

THE VOTE,  
MARCH 17, 1922  
ONE PENNY.

VOTES AT 21.

# THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 1922

**OBJECT :** To secure for Women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men ; to use the powers already obtained to elect women in Parliament, and upon other public bodies, for the purpose of establishing equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes, and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

WHEN I AM M.P. Lady Cooper.  
GREEN, WHITE AND GOLD FAIR.  
WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.  
IN PARLIAMENT.

VOTES AT 21.  
PREVENTION OR "PROPHYLAXIS" ?  
MONTGOMERY BOROUGH BRANCH AT HOME.  
BOOK REVIEW. E. K.

## WHEN I AM M.P.

**Lady Cooper (wife of Sir Richard Cooper, who has represented Walsall in Parliament for 12 years), is the daughter of the Rev. E. Priestland, of Spondon, Derbyshire. When business reasons compelled Sir Richard Cooper to decide to retire next Election, the Walsall Unionist Association asked her to become Prospective Candidate.**

When I am M.P., I should strive to keep ever before me the fact that the voters in my constituency would depend on me as their voice and mouthpiece in the House of Commons. This heavy responsibility is laid upon the shoulders of every Member of Parliament. I should be the only direct representative in the House of Commons of all classes in a great industrial constituency; of the employers of labour, whose difficulties and responsibilities are so immense at the present time; of the thousands of workers, whose problems to-day are so intricate, and who have so many real grievances and legitimate aspirations for better conditions of life; of the women of all classes with their political, social and economic problems; of little helpless children; and of the spirit of our ancestors who toiled, and lived, and died to put our Country and Empire in the forefront of all light and progress, who made England the symbol of high ideals.

I hope the realization of this great trust would give me greater bravery, greater caution, greater foresight, and greater sympathy; so that I might be helped to weigh every question justly and impartially, and to act rightly for the national good.

I have faith in the good instincts of human nature, and a belief that most of the social and industrial and international troubles of to-day could be solved if

citizens of all classes, and representing different interests, could meet face to face, and discuss their difficulties in a spirit of mutual trust and goodwill. I favour the Whitley Councils as being a move in this direction. The Washington Conference gave us glimpses of what can be done to smooth-away apparently insuperable differences, when nations meet in a spirit of real goodwill, each being willing to give up something for the sake of world peace.

I should confidently appeal, in this work, for the help and advice and trust of *all* my constituents—Unionist, Liberal, Labour, and Independents, while I was their Member of Parliament, for I should then represent all voters in the Borough.

I should work with all my heart and soul for progress, for advancement, for bettering the lives and conditions of my fellow-citizens, spiritually, mentally, and physically. But I believe most sincerely that all such advancement must be built and founded on the English character and traditions of our great past.

Advance, I am sure, must come on sane constitutional lines, on a development and extension of the principles on which our glorious Kingdom and Empire were founded. And these principles to my mind are—God and the King.

ALICE E. COOPER.



Other issues of this Series in "The Vote"—Mrs. CORBETT ASHBY, July 15, 1921; Miss MABEL BILLSON, July 29, 1921; Mrs. SCOTT GATTY, August 12, 1921; Mrs. ELEANOR BARTON, August 26, 1921; Mrs. WINTRINGHAM, M.P., September 23, 1921; Dr. ETHEL BENTHAM, October 7, 1921; Mrs. AYRTON GOULD, October 21, 1921; Mrs. MARJORIE PEASE, J.P., October 28, 1921; Miss MAY P. GRANT, January 6, 1922; COMMANDANT MARY S. ALLEN, O.B.E., February 17, 1922.

## GREEN, WHITE & GOLD FAIR. WOMEN AT HOME & ABROAD.

Members and friends will be glad to know that the arrangements for our annual Green, White and Gold Fair are already in hand.

It has been decided to classify the stalls, and the following have been arranged: White, Handkerchiefs, Woollies and Children's Clothing, Overalls and Aprons, Household, Antiques and White Elephants, Irish Stall, two Stalls for Fancy Goods, Literature, Stall, and Vote Stall. Mrs. Lloyd has kindly promised to be responsible for a General Stall, the Hampstead Branch have undertaken the Handkerchief Stall, and the Mid-London Branch part of the Stall for Woollies and Children's Clothing. Other Branches that have promised help are Letchworth, Middlesbrough, and Swansea. All Branches are earnestly asked to make a great effort in support of the Fair.

Competitions will be a special feature of the Fair, and Miss Lyndon, 53, Willow Road, N.W. 3, has kindly undertaken the management of them. There will be prizes for the best camisole, dressed doll, and made toys (elephants, dogs, etc.); also for cakes and jam. The entries should be received as soon as possible, and the toys sent in for judging a week before the Fair. These will afterwards be sold at the Toy Stall. There will be a separate room for the competitions during the days of the Fair, which will be amusing and numerous.

An excellent Programme of Music, etc., is to be arranged, and it is hoped that all members, and friends, will do their very utmost to make the Fair an even greater success than in past years.

## FRENCHWOMEN AND COMMERCE.

The Paris Chamber of Commerce recently passed a resolution to the effect that women are allowed to become members of this Chamber, but are not allowed to act in, the commercial courts. It is well known that women in France are now directing most important businesses, and that they have a wide knowledge and experience in commercial and industrial matters. The Paris Chamber of Commerce cannot, therefore, well exclude women from membership, but they refuse to permit them to serve on the various tribunals on the ground that women have not sufficient legal knowledge, and that "the feminine temperament does not appear to be adapted to the exercise of such functions." The Paris Chamber of Commerce can advance these arguments in a country in which there are many brilliant women lawyers who successfully plead in the highest courts! Like our own Lord Knutsford these French gentlemen keep themselves very busy trying to stem the tide of women's advancement, but they can no more succeed ultimately in doing so than Mrs. Partington could, with a mop, keep the Atlantic out of her house during a tempest.

## LADY ASTOR ON HOUSING.

Lady Astor took part in the debate on Housing in the House of Commons last Monday, when the vote on account for the Ministry of Health was being considered. She urged the Government not to go back on a progressive housing programme, and contended that houses were just as important to the nation at the present time as battleships were in 1914. She said that if Hon. Members would only take the trouble to see what were actually the homes of ordinary men and women they would attend such Debates in greater numbers, and convince the Government that some of them were in earnest, when they said in their election addresses that they meant to struggle for better houses. Private enterprise had failed lamentably in the matter of housing. Housing was at the bottom of a great many ills, both physical and moral. There were splendid women making a brave struggle to-day under conditions which, if endured by the wives of some Hon. Members, would lead to a very different story being told. We must put the needs of the nation ahead of everything, and one of the great needs of the nation at the present moment was that of homes, not for heroes, but for ordinary men and women.

## Women Aldermen on L.C.C.

Mrs. Wilton Phipps and Dr. Florence Barrie Lambert have been chosen as Aldermen on the London County Council, a position they will hold for six years. Miss Nettie Adler, daughter of the Chief Rabbi, has been elected as Deputy-Chairman of the Council.

## Another Prospective Woman M.P.

Miss Jane F. Wood has been selected as Labour candidate for the Mossley Division in opposition to Mr. Austin Hopkinson, M.P. Miss Wood is an ex-president of the National Union of Teachers and a member of the executive, and the Teachers' Union have agreed to pay all the election expenses, and to allow £500 annually. Miss Wood resides in the constituency.

## More Women J.P.s.

The new Justices of the Peace for the County of Middlesex, sworn in at the Middlesex Sessions last week, include Mrs. Travers Humphreys and Miss Smees, who has occupied the chair of the Acton Council. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, the only surviving child of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., has been appointed a J.P. for the County of London. She is an active worker in the Women's Liberal Federation.

## Reception to Women Candidates.

Twenty prospective women candidates for Parliament were entertained by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship at Bedford College last week. Among those present were Mrs. Wintringham, M.P., and Viscountess Rhondda, who each made a short speech.

## Woman Suffrage in Canada.

A Montreal member of the Quebec Provincial Legislature, Mr. Henry Mills, has introduced a Bill providing votes for women at provincial elections. Miss Agnes MacPhail took her seat for the first time at the opening of the new Parliament at Ottawa last week.

## A Ban Removed.

A majority Socialist motion, which was accepted by the Main Committee of the Reichstag last week, provides that illegitimate motherhood will henceforth not be a ground for dismissal or disciplinary action against women employed on Government service.

## A Bold Experiment.

Two enterprising young actresses, Miss Edith Carter and Miss Marriott-Watson (niece of the novelist), are producing their own play, "The Lass o' Laughter," at their own risk, at the Theatre Royal, Leamington. Several West End Managers have promised to attend.

## Swiss Summer School.

The Swiss Woman Suffrage Association is organising a summer school in the Canton of Appenzell, which will probably be held in the last week of July. Conferences on suffrage and feminist questions will be in French and German. Suffragists from other countries will be warmly welcomed.

## Women and Dentistry.

Licenses to practise Dentistry were conferred on two women last week, Miss Cicely May Cox-Moore (Royal Dental), and Miss Lilian Forbes (University College).

## Women in the Ministry.

South Carnarvonshire Presbytery has voted in favour of women being allowed to enter the ministry on the same terms as men.

## Working Women and Education.

At a women's conference at Nottingham a demand was made for residential colleges for women on the lines of Ruskin College, Oxford.

## IN PARLIAMENT.

### Treatment of Children in Hong Kong.

MR. T. GRIFFITHS asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he would make an investigation as to whether, under the *mui tsai* system of Hong Kong, the *mui tsai* girls of any household became, upon the death of the owner, the property of concubines in the household, and were disposed of by them for cash, with other elements in the estate of the deceased owner? MR. CHARLES EDWARDS asked whether the records of the Colonial Office showed that *mui tsai* of Hong Kong, of quite tender years, were frequently compelled to labour over 12 hours a day, and that cases had been established in the open court where those children had been forced to work up to as long as 18 and 20 hours in one day? MR. CHURCHILL replied that he had informed the House on February 21st that he wished to exchange telegraphic correspondence with the Governor of Hong Kong on the subject. Unfortunately, a grave situation had developed in Hong Kong in connection with the strike there; the Governor's hand had been exceptionally full, and he learned that the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, who was particularly concerned with *mui tsai*, had been working night and day. The Governor had promised to answer his enquiries at the earliest possible moment, and in the meantime he must ask the Hon. Members to allow him to defer any statement on the subject of *mui tsai*.

### Proportional Representation.

CAPTAIN WEDGWOOD BENN asked the Prime Minister whether any Government inquiry had been instituted into the question of proportional representation? "No, Sir," replied MR. CHAMBERLAIN. LT.-COL. A. MURRAY asked the Prime Minister if it was the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill for proportional representation? MR. CHAMBERLAIN replied that the Government had not discussed these questions or taken any decision upon them. LT.-COL. MURRAY enquired if the Government did not recognise the necessity of some electoral reform? MR. CHAMBERLAIN stated that the Government did not. CAPT. WEDGWOOD BENN asked if it was a fact that the Minister of Health had been asked by the Government to investigate this subject for them? MR. CHAMBERLAIN replied, "No, Sir, he has not."

### Criminal Law Amendment.

MR. CAUTLEY asked the Home Secretary if he would consider the advantage of taking the opinion of His Majesty's Judges of the King's Bench as to the expediency of taking away the defence of reasonable cause of belief under Sections 5 and 6 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885? MR. SHORTT replied that he did not think it would be right or proper for him to attempt to elicit such an expression of opinion. MR. CAUTLEY further asked the Home Secretary (1) whether he had, or could obtain, any record of the number of cases tried before juries in the last two years, where the defence of reasonable cause of belief under Sections 5 and 6 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885, was set up, and what were the results of such trials? (2) Whether there was any record of the ages of the defendants charged in cases under Sections 5 and 6 of that Act, and tried before a jury where the defence of reasonable cause of belief was set up; if so, how many were under the age of 21, and how many under the age of 25; and, if not, would he have such a record kept? MR. SHORTT replied that those particulars were not recorded, and no accurate statistics with regard to them could be compiled.

### Female Prisoners (Confinements).

MR. LUNN asked the Home Secretary if two babies had been born recently in Armley Gaol, Leeds; and whether, in the interests of children unborn, he would take steps likely to prevent similar incidents happening in future? MR. SHORTT said that he understood there was one confinement among the female prisoners at

Leeds last January, and another last September. When a confinement took place in prison, the patient received better medical attention and nursing than in most cases she would receive outside. Sometimes when the confinement was likely to occur near the end of the sentence the remainder of the sentence was remitted, but this was a method he could not adopt in all cases.

### Women (Convictions).

VISCOUNTESS ASTOR asked the Home Secretary what proportion of women committed to prison in 1921 had previous convictions to their names; and what proportion were under 25 years of age? MR. SHORTT said that the total number of women received into prison on conviction for the year ended 31st March, 1921, was 11,043, of whom 8,100, or 73.3 per cent. had been previously convicted. There were no figures available showing the number who were under 25 years of age, but of the above total there were 3,861 under 30, namely, 743 between the ages of 16 and 21, and 3,118 between 21 and 30. LADY ASTOR further enquired if it was not true that a woman, once convicted, was very apt to be convicted again, and if it could be proved that the women police had prevented convictions, so showing that it was an economy to keep them, would the Home Secretary consider it? No reply was given.

### Women Police Patrols.

CAPT. WEDGWOOD BENN asked the Home Secretary what witnesses appeared before the Geddes Committee to give an account of the work of the women patrol, and whether any members of the women's force were called? MR. SHORTT replied that the Committee consulted the Commissioner of Police and himself. No witnesses from the force were called. It had to be remembered that the question was not as to the efficiency or usefulness of the women police, but whether the work was of such a nature that it ought to be maintained at the expense of the State in a time of extreme financial stringency. CAPT. BENN further enquired if the Home Secretary thought that the Committee was in a position to come to a fair decision when he himself would not permit members of the women patrol to give evidence? MR. SHORTT said that there was no ground for the suggestion that he would not permit it. The Committee did not require it; they had all the evidence that they required. F. A. U.

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

In the House of Commons recently, Major Christopher Lowther moved "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to abolish in Great Britain the award of capital punishment for any crime or offence whatsoever." He contended that such a Bill, if it failed to secure the sympathy of the whole House, at any rate deserved serious reflection. It was very wicked of anyone to take human life. Was it not equally wrong for the State to take human life? He realised the need for a deterrent for the most odious crime of murder, but did not believe it was beyond the wit of man to devise a sentence for murder sufficiently severe to deter others, and yet not to take life. Major Lowther asked the House to consider the penalty which the execution of an individual imposed upon his relatives and friends, and described a scene which he witnessed at a Welsh Assize. A man was charged with the brutal murder of his wife, and the principal witnesses against the man were his two small children. He thought that no more horrible start in life could be given to those children than the fact that they were the witnesses of their unfortunate mother's death, and that they were the direct instruments of sending their father to the gallows. Major Lowther considered that the death penalty was a blot upon any civilised nation. Lady Astor and Mrs. Wintringham both voted for leave to bring in this Bill: but the resolution was lost by 234 votes to 36.

## THE VOTE.

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### EDITORIAL.

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

### VOTES AT 21.

Under the Ten Minutes' Rule Lord Robert Cecil moved the following resolution in the House of Commons on March 8th:—

"That leave be given to introduce a Bill to extend the suffrage to women on the same terms as men,"

and this resolution was carried by a majority of 208 votes to 60. The Women's Enfranchisement Bill was then ordered to be brought in by Lord Robert Cecil, Major Hills, Sir Donald Maclean, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mrs. Wintringham, Lady Astor, and Mr. Aneurin Williams. It was accordingly presented and read a first time. We offer our warmest thanks to Lord Robert Cecil, and all our staunch friends who supported him on this occasion for securing this victory, and we rely upon them to continue to press the urgency of this matter upon the House so that women between the ages of 30 and 21 will have the right to vote at the next General Election. As for the Members who voted against this Bill, we append their names, and we hope that any members of the Women's Freedom League, who live in their constituencies, will make their action known to the whole electorate between this time and the Election, and do everything in their power to prevent their return to the next Parliament. The speech Lord Robert made in introducing this Bill was admirable in every way. He reminded the House that they had had experience of the exercise of the franchise by women in one General Election, and in a number of by-elections, and he thought everyone admitted that it had been entirely successful. They now heard no more of the old objections which used to be so common; of the idea that women would all vote together in one mass against the men; of the conception that granting the suffrage to women would bring about the downfall of the British Empire; nor even of the doctrine that some infallible evil would befall women, and that they would be found reluctant to exercise their vote. On the contrary, women had voted in numbers about equivalent to those of the men; but although, in his judgment, causes in which women were interested had greatly advanced by the granting of the vote to women, yet he thought there were signs that, politically and socially, women were not yet regarded as entirely the equals of men. Lord Robert said that certain incidents, in connection with the failure of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill last Session, were not such as would have occurred if that Bill had been mainly of interest to men and not to women, and in other matters the position was still less satisfactory. Last August, the House passed, he thought unanimously, an elaborate Resolution demanding equal treatment for men and women in the Civil Service. That Resolution set out in detail what was required, and it was assented to by the Government. As far as he knew, practically nothing had yet been done in pursuance of that Resolution, though they were told by the Government that the matter was receiving its closest attention. He could mention other matters,

like the Trade Board's question, in all of which he thought there was still a strong impression that women were not quite entitled to the same treatment as men. He put this Bill before the House very largely because it would sweep away one of the statutory differences between men and women in political matters. There was really no assignable grounds that could be alleged for the maintenance of that difference, and there was no reason whatever for thinking that a woman of 21 was more incapable of exercising the suffrage than a man of 21, and certainly there was no ground for thinking that she compared worse with a woman of 30 than a man of 21 did with a man of 30. Lord Robert explained that he had taken advantage of the procedure of the House to introduce the Bill under the Ten Minutes' Rule, in order to give the House an opportunity of expressing in the Division Lobby, who were for, and who were against, the proposal, because the Government had expressed great reluctance to put forward this reform. If the Bill was so fortunate as to be given a Second Reading by a large majority, he thought that reluctance might become less. In opposing the Resolution, Lt.-Col. Archer-Shee expressed surprise at the Noble Lord introducing the Bill in such a manner. Surely a matter which affected the enfranchisement of something like 5,000,000 electors was a matter which ought not to be brought in by a Bill under the Ten Minutes' Rule! It was an abuse of Parliamentary privilege. He ought to know that the enfranchisement of large numbers of the people was a matter which could only be brought in by the Government, and before a General Election. All the arguments on the question had been thoroughly thrashed out in Committee about 18 months ago on the Bill which was brought in by the Labour Party, and which had died a natural death. "No, no; a most unnatural death!" interjected Lady Astor. There were two million more women than men in the country, continued the gallant gentleman, and he submitted that was a very good reason, why, in 1918, when the Representation of the People Bill was before the House, Mr. Speaker's Committee, in a sort of agreed Bill, gave the vote to women over 30. That age was put in so as to equalise the number of men and women voters. He did not believe there was any demand from girls of from 21 to 30, who had the greatest contempt for politicians, for the vote. "Speak for yourself!" interpolated Lady Astor. Lt.-Col. Archer-Shee proceeded to state that in the recent County Council Elections forty per cent. of the new electors, who were mainly women, did not go to the poll. "How many men went to the poll?" enquired Lady Astor. In conclusion, the gallant gentleman said he had only just advanced a few reasons against the Bill, and expressed the hope that Hon. Members would screw up their courage to vote against it and not run away from the Division, because he was quite convinced that they would receive the support of all the younger women in their constituencies, who did not in the least want to be bothered with the vote. The Members who followed his advice and voted against Lord Robert Cecil's Resolution were:—H. B. Armstrong, A. R. Atkey, Sir Frederick Banbury, Lt.-Col. W. C. H. Bell, A. Bigland, Lt.-Col. Buchanan, Sir William Bull, C. R. Carew, Sir Stuart Coats, Sir Richard Cooper, Commander Dean, Lt.-Col. Sir G. Elliott, Major Sir Bertram Falls, Sir Arthur Fell, L. Walker-Forestier, W. Forrest, Lt.-Col. Freemantle, Capt. Gee, R. S. Gwynne, A. Hailwood, Lt.-Col. Sir F. Hall, A. V. Hambro, Major Hamilton, J. W. W. Hopkins, A. Hopkinson, Lt.-Col. Hon. F. Jackson, J. Kidd, G. R. Lane-Fox, Sir J. Larmor, G. B. Lloyd, Major C. Lowther, Col. Claude Lowther, C. E. L. Lyle, Lt.-Col. C. M'Lean, F. A. Macquisten, Sir P. Magnus, Sir W. L. Mitchell, Major J. E. Molson, Col. W. Morden, Major Nall, Sir W. Pearce, De F. Pennefather, Sir Owen Philipps, Lt.-Col. Pownall, S. Roberts, Col. Sir J. Rutherford, R. G. Crawford-Sharman, Sir Malcolm Smith, Sir Alfred W. Smithers, Capt. J. Starkey, Major S. Steel, G. Stewart, M. G. Townley, Sir Charles Townshend, Col. G. D. White, Lt.-Col. Sir G. Wills, Lt.-Col. Sir M. Wilson, Sir R. Winfrey, Col. Sir C. Yate, W. Young. The Tellers for the Noes were: Lt.-Col. Archer-Shee and Mr. G. Murray.

## PREVENTION OR "PROPHYLAXIS"?

A Conference, concerned with the prevention of Venereal Disease, convened by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, was held on Friday, March 10th, at the Y.M.C.A., Tottenham Court Road, at which various Societies, including the Women's Freedom League, were represented. Miss Eleanor Rathbone, C.C., J.P., presided.

Lady Barrett, M.D., M.S., (Medical Women's Federation), explained that the Federation did not believe in the method of Prophylaxis advocated by the National Society for the Prevention of Venereal Disease—first, because the method could not, in practice, be relied on to prevent, and second, because the promotion of such a method was an indirect suggestion that it was not possible to keep straight. More constructive remedies had been put forward by the Medical Women's Federation, viz., improved occupations for leisure hours, and definite teaching on the value of self-control. The whole of the laws dealing with children under age required linking up, and the number of women police needed to be increased rather than diminished.

Dr. Wansey Bayly (National Society for Preventing Venereal Disease), contended that the scientific principle of prophylaxis was sound, but the difficulty was the application of the principle. His Society had always endorsed the policy of the National Council for Combating Venereal Disease with regard to the education and moral teaching of the young. It was essential that they should be taught the duty of self-control, but the effect of this moral teaching would not be evident for a long time, and in the meantime we should consider what could be done to reduce the amount of disease in the present generation.

Dr. E. B. Turner (National Council for Combating Venereal Disease) gave various statistics, showing how disease had increased in instances in which the packet

system had been adopted. The opinion of the Dutch army was that the system had not responded to the hopes entertained of it. The Italian army considered it a failure, and that it was an incitement to soldiers to frequent the *Maisons Tolérées*. At the Red Cross Conference of Societies, two of the most prominent German specialists in Venereal Diseases had stated that there had been no fall in the number of cases, nor any lessening of the incidence to disease, and in Berlin alone there were 25,000 cases a year. In Dresden, where the packet system was extensively in operation, the number of cases amongst boys rose from 14 to 105, amongst girls from 60 to 116. Dr. Turner complained that the Society for the Prevention of Venereal Diseases had had an unfair start, due to the fault of modern journalism, and that it emphasised the necessity for speed in self-disinfection, but said nothing whatever about *continence*. He spoke of the deterrent of *fear*, and said this was a most potent factor in keeping people straight. Many young men would have kept straight if it had not been for the so-called safeguards put forward by the Society for the Prevention of Venereal Disease.

Miss Neilans (Association for Moral and Social Hygiene) spoke of the force of public opinion, which had kept many girls straight, and had likewise caused many boys to go wrong.

Mrs. Bethune Baker (National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship) said an equal moral standard was the only means of wiping out Venereal Diseases, and that the object of the Suffrage Movement was to raise the whole status of all women. As long as there was one class of women who were considered outside the pale of the law, all women were on a lower level.

A lively discussion followed, and the feeling of the Conference obviously was that moral education was the most potent remedy to wipe out the social evil.

## MONTGOMERY BOROUGH BRANCH AT HOME.

Last Friday afternoon our Montgomery Boroughs Branch held an At Home at the Scala Theatre, Newtown. The place was crowded, between four and five hundred guests being present, who came in numbers from Oswestry, Welshpool, Berriew, and the surrounding district. The Theatre itself was gaily decorated with the green, white and gold colours of the Women's Freedom League, and on every table was a lovely bunch of daffodils. Forty members had provided the sixty tables, the cloths, dainty china, and a sumptuous tea. There was an excellent programme of music, which included songs by Miss Gladys Oliver, Miss Phyllis Woosnane, and Mr. Wakeyn Restori Dodd; Piano-forte Selections by Mr. Nicholas, A.R.C.M., a Piano-forte Solo by Miss Daphne Smith (the eight-year-old daughter of Capt. and Mrs. Smith, both members of the Branch), Violin Solos by Mrs. Fowell, a Recitation by Mrs. Townsend, and a Dance by Miss Esmie Grice. All the guests remained for the meeting, when the Chair was taken by Dr. Owen Morris. He reminded his audience that the Women's Freedom League was the only women's organisation known amongst them. It had been built up there into a powerful organisation by the hard work and untiring energy of Miss Alix Minnie Clark through many years. It stood for equal opportunities of service for men and women in all branches of our national life. He rejoiced that women were more and more becoming elected on to local governing bodies, that we now had two women Members of Parliament, notwithstanding the fact that one of them had described herself on the previous day as "not quite a perfect lady!" (laughter). The Chairman's reference to Lady Rhondda's claim to be summoned to the House of Lords (Lady Rhondda's photograph was displayed in every part of the Theatre on VOTE copies) brought immediate and prolonged applause, and so did his expressed wish for the continued prosperity of the Women's Freedom League in

the Boroughs. Miss Clark followed with a first-rate, rousing speech, in which she outlined the aims and policy of the Women's Freedom League. She appealed for their continued support in pressing for equal franchise for men and women, the Equal Guardianship of Infants' Bill, the Children of Unmarried Parents' Bill, the raising of the Age of Consent to 18 for boys and girls, and heavier punishments for men in cases of child outrage. This address was received with much enthusiasm, after which Mrs. Haslewood spoke on the *mui tsu*, or so-called child adoption system prevailing in Hong Kong. Her story of the sufferings of many of these children, through over-work and physical cruelty, enlisted the ready sympathy of all present. She gave them a number of questions and answers in the House of Commons on this subject, which convinced them that there was practically a system of slavery existing for great numbers of children in the British Colony of Hong Kong. A resolution protesting against this system was passed unanimously. A short address was then given by Mrs. Councillor Davies, J.P., of Welshpool, who gave an exceedingly interesting account of work on the Borough Council. A vote of thanks to the Chairman and speakers was proposed by Mrs. W. R. Williams, who also appealed for help both for Miss Clark and herself in their coming contests for the Poor Law Guardians and the Newtown Urban District Council, and seconded by the Rev. E. E. Thomas, M.A. The meeting concluded by all present singing "Land of Our Fathers" and "God Save the King." The Hon. Treasurer and the Secretary of the Women's Freedom League, who had taken this opportunity to visit the Branch, were accorded a most cordial and kind welcome by numerous members, both on the platform and in the Theatre. They returned to London greatly impressed by the alert enthusiasm everywhere visible in Newtown for the cause of the Women's Freedom League.

## BOOK REVIEW.

*Lunacy Reform.*—Report of the Proceedings of the Conference, convened by Sir Frederick Willis, K.B.E., C.B., Chairman of the Board of Control. (H.M. Stationery Office). 2/6 net. (Can be obtained at this Office).

This is the report just published of the Conference of January 19th and 20th, between the Lunacy Commissioners, Medical Superintendents and Chairmen of Committees of County, Borough and Registered Mental Hospitals, and certain other persons, to consider possible improvements in Lunacy administration and treatment. General questions were considered, early treatment, voluntary patients, nursing, diet, employment, etc. Our readers will be specially interested in the discussions on the further introduction of women into the system.

*The Advisability of Women Members of Visiting Committees.*

Mrs. How-Martyn, Chairman, Middlesex County Mental Hospital (Wandsworth) Visiting Committee, said that of the 95 visiting committees only 27, less than one-third, had women members, and only eight of these had more than one. This was deplorable, as more than half the patients were women. For good administration she held very strongly that a staff of women required adequate representation of women on the governing body. All members of Visiting Committees had to be members of their county or borough Councils, but if enough women were not elected to these bodies the Councils could include suitable women in the 12 to 20 aldermen which they elected themselves. In the long run this would improve the administration and would increase public confidence, for the community instinctively trusts women when suffering has to be relieved. In these modern days the ideals of such women as Florence Nightingale and Elizabeth Fry had to be carried out by charitably-minded women upon the governing bodies of institutions. The Conference agreed.

*Women Assistant Medical Officers.*

Dr. Shera, Medical Superintendent, Somerset and Bath Mental Hospital, Wells, said that women might sit on the Board of Control, but they received no encouragement to become Medical Superintendents. In small asylums (800 beds) he thought there were difficulties of accommodation; the doctors had a common bath room and a common mess room. Nobody doubted the capability of the women for mental work; they were excellent. Beyond this he did not know.

Dr. Moore, Medical Superintendent, Holloway Sanatorium, Virginia Water (400 beds), for the last 30 years had always had a resident woman Junior Assistant Medical Officer. She had both professional and social duties, and the care of cases of special diseases of women. He invariably found her capable, well-informed, painstaking, energetic and keen. Her judgment, he thought, was apt to be hasty, and he thought her notes often stressed unimportant details and neglected essentials. In serious illness he found that patients and staff preferred the man doctor, but there had been one or two brilliant exceptions to this rule. Was it a career for a woman as it was for a man? He did not know; his own committee had never wished to appoint a woman to a senior post; they had had ten junior women doctors.

Dr. Bedford Pierce, Medical Superintendent, the Retreat, York, had, for the past 23 years, had one man and one woman Assistant Medical Officer. He had had four women—one stayed for 15 years. He disagreed with Dr. Moore. At the Retreat the man and woman took equal duties and attended each other's patients when either was absent. There was no distinction made between them. He found that medical women could take the full responsibility in a thoroughly satisfactory manner, and he spoke most emphatically as to their value in a mental hospital. Perhaps women worried over things rather more than men did; they

were extremely keen, and possibly over anxious, but that was not altogether a bad quality. He wished to make himself quite clear as to their value.

Dr. Devine, O.B.E., F.R.C.P., Medical Superintendent, Portsmouth Corporation Mental Hospital, very heartily supported the last speaker. He had a good deal of experience of women doctors in an asylum, and thought them most valuable. His view was that they should certainly share in this work, and he saw no possible reason why eventually they should not become Medical Superintendents. Furthermore, he felt that these very details of Dr. Moore were the very things that the clumsy male people often missed. He was much interested in Dr. Moore's experiences, but wanted to ask him how many times the superior abilities of the male medical officers have resulted in the note, "in statu quo"?

Mrs. How-Martyn had no experience in working with women doctors as, unfortunately, their Middlesex hospitals had nine doctors, but had never had one woman amongst them.

They should know that all the organised women in the country were demanding very loudly for every mental hospital containing women patients—at least one woman medical officer; they would not leave off agitating till they had it.

She also suggested that there might be in some places an asylum entirely for women, and completely staffed by women, with a woman medical superintendent after the first few years.

These extracts, carefully studied, are illuminating; they show that the full value of a woman is only obtained when she is given her proper position, and proper authority as a medical colleague and officer. If this is not done, a hampering shadow of inferiority is cast upon her, and only a very exceptional woman can do her best work under these conditions.

In places where the woman is treated simply as a human being, there are no difficulties, and her work, though slightly different, is equally valuable with that of the men, the combined efforts of both being needed to give the best result. E. K.

## THE RIGHT OF THE MENTAL PATIENT.

*Nominees of Intervener Refused.*

Section 49 of the Lunacy Act says that anyone may ask the Board of Control for an order to have a patient examined by two independent Medical Practitioners, to see whether that patient is sane or not.

There is at the present time a patient who has been kept in Camberwell Asylum by her husband for 13 years. Lately, a lady has asked the Board of Control for an order for her to be examined, giving the names of two doctors (women) whom, she was given to understand, were accepted. Now the Board has substituted for these two doctors, two mental specialists (men), the nominees of the husband, who is desirous of her continued incarceration. In reply to an enquiry by Mr. Gillis, M.P., (March 6th), as to what he was going to do about it, Sir Alfred Mond said the Section was permissive, and he referred him to his answer of February 13th. (That a mental specialist's opinion was of greater value than that of a doctor who had seen fewer mental cases).

**The Feminist League.**

**MISS ABADAM**

will Lecture at the

Upper Mortimer Hall, Mortimer Street, Regent Street, (Oxford Circus Buses and Tube), at 6.30 p.m. (Music at 6) on

Tuesday, Mar. 21. Order of Vestal Virgins and Sybils—Reasons of their Power and Knowledge.  
 .. 28. Danger of Intellect without Intuition.  
 Monday, April 3. Duality. What was the "Original Sin?"  
 .. 10. Purity. "Be ye Perfect." Likeness to the Divine.

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS, W.F.L.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.



Friday, March 17, at 6 p.m.—Organisation Committee will meet at 144 High Holborn.

Saturday, March 18, at 10 a.m.—National Executive Committee Meeting, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.

Monday, March 20, at 6.30 p.m.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn.

**DARE TO BE FREE.**

Monday, March 27, at 6.30 p.m.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C. Speaker: Miss E. W. Kirby. Subject: "Dr. Elsie Inglis; her Life and Work."

Monday, April 3, at 6.30 p.m.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn. Speaker: Mr. E. G. Clayton. Subject: "Old London—some quiet backwaters and other relics of the past, in a great Capital."

Wednesday, April 5, at 6.30 p.m.—Mid-London Branch Meeting, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1.

Friday, April 7, at 3 p.m.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn. Speaker: Miss Helen Fraser, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Govan Division of Glasgow. Subject: "American Women versus British Women."

Friday, April 28, at 10 a.m.—National Executive Committee Meeting, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.

Saturday, April 29, at 10 a.m.—Annual Conference, Caxton Hall. Friday and Saturday, November 24 and 25.—Caxton Hall, Green, White, and Gold Fair.

PROVINCES.

Monday, March 20, at 8 p.m.—Southend-on-Sea and District.—Public Lecture, at Metropolitan Academy of Music, 10, London Road, Southend-on-Sea. Speaker: Mr. H. H. Elvin. Subject: "Rates and Assessments."

Tuesday, April 11, at 7 p.m.—Portsmouth. Speaker: Dr. Octavia Lewin. Subject: "The Training of Children in Personal Hygiene."

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Friday, March 17, at 6 p.m.—39 Brunswick Place, Brighton. Speaker: Dr. Octavia Lewin. Subject: "Nasal Hygiene as an essential factor of Health."

Sunday, March 19, at 6.30 p.m.—Greville Place Congregational Church, Maida Vale. Preacher: Rev. Constance Coltman, B.A., B.D.

Thursday, March 23, at 3 p.m.—24, Lower Clapton Road, Mrs. Mustard, on "Women and Politics."

Wednesday, April 12, at 7.30 p.m.—Hoxton Hall, Mrs. Mustard on "The Aims of the Women's Freedom League."

## BRANCH NOTE.

PORTSMOUTH.

The Grand Jury Room at the Town Hall was well filled on the occasion of our Monthly Public Meeting on Wednesday, March 8th. Miss C. Smith Rossie gave an excellent address on "Health," or rather, as she said at the beginning of her speech, on how to prevent ill-health. Miss Smith Rossie, in a lucid and interesting way, talked about the three kinds of vitamins, and mentioned the foods in which they were to be found. She also emphasised the value of fresh air and sunlight especially for children. Miss E. F. Maynard presided, and Miss Smith Rossie was thanked with great acclamation by the audience on the proposition of General Buchanan Hamilton, seconded by Mr. A. G. Yeaxlee. Tea was served by kind invitation of Miss Smith Rossie.

Dr. Octavia Lewin is the speaker for April. The place of meeting will be announced next week.

(Hon. Sec.) MRS. WHETTON, 89 Festing Grove, Southsea.

MINERVA PUBLISHING CO., LTD.

The Annual Shareholders' Meeting of the above Company will be held on Friday, the 17th inst., at the Company's Office, 144, High Holborn, at 5 p.m.

MR. GILL'S SCHEME.

Miss Lyndon, 53, Willow Road, Hampstead, N.W. 3, has sent in her name under this scheme, and has been given a letter.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

**The Lord Chancellor and Lady Rhondda's Claim.**

Notice has been given that at Wednesday's sitting of the House of Lords, after we have gone to press, the Chairman of Committees will move that the report from the Committee for Privileges on the petition of Viscountess Rhondda, praying for a writ of summons to Parliament, be agreed to. The Lord Chancellor will move as an amendment that the report be referred back to the Committee for Privileges for reconsideration. Women are now in the House of Commons. Why should they be kept out of the House of Lords?

**The Passing of the Perfect Lady.**

Speaking at a luncheon given by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship last week at which Mrs. Wintringham, M.P., was the guest of honour, and Lady Astor, M.P., Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Sir Robert Newman, M.P., and Mr. Clarke Hall were also guests, Lady Astor said that she heaved a sigh of relief when Mrs. Wintringham was elected. At first she thought that she was the worst person to be the first woman in the House of Commons. Lately she had realised that she had a few gifts that were very necessary. One of them was "not acting like a perfect lady." She thought Mrs. Wintringham also cared too much about real things to be a perfect lady.

**Nurses' Protest Meeting.**

A meeting of nurses, convened by the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council, was held last week to protest against proposals made by certain members of the General Nursing Council in regard to nurses' certificates. The meeting was held at the offices of the London Medical Society, Chandos Street, W. Councillor Peatrice Kent presided. Certain members of the General Nursing Council, it was stated, tried to pass resolutions by which trained nurses, on becoming registered, would have no recognition of their certificates of proficiency incorporated in their registration. A resolution was passed, taking exception to the registrar having been empowered by the council to decide whether or not the credentials of nurses applying for registration should be placed before the registration committee, and to the members of that committee being compelled to recommend to the council persons approved by the registrar, whose applications and credentials they had not been permitted to inspect.

**Probation Officers.**

The report of the Departmental Committee on the Training, Appointment, and Payment of Probation Officers was issued as a White Paper last week. The Committee express their view that probation is of great value and is economical. It should be used at an early stage in the offender's career, but where it has definitely failed its use should not as a rule be repeated. Probation could with advantage be used much more freely in many Courts, and every Court should have a probation officer. The Committee further suggests that it is not desirable that probation officers should be appointed by the State, but should continue to be appointed by the Courts and paid by the local authorities. There is need in the probation service for men and women of higher education and better training.

**Chief Gaoler of Bow Street Retires.**

Chief Gaoler William Gorey, of Bow Street Police Court, retired last week after twenty-six years' service. The number of prisoners appearing at this Court averages 10,000 a year. It fell to the lot of the Chief Gaoler to administer the birch to juvenile offenders. "This was the most distasteful task of all," says Mr. Gorey, "and I am glad to say that we have not had a case of that sort since before the war. In fact, if a birching was ordered now we should have to send for a new birch. There is not such a thing in the building."

**Women and the Budget.**

Women electors will certainly show a keen interest in the coming Budget. Is there to be a freer breakfast table or cheaper beer? The *Observer* states that there is a hint at a reduction of a penny in the price of beer. This would mean a reduction of revenue by about £25,000,000, and would destroy the possibility of some other reductions of taxation. Sugar is now taxed to the tune of over £40,000,000 annually. It is urged that a preference for cheaper beer would mean no loss of revenue, and that consumption would be increased. But can there be increased consumption of alcohol without increased intoxication? The *Observer* states that hundreds of thousands of women would vote dead against it. Reducing the revenue from alcohol means the maintenance of other taxation which might have been removed. Either the household will come before the public house or the women voters will know the reason why.

**Women and the League of Nations.**

We protest strongly against the appointment by the British Government of Mr. Harris, of the Colonial Office, as its representative on the Commission on the Traffic in Women and Children. This question vitally affects women, and the British Government should have appointed a woman as its representative. In any case, women's organisations in this country should have been consulted on such an appointment. We greatly resent the selection of Mr. Harris as the British Government's representative, whose views at the Traffic in Women Conference last June, in Geneva, were contrary to those held by any women delegates there, as well as against the majority of all present, notably in the matter of passport regulations.

FRIDAY,  
MARCH 17,  
1922.

# THE VOTE

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