

THE VOTE,
FEB. 2, 1923.
ONE PENNY.

THE MUDDLE OF THE SCHOOLS!

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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FRIDAY, FEB. 2, 1923

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.

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OUR PIONEER WOMAN VETERINARY SURGEON.

Interview with Miss ALEEN CUST, M.R.C.V.S.

"Custom is the brick wall against which feeble minds come to a standstill, and hinder the progress of the world." These words of Henry Seton Merriman, in 'Barlasch of the Guard,' have always been one of my mottoes," said our Pioneer, who has now, after 25 years of unswerving perseverance, at last cleared the road for women into the profession of Veterinary Surgery.

All her life this has been Miss Cust's chief desire and object. She was riding almost before she could walk, and has a fellow feeling for all animals, large and small. Tall, strong, and vigorous herself, and full of energy and enthusiasm, she is also full of the joy of the woman who is doing well the one thing that out of all the world she would choose to do.

Miss Cust matriculated and entered as a student at Principal Williams' New Veterinary College, Edinburgh, never doubting that in due course the diploma might be hers. As the first woman student, she cannot speak too highly of the kindness and comradeship she received there, when, a very shy girl, she "scurried every morning through the crowd of young men, into her classes." During her first year she gained first prize class medals, and the esteem and goodwill of teachers and fellow-students alike. Her professional examination came next, but the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the only body which grants the diplomas entitling veterinary surgeons to be placed upon the official Register, to the consternation of both Miss Cust and her teachers, refused to allow her to sit for the necessary examina-

tions, because their Charter "referred to men only," "student" implying "male" student.

The cudgels were strongly but unsuccessfully taken up on Miss Cust's behalf in the Council by Principal Williams, and an action brought in the Scottish Law Courts. Three K.C.s had given their opinion that the Charter did not shut out women, but the case was never heard, on grounds of no-domicile.

Our determined young woman, however, took the view that knowledge and skill might weigh as heavily as red tape. She worked hard through the four years' course at her Edinburgh College, took many class distinctions, and gained extra experience by pupilage in country practices during vacations, and then took up an assistantship in Scotland. Later on, Miss Cust decided to set up in Ireland, in the Roscommon and Galway district, where she built up, by hard work, one of the largest and most widespread practices in the country. Irish people know how to value experience and good work, whether in man or woman, and the Galway County Council (after a nine months' fight with the Board of Agriculture, who objected



because she had no Diploma) appointed her their Veterinary Inspector. This position she held for ten years, till, in August, 1914, she was requisitioned to assist in the Remount Department. The next year she drove her car with the Y.M.C.A. in France, and later held a position under the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, in the Laboratory attached to No. 8 Veterinary Hospital.

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