

VOTES FOR WOMEN

EDITED BY FREDERICK AND EMMELINE PETHICK LAWRENCE

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THE GENERAL ELECTION RUMOUR



("It is generally known that the Government is unpopular in the country, and that a General Election could not in practice be confined to the question of Home Rule."—Evening paper.)

CHORUS OF SUFFERING CABINET MINISTERS: "Why didn't you take us into port last week, when you had the chance?"
BO'SUN ASQUITH (faintly): "I have nothing to add"—groans—"to my previous public declarations"—groans—"on the subject."

CONTENTS.

PAGE	PAGE
Our Cartoon	Masculine Good Sense. By Joseph Clayton
The Outlook	A Human Tragedy
Jimmy's Afternoon. By Mary Samuel Daniell	Suffragists in Westminster Abbey. By A. M. Buckton
The Prospects of the Franchise Bill	The Agitation Throughout the Country
New Books	"A Girldie Round About the Earth"
The Child at the Court Theatre	The Case of Mrs. Napolitano
For Girls and Boys	
Will Women Unite?	

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

It is now definitely stated that the Committee stage of the Franchise Bill will commence one day during the week beginning January 20, probably Thursday the 23rd. As the first Woman Suffrage amendment—the omission of the word "male"—proposed by Sir Edward Grey, Lord Robert Cecil, and others, is one of the very first amendments on the paper, it will almost certainly be discussed on the opening day.

The General Election Rumour

Each week brings its fresh crop of rumours as to the possible intentions of the Government. First we had the threatened resignation of Mr. Asquith, then the resuscitated proposal of a Referendum on Woman Suffrage, next the suggestion that the whole

Franchise Bill would be delayed so as to be excluded from the benefit of the Parliament Act; and to no one of these rumours has Mr. Asquith consented to give an explicit denial. Finally, this week we have had the rumour that the Government were contemplating an early appeal to the country in the shape of another general election.

Party Opinion

It is too early yet to form any idea whether this rumour is more than an unjustifiable inference from a passage of arms between Mr. Asquith and Mr. Bonar Law which occurred during the discussion of the Home Rule Bill. But while both the *Daily Chronicle* and the *Daily News* deny the rumour, calling it "unwarrantable" and "unthinkable," it is significant that other Liberal daily papers preserve a strict silence on the matter, and the *Nation* declares that "the Government are just now under a singularly strong temptation" to challenge the electorate. On the Unionist side, the *Spectator* shares this view, on the ground that an election would provide the Cabinet with a solution of the Ulster difficulty, while the *Observer*, without giving credence to the rumour, warmly welcomes the idea. The *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Evening News* go so far as to prophesy a general election in February or March of this year; and the London correspondent of the *Birmingham Post* states that the Liberal central organisation has given orders for the extensive printing of election placards.

Suffragists Ready

Whether there is fire or not behind all this smoke, the fact stands out plainly that a general election

would also, as the *Globe* suggests, offer Mr. Asquith a way out of the Woman Suffrage difficulty; and Woman Suffragists will be found ready and eager to take their part in it when it comes. It is clear, however, that were it to take place before the Franchise Bill had been settled, Mr. Asquith's pledge that this Parliament should have the opportunity of effectively dealing with the Woman Suffrage question would have been broken in the letter as well as in the spirit. In this connection it is interesting to notice that a member of the Government, in denying the rumour of an early general election, said to a *Daily Telegraph* reporter, "You may take it from me that the next general election will be based on Franchise and Redistribution, and not on Home Rule," indicating very clearly that in his opinion the Franchise question would not be settled in the present Parliament.

"The Free Vote of the House of Commons"

Other signs are not wanting as to the truth of this assumption. The *Daily Herald* has appointed a Special Commissioner to watch the Bill in the interests of the women, and he has made it his business to disclose in that paper the various plots within the House of Commons to defeat the Woman Suffrage amendment—disclosures which were anticipated by us in this paper months ago. The *Morning Post* affirms that, whatever becomes of Sir Edward Grey's amendment, the Government will, immediately after the voting thereupon, drop the Bill and adopt the Plural Voting Bill instead. In Wednesday's papers appeared a statement

NEW BOOKS

TWO POETS'

They are different, for both are good, and no two good writers are ever alike. But still they have very much in common—the same kind of knowledge, the same love of the arts and belief in them, an upbringing in the same general class of society, and the same general outlook upon the world.

What both want is power—a power that no amount of study in books or arts can give, no amount of culture or association with people who are never compelled to face the crude and fundamental passions and difficulties of life.

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MEMOIRS OF AN ACTRESS+

It does not appear to follow that because a life has been an interesting one, the written account of it will prove readable. This is doubly true in the case of an autobiography; for where a Boswell, of course, would make the dulllest man a hero to his valet, a comedy actress, like Madame Judith, whose Autobiography has recently appeared in a charming English edition, is capable of boring her most admiring readers, simply because she is not enough of an egoist to write amusingly about herself.

in my rooms in the Rue de Richelieu, I was consumed with anxiety with regard to my old mother, who lived in the Faubourg du Temple. For two whole days I had been

* (1) "The Agate Lamp." By Eva Gore-Booth. (Longmans. 2s. 6d.)
(2) "Lyrics." By Lady Margaret Sackville. (Herbert and Daniel. 8s. 6d.)
+ "My Autobiography." By Madame Judith. (Eveloigh Nash. 10s. 6d.)

listening to the boom of cannon and volleys of musketry that did not cease even at night. It was one long, continuous, awful and sinister roar. The closed shutters of the windows looking on to the street, the ceaseless outcries from below, the close confinement in my hermetically sealed apartments all contributed to madden me with terror for my mother, especially as I knew that the Faubourg du Temple was one of the most exposed situations in the town.

The story of the way she sallies forth from her apartment, crosses Paris under fire, and climbs a barricade in order to assure herself of her mother's safety, is told with the utmost modesty; though the expedition must have demanded very great courage on her part.

Another episode of particular interest to readers of VOTES FOR WOMEN is that of a luncheon party at the prison of the Conciergerie, where the hosts were the two sons of Victor Hugo and the editor of the Eclairement, who were all imprisoned there for writing articles against the Government.

At the Palais Royal he made my coachman stop, and told the footman to buy a lot of provisions and choice wine. "Visitant captivus is one of the seven works of mercy," he remarked as he piled up pastry, hams and bottles of Burgundy and champagne on the seat between us.

All this sounds a little familiar; but the parallel ends abruptly here, for French political prisoners of 1848 seem to have treated their prison very much as a hotel. No Rule 243a for them! They were allowed to meet together as much as they liked, and the luncheon party was a merry one.

Vaquerie, Maurice and the two Hugos all wore red caps they had got for the occasion, I don't know how, and they produced others for me and the Prince to don. At every successive course and the opening of every fresh bottle of wine we sang a verse of the Marseillaise. "To liberty!" cried Vaquerie, raising his glass, and the Prince clinked glasses with him. "Death to the tyrant!" shouted Maurice. "Judith, we count on you to behold the new Holofornes!"

Nothing else in the book is quite so interesting to Suffragists; but they will find a good deal that is worth reading in the stories about the two Dumas, about Rachel and Théophile Gautier, and other figures of a very dramatic period of French history.

A PRISONER'S CORRESPONDENCE

There are doubtless many readers of this paper who feel themselves to be experts in the subject on which Mrs. Fred Reynolds has based her book, "Letters to a Prisoner." That is to say, every Suffragist, whose friend has broken the law in the name of the cause, has written letters to a prison. In very few cases have the letters reached the prisoner, and in still fewer cases have any answers to them come back to the writer; while those that did get through the prison gates were almost worthless, because the only interesting passages in them had been censored. Still, every Suffragist who has been to prison knows the kind of letter she would have liked to receive there, and we do not think it would resemble the letters written by the heroine of Mrs. Reynolds's book to her husband in prison. For these are literary discourses; and in prison one does not want literary discourses, one wants two things, (1) important news and (2) a definite assurance—it cannot be too definite—that the outside world has not forgotten one's existence.

A very interesting book of prison letters might be written, and almost any active Suffragist could write one; but the compilation would not remotely resemble that made by Mrs. Fred Reynolds, and its proper title would be "Undelivered Letters."

* "Letters to a Prisoner." By Mrs. Fred Reynolds. (Chapman and Hall. 6s.)

THE CHILD AT THE COURT THETREA

"Well," we asked when Miss Margaret Morris's Matinée was over, "which did you like best, 'Cinderella,' or 'Monday's Child,' or 'Old People,' or the dancing?"

"It's rather difficult to answer," the Child replied politely, "because they was all so nice." And that, we felt ourselves, was the difficulty. The Child was one of two whom, with the help of the District Nurse, we had borrowed for the occasion, since obviously the real way to enjoy a children's entertainment is to take a child or two with you; and preferably those who come from a home where there is not much money, and where Mother works very hard, and where the mere fact of being taken to an entertainment of any kind is a very great event.

Just how much those two pale-faced little people (one of whom spends her days at the "delicate" school) enjoyed the afternoon could only be gauged by watching their intent faces, and catching the sudden sunshiny smiles that were continually breaking out. For they were very "well-behaved" (that had been their ostensible title to the "treat"), and they did not show their pleasure in boisterous ways. One of those smiles (indeed, it grew into a delightful laugh) came when Thursday's Child, who had to work so hard for a living, threw down her mop and danced gaily round her pail (they knew all about mops and pails), and was chased off the stage by an irate landlady.

At this juncture a warder came to inform us respectfully that everyone in the prison could hear us, and a crowd had collected outside our door. . . . The next morning all the opposition newspapers were full of our escapade. It was stated that the Prince-President was disowned by his own family, and that his own cousin had joined the opponents of the Coup d'Etat.

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FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

In the days of the reviewer's youth "From Pole to Pole" would have been called a book for boys; it is, however, significant of the times that it is dedicated to "young people." An abridged translation of the famous Swedish traveller's work, "Frau Poll till Poll," the story literally carries us all over the world, sometimes by means of personal accounts of the author's own travels, and sometimes by vivid descriptions of the lives and work of such heroes as Livingstone and Gordon. The old in years but young in heart will find it as difficult to tear themselves away from this book as the "young people" themselves.

A School Story

So fresh and healthy a story as "The Right Sort" deserves a hearty welcome, and although its plot is concerned mainly with scores at cricket and the rivalries of various "Houses" and schools, we can recommend it to anyone who is tired of the ordinary novel based on sentimental interests. We have, however, our doubts as to the claim of the story to its English setting, for there are somewhat frequent Americanisms scattered throughout its pages.

One never knows for a certainty what a junior will do. To-day he will behave in a quiet, dignified, and eminently respectable manner, and to-morrow he will be more like a militant suffragette than anything else.

Fairy Stories

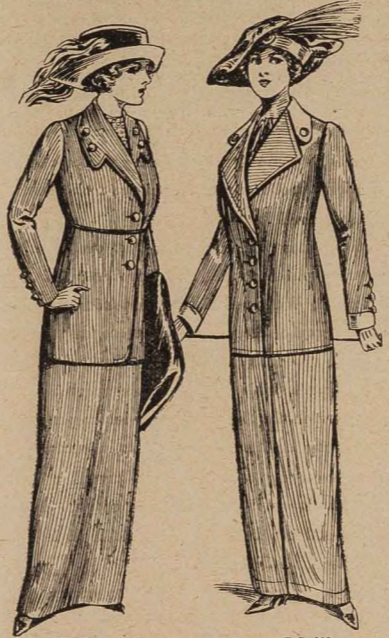
The Fairyland of these stories is not the old one of folk-lore, fairy, or animal tales. They are pretty fancies woven about bird, insect, or plant life, most of them based upon real happenings in the world of nature, their laudable aim being to interest the child-mind in these things and lead it to desire knowledge, not to instruct it in a dry routine.

BOOKS RECEIVED

"Frances Willard: Her Life and Work." By Ray Strachey. (London: T. Fisher Unwin. Price 5s. net.)
"The Tyranny of the Country Side." By F. E. Green. (London: Fisher Unwin. Price 5s. net.)
"Jerry the Girl Guide." By Dorothea Moore. (London: James Nisbet. Price 3s. 6d.)

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