

# VOTES FOR WOMEN.

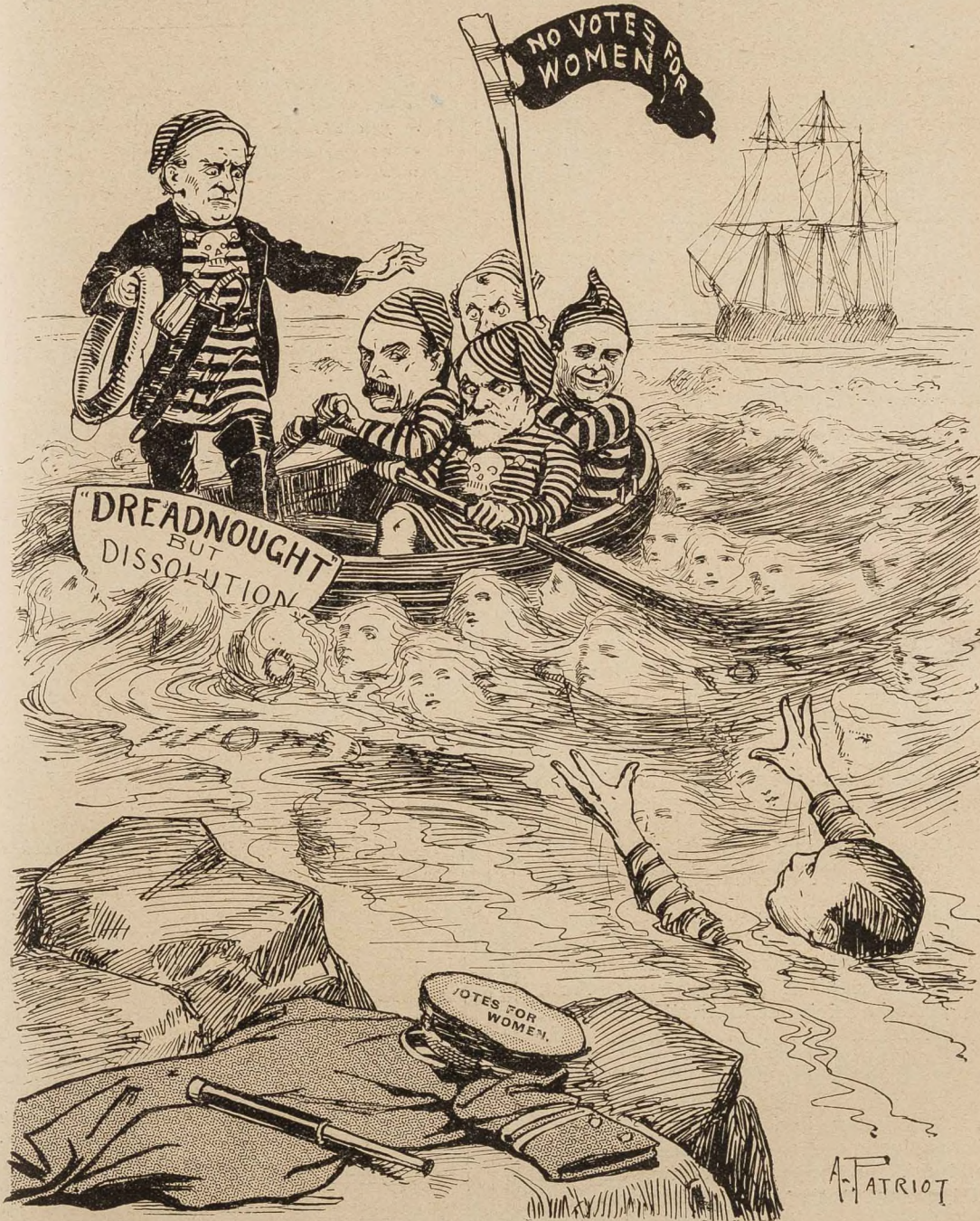
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VOL. II., No. 55.

FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 1909.

Price 1d. Weekly. (Post Free. 1d.)

## WILL HE REACH THE BOAT?



### THE CROYDON BYE-ELECTION.

PIRATE RECRUIT (MR. RAPH..L) (having deserted the service of Woman Suffrage and donned the colours of Mr. Asquith's gang of anti-suffrage pirates): "I fear the waves may drown me ere I reach the Liberal barque."

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### 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.

The past week has been crowded with events bearing on Woman Suffrage. On Friday last came the second reading of Mr. Geoffrey Howard's Bill in the House of Commons. Though the measure is on totally different lines from that advocated by the Suffrage societies, the discussion furnished many points of interest for women, and the position and influence of the Women's Social and Political Union were frequently referred to by the speakers.

#### The Croydon Fight.

During the week the situation in Croydon has developed, owing to the entrance into the contest of a third candidate in the person of Mr. Frank Smith, the Labour nominee. The Women's Social and Political Union are pursuing with vigour their usual anti-Government policy. It is true that Mr. Raphael, the Liberal, and Mr. Smith profess themselves friendly, while Sir R. Hermon-Hodge declares himself opposed to Woman Suffrage. But the Union has learnt that the personal opinions of the candidates are of no consequence, the policy of the Government being the all-important matter. A private member of Parliament is simply a counter in the hands of his leader in the House of Commons. Whatever Mr. Raphael may profess, if he were returned as a member of Parliament he would do exactly what he was told by Mr. Asquith; and Lowerer boldly Sir R. Hermon-Hodge may now proclaim his views, he will act as Mr. Balfour bids him. The W.S.P.U. simply ask the electors of Croydon to vote

against Mr. Raphael, the Liberal; they are quite indifferent as to whether the result of this action is to give votes to one or to the other of the remaining candidates.

#### Great Meetings.

The audience which gathered at the Queen's Hall, London, on Monday afternoon last listened with rapt attention to the speech delivered by Miss Elizabeth Robins, who explained in her own graphic way what prison really means to the women who go there on behalf of their principles. Again, on the evening of Tuesday a great meeting came together in the same hall. Miss Christabel Pankhurst, who took the chair, dealt with Mr. Geoffrey Howard's Bill and also with the Croydon bye-election. Miss Mary Gawthorpe delighted the audience with her sarcastic references to the present Government. Mr. Pethick Lawrence announced the result of the Self-Denial Week, showing that the self-denial collecting cards had reached the figure of £1,200, as compared with £700 last year; and that, including promises of all kinds, a figure of £8,000 was available for the campaign of the ensuing year. He announced the intention of the Union of raising £50,000 for the fight. Mrs. Pankhurst, who arrived in the course of the meeting from Croydon, gave a stirring address, which was heartily received.

#### The Prisoners.

On the following morning a crowd assembled at Holloway to welcome the prisoners who were released, and conducted them in procession to the Inns of Court Hotel, where a private breakfast was given them. There are now still two members of the Women's Social and Political Union in prison—Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, who is serving a sentence of two months, and Miss Gye, who is serving a sentence of six weeks. Particulars as to the arrangements for the welcome on their release will be found elsewhere, p. 475. Looking back over the history of the agitation, we find prisoners sometimes sentenced to long, sometimes to short, terms; leaders and second offenders sometimes given the same, sometimes longer, sentences than their fellows; women sometimes put into the second class, sometimes into the first. There has been no rule nor method in the treatment; even the same magistrates sitting on the same occasion give sentences quite at random, as, for instance, the disparity between the sentence of Mrs. Despard, who was a second offender and a leader of one deputation, who received the outrageously long sentence of one month, and of Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, who for a precisely similar offence received two months.

#### Another Deputation.

As we went to press on Wednesday evening a dinner was being given at the Inns of Court Hotel to the released prisoners in London, in Manchester Mrs. Pankhurst was addressing a great meeting in the Free Trade Hall, and a Lancashire deputation was being formed to wait upon Mr. Asquith. The women taking part in this deputation will come to London on Saturday morning, and will be present in Croydon in the afternoon and again at the Queen's Hall on Monday. On the following afternoon the Lancashire women, in conjunction with others from London and elsewhere, will march from the Caxton Hall to the House of Commons. Whether Mr. Asquith will see them on this occasion, or whether he will repeat his tactics of February 24, time alone can show.

#### Special Features.

Among the special features of this issue is the second half of the article by Elizabeth Robins dealing with the Signs of the Times, which will strike home to the hearts of many of our readers. Mr. Pearce again contributes a special cartoon. Mr. Pethick Lawrence writes on the Constitutional Demand for Woman Suffrage, Miss Christabel Pankhurst on Mr. Geoffrey Howard's Bill. Owing to pressure on our space, many of the usual features have had to be omitted. Next week the issue of the paper will be extended to thirty-two pages, to include a special dialogue written by Miss Beatrice Harraden, entitled, "Lady Geraldine's Speech." We hope that all our readers will make a point of buying extra copies of this issue in order to introduce it to their friends. The following week, being the week before Easter, the paper will be published on Thursday, the day before Good Friday. Contributors are asked, therefore, to send in their matter a day earlier than usual.

## ELEMENTS OF THE WOMAN SUFFRAGE DEMAND.

By F. W. Pethick Lawrence.—Chapter V.—The Constitutional Demand.

The Suffragettes are frequently accused of being impatient. Their critics forget that the virtue of patience exists only in moderation. When great causes are at stake the continued exercise of patience after it has been proved to be of no avail ceases to be a virtue, and becomes a vice. To be inactive when action is demanded in the interests of humanity is to commit the crime of negligence—a crime as heinous and as deadly as any of those active crimes which are punished by the codes of nations or anathematised by the teachings of the religions of the world.

When the Suffragettes commenced their vigorous action the time for patience had long gone by. If anyone doubts it, let him ponder on the facts of the following historical survey.

The modern agitation for the franchise dates from 1866, when the women found a champion of their cause in John Stuart Mill. This was the time when the Household Franchise Bill was under discussion, and John Stuart Mill determined to move an amendment to that measure. A petition was immediately got together, and in the course of a fortnight the signatures of 1,500 women were obtained, prominent among the number being the names of Frances Power Cobbe, Harriet Martineau, Florence Davonport Hill, and Mrs. Josephine Butler.

John Stuart Mill's amendment expressly including women voters was defeated, but in the Act the word "man" was used in place of the words "male person," which had occurred in the Act of 1832. In view of Lord Brougham's Act, by which it had been decided that the word man should invariably be taken to include woman, unless the contrary were specifically stated, it was thought by many people that women were therefore now enfranchised. Accordingly, in various parts of the country women sought to be put upon the register. How great was the demand for their enfranchisement may be seen from a canvass which was carried on in Manchester and the surrounding districts. In that constituency, out of a total number of 4,215 possible women electors, 3,924, or about 92 per cent., sent in claims. The case, however, was decided against the women in the Law Courts—*Chorlton v. Lings*—and the desire of women to be placed upon the register was frustrated.

### Fifteen Year's Strenuous Work.

It was therefore decided to commence a vigorous constitutional agitation. Miss Lydia Becker was at the head of the movement, and she and those with her did exceedingly active work. Great public meetings were held and enormous petitions were presented. Thus in 1873 919 petitions with 329,206 signatures were presented to the House of Commons in support of the Women's Bill. In 1874 there were 1,404 petitions with 430,343 signatures. In 1875 1,273 petitions with 415,622 signatures. In all between 1866 and 1879 it is computed that the number of petitions amounted to 9,563, and that the signatures numbered over three millions!

The agitation by public meeting was on an equally extensive scale, and between 1,300 and 1,400 such meetings (an enormous number for those days) were held to promote the cause.

Among these were nine great demonstrations in the largest halls in the principal towns in the country. These were as follows:—

1. Manchester.....	Free Trade Hall.....	Feb. 8, 1880.
2. London.....	St. James's Hall.....	May, 6, 1880.
3. Bristol.....	Colston Hall.....	Nov. 4, 1880.
4. Birmingham.....	Town Hall.....	Feb. 12, 1881.
5. Bradford.....	St. George's Hall.....	Nov. 22, 1881.
6. Nottingham.....	Albert Hall.....	Nov. 30, 1881.
7. Sheffield.....	Albert Hall.....	Feb. 27, 1882.
8. Glasgow.....	St. Andrew's Hall.....	Nov. 3, 1882.
9. Edinburgh.....	Hall of U.P. Synod.....	Mar. 22, 1884.

In every case the audience, with few exceptions, was confined to women, and immense enthusiasm was evoked, the support for Woman Suffrage being practically unanimous. The campaign was kept up until 1884, when the County Franchise Bill was under discussion. It was understood that there was a majority of the House of Commons in favour of Woman Suffrage, and the Liberal Government being in power, a memorial was addressed to the Prime Minister asking that the Government would allow the Woman Suffrage amendment to be submitted to the free and unbiassed consideration of the

House on its merits. This request the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone unceremoniously refused, saying that the Government would disclaim all responsibility for the County Franchise Bill if the Woman Suffrage Amendment was carried. Accordingly, when the vote was taken a large number of Liberal members pledged to support Woman Suffrage voted against the amendment, including Mr. John Morley (now Lord Morley), who justified his action on the ground that, though he was prepared to support Woman Suffrage as an independent measure, he was not prepared to support its inclusion in the Government Reform Bill.

Supporters of Woman Suffrage then pinned their faith to an independent measure, but the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone succeeded in thwarting this proposal also, for though he gave an undertaking that he would not interfere with the discretion of private members on this occasion, he so arranged Parliamentary business that the Bill never came on for discussion.

### After Constitutional Effort failed.

It was at this stage of the proceedings that the leaders of the Woman Suffragists failed to see that the limits of patience were exhausted, and that the time to act had come. A constitutional agitation of magnificent proportions had been carried on; the demand for the vote had been expressed by women all over the country; it had been supported by prominent men and by the Councils of leading municipalities. Nevertheless it had been defeated by the direct intervention of the Liberal Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone. There was now no course open to self-respecting women but to take up immediately a spirited policy of opposition to the Liberal Government. Had they done this they would undoubtedly have compelled action from one or other of the political parties. Instead of this, however, they contented themselves with a mild protest, and with vain regrets at the unfaithfulness of their nominal friends.

The effect upon the movement was immediate. Women who had worked actively in hope now gave up the conflict in despair. The astuteness of the Liberal Premier suggested to him the advisability of keeping women politicians busy by giving them a small amount of political influence inside the ranks of the party. The Women's Liberal Association was formed, with Mrs. W. E. Gladstone as its president, and obtained a large number of recruits from the Woman Suffrage ranks. Another large section of women devoted themselves to individual causes, leaving the ranks of the Suffrage army. The residue that remained, disheartened by failure and by the death of their leader, Miss Becker, put up a pitifully small show of resistance. Meanwhile, inside the House of Commons the Woman Suffrage cause languished, and for some years the Bill never reached a second reading division. It began to be understood that as with the connivance of the leaders of both political parties the question of Woman Suffrage had been burked before, so it would be again; and private members were content to give pledges at election times to women, knowing that when once in the House they would find a means of escaping from their obligation.

In 1897 a final effort in the line of constitutional agitation was carried out in the shape of a monster memorial to members of Parliament containing the names of 257,000 women in favour of the extension of the Suffrage. But though this memorial was actually introduced, very little notice was taken of it beyond a cursory mention in the House of Commons and in the Press.\*

From that date till the year 1905 the movement retrogressed in vitality and public esteem. Politicians ridiculed it, the man in the street forgot it, women were ashamed to belong to it. Woman Suffrage meetings were attended by a handful of people only, and among these there was no life nor hope.

The fact was that the day for peaceful agitation was past; politicians had turned a deaf ear to the claim for justice. They had to be forced to listen by very different means.

(To be continued.)

\*It is now admitted (see the Liberal "Year-Book") that petitions and memorials weigh very little with members of Parliament. They are now regarded as signs of successful organisation rather than of enthusiasm or living interest.

## THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

By ELIZABETH ROBINS.—PART II.

There are those who, when they "see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway say, 'There cometh a shower,'"; and so it is. And when the south wind blows they say, "There will be heat; and it cometh to pass." But as in the old days, those who "can discern the face of the sky and of the earth," cannot discern "the signs of the times."

In the symbol offered them by the woman who goes to prison, they can discern no meaning.

"We were a little stirred as well as shocked at first" (they tell you). "But we are no longer stirred, and hardly even shocked."

And because they are able to deaden what human sympathy they have—because they can look on unmoved while women suffer—the public, too, they think, is equally indifferent.

But they are wrong. The public is anything but indifferent. And this is why.

Prison is *real* to the toiling millions.

In the great body of the electorate, there are people who realise that going to prison is a ghastly business.

Justice is the stepmother of the poor. They *know* the heaviness of her hand. Few great aggregations of the populace where there is not some one who has been caught in our clumsy municipal machinery—some one who has suffered and been torn. Those who have not first-hand knowledge *have heard*. Prison for them is not a thing to shrug the shoulders at; neither lurid legend nor queer anachronism, scarce credible as a concomitant of twentieth century progress.

Prison is *real* to the poor. In the person of some relation or friend it has been a horrible fact. No danger of their sharing the illusion of the middle-class woman, entrenched in her comfortable ignorance, leaning back against her cushions and saying: "Holloway can't be so bad, or the Suffragettes could never get so many people to go there." Strange forgetfulness of the fortitude possible to the human soul!

Say to your neighbour at a dinner party, "those women seem rather to like it." But don't dare say that to the people at the polls. There will be those who know better.

Men and women who would understand the signs of the times must remember that the comfortable person's paraded indifference to women's imprisonment is offset by the enormously greater number who are not blind to the significance of hundreds of women voluntarily entering the gates of Holloway. Anyone who doubts this has only to watch the electric effect of the coming of a relay of newly-released prisoners into the field during a bye-election. Easy enough to denounce their appearance as "a cheap electioneering dodge." If it were really so "cheap," if it were not in truth very costly, it would not have its invariable effect upon the voters. The reason it is so potent is, as I say, that in the great mixed crowds that gather round the public speakers at election time are always these *people who know*. Even for them—at no time used to much creature comfort—even for them, hardened to harsh treatment and sordid environment, *some* of them—(enough to make actual the women's sacrifice)—*know* the fierce pinch of prison days. The effect of that sacrifice upon the masses is enormous. It is incalculable. They look at these delicate women, and say: "She knows!" Very few of the gentlefolk know. That woman standing there in the

wind and the rain, *she* knows! She was under no compulsion to share the heavy knowledge of the hard-pressed. She must be buoyed up by some strange power unknown to the petty offender.

What power? Let us listen and find out.

By going to prison the Suffragette has done two things. She has proved her faith to those who know the harsher side of life; and she has brought herself through suffering into more direct relation with the masses than she could have done by all the academic eloquence in the world.

The perhaps too common silence of the Suffragette as to the price she has paid, does not here make for misunderstanding. These people have seen the cowed and beaten look many a prisoner has brought out of the same sort of experience; they know all about the strain on the nerves and the courage, the unconquerable sickness at sight of the food, the windows that cannot admit air. In their dumb way some of these people, too, have felt the atmosphere, not to be shut out, that penetrates the prison walls. The "Geist der stets verneint" is in possession there. The spirit that denies all hope of understanding or of betterment, that harshly reproaches every natural human emotion.

Who that heard will ever forget the tone and haunted look of that prisoner who once admitted the acid-like corrosion wrought upon the mind by the "warder-voice." And she excused the warders—"Not their fault," she said, "but the only people who may speak to you have a *special* voice for prisoners. A voice that isn't human," she said, with trembling lips, "a voice of iron." Such kindness as, in spite of all, creeps into the relation must be hidden like a felony. Some of us remembered the Suffrage prisoners when we read the other day that Sir Walter Scott once quoted an opinion that women go mad seldomer than men. "I fancy," he said, "if this be true, it is in some degree owing to the little manual works in which they are constantly employed, which regulate in some degree the current of ideas, as the pendulum of the timepiece. I do not know if this is sense or nonsense; but I am sensible that if I were in solitary confinement without either the power of taking exercise or employing myself in study, six months would make me a madman or an idiot."

When he came over to lecture for the Berlitz School a few weeks ago M. Richepin told us how the poet Verlaine, after trying to kill his friend by shooting him, was sent to prison for two years. But Verlaine was given all the books he asked for. In those two years he taught himself English. He read Shakespeare, so the lecturer said, from end to end before he had finished his term. What would not some of the imprisoned Suffragettes give for a chance to occupy their minds to that extent? But they, so far from having injured their friends, have not even tried to injure their enemies. Yet they are less well treated than a French citizen convicted of manslaughter.

"Ye say . . . in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowering."

Does it tell men nothing that some of the Suffrage prisoners before they tried going to Holloway had grown grey working among the poor and the lost? And some of the prisoners are young—full of a generous fire as illuminating as experience, lighting up the Wrong that could never touch them, but which they have pledged themselves to banish out of the world. A few weeks of prison! Can you not realise that the woman bearing that may see in herself a type of the Immortal Woman—the burden bearer of the world?

Prison! What evil there can visit her that will not pale by the side of evil women bear outside those walls?

One seems to hear the prisoner in her darkest hour remark—

her heart as the Greek hero did: "Endure, my heart, far worse hast thou endured."

She will come out smiling, do you say? Yes. Her smiling is a symbol of her faith. But you may believe that as she sits alone there in her narrow cell

"tears  
Are in her eyes; and in her ears  
The murmur of a thousand years."

I do not ask on behalf of those women what they do not ask for themselves. They do not ask for sympathy. They went to prison for "a sign." The question is: Can you read it? Can you even discern the two strange and unexpected things that have come out of women's going to prison in the cause of Suffrage? This fact that through their suffering and voluntary acceptance of the badge of humiliation they have come close to the poor; and, most difficult, most precious gain of all, the poor have come close to them. In a democratic country this is a fact of the first magnitude. It might well give the most astute statesman pause to reflect that there is no body of educated men in Europe to-day in such close touch with the hard-pressed, disinherited millions as the women who have gone to prison for conscience' sake.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The most important event of the coming week is the deputation to the Prime Minister on Tuesday next, March 30. The proceedings will be commenced at the meeting in the Caxton Hall at 3 p.m., and from there the deputation will proceed to the House of Commons. Tickets for the meeting can be obtained, price 1s. and 6d. from the Ticket Secretary, N.W.S.P.U., 4, Clements Inn, W.C. Women intending to join the deputation should communicate with Miss Christabel Pankhurst.

Release of Miss Gye.

On Thursday next Miss Gye will be released from Holloway at 8 a.m. Friends are invited to meet her at the prison gates and form up in procession to take her to the Inns of Court Hotel, where a private breakfast will be given her. In the evening Miss Gye will be present at the St. James's Hall, and it is hoped a large number will be there to give her a welcome.

The Release of Mrs. Pethick Law ence.

The release of Mrs. Pethick Lawrence is due on Friday, April 16. It is arranged to meet her at the prison gates, and give her a hearty welcome. She will then drive to a London hotel, where a breakfast will be served at 8.45 o'clock. Tickets for the breakfast can be obtained, price 2s. each. On the following day (Saturday) a meeting will be held, particulars with regard to which will be announced later.

The Albert Hall Meeting.

A special feature of the great Albert Hall meeting on Thursday, April 29, will be the presentation to all those members of the N.W.S.P.U. who have suffered imprisonment for the cause of Woman Suffrage. Will any member who has not received a letter referring to the arrangements kindly communicate with Miss Isabel Seymour, N.W.S.P.U., 4, Clements Inn, W.C.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS.

Table with columns for date, location, event name, and time. Includes events like Birmingham, 14, Ethel Street; Sloane Square; Bristol, St. George's Hall; W. Kensington, 8, Edith Road; Aberdeen, At Home, 41, Union Street; Putney, Weimar Street, Open-air meeting; Bristol, Open-air Meeting, Horse Fair; Aberdeen, Speakers' Class, 41, Union Street; Croydon, Public Hall; Ealing, Montagu Rooms; Lavender Hill, S.W., Stanley Hall; Nottingham, Mechanics' Hall; Brighton, The Dome; Glasgow, At Home, 141, Bath Street; Manchester Teachers' Association, Portico Library; Crouch End, Ye Chino Cup, Park Road; Stechford, Council Schools; Pimlico, Orange Square; Manchester, At Home, Onward Buildings, Deansgate; Barnes, Byfield Hall.

Table of events and meetings across various locations and dates. Includes Manchester, London Road Station; Lancashire Deputation; Rochdale, At Home, 84, York-shire Street; Chelsea, World's End; Wimslow, St. Bartholomew's; Chelsea, Sloane Square; Bristol, At Home, Victoria Rooms; London, At Home, Queen's Hall; W. Kensington, 8, Edith Road; Bradford, Workers' meeting, 61, Manningham Lane; Manchester, Lecture, Onward Buildings, Deansgate; Bristol, Horfield Tavern; Chelsea, 4, Trafalgar Studios; Beginners' Elocution Class; Weston-super-Mare, At Home, North Street Hall; Birmingham, Sparkhill; Paisley, Y.M.C.A. Hall; Bristol, Dinner-hour Meeting, Tilton Laundry; London, Caxton Hall; Manchester Memorial Hall, Albert Square; Birmingham, Midland Hotel; Bristol, Fishponds Hall; Liverpool, At Home, 48, Mount Pleasant; Coventry, Priory Rooms; Bristol, Open-air Meeting, Horfield Broadway; Aston Literary Club; Newcastle-on-Tyne, At Home, Crosby's Cafe, Northumberland Street; South Kensington, Mrs. Gaudell's Drawing-room meeting, Earl's Court Square; Kensington, At Home; Aberdeen, At Home, 41, Union Street; Wolverhampton, St. Peter's Inst.; Edinburgh, Ardmillan Hall; Dalry, Social meeting; Formby, Local Union mtg.; Bristol, Assembly Rooms, Stokes Croft; Chelsea, 93, Oakley Street; Wardle, Nut Food Society; Holloway; Bristol, Open-air Meeting, Tilton Common; Edinburgh, At Home, Society of Arts Hall, 117, George St.; West Kensington, 8, Edith Road; London, At Home, St. James' Hall; Bristol, small Victoria Rooms; Coventry, At Home, Priory Rooms; Edinburgh, Marshall St. Hall; Hythe, Debate, Conservative and Unionist Association on Wood Green, Unity Hall; Paignton, Masonic Hall; Bristol, Women's Meeting, Horfield Tavern; Bishopstone, Open-air Meeting; Manchester, At Home, Onward Buildings, Deansgate; Fulham, 20, Churchfield Mansions, New King's Road; Glasgow, At Home, 141, Bath Street; Manchester, 164, Oxford Road; Aberdeen, At Home, Kennaway's Tea Rooms; Glasgow, At Home, 141, Bath Street.

Many additional meetings are held every day in Croydon which are not included in above list.

IMPORTANT FUTURE EVENTS.

Table with columns for date, location, event name, and time. Includes April 7 Bradford; April 16 Release of Mrs. Pethick Lawrence; April 19 Newport, Temperance Hall; April 22 Bath, Guild Hall; April 27 Bristol, Victoria Rooms, Clifton; May 29 London, Albert Hall; May 7 Birmingham, Town Hall; May 13-26 Prince's Skating Rink.

MR. GEOFFREY HOWARD'S REFORM BILL.

On Friday last Mr. Geoffrey Howard moved the second reading of his Representation of the People Bill. This Bill would entitle "every person" (male or female) to be registered as a Parliamentary voter who is of full age and not subject to any legal incapacity and has resided in the constituency during the three months immediately preceding the 15th of July in any year. The Bill would also abolish plural voting. It was specially noticeable that, compared with last year, the debate was lifeless and uninteresting. This was due to the extravagant magnitude of Mr. Howard's proposals and to the reputation of his measure by all the suffrage societies. The Women's Social and Political Union came in for direct mention by a great number of the speakers, Sir Charles M'Laren referring to its strength and potency at bye-elections, and Mr. Dickinson urging that there was some excuse for the adoption of militant tactics in the procrastination of Parliament in dealing with the question. Mr. Asquith's final pronouncement was adroitly contrived to leave the situation exactly where it had been before. He refused, however, to support the Bill, on the ground that such proposals ought only to emanate from a responsible Government—an argument which throws into relief the irresponsible attitude on Woman Suffrage which he professes himself as willing to adopt.

Details of the Debate.

Mr. Howard said it was hardly possible to bring in an Electoral Reform Bill now without facing the question of women's suffrage. That question had been pressed in the House and in the country on non-party lines, but his view was that it would only be carried by being attached to one or other of the great parties. He urged that if women were enfranchised without any alteration being made in the basis of the franchise we should not be enfranchising the same class among women as among men. The mere removal of the sex disqualification would not enable working married women to get upon the register unless where the husband owned a house of the yearly value of £20. A working married woman, as a rule, would only be able to look forward to obtaining her qualification on the day she became a widow. A Bill which aimed merely at the removal of the sex disqualification would accentuate some of our present difficulties—the plural voter, for example. It would also increase the facility for creating faggot votes and property votes. Mr. Howard explained in detail the provisions of his Bill, saying that he had no hope of carrying it into law, but merely of clearing the air for the Bill promised by the Government.

Sir Charles M'Laren (L—Bosworth), in seconding the motion for the second reading, said the supporters of the Bill had been blamed in many quarters for mixing up women's suffrage with adult suffrage. But those who had promoted the cause for many years had had to consider the position in which the question had been placed by the statement which the Prime Minister made last year. They also felt that, as the House had frequently adopted by large majorities the principle of women's suffrage, it would be useless to invite the House to discuss the same question again, especially in face of the Prime Minister's specific declaration. On the general question of woman suffrage he admitted that there were many women who did not want the vote, and that the anti-suffrage petition presented that morning deserved some consideration. It was worth noting, however, that after months of strenuous effort the Anti-Suffrage Society had only managed to secure 245,000 signatures. A Unionist member: More than you've got.

£20,000 for the W.S.P.U.

Sir Charles M'Laren: Oh, I admit that. I don't suppose a single petition in favour of this Bill has been presented. (Cheers.) But that is because the time for petitions has long gone by. (Laughter.) The House of Commons does not care for petitions; it cares for arguments and for votes. Speaking of the intensity of the agitation for the suffrage, he said he had seen it stated that the most active of the suffragist societies had an income of £20,000 a year raised among women themselves for the purpose of forcing on the agitation. That society—he referred to the "Suffragettes"—was forcing it on, too, in a way which was no doubt most unpalatable to members of the House. (Laughter.) But when these women were able to raise no less than £20,000 a year for the purposes of agitation the question had reached a position beyond ridicule. It had reached a position where it demanded solution. (Cheers.) This Bill was intended to help the Government to come to some decision as to the manner in which they would deal with it next year. He believed these women had had very great influence at all the bye-elections. It was difficult to say what turned a vote, but it was a fact that these intelligent, eloquent, and attractive women—(laughter)—because the "Suffragettes" had many

admirable qualities besides that of fanaticism—(laughter)—going to all these bye-elections, and consistently, ruthlessly, and mercilessly opposing the Government candidate, had had a very great effect on public opinion. Turning to the Bill itself, Sir Charles admitted that there was great force in the objection to having a Parliament elected by a majority of women, and if the Bill went into Committee he should certainly support certain restrictive amendments to obviate that very undesirable result. In particular, he would favour the exclusion of domestic servants. He did not believe the admission of women would materially affect the balance of parties, but it would materially affect the trend of legislation and secure a more generous appreciation of the needs of women, and especially of those—and they numbered half the women in the country—who earned their own living. (Applause.)

Mr. H. W. Forster (U—Sevenoaks), who moved the rejection of the Bill, said it dealt with three distinct subjects—(1) a gigantic extension of the franchise; (2) the abolition of plural voting; and (3) women's enfranchisement. Of course, the Bill would not pass—the Government might baptise the babe, but they would not confirm the child. Our present electoral system was based on the representation of localities, by and through the votes of those who were qualified by Parliamentary sanction to give it. This Bill substituted for that principle the right of the individual to a vote. He granted at once that if they adopted the individual as their Parliamentary unit they were bound to include women. They could not on the ground of sex deny to one individual the right they gave to another; but they must go further. The voter did not cease to be an individual if he happened to find himself in a minority. Therefore they must provide for minority representation. He noticed that some of the highly organised militant bodies who voiced the opinions of women in favour of enfranchisement were exceedingly hostile to the Bill.

Mr. Howard remarked that the members of the society to which the hon. gentleman referred invariably opposed Liberals and supported Conservatives.

Mr. Forster would prefer to say not that they supported Conservatives, but that they were violently hostile to Liberals. There was no demand for the Bill. Not a score of members put the question of adult suffrage before the people at the last election, and there was no evidence in the interval of the growth of that volume of public opinion without which such a movement could not succeed. He maintained that suffrage and seats must be dealt with together, and that the Bill would involve a scheme of redistribution.

Opinions as to Methods.

Mr. E. S. Montagu (L—Cherterton), in the course of his remarks, referred to the W.S.P.U. as follows:—"The hon. member for Sevenoaks dealt with the opposition which has notoriously been raised to this Bill by the Women's Social and Political Union. The hon. member must know that there are a great many people choosing different methods for the advancement of the cause of woman suffrage. The Women's Social and Political Union adopt their own peculiar methods—the methods which commend themselves to them. I should be the last to condemn any method for the propagation of an object in which I am sincerely interested. The fact that their methods differ from ours matters very little. They are, if I may say so, entirely ignorant of the exigencies of Parliamentary life. They do not understand the difficulties experienced in obtaining the passage of a women's enfranchisement Bill."

Mr. Snowden (Lab—Blackburn) stated that the women's suffrage societies without exception repudiated this Bill. (Cheers.) The members of these societies differed very much in their opinions on certain questions, but they were absolutely united in their opinion as to what was the best policy to adopt in order to bring about the speedy enfranchisement of women. The demand for the enfranchisement of women on the same terms as men was simple and understandable. It secured also the largest common measure of support. For instance, a considerable number of members on the Conservative benches supported the Bill of last year, but he did not think a single one of them would be disposed to support this Bill. (Hear, hear.) The last annual Conference of Conservative Associations also expressed approval of the principle that the franchise should be conferred on women on the same terms as on men. If the removal of the sex disability was to wait until every adult man had obtained the vote the demand would be indefinitely postponed. (Cheers.) In the course of an extensive experience of public meetings in this country he did not remember that this question of adult suffrage had ever been raised. But there was a strong demand for the enfranchisement of women.

Mr. Bertram (L—Hitchin) objected to the extension of the franchise to women at any time or under any circumstances. It was quite certain that the men electors of this country were opposed to women's suffrage, and if this had been a dominating issue at the last election he did not think there would now be in the House a

single supporter of this so-called reform. The great mass of the women of the country were entirely indifferent on this question.

Earl Percy (U—South Kensington) had never been able to take the view that women as a whole were less qualified intellectually than men to exercise the suffrage, or to express virile views on important questions. His objection always had been that once women's suffrage was introduced he did not see where it would stop. He would like a vote of a special character conferred upon women, but as no such proposal had been put into practical shape, he saw no alternative but to vote against every measure dealing with women's suffrage which did not offer some promise of a final settlement of the question, and which did not receive the assent of both the great political parties.

Mr. Stanger (L—West Kensington) defended his action in supporting the present Bill, saying that as the principle of woman suffrage had been carried last year by a 3 to 1 majority (on the second reading of his own Bill), he now felt prepared to include that principle in a Bill along the lines which Mr. Asquith demanded.

Mr. Massie (L—Cricklade) said that whatever might be the secondary features of the Bill, the head and front was the extension of the franchise and of sovereign authority to women. The present Parliament had no moral authority whatever to make such a revolution. From some investigations he had himself made, he found that out of the 670 members of the House only thirteen spoke of adult suffrage and only forty-eight referred to Women's Suffrage at the general election. It was, therefore, absurd even to pretend that either at the last election or at any previous election Women's Suffrage was a live issue. (Cheers.) The verdict of experience and acquaintanceship with the bye-elections went to show that the militant Suffragists counted for very little in the result. The latent opposition on the part of women to the movement had recently taken to itself a body, and the question, Did women want their sex to be the governing sex? was being slowly but surely answered. He had himself presented to the House that day a petition from 243,000 women, representing all sections of society, praying that the vote should not be granted to women. There was evidence from all quarters and all classes that the apathy which prevailed before Women's Suffrage came into the region of practical politics was now passing away, and that the country was now awaking to the danger of conceding such a demand. If the House, by passing the Bill, anticipated that awakening by irrevocably extending the government of the country to women, it would be a piece of sharp practice on the part of the House.

**Sex Disqualification Sound.**

The Women's Suffrage societies were hostile to the Bill, because it went against their practical policy of abolishing sex disqualification. He agreed that the Suffragists were wise from their point of view. When once sex disqualification was abolished, everything that they desired followed—adult suffrage, seats in Parliament, shares in office under the Crown, and possibly a woman Speaker. Sex disqualification was sound because it was on a natural basis which no artificiality and no unnaturalness could upset, and to disregard nature must necessarily end in doing an irreparable wrong to any nation. The ultimate basis of authority was physical force, and that force was characteristically male. Women had to be guarded rather than attacked, and protection implied inequality for purposes of government.

Mr. W. H. Dickison (L—St. Pancras) defended the form of Mr. Geoffrey Howard's Bill, which he believed to be of the only kind acceptable to the Liberal Party. He then dealt with the general question of women's enfranchisement, in the course of which he said:—"You may say that women are not fitted for the vote and you may point in support of that contention to some recent events. I do not propose to criticise or to judge the action of anybody outside; I think some of them have been mistaken. Some of them have done more harm to their cause than good, but we must bear in mind that the women who have been carrying on this method of procedure have only constituted a very small fraction of the women of the country. Side by side with them are a large number of responsible and sensible women, who deprecate these methods, and who have advocated the cause with every reasonable argument pertinaciously for many years. We ought not to allow their case to be damaged by what we think the mistaken tactics of certain Suffrage associations. But, after all, can we not also recognise that they were to a certain extent justified? They have read history, and they know the methods that were used in former years. They have tried pacific persuasion, and they got some 400 hon. members of this House to declare in their favour. Since then, they have taken strong steps, which some of us deplore; but also some of us realise that, under the circumstances, they were inevitable. They have brought the question to the forefront. Their methods have shown that they were in earnest in what they were doing. None of us has failed to realise that these ladies who are going to prison did so with no particular desire for advertisement or from any hysteria. That which has moved them to take this action is an earnest and convinced belief in a great cause. I believe this House would make

no greater mistake than by thinking that this movement is a partial movement. It will grow. The women believe, and I believe—and they rightly believe—that their demand for justice cannot be refused permanently. They say:—"Your principle has been to place your trust in the people. Why trust one half only? Cannot you trust the whole of the people?" I believe that principle will in the long run prevail."

Mr. Hicks-Beach (U—Tewkesbury) argued that this was not a Bill which ought to have been brought forward by a private member, and ought not to be passed until the general sense of the electorate had been taken on it.

Mr. J. M. Robertson (L—Tyneside) supported the Bill.

Mr. Rees (L—Montgomery Boroughs), in the course of a speech of an offensive character, said the last speaker had completely ignored the one and only ground on which women should not have the vote—the ground of sex. The great difficulty in dealing with the subject was that the moment they came to actual facts they were accused of being frivolous. But he would again ask in all seriousness—Was there any member who would openly say, however clever, able, and capable was his own wife, that he was proud to be under petticoat government? There was not one. (Laughter.) Rather would the husband of the most capable lady say with Byron:—

"Oh, you lords of ladies intellectual,  
Confess it truly, have not they henpecked you all?"

(Laughter.) How could it possibly be good that the State, which was but an aggregate of families, should live not only subject to that influence, but under a state of affairs in which the majority of the electors would actually belong to the female sex?

**The Prime Minister.**

Mr. Asquith (Prime Minister), rising at five minutes to five o'clock, said: It has been often stated and is well known that on the issue whether women should have the suffrage the members of the present Government are not altogether of one opinion, and throughout this Parliament that has never been made a Government question. The situation in that respect is unchanged, and is entirely unaffected by the introduction of the Bill now before the House. But this Bill raises other and much wider issues. It proposes to extend the franchise to all adults of either sex, subject to the condition of three months' residence. I myself, and I believe all my colleagues, whatever may be our opinions on women's suffrage, are strongly in favour of a reform upon a wide scale of the existing franchise—(cheers)—the abolition of plural voting—(cheers)—the disappearance of the artificial and illogical distinction between occupiers and lodgers—(cheers)—a material shortening of the period of qualification—(cheers)—and a thoroughgoing simplification of the machinery of registration. (Cheers.) Apart from the question of sex—as to which I do not recede from but reaffirm what I have previously said as to what the Government contemplate and intend—and not committing myself so far as men are concerned to the precise proposals of my hon. friend, I wish to see a large reform on the lines I have indicated. But, I must add, any measure of the kind ought, in my opinion, if it is to take its place on the Statute-book, to proceed from the responsible Government of the day—(cheers)—and to be carefully moulded out of the stress of deliberate and prolonged Parliamentary discussion. (Cheers.) I understand the promoters of this Bill are quite willing, if it is read a second time, the Bill should be committed to a Committee of the whole House—a course which I think to be a wise one for them to take. (Cheers.) But it seems to me, apart from all other considerations, that the reasons I have given are sufficient reasons why I at any rate and my colleagues should not vote at this moment for the second reading of the Bill.

When Mr. Asquith resumed his seat several Conservative members rose to continue the debate, but Mr. Howard moved the closure. This motion was accepted by the Speaker, and carried by 158 votes to 124.

The House then divided on the amendment for the rejection of the Bill, and there voted:—

For the Bill	157
Against	122

Majority for the Bill 35

The Bill was then read the second time without a division and committed to a Committee of the whole House.

**ANOTHER BILL.**

Mr. Philip Snowden has introduced a bill along straightforward lines for conferring the Parliamentary franchise on women. It consists of a single clause, which enacts that

"in all Acts relating to the qualifications and registrations of voters or persons entitled or claiming to be registered and to vote in the election of members of Parliament, wherever words occur which import the masculine gender the same shall be held to include women for all purposes connected with and having reference to the right to be registered as voters and to vote in such elections."

It is backed by other members of the Labour party, but unless special time is allotted to it by the Government, it cannot be discussed in the House.

**EXTRACTS FROM THE PRESS.**

**The "Times."**

The proceedings of yesterday afternoon in the House of Commons will not tend to strengthen the confidence of the nation in the capacity of the present Parliament to deal seriously with its duties. At a moment when the thoughts of every responsible citizen are deeply preoccupied with the menace of the naval situation the attention of the House of Commons has been diverted to a domestic measure of franchise reform, of which the alleged importance has been repudiated by most of the prospective beneficiaries. . . . It is true that the extravagant diversity of the proposals united in the Bill is largely to be ascribed to the attitude of the Government in declaring that the extension to women of the Parliamentary franchise would only be considered by it as part of a general scheme of electoral reform. Even where a demand is proffered to extravagantly as that of the more vehement claimants of Woman Suffrage, some measure of firm and responsible statesmanship should be apparent in the response; but the refusal of the direct issue which was involved in the preliminary attitude of the Government towards this question has only been exceeded by its equivocal policy as declared by the Prime Minister at the close of the debate.

**The "Manchester Guardian."**

That the Bill should have been carried by a majority of 157 to 122, in spite of the opposition of the Conservatives as a body and of a good many Liberals who are supporters of Women's Suffrage, but who regard this Bill as a red-herring drawn across the path, is a remarkable evidence alike of the strength of the Women's Suffrage movement and of the growing feeling in favour of a wide extension of the basis of the franchise. So far as the Liberal party is concerned these two currents to a large extent run together, and it is now pretty plain that if women are ever to be enfranchised by a Liberal Government it must be on the basis not of the existing but of a wider franchise. We may take it that if and when—a large and doubtful hypothesis—the Government introduce a Reform Bill they will permit the sense of the House to be taken on the question of including women in the enlarged franchise. The franchise for women will be the same as for men, but it will be an enlarged, a "democratic," one. What is meant by this Mr. Asquith went some way last night towards explaining. He and all the other members of the Cabinet are, he tells us, "strongly in favour of a reform upon a wide scale of the existing franchise," and by this he means "the abolition of plural voting, the disappearance of the artificial and illogical distinction between occupiers and lodgers, a material shortening of the period of qualification, and a thoroughgoing simplification of the machinery of registration"—that is, in other words, adult suffrage; and it is therefore under an Adult Suffrage Bill alone that Mr. Asquith will consent to allow the inclusion of women to be left to the unfettered discretion of his followers and of the House of Commons. Are we likely to see such a Bill during the lifetime of the present Parliament? On this vital question Mr. Asquith threw no light. In part, at least, the decision rests with the Liberals themselves, and it is for them to make their voices heard. It would be a sorry thing for the party if it should have made no effort in the day of its strength to enlarge the rights of citizenship and to respond to the last and greatest demand addressed to it for political enfranchisement, this time not for a class merely, but for the whole sex.

**The "Daily News."**

The debate was memorable in two respects. The Prime Minister said that any measure of the kind brought forward by Mr. Howard, if it was to take its place on the Statute-book, must proceed from the responsible Government of the day. This would seem to involve the admission that Woman's Suffrage also must be so treated, and that it can no longer be regarded as a matter on which the opinion of the private member *qua* private member is of great consequence. The Government, and the Government alone, can deal with it. The second point to which we alluded was Sir Charles McLaren's frank statement of the influence of the women's organisations on the bye-elections. Owing to the fact that quiet and successful meetings are less frequently reported in the Press than those which are interrupted, the public has not understood that, as Sir Charles McLaren said, the women have turned a considerable quantity of votes. . . . It is very urgent that a satisfactory solution of this problem should be found as soon as possible. At present all the progressive movements in the country—and the Liberal Party not least—are losing much of the help and support of women, who are being forced to devote to mere political agitation the energies which many of them—if only their rights as citizens were fully acknowledged—would gladly turn into more fruitful channels. The continuance of the present situation means the existence of a dangerous rift in the forces of the Party of reform at a moment when all its strength is needed to combat the powers of privilege and reaction.

The matter must, before it is settled, be taken up by the Government, as was admitted on all sides to-day. Delay means the re-enactment of scenes painful to all concerned, and a disgrace to the country. The majority of the Cabinet is known to be in favour. An immense majority of the House is pledged to this reform. The Government must choose how this reform is to be carried out. There are other means of doing it than either by the limited Bill or by Mr. Howard's Bill—measures more democratic than the one and less revolutionary than the other. Mr. Dickinson's Bill removing the sex disability and at the same time enfranchising married women might be a satisfactory solution, and we should be glad to see the Government adopting that. One thing is clear. If we do not grant a democratic franchise to women, the Tories, when they come into office will grant an undemocratic one.

**The "Standard."**

Before members of Parliament could settle down yesterday to a pleasant afternoon talk about women's suffrage the bread had been taken from their mouths by the ladies chiefly interested in the discussion. Mr. Geoffrey Howard's Adult Suffrage Bill had been blessed, on behalf of the Women's Liberal Federal Federation, by Lady Carlisle. . . . In a closely argued letter which we printed yesterday the Anti-Suffrage League pronounces vigorously against any sort of tampering with the existing distinction of the sexes. . . . The Bill has been excommunicated by the very women to whom Lady Jersey and her friends are specially opposed—the promoters of a limited female suffrage. Lady Knightley of Fawley has protested in the name of the Conservative and Unionist advocates of a limited enfranchisement. In this, if in nothing else, she is backed by the more prominent agitators. They are broken into two groups. There is the physical force section, led by Miss Pankhurst, which breaks windows, flourishes dog-whips, and otherwise makes itself obnoxiously ridiculous. Then there is the Parliamentary party, under Mrs. Fawcett and Lady Frances Balfour, which deprecates the methods of the militants, but is not above profiting by them. These two sections unite in repudiating Mr. Geoffrey Howard.

**"Morning Post."**

Members were, of course, fully conscious of the unreality of the discussion, and most of those who went down to St. Stephen's yesterday spent their time elsewhere than in the debating chamber. The attendance was so meagre at one time that a count-out was attempted, though the ringing of the electric bells and the shouts of "Count" along the corridors soon secured a quorum.

**"Daily Chronicle."**

The Adult Suffrage Bill (men and women) was read a second time yesterday by a majority of 35 (157 to 122). The figures are interesting, for Mr. Stanger's more restricted Women's Suffrage Bill last session was carried in a larger House by a majority of 179 (271 to 92). This may or may not indicate some falling off in the popularity of the idea in the House of Commons. On the present occasion the issue was complicated by the sweeping nature of the reforms proposed.

**"Morning Advertiser."**

As Mr. Asquith said, no such measure ought to be introduced except by a responsible Government. That was what was wrong with Mr. Howard's Bill from a debating point of view. No one could be expected to take seriously such a Bill, introduced by a private member, in a form in which it was obviously incapable of being taken up by the Government. Even Mr. Howard did not take it seriously. He said he did not expect it to be passed.

**"Hereford Times."**

The air of the week has been again greatly agitated by the movement for Women's Suffrage. From the standpoint of a vulgar world, the conduct of Lady Constance Lytton in refusing any prison favours denied to her sister prisoners is hailed as a paragon of sacrifice. As a matter of fact, this young heroine is merely showing a sense of justice and chivalry which is surely not uncommon in this year of grace. At any rate, the cause for which Lady Constance Lytton and the other specimens of pure and unselfish womanhood are looking through prison bars is making steady and substantial progress. As men, we may think that the militant methods have already cleared the way to victory at the earliest possible moment. The field is ripe for the harvest. But we are not in the least surprised that so many thousands of women are not of the same opinion. Personally, we could not act shoulder to shoulder with the women that oppose Mr. J. E. Raphael at Croydon, who is as active a worker for Women's Suffrage as he is for the Liberal cause. But we cannot account it an unpardonable offence that these militant women should prolong the aggressive policy, which in three years has brought them nearer to success than the previous three centuries of persuasion and reiteration.

(Extracts relating to Croydon appear on page 479.)

## THE RALLY OF THE FORCES.

By EVELYN SHARP.

Miss Christabel Pankhurst, in one of those happy moments of hers when she flashes straight from the abstract to the humorously concrete, remarked from the chair at the Queen's Hall on Tuesday evening that "Politicians may lie about in heaps suffering from influenza, but we go gaily on our way, influenza or no influenza." And the sight of that packed hall, painted purple, white, and green with enthusiasm, explained why it was that ours, probably, was the only audience in London on Tuesday evening that was not decimated by the prevailing epidemic. The only thing that causes gaps in the ranks of the Suffragettes is a call to work elsewhere; and if any friends were absent from the annual meeting of our Union, this was only because these was a bye-election to be fought at Croydon, and a Cabinet Minister to be fought at Sion College. And even the ubiquitous Suffragette has not yet learnt how to be in two places at once.

But there were no very obvious gaps in our ranks on Tuesday, and our forces had mustered well to hear the account of the year's work. This was no meeting for the unconverted or the stranger. For once we were out for a frolic, just to shake one another by the hand before separating for another year's campaign; and it was very pleasant to look round and see, here a woman whom one last saw as she vanished into Cannon Row between two arms of the law; there another whom one last met (speedily to part again) at a political meeting packed with Liberal stewards and a carefully selected portion of the Liberal Party. If there were any strangers present, they probably felt that the gay and cheery women round them could not be very strenuous campaigners after all. And then, directly after, those gay and cheery campaigners raised another thousand pounds among themselves. That is the sort of little thing the Union does when it is out for a frolic.

### Miss Christabel Pankhurst.

The speakers played up well, of course. In her speech from the chair Miss Christabel Pankhurst was delightfully characteristic of herself, touching generously on the past, scornfully on the present, inspiringly on the future. With a fine tribute to the women who had raised £20,000 during the past year, she then described Mrs. Pethick Lawrence as one who stands in the very front "as a friend, as a leader, as a fighter for womanhood." There was great applause when she declared that "no society ever had or ever will have a treasurer like ours," followed by understanding laughter when she added, whimsically, "For this we excite the envy of the whole political world." Becoming suddenly serious she spoke of the willingness of women to bear the enormous burden put upon them by the Government, because they realise that the vote must be paid for in money, in strength—in life, possibly. "What we do complain of," she went on in righteous scorn, "is that the Government will name no limit to the price that is to be paid. Hercules was happy compared to us; he at least knew what was expected of him!" Passing from a cutting criticism of the attitude shown towards Woman Suffrage by Sir W. Robson, "who, though eminent, has not yet reached sufficient eminence to induce us to attend his meetings," the speaker touched on the advantages gained from the Adult Suffrage debate in Parliament, which she described as "an advertisement for the W.S.P.U.," and she wound up with a fine peroration, calling on the present Government not to leave our question to be settled by the Tories: "Better for us to get our vote from them now, because it means no more delay; better for them, because it means saving Liberalism from disgrace and dishonour."

### Miss Mary Gawthorpe.

Miss Mary Gawthorpe, who had the big reception she deserves for her plucky work in the North, was both witty and impressive. An amusing account of the audiences to which she is

accustomed in Lancashire was followed by a summary, clever and concise, of what is going to be brought to the attention of Mr. Asquith by the deputation of Lancashire women who are to wait upon him next week—that is if he consents to see them. They are going to ask him to be just before he is generous, to remove the disability of sex before talking about adult suffrage; they will put before him the failure of private members to deal with this question by enumerating the unsuccessful attempts of Mr. Dickenson, Mr. Stanger, and Mr. Geoffrey Howard, and they will justify from this the demand of the Union for a Government pledge. "If you say that these gentlemen in the House of Commons have done their best, you give away the whole situation; for that is precisely why we refuse to lay down our arms for anything short of a Government promise," was a sentence that produced much applause. So did the speaker's finely expressed sorrow for a Cabinet that has not the political imagination to take the political chance of a lifetime; and the whole audience wildly appreciated her concluding remark: "Militant methods are not unconstitutional. Those who are trying to get votes by methods which never yet won a vote for anybody—they are unconstitutional, and I wash my hands of them!"

### £2,000—for Self-Denial Week.

Mr. Pethick Lawrence, receiving his well-deserved ovation as soon as he got upon his feet, very amusingly referred to the "black origin" that is attributed to the funds of the Union by the enemy, and touching upon the finer influences at work in the movement, raised laughter by saying that a few hundred years ago the leaders of it would have been burnt for witchcraft. He then proceeded to evoke the witchcraft by the erection of a scoring board on the platform; and the scene that followed would certainly have hurried most of those that took part in it to the stake on Wednesday morning, had Cabinet Ministers to-day the powers possessed by authorities in the past. The score stood at £29,000, to start with; money already received for Self-Denial Week speedily sent it up to £36,404, amid cheers. Any ordinary political society not under a spell would have left it at that. But it was only here that the fun began on Tuesday evening; and by the time the meeting broke up the score had mounted up to over £37,000. And nobody even smiled, or seemed surprised, when the five baskets, in the shape of collecting boxes, were sent round the audience to gather up the fragments that remained.

### Mr. Pankhurst.

Just to put a tidy finish to the meeting, as it were, Mrs. Pankhurst arrived fresh from the Croydon battle-field in time to receive an immense ovation, and to tell us that, great as Lancashire has been in the past, London is now going to set the pace for the whole country in the race for Votes for Women; also that, before another annual meeting comes round, we shall have won the race. I think that much desired limit would speedily be set to the price demanded of us for our vote, if Cabinet Ministers had attended our meeting on Tuesday evening, instead of turning women out of their own meetings elsewhere. They would at all events have realised the futility of trying any longer to stem a relentless, incoming tide.

### THE ALBERT HALL MEETING, APRIL 29.

England has been described as the storm-centre of the women's movement, and on April 29 the delegates to the International Congress, who are meeting in London this year, have received a special invitation to be present on the platform at the Great Albert Hall meeting arranged by the W.S.P.U. For the benefit of the delegates the militant policy will be expounded; it will be shown why this policy is necessary, and the way in which it has been carried out will be described. Another interesting feature of the meeting will be the presentation to all the members of the Union who have suffered imprisonment in the cause of women's political enfranchisement. These women are invited to occupy seats on the platform. Mrs. Pethick Lawrence will be in the chair, and the speakers will include Mrs. Pankhurst and Miss Christabel Pankhurst. Miss Isabel Seymour, 4, Clements Inn, W.C., will be glad to have the names of any members who have been to prison in the cause, in order that arrangements may be made for the presentations.

### THE TREASURER'S NOTE.

I congratulate the Women's Social and Political Union on the splendid result of the Self-denial Week of 1909, which will enable the campaign to be extended during the year, and carried out with increased effect.

#### Self-Denial Cards.

Over a thousand Self-denial cards have been returned to the Treasurer, containing a total sum of £1,206 8s. 5d. This large figure has been made up by amounts, great and small, from many generous friends, ranging from the collection of the London City Union which totalled £29 17s. 10d., to some containing only a few shillings, put together by the loving thought and sacrifice of those who have the cause at heart.

#### Self-Denial Subscriptions.

Apart from the collecting cards, the sum sent in in Self-denial subscriptions and in collections, etc., amounted to £1,771 11s. 8d. While some of this represented large sums, others were careful savings of those to whom it was good to be able to give, because they loved so well. It is impossible to act, even for a short while, as Treasurer of this Union, without realising how much is meant by every shilling that forms part of the great fund, and it is good to know that the same loving care is used in the expenditure, so that not a penny is wasted on unnecessary or unprofitable outlay.

#### Promises for the Exhibition.

Another large work of the Self-denial Week this year has been the active preparation for the Exhibition in premises of stalls and goods. The total of all these is no less a sum than £4,120.

#### At the Queen's Hall.

The final part of the Self-denial fund was raised on Tuesday night at the Queen's Hall. Money and promises were handed up from all parts of the building. Mrs. Hertha Ayrton contributed £200, Miss Garrett Anderson, M.D., promised £50, Mrs. Budgett £50, Miss Dorothy Pethick £47 10s., Mrs. Cohen £40, Hon. Mrs. Haverfield £25. These with other sums and the collection totalled about £1,000, bringing up the final figure for Self-denial to £8,000—a sum of which we may all be proud.

I shall be delighted to tell Mrs. Lawrence of this splendid result when I go to see her in Holloway, as I expect shortly to be able to do. She will appreciate how well every member of the Union has worked in her absence, and she will understand how much they have cared for its progress.

I had hoped to be able to give a subscription list this week, but pressure on space has rendered it impossible. Next week this omission will be repaired.

F. W. P. L.

### MRS. PETHICK LAWRENCE'S RELEASE.

We want all members and friends of the W.S.P.U. to keep April 16 free, making a note in their diary, and looking for further announcement in VOTES FOR WOMEN next week. On April 16, at 8 o'clock, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence is expected to be released from Holloway Gaol after her long sentence of two months. She will be met at the gates by members and friends of the Union, and will drive to one of the hotels, where a complimentary breakfast will be served. Tickets, price 2s., will be ready shortly. For the following day (Saturday) special arrangements are being made, which will be announced next week.

### MISS GYE'S RELEASE.

Miss Elsa Gye, who in default of being bound over went to prison for six weeks for her share in the deputation to the Prime Minister on April 24, will be released on April 1. Miss Gye's work in connection with the N.W.S.P.U., and especially at bye-election times, is well known, and it is confidently expected that she will be met at Holloway Gates at 8 o'clock in the morning by a large muster of friends, and a procession will conduct her to the Inns of Court Hotel, where she will be entertained to breakfast privately by the Committee and a few personal friends. In the evening the usual Thursday at Home will take the form of a public meeting, at which Miss Gye will be present, and a specially large rally of members and friends of the Union will be expected.

### THE DEPUTATION ON MARCH 30.

When Mrs. Clarke was released from Holloway for her share in the attempt to interview the Prime Minister at Downing Street during the sitting of the Cabinet Council two months ago, she brought with her a message from Mrs. Pethick Lawrence to the effect that just as the W.S.P.U. had held more meetings up and down the country, and had presented more petitions in the cause of enfranchisement than any other body fighting for their rights, so she wanted the number of women prepared to undergo imprisonment for the sake of political freedom to exceed that of any other body—for example, the Chartists.

Within the next week another opportunity will be given to those women who feel themselves free to take militant action against the

Government which persistently refuses to attend to the women's claims. Next Tuesday another attempt will be made to interview the Prime Minister, and to lay before him the case for Women's Enfranchisement. On this occasion a special contingent from Lancashire will take part, and any other women who feel that they can serve the W.S.P.U. by taking action in this way should remember that their names should be sent in to Miss Christabel Pankhurst, 4, Clements Inn, W.C., without delay. On this occasion the preliminary meeting in the Caxton Hall will take place at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the deputation setting out shortly after its commencement.

Tickets for the meeting are 1s., and 6d., and may be obtained from the Ticket Secretary, N.W.S.P.U., 4, Clements Inn, W.C.

### THE PRESENTATION MOTOR-CAR.

In last week's issue of VOTES FOR WOMEN a letter appeared from the pen of Mrs. Pankhurst, suggesting that members of the W.S.P.U. (who would, she was sure, desire to find some way, however inadequate, of letting Mrs. Pethick Lawrence know how much her work and sacrifice in going to prison for the women's cause is valued by the Union), should unite in presenting her with a motor-car, decorated with the Union colours. The National Committee's work, Mrs. Pankhurst pointed out, is now of such magnitude that a conveyance for constant use has become a necessity, and would be a real economy of time and money. Many members and friends of the Union have already responded to the suggestion, and are subscribing to present to their Honorary Treasurer, for the service of the W.S.P.U., the motor-car for which she has so long felt the need. At Queen's Hall, on Monday afternoon and Tuesday evening, various sums were handed up to the platform, and altogether £50 has so far been received in money and promises. Mrs. Tuke asks that all money for this purpose should be sent direct to her at 4, Clements Inn, W.C.

### WOMEN TEACHERS AT MORECAMBE.

The annual conference of the National Union of Teachers will be held at Morecambe at Easter, and Miss Mary Gawthorpe, an ex-teacher and member of the W.S.P.U., will be present for the purpose of bringing VOTES FOR WOMEN to the notice of the women delegates. Miss Gawthorpe hopes for the co-operation of the other members of the teaching profession belonging to the W.S.P.U. who are intending to be present at the conference, in order that they may join forces with her. Letters should be addressed to 164, Oxford Road, Manchester.

### THE WOMAN'S EXHIBITION.

Prince's Skating Rink, May 13-26, 1909.  
Communications to be addressed: Exhibition Secretary,  
W.S.P.U., 4, Clements Inn, W.C.

Owing to great press of matter this week, we are able to devote only a small portion of our space to the Exhibition, and a great many interesting details must be held over. The following letter from Miss Isabel Seymour, hon. secretary of the Flower Stall, and Mrs. E. K. Marshall, hon. secretary of the Farm Produce Stall, must, however, find a place this week:—

#### An Interesting Partnership.

So as not to engender "unseemly rivalry" the farm and garden produce stall have decided to enter into partnership with the flower stall. We are sure this friendly relationship is worthy of support. Promises of flowers, plants, vegetables, salads, etc., are urgently needed in order that we may have a fresh supply daily. We gratefully acknowledge £1 from Mrs. Littlejohn, and 12s. 6d. from Miss Fergus, towards the prizes for the competition; and Miss Rose Barnard promises £2 towards the flower stall, as she is not sure whether she will be able to send flowers or not; a very sensible way of looking at the matter from our point of view. *O si sic omnes!*

ISABEL SEYMOUR and E. K. MARSHALL, Hon. Secs.

Further details as to competitions will be announced next week.

The Exhibition Secretary wishes also to thank very heartily Mrs. Baillie Guthrie for her kind offer to help the Refreshment Stall by taking charge of an Ice-Cream Soda Fountain. This is a novelty to English people, and should prove very popular. All promises of help should be sent in as soon as possible to the Exhibition Secretary, 4, Clements Inn.

#### The Pageant.

A very novel suggestion has been made, viz., that the cartoons by Mr. Alfred Pearce, which have become during the last few weeks such a feature of VOTES FOR WOMEN, should be reproduced in a Cartoon Pageant at the Exhibition. So attractive a feature the Exhibition Committee felt to be too alluring to be set aside, and on consultation with the artists who have offered their assistance for the pageant on the lines announced last week, it was definitely decided to substitute a Cartoon Pageant for the less novel scheme. Those workers who generously gave in their names as willing to help in the historical pageant may perhaps like to dress dolls in historical and other characters; and if they will write to Mrs. Taylor, of Chipchase Castle, Wark-on-Tyne, she will gladly supply dolls for this purpose.

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The Women's Social and Political Union are NOT asking for a vote for every woman, but simply that sex shall cease to be a disqualification for the franchise.

At present men who pay rates and taxes, who are owners, occupiers, lodgers, or have the service or university franchise possess the Parliamentary vote. The Women's Social and Political Union claim that women who fulfil the same conditions shall also enjoy the franchise.

It is estimated that when this claim has been conceded, about a million and a quarter women will possess the vote, in addition to the seven and a half million men who are at present enfranchised.

The Women's Social and Political Union claim that a simple measure, giving the vote to women on these terms, shall be passed immediately.

### THE DEPUTATION TO MR. ASQUITH ON MARCH 30th.

Dear Members and Friends of the W.S.P.U.,

It has been a great joy to us all to welcome back to our midst the women just released from Holloway Gaol. By their courageous action on February 24, by their steadfast determination to suffer any term of imprisonment meted out to them rather than betray the honour of our cause, they have won for all time our admiration. But there is also another side to the picture. The Government must be made to understand that we cannot remain quiet in the face of their refusal to deal with our question this Session. Militant action is again forced upon us, and so strong is the indignation of our women that, in addition to our London members, others are coming from Lancashire on Tuesday next to join yet another deputation. This will start from the Caxton Hall to the House of Commons at three o'clock, once again to demand an interview with the Prime Minister, in order that the urgency of our case may be laid before him in unmistakable terms.

Emmeline Pankhurst.

### THE ADULT SUFFRAGE BILL.

When Mr. Geoffrey Howard decided to introduce an Adult Suffrage Bill instead of a measure simply removing the disability of sex, all the Woman Suffrage Societies united in condemning his action. Mr. Howard and other supporters of an Adult Suffrage policy defended themselves against this attack by saying that in the present House of Commons an Adult Suffrage measure would command greater support than would a Women's Enfranchisement Bill.

Events have utterly destroyed this excuse, for whereas the Women's Enfranchisement Bill was last year vigorously and

earnestly debated in the House of Commons, and passed the second reading by a majority of 179, the debate on Mr. Howard's Bill was admittedly unreal and apathetic in character, and was conducted in a very thin House (at one moment the presence of the necessary forty members was in doubt), and the second reading was carried by 35 votes only. As the *Daily Chronicle* Lobby correspondent said: "The business before the House was of an even more academic character than is usual on Fridays. Mr. Howard's Bill would add about 15,000,000 voters to the present electorate, 12,000,000 of whom would be women. This was a pretty tall order, even for the present House of Commons. . . . It is unnecessary to say much about the debate, which was carried on in a listless House." A leading article in the same paper, comparing the voting upon the Adult Suffrage Bill and last year's Women's Enfranchisement Bill, observes that "on the present occasion the issue was complicated by the sweeping nature of the reforms proposed."

Friday's debate proves, therefore, that the right policy is to deal with Woman Suffrage by means of a separate measure, to be carried into law before any other questions of electoral reform are raised at all.

Mr. Geoffrey Howard's speech in support of the Adult Suffrage policy was entirely unconvincing. He argued that it is "almost impossible to deal with the reform of the franchise without at the same time dealing with the question of Woman Suffrage." This statement we know to be contrary to historical fact. Into the Reform Bill of 1832, a provision excluding women from the operation of the Bill was deliberately introduced. John Stuart Mill's amendment to the County Franchise Bill of 1834 met with the same fate. The present Government have shown that the inclusion of Woman Suffrage in a measure of general franchise reform is very far from being a matter of course, for they have established in South Africa a Constitution which gives votes to men only.

Mr. Geoffrey Howard's further contention was that "it is, with a democratic Parliament, almost impossible to deal with the question of women's enfranchisement without at the same time making some alteration in the existing franchise laws." As I have pointed out, the division upon his Bill proved that there is more support in the present House of Commons for Woman Suffrage pure and simple than there is for Woman Suffrage plus other alterations in the franchise.

To Mr. Howard's claim that the present franchise is not good enough for women, we reply, in the first place, that however bad it may be, it is better than nothing, and, in the second place, that men and women electors can later on take joint action to improve the existing franchise laws.

That the Liberal rank and file in the House of Commons have decided to support, or at least to condone, the plan of side-tracking the movement by raising the issue of Adult Suffrage, appears from the fact that none of them spoke in support of a genuine Woman Suffrage policy.

The Unionist contributors to the debate, Earl Percy and Mr. Forster, did not fail to draw attention to the fact that such a measure as Mr. Howard's Bill is a hindrance to Woman Suffrage.

Liberals may retort that the Unionist members took this line because they object to a democratic franchise, but they can make no such criticism of Mr. Philip Snowden's attitude. No one will suggest that he, a member of the Labour Party, is less friendly than are the Liberals to a wide measure of electoral reform, yet he gave it as his deliberate opinion that if the removal of the sex disability is to wait until every adult man has obtained the vote, the realisation of that demand will be indefinitely postponed, and he expressed his great regret that Mr. Howard should, by introducing an Adult Suffrage Bill, have departed from the policy he formerly advocated. "For the last three years," said Mr. Snowden, "he has, along with myself, been a joint secretary of the Parliamentary Committee for the Enfranchisement of Women, and I think the Woman

Suffrage Societies had a right to expect that he would remain true to their cause."

Turning to Mr. Asquith's speech, we find in it new evidence, if that were needed, of the Government's hostility to our claim. What he had to say amounts to this: Upon Woman Suffrage the Government are disunited, which, since it involves inaction, means, for all practical purposes, that they are as a body opposed to Woman Suffrage. But where the question of votes for men is concerned they are united, and they wish to see a comprehensive measure of electoral reform carried into law. It requires very little penetration to see that the Government are prepared, if hard pressed by the militant agitation, to establish Manhood Suffrage as a barrier to Votes for Women. Mrs. Welstenholme Elmy and other Suffragists have from the first foreseen that a Liberal Government might attempt by this means to postpone for a generation or more the enfranchisement of women. Mr. Asquith has now shown that he is considering this method of escape from the political claims of women. The Prime Minister's speech had one good effect at least. It has served as a warning to Suffragists that they must not rely upon getting a Votes for Women amendment included in a Reform Bill, but that they must demand the immediate concession of votes to those women at present disqualified solely on the ground of sex.

The anti-Government policy affords the only possible means of enforcing that demand. Sir Charles McLaren drew attention to the power which such a policy gives to the Suffrage movement. Speaking of the Women's Social and Political Union, he said: "There is one society alone, the most active of all these agitating societies, which has secured an income of no less than £20,000 a year, raised amongst women, for the purpose of forcing on this agitation, and forcing it on in a way most unpalatable to members of this House. . . . I believe that these women have had very great influence in recent bye-elections. It is difficult to say what will turn a vote or what will not, but I believe the fact of intelligent, eloquent, and attractive women—because the Suffragettes have very admirable qualities besides that of fanaticism—going down at bye-elections, and consistently and ruthlessly opposing every Government candidate, has had a very great effect on public opinion."

At the moment of writing, the Union is engaged in a campaign against the Government in Croydon, with the object of reducing the Liberal vote, and proving to the Government that their Woman Suffrage policy is unpopular in the country. Notwithstanding the fact that the Liberal candidate declares his personal belief in Woman Suffrage, while one of his opponents confesses himself an Anti-Suffragist, the Union is not to be drawn aside from its policy of holding the Government, and the Government alone, responsible for giving or refusing Votes for Women. If Mr. Raphael is returned, the result will be hailed as a victory for the Government, and as a sign that their policy has the approval of the electorate—such a result it is in the interest of our cause to prevent. We have everything to lose and nothing to gain by the election of Mr. Raphael for Croydon. Once in Parliament, he will be as powerless to serve our cause as Mr. Geoffrey Howard admitted himself to be when, in the House of Commons last Friday, he said: "We must frankly confess that we are unable to force this Government to take up the question as their own."

But it must always be remembered that the virtue of the bye-election policy depends upon the fact that women themselves are doing and daring for this cause. Because women are ready to face denunciation, rough usage, and imprisonment in the pursuit of their rights, the electors are moved to make Votes for Women the issue which shall decide their attitude towards the Government. Because women themselves are paying so heavy a price, men electors are prepared to vote for their cause at the ballot-box.

Those who are to go in deputation to the Prime Minister next Tuesday have their courage and determination redoubled by the knowledge that such action, by winning the respect of the voters, strikes at the very foundations of the Government's power to withhold the vote from women.

Christabel Pankhurst.

### RELEASE OF TWENTY-SIX PRISONERS.

The following prisoners were released from Holloway on Wednesday morning:—Lady Constance Lytton, Miss Daisy Solomon, Mrs. Frank Corbett, Miss Una Dugdale, Mrs. Madeline Petre, Miss E. H. Chesshire, Mrs. Caprina Fahey, Miss M. Barnet, Miss M. Davis Colley, Miss Margaret Rodgers, Miss Mary Allen, Miss Ellen Pitman, Miss Maud Freeman, Miss Catherine Richmond, Miss Mary Lethune, Miss M. M. Roberts, Miss Leslie Lawless, Miss Caroline Townsend, Mrs. Tyson, Miss Tyson, Mrs. Lamartine Yates, Miss Sarah Carwin, Miss Ainsworth, Miss Thompson, Miss Walsh, and Miss Kirkpatrick Watts.

By 7.30 the prison authorities were able to witness the now familiar sight of Suffragettes, wearing their colours, and groups of friends and interested onlookers rapidly gathering in the thoroughfares around the prison gates. The scene was further enlivened by the arrival of the seven draped and decorated carriages and pairs for the released prisoners, and the horsewomen appointed to lead the cavalcade. Meanwhile Bryer's well-known band was playing lively airs.

As eight o'clock drew near the crowd began to close in around the gates, an avenue of approach being kept by the police. At about a quarter past eight the small door in the prison gates was thrown open, and the band struck up "The Marseillaise" as the first of the released prisoners appeared, some of them running down towards the gates. They were at once surrounded by the cheering crowd and greeted warmly by their friends and relations. After the greetings and congratulations were over they took their places in the carriages, and the procession was then formed up in the following order:—

First came Miss Daisy Dugdale bearing the tricolour, immediately succeeded by Miss Christabel Pankhurst, Miss Annie Kenney, Mrs. Tuke, and other well-known members of the Union. Then came the band, followed by a group of members dressed in becoming costumes representing the four national divisions of the kingdom, England being represented by Miss Joan Dugdale, Scotland by Miss McLeod, Wales by Miss Rachel Barratt, and Ireland by Miss Maguire. The well-known Kensington banner, with Mr. Laurence Housman's design, came next, and then came nine women riders on white horses, first Miss Douglas Smith, dressed in a handsome purple uniform, then Miss Joachim, Miss G. Löwy, Mrs. Diplock, Mrs. Higgins, Miss V. Holme, Miss A. G. Sheppard, Mrs. Masters, and Mrs. Freeman, all wearing the Union regalia. After these came the seven carriages bearing the released prisoners, with friends and members of the Union following on foot with a fine display of flying colours. Finally came a long line of cabs, motor-cars, and private carriages, all draped or decorated in some way with the colours, and most of them flying tricolour flags.

The route chosen was Camden Road, Hampstead Road, Tottenham Court Road, New Oxford Street, and High Holborn. An amusing incident occurred in Camden Road, where the driver of a heavily loaded dray begged or borrowed a large tricolour flag, fixed it to the top of his dray, and constituted himself part of the procession. The procession was cheered again and again, in many cases handkerchiefs being waved from windows or sometimes the Union scarves, bunting, or tricolour flags.

At about a quarter to ten the procession reached the Inns of Court Hotel, where the prisoners were entertained privately to breakfast by the Committee of the Union, after which most of them proceeded to their homes.

Their public reception took place in the evening at 7.30, at the Inns of Court Hotel, where they were welcomed to dinner by a large gathering over which Miss Pankhurst presided. Several interesting speeches were made. A report of these proceedings will appear in our issue of next week.

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