

THE VOTE.
SEPTEMBER 28, 1917.
ONE PENNY.

Nationality of Women.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

VOL. XVI. No. 414.

(Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper and transmissible through the post in the United Kingdom at the newspaper rate of postage, but to Canada and Newfoundland at the Magazine rate.)

FRIDAY, SEPT. 28, 1917

Edited by C. DESPARD.

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

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NATIONALITY RIGHTS OF CANADIAN AND AUSTRALIAN WOMEN.

The New Electorate in Manitoba.

An interesting account is given in *The Woman's Century*—the suffragists' organ in Canada—of the registration of the new electorate in the province of Manitoba. It is delightful to read of the pleasure displayed by the men voters in welcoming their women fellow-citizens to equal rights; of the excellent work done by women's organisations in mustering a large percentage of all possible voters to the register; and of the unstinted fashion in which women were taken on, at equal wages with men, to do the important clerical work in connection with the returns. These women, let us add, in every case gave satisfaction. Not such pleasant reading, however, is the sad tale of women disfranchised through marriage. Polish and Russian women naturalised by their own act; German and Austrian women naturalised by marriage with Canadian men; entered their names without let or hindrance. But British-born women, by virtue of Mr. Lewis Harcourt's hated Act of 1914, are disfranchised and denationalised (as Canadian citizens) by marriage even with English and American born men. Women and men voting for a British dominion province, who cannot speak one word of English, and in a painfully large number of cases who cannot read or write; and women of culture and education, and British to the tips of their fingers, with their rights juggled from them by an immoral and unjust interference with their private actions; it is indeed a sorry spectacle, in view of the sacrifices women are called on to make to the spirit of nationality. We are glad, indeed, that Canadian women have seized on this aspect of sex prejudice; and it is news of the very best kind that Sir Robert Borden has given his attention to the matter, and is likely to remove this stain from Canadian politics.

Nationality Rights of Women.

Miss Chrystal Macmillan has a very informing and valuable column in last week's *Common Cause* on the subject of the fight that is being waged in Australia for the rights of Australian-born women to control the question of their nationality, married or single. It seems that a Naturalisation Act passed by the Commonwealth in 1903 was, owing to the action of Miss Rose Scott and Miss Vida Goldstein, based on liberal and broad-minded lines, leaving the desired freedom to women, and treating them as independent persons, not mere appendages to husbands.

By an Act of the British Parliament, the Commonwealth was given the right to pass legislation, dealing on her own lines with questions of naturalisation; so that when Mr. Harcourt's detested "Nationality and Status of Aliens Act, 1914," was passed, a certain part of it was only to apply to Australia if the Commonwealth accepted it. This was not the part which dealt with women; nevertheless, in view of the previous Acts and arrangements, it is contested by Australian women that the part that does apply to them cannot be enforced unless specifically adopted by the Commonwealth Government.

So these spirited women are fighting—and fighting successfully—the various forms of encroachment on their rights that war-time has brought into acute prominence. Registering as aliens because of an alien husband, handing over their shares in Australian companies to the Public Trustee, and so forth—as laid down by Mr. Hughes!—cannot, it appears, be legally forced on them, and Miss Macmillan hopes that this determined resistance will result in widened liberties and a more solid position for women not only in Australia but all through our Empire.

THE VOTE.

Proprietors:—THE MINERVA PUBLISHING Co., Ltd.
Offices:—144, High Holborn, W.C.
FRIDAY, September 28th, 1917.

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Telegrams: "DESPARD, Museum 1429, London."

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AGENTS.

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AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

Those who have been able to lay aside the cares of these times sufficiently to reflect on the nature of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill and of the opposition to it, must have been profoundly depressed by both. Here is nothing but the old contest, grown wearisomely familiar to us in the last decade:—On the one hand penal measures, which in a matter of deepest importance bear the casual stamp of by-laws, and which, under the plea of public necessity, introduce public dangers worse than those they purpose to prevent; on the other hand, a handful of sincere people, fighting the cause of individual liberty against bureaucratic despotism, and trying to keep some general principle of human justice from being over-riden in the general scare—but quite failing to contribute any positive suggestion to meet undeniable evils.

The war has greatly increased the risk of venereal disease and focused public attention on it, and the widespread alarm is being used to realise the propaganda of a certain school of reformer. At a time of popular alarm, when a remedy (however unjust or ineffective) is proposed, any "pro" will carry the day against any "anti." As mere tactics, therefore, the active opponents of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill should have a better line of action to propose in its place—a road that should lead in the direction of *Somewhere*, instead of leading *Nowhere*.

But is a debate over venereal disease all that our age has to contribute to the vaster, world-old problem of sex relations? Are we incapable of approaching the greatest of human forces from any aspect but that of the hospital and the police-court? Have we nothing but danger signals and taboos with which to guide the oncoming race? If it were so, it would be better, in my opinion, to confess ourselves mentally bankrupt, and to bury our failures in silence. I want to suggest, however, that this is not so, and that though we may have as yet no new light to shed on the eternal problems of life, yet that we can approach social difficulties with the idea of fostering healthy growth, instead of contending with decay. According to this view the whole question of sex relations (of which disease is an incidental, though prominent, feature) demands a "forward"

movement of a very positive kind, not a nugatory one. This notion of controlling instincts solely by prohibition and enforced restraint is a legacy of out-worn creeds. Until our fathers' day it was based on the doctrine of "sin" (for which a loophole was found within canonical limits); since then the idea of "disease" is replacing that of "sin." Both are bad and ineffective because both are based upon Fear—the most paralysing and degrading of passions.

Suppose that by the fear of hell, or of the lockward, or the penitentiary we could get every English man and woman physically clean, and appoint the M.O.H. official "best man" at every wedding feast, suppose we could substitute for the love of life the dread of death, we should not have contributed much towards the future. By such measures, if we did not create (as is to be hoped) a race of revolutionaries, we should evolve a generation of hesitating timid egoists—a society swept and garnished for the first seven devils who chanced to come by.

What, then, is to be done? The religion of the future has not yet grown up, to re-inform social life and take the helm of human impulses. We are still going ethically in tatters. But we can at least prepare the way for a fresh inspiration by clearing away the rubbish left at the rotting of the old ideals. Sanity, cleanliness, and moral fearlessness may replace mystification with its accompanying dirt. And this is the task of education, not of penal laws.

Let us consider the sex-education which girls and boys receive to-day. Granted that in isolated families and schools it is better than ever before—thanks to the hard work of individual thinkers—among the mass of all classes yet is still—in face of modern conditions and requirements—criminally dishonest, ignorant and mischievous. The average parents neither know what to say to their child on the most necessary and interesting subjects, nor have the courage to say it. At most they give solemn cautions, based on a muddled analysis of their own errors. At heart they consider it inevitable (though dangerous) for their sons to be rakes, and desirable for their daughters to be prudes; and by the "hush" system, by segregation, by unwholesome innuendo, and all the artificial barriers raised by convention, they concentrate the latent thoughts of young, growing creatures on the ill-understood phenomena of sex. Consequently, the barriers break down at the first genuine breath of idealist emotion or animal appetite. The very clothing specially allotted by custom to male and female children is adopted to direct their curiosity to all that their "educators" seek to conceal and evade, and, in the case of girls certainly, is usually such as to check the natural development and balance of part of the body, so tending to the over or under stimulation of the sex organs, and in either case to morbidity. All tends to take sex out of its place as one of the many interests of life and to turn it into a strong personal obsession, all the more disastrous because it is unreasonably connected with secrecy and shame, and because its real facts and bearings are rarely taught simply and in their place.

To correct this physical misguidance, what mental education is at present offered? In refined circles a bewildering and very dangerous cloud of romanticism is thrown over the complex subject of love and marriage; whilst in unrefined families it is handled with a quite astounding mixture of impropriety and convention. For literature on the subject, there is (omitting the erotics and the ascetics—reverse sides of the same coin) either the novel of the Victorian age, in which sentimental passion (with all the physical facts ignored) is glorified as the principal absorption of every man and woman, and sex emotion kept at a gentle heat; or else the modernist story, in which the beastliness of life is presented without any of its bigness. Neither type

OUR POINT OF VIEW.

A Great Victory.

The triumph of Miss MacAdams, in the Alberta election contest, is inspiring news for all suffragists. The soldier candidate, Capt. Robert Pearson, headed the poll; and the woman, who is a lieutenant in the Canadian Army Medical Corps, followed as a close second, with a majority of 700 votes over the next candidate. Miss MacAdams, says *The Daily Sketch*, is the second woman legislator in Canada. She stands for fair play and clean conditions, and is rather contemptuous of the 30-years-of-age limit laid down for women voters by cautious British Parliamentary suffragists! Alberta is to be heartily congratulated on the whole position; and we like to know that Miss MacAdams was elected by the votes of the men, as of the women, of Alberta.

The Worse Offender?

In last Saturday's issue of *The Daily News* there was an account of a prosecution of a woman, whose husband and sons brought in £11 a week between them, and who on the strength of it saw fit to waste their food and to throw good bread and bacon into the swill-tub. Fined £5. Well and good. On the other side of the page was a bitter complaint from officers that they are forced to buy sword and spurs, which they never use at the Front, as part of their kit. A sword costs £25, and is kept for ornament over the mantelpiece at home. Spurs are for full dress, parades, and things of that sort, which the most vaulting fancy will not transmogrify into methods of winning the war. Factories are actually working at high pressure and big wages, using men, metal and machinery, not to speak of fuel, to manufacture these useless articles; and the gentleman who never wears them is also equipped with leathern apparatus to support and fasten them. Will not some public-minded person bring an action against some Government official for waste of public funds and material, seeing that the collier's wife was fined so heavily? Why should these wicked wasteful scoundrels escape, merely because they are Government officials—and therefore have greater opportunities for wanton wasting? Here is a chance for the National Party! General Page Croft, forward, please.

Our Stolen Rights.

The arrest and internment of the famous Hungarian painter, Philip de Laszlo, must of necessity interest Freedom Leaguers. Just about the time that war broke out de Laszlo became a naturalised British subject, being then 45 years of age. The reasons either for the naturalisation or the internment do not seem plain to the feminine intelligence. It would be interesting to know how much was due to the fact that in 1900 this Hungarian gentleman married Miss Guinness, of the well-known Dublin family, who, had he not been able to secure naturalisation, would have had to register as an alien enemy.

The most loyal, devoted, patriotic woman cannot at any age become a citizen of this country. At any age she may be a taxpayer; she may lay down her life in the service of her countrymen, as scores of devoted doctors and nurses have done; but the acknowledgment of her citizenship is still to seek. As if it were not enough that the whole of the women of this country should live in social, political, and economic subjection to men, male predominance is reinforced by the naturalisation of foreigners, men who have not helped to make this Empire what it is, many of whom have shown anxiety to pull it down, to betray it to its enemies. And in the great question of the division of profits between Labour and Capital many capitalists would prefer to share the spoil with the foreign capitalist than to let, still less to help, Labour come by its own. It seems as if many of us are befogged as to who is the Common Enemy.

is true nor sane, although probably "realism" is less harmful than "romance."

A totally new education of thought and body is necessary. First we must face the facts ourselves, and then deal with them honestly. Eros, like all great gods, is a Spirit, and we cannot define nor contend with the "Anikatos Machan"; but the animal instinct, which may or may not attend him and is covered by his name, is subject to the ordinary laws of biology. Physical love needs to be handled as part of physical science; and that this has not been satisfactorily done is largely due to the false standards and unwholesome ideas inherited from philosophies that are no longer accredited, and which now only create evil and confusion where good might be. Our immediate duty, then, appears to be so to educate children of both sexes that (1) their physical organs may be all fully developed and practised in control (control being dependent on equilibrium), and (2) that they should have a common-sense knowledge of their own mechanism—a knowledge acquired simply and wholesomely—so that they may respond nobly to the calls of life when they come, and meanwhile not ruin themselves nor their neighbours.

This is a matter not of religious asceticism, nor medical drugs, nor moral maxims, but of knowledge of the laws of the human body, and of habits based on those laws. It is a question of diet, circulation, muscular and nervous control gradually formed, and a teaching that centres round what is noble and stimulating, not round what is diseased and abhorrent.

I write as a layman, and can contribute no special "hints" towards such an education beyond the conviction that what we need is honest unashamed enquiry, and perfect sincerity towards ourselves first, and then towards our children. Personally I do not think that such instruction as is wanted can wisely be left to specialists. "Courses" given by school teachers, hygienists and other experts are often about as helpful to the living of life as the catechism is to the practice of Christianity. Least of all should sex-teaching be handed over to clergymen or other professors of religion.

We do not want expertism, but that every individual should be something of an expert in his or her own machinery. Further, I think Man-and-Woman difficulties are best approached not with the idea of sex dualism, but with a profound perception of the common nature underlying their varieties and of the similarity of the problem for each.

Perhaps the best—certainly the obvious—people to give this reformed education are mothers, not because of any special inspiration coming from motherhood, but just because they have a practical knowledge of sex-relations, and because, having the early physical care of children, they can give instruction as it should be given, *i.e.*, from a young age, as occasion arises, and without special parade as part of common life. To do this the mothers of the country must first reform their own education. They must have presented to them first the need for mental honesty and moral courage in themselves, and then for a sound up-to-date knowledge of physiology, so that they may deal sincerely and also wisely with their children.

This is, I suggest, the only effective way to forestall such social crimes as the Criminal Law Amendment Bill and the social ills that occasion them. Only so can we help Love and Life to lift themselves out of the mire with which their wings are be-draggled.

ETHEL WEDGWOOD.

Dr. Fort Newton having been detained in America by the illness of one of his children, Miss Royden will preach at the City Temple every Sunday evening until further notice.

1848—1917.

When we feel too depressed with the nerve-shattering experiences we are living through to-day—Europe in conflagration, revolution and rebellion, rumours of pestilence and famine, catastrophes of all kinds, misfortunes overhanging us, it is interesting to turn our eyes backwards to other periods and compare the upheavals of other generations with our own. The year 1848 was the last period in which Europe was in convulsions, and apparently empires and countries toppling to ruin. The whole world was unsettled. In our own country there was much unrest. Labour troubles and mismanagement were endless. London was covered with placards urging the people to unite in resisting payment of taxes. A run upon the banks "for gold" was counselled. The extinction of the privileged orders, even of monarchy itself, was preached; general confusion and anarchy were threatened. In Ireland rebellion was rife. Englishmen were designated as "Saxons," their laws and rulers were denounced. Irishmen who submitted to the yoke were called slaves and cowards.

The working people in Britain had real grievances; they had banded themselves together to seek reforms, and were known as Chartists. Prior to 1830 they had always demanded universal suffrage and annual Parliaments. These measures were too democratic and were repudiated by the Whigs and middle classes, and the cause of reform languished. In 1848 the revolution in France inspired the Chartists with new life. They summoned their followers together, and on April 10, at Kennington-common, they mustered in overwhelming numbers and marched to the doors of the House of Commons bearing with them their monster petition. For many years the anti-corn law agitation was carried on. All over the country large meetings were held and lively scenes enacted. Our history at that period was a record of class divided against class, political discord and popular discontent.

Abroad things were no better; the world was in a ferment, restlessness and change were marked characteristics of the age. In Mexico, it has, Lecky tells us, "been computed that in thirty years, between 1821 and 1853, no less than forty-eight different forms of government succeeded each other." Every country was shattered by bloodshed and seemed on the verge of destruction. If we study any table of notable doings for the year 1848, we wonder how Europe ever settled down again after such a year of turmoil, how peace ever came upon a devastated world.

Take a few of the outstanding events:—

In January great riots at Milan, collisions between the people and the military resulted in 100 deaths. Every day chronicled disorders and bloodshed in Paris. Martial law proclaimed in Lombardy, by order of the Austrians; people forbidden to meet in certain streets, and prohibited from wearing certain colours. Messina bombarded by the Neapolitan troops. Milan declared in a state of siege.

In February we hear of a complete revolution in the French capital; France declared a Republic; debtors and political prisoners set at liberty, and capital punishment abolished for political offences.

On March 1 the Canton of Neuchâtel declared its independence of Prussia.

Insurrections in Vienna, with much loss of life. Emperor of Austria compelled to grant constitution to Hungarians.

Insurrections at Berlin, 600 people killed in conflict. The inhabitants of Cracow proclaim a Republic in April. Insurrection at Milan. Austrians expelled with the loss of 2,000 men. Venice, Vecezza and Padua in open insurrection. Four days later Venice declared itself a Republic; Holstein follows suit, declares itself independent of Denmark. Insurrection in Madrid, 200 people killed. Hungary de-

clares itself independent. Chartist risings all over Britain. Public offices in London supplied with arms in expectation of a rising. Battle between the Danes and Germans, Germans defeated. The town of Schleswig taken by the Germans. In May we have a battle between Austrians and Piedmontese before Verona, with much loss of life. A large revolt in Madrid, with loss of life. The Sicilian Parliament adopted a decree proclaiming Sicily independent of the King of Naples. May 13 sees a conflict between Swiss troops and National Guards at Naples. 30,000 Austrians defeated by 15,000 Piedmontese at Gaito. In June the annexation of Lombardy to Piedmont took place. Hostilities resumed between Germans and Danes.

In Hayti 1,000 blacks rose and attacked the town of Jaemel. Venice surrendered to the Austrians; Trieste blockaded by the Italian fleet.

Insurrection at Prague; city much destroyed by bombardment. Great disorder in Paris, during June 8,000 persons killed and wounded.

In July Habeas Corpus Act suspended in Ireland. Italians defeated at Gaito by Austrians. Riots and bloodshed in Ireland. Austrians recovered Milan. In August a revolt broke out in Leghorn. Insurrection in Frankfort-on-Maine, great loss of life. In September great revolution in Vienna, much blood shed. In November conflicts in Berlin, Munich and Hamburg. Troubles in Paris, London, Vienna and Italy. Count Ressi assassinated by the decree of the Chamber of Deputies. Next day populace attacked the Palace of the Pope. The Pope, attended by cardinals, fled from Rome in disguise, and took up his abode at Gaëta, a seaport of Naples. (He remained there two years.)

In December the Emperor of Austria abdicated the throne in favour of his nephew Francis Joseph. The King of Prussia dissolved the National Assembly and proclaimed a new Constitution.

These, then, are a few of the outstanding events in this year of storm and stress. Out of this unrest and welter of bloodshed came improved conditions, better governments, wider education, developments of free institutions, and the recognition of liberty of opinions. Mutual confidence succeeded mutual distrust.

We who are in the midst of what seems to us a great cataclysm must take courage. When we see our ideals crumbling into the dust, when we hear the roar of guns and the dread words of revolution and famine we must brace ourselves up and determine that we, in our turn, will emerge stronger and surer, more liberty-loving, with higher and purer ideals, than before the war. We will be weak and exhausted; but we must not be discouraged, for out of our blunders and mistakes we must, as our forbears did, build a better and happier world for all classes of the community. EUNICE G. MURRAY.

Women's Freedom League Settlement, 93, Nine Elms-Lane, S.W. 8. Hon. Sec. and Organiser: Miss Kathleen Holmes.

We very gratefully acknowledge two gifts of £10 and £5 from Mrs. Walpole, of Latrobe, Tasmania; also £1 collected by her from friends; Mrs. Behrend, £1; per Mrs. Miller, 3s.; Miss Gladish, dress material; Mrs. Hasker, provisions, matches, books and toys; Mrs. Halford, Mrs. Alvary Gascoigne, clothing; Miss Cohen, Mrs. Tritton, Dr. O'Brien, Mrs. F. Lindsay Fisher (per Miss Harvey), fruit and vegetables; Miss Sylvia Brandon-Thomas, ten pictures to make gay our dining-room; and we much appreciate Mr. Simons's kindness in renovating the perambulator he gave us a year ago, and which had suffered much meanwhile at the hands (and feet) of successive occupants. A resident helper is still needed for the Guest House. A high nursery guard for fireplace is an urgent want, also towels, sheets, dusters, a linen cupboard, pieces of linoleum for stairs and passages. We should like at least two extra dinner-hour helpers daily from 11.30 to 1.0. Who will volunteer to give this time even once a week?

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POLITICAL NOTES.

Union.

The outstanding feature of the political situation is the various efforts being made by all industrial organisations to unite or to amalgamate their forces for combined political action. The Trades Unions and the Co-operative Societies are deep in a scheme for the union of their funds and forces; the National Union of Railway workers and the Association that threatened a strike some short while back, are discussing the fusion of the two bodies; everywhere one sees and hears hammering of the rivets which will bind industrial interests in closer formation for action. This is the menacing sound which is inducing many an "old Parliamentary hand" to take stock of his armoury, and equip himself afresh with the panoply of "democracy," realising that antiquated methods of attack and defence will not avail against a rush of the united forces of the working people.

What of the Women?

So far as one can see, or guess, the forces of Labour are prepared to use the impetus of women's enfranchisement for the strengthening of their own position. There are already creakings and gratings of the stiff machinery; there is a cry going round: "Organise the women voters; educate the women voters." For whose benefit, we ask? Educate them in whose rights, which principles?

Union of Our Forces.

There are similar ideas under discussion within the suffrage movement; and the words "union" and "fusion" and "federation" are going round as busily as among the men. There is at present a standing body, endowed with the power to call conferences for specific objects, formed from representatives of all the active suffrage societies, which may prove ultimately the nucleus of a great combine or federation of organisations. There is the National Union of Women Workers, within whose circle large numbers of feminist, reform, and social societies are affiliated; there are, in fact, many possibilities far more attractive to the women who have learnt the pride and joy of independent action in the suffrage movement, than a return to the stereotyped and often fossilised atmosphere of the old parties.

Swedish Elections.

The *Daily News* gives the following interesting item of news about the internal political situation in Sweden:—"Apart from the very grave accidental factor created in the political situation since the elections started by the Washington revelations, it must be borne in mind that the real question which the elections have decided is electoral reform, and as this is the first plank in the Social Democrats' platform, it is felt that they should have the responsibility for the Parliamentary proposals in this matter. Up to the present 377,000 votes have been recorded in favour of electoral reform and 186,000 against."

This electoral reform scheme comprises the enfranchisement for which Swedish women have long hoped and worked with infinite faith and zeal. The Constitution is in some senses a cumbrous one, and it is probable that a considerable time would elapse before a drastic revision of the electoral arrangements could come into force; and in Sweden as well as in all other lands to-day, the shadow of the world war, and the national desire to safeguard the interests of the country, complicate the question of party and the government most gravely.

Reform of the House of Lords.

The avowal of opinions of "advanced radicalism and socialism" made by *The Daily Chronicle* on behalf of Lord Milner, may perhaps be taken as an assurance that he, at least, will not attack the People's Bill by holding it back to await the reform

of the Upper House. It would scarcely be good policy for the new House of Lords to begin its reconstituted career weighted with the unpopularity of an attack on the decisions of the Lower House. Such an action might, indeed, have a very decided effect on its own future.

Political and Militant Department.

The autumn session, big with the fate of the People's Bill, is approaching. Our League purposes holding a meeting, which will be in the nature of a political rally, at Caxton Hall, on October 19. There will by that time be some idea of what the prospects of the Bill are, and of the possible alterations or amendments that may be suggested by the Lords. If the Bill becomes law, the League will have to call a conference and discuss possibilities of future action; it will have to attend to the organisation of its own enfranchised members, and of other women who may be interested, in the districts where we have branch organisations; and it may also have to prepare for brisk election campaigns against candidates adjudged unworthy to represent the people in Parliament. All these things require money, zeal, organisation. Our members need not grudge these to the Cause even in war time, for indubitably better men and better administration must make for more efficiency and economy in all our national affairs. And if, by evil luck and treachery the Bill should fail to pass its further stages, we shall need stout hearts, a full exchequer, and a dashing campaign. I ask you to rally to the Rally, and do your best. The Executive cannot work without the members, who have never yet failed the League and the Cause. We shall expect a great meeting on October 19. C. NINA BOYLE.

GREEN, WHITE AND GOLD FAIR.

Now that the holidays are over we hope that all members are working for the annual Fair, which is arranged for November 30 and December 1. The fate of our Bill still hangs in the balance, and we must therefore make every possible effort to keep the treasury filled. We look to the Fair to furnish a good sum with which to carry on, but this can only be provided if all members help. There was a ready sale for useful articles last year, and we hope to receive a larger number this year. The following stalls have been arranged for up to date:—General, Handkerchief, Home-made Provisions, Toy, White, Literature, THE VOTE (in memory of Mrs. Snow). The "Violet Clark" Quartette, which was so much appreciated last November, has again been engaged. Please look in THE VOTE for further details from time to time.

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Subscription for 12 consecutive numbers, 4/- with postage.

MINERVA PUBLISHING CO., Ltd., 144, High Holborn, London, W.C. 1

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FRIDAY,
SEPT. 28,
1917.

THE VOTE

ONE
PENNY
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

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