not asking too much that their self-denying labours should receive at least a living wage.

The Babies' Welcome.

The home for babies of unmarried mothers which the members of the Women Police Service subscribed for, and support out of their own funds, has very nearly completed the first year of its existence. During the few months of its establishment it has sheltered eight mothers and twenty-five babies. In addition, work has been found for the mothers in service, on the land, or in shops, each one paying as much as she can afford for the keep of her baby. The home, a comfortable roomy mansion in Kent, looking out across sunny gardens to wide stretches of sea, is registered under the East Ashford Union, and is regularly inspected by the medical officer of health for the district. Though hundreds of applications from unmarried mothers arrive daily, there is only accommodation for a limited number of babies. So that more may be received an appeal is about to be made to the public for help, either in money, clothes, cots or blankets.

Women Grocers.

Much interest is being shown in the Grocers' Exhibition now being held at the Royal Agricultural Hall, at the entrance of women assistants for the first time into some of the numerous competitions which form a special feature of these annual exhibitions. Women grocers have already proved their taste and skill in window dressing, and it is confidently expected that they will show at least as much ability as their male comrades in competitions which often call for a good deal of specialised judgment. These include, for instance, the naming and placing, according to value, of assortments of dried fruits, the weighing and wrapping of parcels, and the packing of groceries to be sent on long journeys. The Food Controller is manifesting a warm interest in the exhibition, and many prominent members of the Ministry are expected to visit it in the course of the week.

No Votes for Frenchwomen.

There is to be no vote for French women. The French Senate, or, rather, the commission which it appointed to examine the question of women's franchise, has decided against "votes for women." The Parliamentary franchise and also eligibility of women for Parliament had already been passed by the Chamber of Deputies; but the Senatorial Commission has now killed the whole project. A proposal empowering war widows to vote, and also one allowing a similar privilege to any family whose adult menfolk had been killed in the war was also rejected.

QUEEN'S HALL, LANGHAM PLACE, W
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FOUR LECTURES

BY
MRS. ANNIE BESANT.

SUBJECT:

THE WAR AND THE FUTURE

On SUNDAY MORNINGS, at 11.30.

- October 5th. The War and the Builders of the Commonwealth.
- October 12th. The War and its Lessons on Fraternity.
- October 19th. The War and its Lessons on Equality.
- October 26th. The War and its Lessons on Liberty.

Seats, numbered and reserved, 7s. 6d., 6s., 5s. 6d. Admission 1s. 6d., and a few free seats.

Applications for tickets (accompanied by stamped square envelope), should be either to The Theosophical Publishing House, 1, Upper Woburn Place, W.C.; 169, Piccadilly, W.; The Order of the Star in the East, 314, Regent Street, W.; or at the door of the Hall.

THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY, September 26th, 1919.

NOTICE.—Letters should be addressed as follows:—
To the Editor—on all editorial matters.
To the Advertising Manager—on advertising.
To the Secretary—on all other business, including VOTE orders, printing, and merchandise, etc.

Telephone: MUSEUM 1429.

Telegrams: "DESPARD, Museum 1429, London."

EDITORIAL

The Editor is responsible for unsigned articles only. Articles, paragraphs, or cuttings dealing with matters of interest to women generally will be welcomed. Every effort will be made to return unsuitable MSS if a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed, but the Editor cannot be responsible in case of loss.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE,

At Home and Abroad ... post free, 6/6 per annum.

WHY WE WANT WOMEN CANDIDATES FOR PARLIAMENT.

The recent decision of the National Executive Committee of the Women's Freedom League to urge Miss M. I. Neal (of Manchester) to stand as a candidate for the Rusholme bye-election has aroused an enormous amount of interest both amongst the public and throughout the Press, and although it is with extreme regret we learn that Miss Neal (whose work in the cause of women has been so admirable and with whose views on housing, the question of the health of the community, national waste, high prices and profiteering we are in such cordial agreement) is unable to stand on this occasion, we are more convinced than ever that women candidates at these bye-elections are absolutely necessary if women electors are to secure real representation in the Government of the nation. Until women are actually members of the House of Commons on an equality with men legislators there, the ordinary member of Parliament will not understand that the women of the country intend that their demand for equal opportunities, rewards and responsibilities with men in the State shall be taken seriously. We know that women members of Parliament would have had questions daily on the order paper to enquire about the Government's intentions in regard to those Bills, the purpose of which was to enable women to become barristers, solicitors, justices of the peace, to serve on juries, and to fill the higher posts of the Civil Service. They would certainly have pressed for the extension of the vote to British women on equal terms with men, and would have urged strongly that Indian women, as well as Indian men, should have consideration in the Indian Reform Bill. If women had been in Parliament we are certain that the Pre-War Practices (Restoration) Bill would not have had an easy passage into law, and we could have relied upon women members to bring pressure enough to bear on the Home Secretary to secure the release of the W.R.A.F. clerk who is now in Holloway.

Since the Women's Freedom League's attempt to promote the candidature of a woman in Rusholme, we learn from the *Daily News* that the policy of the equality of the sexes has Mr. Pringle's cordial adhesion. We are exceedingly pleased to have this information, and we hope that the other candidates will also publicly express their views on this matter, which is of vital importance to women. Whichever one of them is returned to Parliament we feel sure that he will have an opportunity in the near future of showing his constituents the strength of his convictions in this direction. Meanwhile, women should leave no stone unturned to put a woman candidate in the field at any coming bye-election.

THE MATERNAL INSTINCT.

The Leytonstone baby farm tragedy does not find its final settlement in the sentence passed on the wretched woman who drank away the paltry sums paid for adoption. Surely it is time to question a social system that turns mothers into unnatural monsters. At the Zoo, when animals exhibit unnatural tendencies and destroy their young, as in the notorious case of the polar bears, the explanation is, they are living under artificial conditions, which is sufficient to account for perversion. But amongst ourselves, in a so-called civilized society, we find women so dead to the most elementary instincts as to consign their young ones to a death of tedious torture. It is useless to argue they do not know it; it is well known. Who is going to relieve a parent of a baby for £20 for good and all, unless it is a very clear case of genuine adoption, in which case money would not be the object.

Rationalists tell us the germ of religion and altruism first found root in the mother's love; on that purest emotion all the rest have branched and flowered. To trample that most glorious instinct into the mire must make angels weep. To search for the bed rock reason brings us to the economic problem. Apart from public shame is the cruel necessity to live. The economic fight for women is far more acute than for men. By a singular lack of proportion, the stigma of out of wedlock childbirth is reckoned as a crime. And so it is when an innocent, defenceless child bears all the brunt. At the same time nature will not be defied. The wretched woman punished, may be a convenient scapegoat. But if one thing more than another requires safe guarding it is the elementary instinct of Motherhood; a nation is past redemption without it.

THE GOVERNMENT'S NATIONAL POLICY.

"Please take one" was an invitation issued at railway bookstalls last Saturday to passengers to carry away with them the apparently unwanted surplus copies of *The Future*, which describes itself as a "Government statement of national needs and national policy." It states that Parliament from February 4th to August 9th, 1919, has achieved a record output, and among the achievements stars "A Housing Act." We agree that this looks very well on paper, but very few of us have seen any houses being constructed. The establishment of a Ministry of Health, which is to secure national fitness, is given a prominent position. We should like to be assured that this Ministry intends to see that the mass of women in this country will be able to purchase milk at something less than one shilling a quart in the coming winter, and that it will make some drastic provisions against the adulteration of our food supply. The periodical also boasts of the restoration of Trade Union conditions, which is certainly an advantage to men Trade Unionists, but at the same time is a legalised injustice to working women. The Government's autumn programme tabulated by *The Future* is a matter of some surprise to women, who had been told by the Prime Minister and Mr. Bonar Law last December that "it will be the duty of the new Government to remove all existing inequalities of the law as between men and women," for, although this precious programme deals with the demands and aspirations of Labour, a policy in regard to coal mines, our import and export trade, protection against trusts, combines, etc., it makes no mention of women's concerns or interests; it fails even to say anything about the Government's own Bill—the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Bill! Does the Government expect to have any support from organised women for this travesty of a national policy?

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WORK.

Their place in Industry.

An interesting conference on "Women's Right to Work," organised by the Manchester Branch of the Women's International League, was held last Saturday at Manchester. Representatives from women's Trade Unions and other women's societies were invited. The Freedom League had four delegates present. Three very important resolutions were moved and passed unanimously, each being moved and seconded by specialists on the subjects concerned. Miss Margaret Ashton presided.

I. (a) That women shall not be arbitrarily debarred from any trade or profession;

(b) That they shall be paid on the same basis as men. This was introduced by Miss Love, a representative of the National Union of Teachers, who described the great opposition with which the women had met in their fight for equal pay for equal work in the teaching profession.

The seconder of this resolution, who represented the Tailors and Tailoresses' Union, maintained that in their trade there was no adequate reason why women should not be paid as much as men. The value of their work was undeniably equal, and it was

only a myth

that women must be paid less because their needs were less than those of men. If a woman went into a restaurant she paid just as much as a man: there was not one menu for women and another for men. In fact, women's clothes often cost more than men's.

There was a good deal of discussion on this subject, during which a representative of the Bakers and Confectioners' Union complained that though men and women in their union worked just the same hours at exactly the same work, there was a lower rate of pay for the women.

II. "That this conference protests against the wholesale and needless dismissal of women from Government employment without any provision for their future welfare, and demands that the live register of the Labour Exchange should not include the unemployable, for whom provision should be made in other ways, e.g. (a) by lowering the age for old-age pensions and increasing the amount; (b) by granting widows' pensions. It urges the Government to tide over the period of transition from war industry to peace, and demands the use of the Queen's Work for Women Fund and local relief funds to provide:

"(a) Employment for unskilled workers at not less than subsistence rates.

"(b) Education for young workers, with payment for maintenance.

"(c) Further training for semi-skilled workers."

Mrs. Annot E. Robinson, in introducing this resolution very severely criticised the Government's

treatment of women

in industry. Women, she said, are no longer going to be content to be thrown on the scrap-heap when they are no longer wanted by the Government. Women have come into industry to stay. She realised that many men had returned and wanted their old jobs back. But that was no excuse for the wholesale scrapping of women. If there was room for 20 per cent. of the women who had entered industry during the war they should be allowed to remain, so as to keep open the doors of any industry in which women had been found to be competent workers. She demanded that the conference should press for the Queen's Fund to be used to provide employment for the large numbers of women who were at present being dismissed from Government offices throughout the country.

Miss Quaile, the secretary of the Trades and Labour Council, seconded this resolution.

III. The conference recognises the good work being done by the Trade Board Department of the Ministry of Labour in raising the wages of women by legal minimum rates, but urges that the present method should be speeded up, and that all underpaid women's trades should be included under the Act as quickly as possible.

This was moved by Miss Wilkinson, of the A.U.C.E., in an interesting speech, in which she briefly described the work of trade boards and the great necessity for speeding up their operation.

The resolution was seconded by Mrs. Dickenson, of the Women's Trade Union Council.

Discussion on this resolution was scarcely felt to be needed, and the conference passed it unanimously.

The Women's International League intend to arrange a further joint conference between men and women, when these resolutions will again be considered. It is expected that this will be held in a few weeks' time.

M. SACKUR.

WOMEN IN PUBLIC WORK.

In many parts of the country women have for years shown splendid public spirit by serving on Boards of Guardians, and, in fewer numbers, on borough and county councils, where their work has shown such regularity, punctuality and attention to detail as to afford a striking example to some of their men colleagues. It is due to the initiative and energy of public-spirited women that maternity and child welfare centres have been started up and down the country, and now that these centres are firmly established and recognised as an important factor in securing national fitness, these same women should certainly have some influence and control in their management. To do this, they must become members of their local borough councils, and we are more than pleased to learn that Mrs. Schofield Coates, our honorary organising secretary and for many years a member of our National Executive Committee, has consented to stand as a candidate for the Middlesbrough Borough Council. We wish her every success, and feel confident that our readers in the Middlesbrough district will do all in their power to secure her return to the Council, on which, from our knowledge of Mrs. Coates' work on the Women's Council and her frequent chairmanship of our own Committee, we are convinced she will render invaluable service. Her local work on behalf of women and children, her wide knowledge of the housing question, of health conditions and of the necessity of a pure food supply; and her appreciation of the work and capacity of women, will go far in helping to solve some of the difficult problems with which every district is faced. As we go to Press we learn that Mrs. Whetton, another member of our Executive Committee, is being urged to stand for the local Council election in Portsmouth. We sincerely hope that she will decide to do so, and that her success will be assured by our members in that district.

CONFERENCE ON INDIA.

Saturday, October 4th, Steinway Hall, Lower Seymour Street, W.1. (Bond Street, Tube Station.)

Morning, 11 to 1 p.m. Chair: MRS. BESANT. Political and Economic Problems.

Speakers: Hon. V. S. Sastri; Col. J. C. Wedgwood, M.P.; N. C. Kelkar; B. P. Wadia.

Afternoon 2.30 to 5 p.m. Social Problems.

Speakers: Mrs. N. C. Sen; C. Y. Chintamani; J. Dwarkadas M. A. Jinnah.

Admission to each session 1/-.

Evening 7.30. Public Lecture by Mrs. Besant, on "THE INDIAN REFORMS."

Chair: Com. Kenworthy, M.P. Admission 2/6 and 1/- Programme and Tickets from Hon. Sec. "Britain and India" 7, Southampton St., High Holborn, W.C.1.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND WOMEN OVERSEAS.

At a meeting held on Wednesday, September 17th, at the office of the British Dominions Women Citizens' Union (19, Buckingham Street, Strand) there was an animated discussion upon the subject of the League of Nations, and women overseas. Miss Newcomb (hon. secretary) opened the proceedings by announcing that this was the first of a series of meetings to be held on the third Wednesday and the fourth Friday of each month for the discussion of social questions, all of which affect the oversea dominions as well as the Motherland. She specially asked for the help of members in securing speakers to advocate the more conservative side of these questions.

Miss Ruth Atkinson, a leading member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union of New Zealand, announced from the chair that Miss Vida Goldstein (president, Women's Political Association of Victoria, Australia) would open the discussion.

Miss Goldstein prefaced her address by alluding to her previous visit to London in 1911, and to the pleasure it gave her to recall her work in arranging the Australian section in that year of the

women's procession

She also referred to the Union under whose auspices she was now speaking, expressing the keenest gratitude to Miss Newcomb and Miss Hodge for their work for women during their world tour, undertaken entirely at their own expense, with the object of strengthening this Union, whose potentialities were almost limitless.

The spirit which animated all the women representatives at the League of Nations Conference, held at the Caxton Hall on September 4th, was altruistic in the extreme. Many speakers believed that women's co-operation was essential, and their exclusion would be disastrous. Primarily, the feminist movement must be kept vigorously alive in order to readjust the positions of the sexes. Women were still in a position of inferiority. Until women had economic independence the readjustment cannot be effectual; until women had access to knowledge in every department they were severely handicapped in the world's race. For humanitarian reasons, too, the feminist movement must be kept alive and active. The function of women was to create, nurture, and foster life, and in order the more effectively to exercise their humanitarian activities they should form trades unions in this time of peace.

Miss Newcomb spoke enthusiastically of the spirit of **international sympathy**

which lay behind the ideal of the League of Nations, a spirit that was strong among all the peoples.

Dr. Vickery said that women were too slow in realising that they, as a sex, had a much better claim than men to represent the race. She deprecated the idea of a women's bureau, and urged that the International Women's Suffrage Association and the International Union of Women Workers could do the work that was needed quite as effectively.

Miss Goldstein brought forward as a recommendation to the women of the oversea dominions that they should organise as their sisters in Great Britain had done to secure representation by duly qualified women upon the League of Nations, and, in addition, that they should carefully consider the pros and cons of the formation of a women's bureau, the scheme for which had been so skilfully worked out by Miss Chrystal Macmillan.

Miss Newcomb suggested that the women of the oversea dominions should be urged to follow the example of Great Britain in summoning a conference of the representatives of all their women's societies. She announced that the next meeting will be on Friday, September 26th, when Mr. Plaatje will give an address upon the recent land laws in South Africa and their grievous effect upon the native population.

MARGARET HODGE.

BOOK REVIEWS.

Mary Olivier: a Life. By May Sinclair. Cassell & Co., Ltd. London. 7s. net. (Can be obtained at this office.)

This is undoubtedly a remarkable book. For daring and relentless self-analysis and for sheer power it stands out in our mind as unique. Yet there are times when we have no patience with it, when we should have preferred a plain, straightforward story ending in the conventional happy vein.

It is like trying to review Browning's "Sordello." It contains so many statements about which one would like to ask the brilliant authoress what exactly she means. Mary Olivier's life is given quite fully, from the first dawn of consciousness to mature womanhood. Her parents and family, her friends and occupations, are discussed with an unromantic realism that sometimes strikes us as hard.

The temptation of a reviewer to attribute the experiences and emotions, the words and actions, of the characters drawn to the novelist's self is peculiarly liable to overwhelm one here; and this, we imagine, because of the vividness with which the writer has woven herself with her principal character.

One of the crises in her life was when she was "removed" from school for pantheism. In this error (was it an error?) Spinoza was her guide. She had read him eagerly, and, one thinks, not with complete understanding. So it is the evolution of a soul we are called upon to witness here, and, truth to tell, it becomes a trifle morbid at times. Again, it is intensely interesting. In the main it is a book without atmosphere; or, let us say, the characterisation is so fine that the atmosphere escapes one. The characterisation is not vigorous so much as virile. They move by the strength of steel wire, not by main force and perspiration. And their capacity for suffering may be measured by that simile.

The year 1910 marks the end of the chronicle, and the beginning is 1865. During that time we are watching the liberation of Mary's soul.

This is an absorbing book; but it is not one to be read by the fireside on a Sunday afternoon. There is too much fundamental brainwork in it for that.

Woman, the Inspirer. Edouard Schuré. Power Book Co., 52a, High Holborn, W.C. 4s. 6d. (Can be obtained at this office.)

Monsieur E. Schuré takes three exemplars—Mathilde Wesendonck, Cosima Liszt, and Margherita Albana Mignaty. He has much to say of the sacred rôle of wife and mother, and alludes to the spiritual fecundation of the Eternal-Masculine by the Eternal-Feminine.

Mme. Wesendonck and Cosima Liszt were ladies whom Wagner loved. The first he could not have—his friendship with Wesendonck forbade it. In a tempest of grief and overwrought feeling, Wagner worked out the magnificent music of Tristan and Isolde. Some years later the maestro fell in love with Cosima Liszt, wife of the musician, von Bülow. After her divorce she married Wagner, and proved to be another great inspirer. Her husband longed for a theatre not dependent on popular taste and will, which nearly always drags histrionic art down to the low revue level we now see in our great cities. Owing to his own herculean efforts, the patronage of Ludwig II. of Bavaria and the wonderful ability of Frau Wagner, Baireuth Theatre slowly evolved. To Wagner is due the idea, to her the practical ability which gave it being and shape. After Wagner's death (1883) she staged *Parsifal*, and then realised gradually two more of the master's ideals, the founding of a new singing school and the creation of a new dramatic style.

The third woman of the trio, Margherita Albana Mignaty, was Schuré's close friend and inspirer for 15 years; her remarkable personality fills more than half the book. The author dwells on the fruitful influence she exerted on Pasquale Villari, and shows up his mean jealousy of a gifted woman; she was a mine which the able Italian writer exploited whilst refusing to acknowledge the fact.

Women's Freedom League.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Wednesday, October 1.—Public Meeting, Minerva Cafe. Speaker: Miss Abadam. Subject: "Flouting Women—the Divided Faggot."

Wednesday, October 1.—Open-air Meeting, Hyde Park, 7 p.m.

Thursday, October 2.—Open-air Meeting, Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.

Wednesday, October 8.—Public Meeting, Minerva Cafe, 3 p.m. Speaker: Miss Clara Andrew. Subject: "Adoption in Relation to the Unwanted Child" (the work of the National Children Adoption Association).

Wednesday, October 8.—Open-air Meeting, Hyde Park, 7 p.m.

Thursday, October 9.—Open-air Meeting, Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.

Wednesday, October 15.—Public Meeting, Minerva Cafe, 3 p.m. Speaker: Miss Lind-af-Hageby. Subject: "The Re-valuation of Women."

Wednesday, October 22.—Public Meeting, Minerva Cafe, 3 p.m. Speaker: Mr. William Aird. Subject: "The Food of the Future."

Monday, September 29.—Westcliff. Social, Crowstone Congregational Hall, King's Road, 7.15 p.m. Music and sketches by Mrs. Newberry and friends. Refreshments provided; 1s. each.

Thursday, October 2.—Ipswich. Meeting at 9, Queen Street, (private door) 3.15. Discussions and papers on social questions, and work for Green, Gold and White Fair.

Monday, October 6.—Westcliff. Speaker: Miss Underwood

Monday, October 20.—Westcliff. Speaker: Mr. Elvin. Subject: "Local Problems and the Municipal Election."

Thursday, October 23.—Ashford. Public Meeting. Speaker: Miss F. A. Underwood, Subject: "What the Women's Freedom League stands for."

Friday, October 24.—Swansea. Public Meeting, Central Hall. Speaker: Miss Anna Munro.

Monday, November 3.—Westcliff. Speaker: Dr. Charlotte Shields. Subject: "Pre-Natal Conditions and the Mother."

Provinces.

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Other Societies.

Wednesday, October 1.—Women's Social Hour, 141, Portland Road, Norwood, at 3 p.m. Speaker: Miss Dorothy Evans. Subject: "Fair Wages for Housewives."

Saturday, October 4.—North Kensington I.L.P., 8, Bonchurch Road, Ladbroke Grove, at 8 p.m. Speaker: Miss Dorothy Evans. Subject: "Fair Wages for Housewives."

Monday, October 6.—Shoreditch Herald League. Open-air Meeting, Hoxton Church, at 8 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Nevinson. Subject: "The Need for Women on Public Bodies."

Branch Notes.

Swansea.

Arrangements are now being made for holding a public meeting in the Central Hall on October 24th. Miss Anna Munro will be the principal speaker. We hope to hold a jumble sale early in November, and shall be glad of contributions. Anything saleable in the way of old clothes, boots and shoes, ornaments, carpets, etc., will be acceptable. Will all members and friends kindly do all in their power to make both the meeting and the sale a success?

Manchester.

The Manchester Branch is forming a study circle, whose meetings are to be held fortnightly, on Monday evenings at 7 p.m., at the Milton Hall—the first on Monday, September 29th. We intend to discuss many subjects of special interest to women, beginning with "Endowment of Motherhood," "Mothers' Pensions," "Allowances for Children," etc. These meetings should be very fruitful in helping us all to formulate our ideas.

Westcliff.

One of our members, Mrs. Gaunt, is contesting one of the wards at the coming municipal election, under the Labour Party banner.

AN IMPRESSION OF THE ABERYSTWYTH CAMPAIGN.

BY A VISITOR.

For over a quarter of a century I have spent the summer in that queen of Welsh watering places, Aberystwyth. Walking along the promenade one day this summer I saw the welcome announcement that the Women's Freedom League had arrived and were going to hold their first meeting that night on the promenade. My thoughts went back to some seven or eight years ago, when Miss Clark and Miss Munro held their first meeting in Aberystwyth educating the public to the just claim of votes for women, and the violent opposition they met with, and how, in spite of the most hostile reception at several meetings, the opposition was eventually broken down and enthusiasm reigned instead.

For three summers the Women's Freedom League have not held a campaign in Aberystwyth, and I waited with eagerness for their first meeting, punctually at 8 p.m. Miss Clark taking the chair, she spoke of the great strides women had made during the past four years. It was a deplorable fact that it had taken a European war to make the country realise the capacity of the women; it had been there all the time, and only wanted the opportunity. She pointed out that since the last campaign in Aberystwyth several millions of women had been enfranchised, and hoped that the enfranchised women were going to use their vote for their unenfranchised sisters and work for full equality and equal opportunity between men and women.

Mrs. Mustard spoke on the "Power of the Vote," capturing her audience by her deep note of sincerity and intense earnestness.

Night after night, at 8 p.m., the Women's Freedom League flags flew above the promenade, and "The Need of Women M.P.'s," "Equal Pay for Equal Work," "Equal Morality," etc., etc., were spoken about and discussed. One night about a week later Miss Clark made the announcement that the police and Town Council had forbidden her to collect. Great indignation prevailed among the audience, but Miss Clark pointed out that there was no law or regulation in Britain which could prevent her accepting money for the Women's Freedom League if it was offered. Immediately hands went in pockets and bags, and donations were received amid applause and cheers. Many of the same faces were seen at the meetings night after night, and great was the praise for the work the Women's Freedom League was doing.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE SETTLEMENT.

93 Nine Elms Lane, London, S.W.8.

This week we have been enriched by a concert kindly arranged by Miss R. Wells, in Petersham Park. Mrs. Despard attended, and spoke a few words on our behalf, with the result that we are expecting something more than even Miss Wells' very great help was able to accomplish. Miss Wells is hereby accorded a most hearty vote of thanks, in which her excellent artistes are included.

We have been promised further garments for the children, but so far no one has offered to supplement our vanishing supply of towels and cot under-blankets. We have to acknowledge sweets and fruit for the children from "Tony Brooks'" mother, an extra 2s. 6d. from one of the kind performers at Miss Wells' concert, 1s. from Miss Riggall, and to-day our dinner guests have been revelling in the apples sent by Mrs. Brown. We have also had some pears given to us this week by Mrs. Despard, grown on a tree planted by her own hands.

One of our helpers suggests that we form a needlework guild, to help us out of some of our difficulties. Would anyone willing to join kindly communicate with the Secretary here? Miss Davies has made six little pairs of knickers, which would form a good nucleus, though, of course, one article would be the minimum.

SPECIAL INJUSTICES FUND.

Many thanks to the friends who have already subscribed to our special protest fund. The splendid public meeting was a heavy expense, as it had to be made known very widely, but the large and influential audience rewarded us. Elsie Smith must be got out of Holloway; much work may still have to be done to get this result. From all over the country I expect contributions to reach me, both to end this poor girl's imprisonment and to be ready for immediate action in similar cases.

144 High Holborn, E. KNIGHT,
London, W.C.1. Hon. Treasurer.

FRIDAY,
September 26,
1919.

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LET US SEND YOU "THE VOTE" EVERY WEEK POST FREE.

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Hastings.

A most successful meeting was held at the Wellington Square Lecture Hall last Thursday. Mrs. Despard gave a brilliant address on "Women, and the Great Questions of the Day." Mrs. Strickland, who presided, warmly pleaded that the petition got up by the Women's Freedom League to protest against the imprisonment of Elsie Kathleen Smith should be signed by those present at the meeting. The Organiser wishes to thank all those who so kindly came forward to help her with the meeting. Mrs. Crittenden ably presided over the tea arrangements. Mrs. Strickland, whom we warmly welcome as our new president, entertained Mrs. Despard to lunch. All the cakes for the tea were provided by Mrs. Barton, Mrs. Jowers, Mrs. Brock Lane (secretary of the Hastings Branch), and Mrs. Strickland. We tried a new venture for this meeting which proved very successful. The printing bills are very heavy nowadays, so we thought we would try selling penny tickets for a change. The result was excellent: we will try it again!

Ashford.

A very successful meeting was held at the Co-operative Hall last Wednesday. Mrs. Despard was accorded a warm welcome. The subject of her speech, "Women, and the Great Questions of the Day," was listened to with close attention. Mrs. Kiltur made an excellent chairman. Mrs. Murgatroyd Dickinson, in a delightful little speech, thanked the speaker for her excellent address.

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