JOSEPHINE BUTLER

A Cameo Life-Sketch

P PAMPHLET

BY

MARION HOLMES

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VOTES FOR WOMEN.

Women's Freedom League

OBJECTS:—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, to organise women (voters or non-voters), and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

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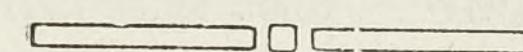

A By-Election Scene.

IN the autumn of 1872 there was a by-election in Pontefract. In a large hay loft over an empty room a woman was speaking to a deeply interested gathering of her own sex. Suddenly great clouds of smoke rolled up from the room below, and sounds of anger came in ever-increasing volume. Then through the trap-door appeared face after face, full of fury. Listen to what the speaker herself says of the scene:—

"The bundles of straw beneath had been set on fire. . . . man after man came in until they crowded the place. There was no possible exit for us, the windows being too high above the ground, and we women were gathered into one end of the room like a flock of sheep surrounded by wolves. . . . It is difficult to describe in words what followed. It was a time which required strong faith and calm courage. Mrs. Wilson and I stood in front of the company of women side by side. It was not personal violence that we feared so much as the mental pain inflicted by the rage, profanity and obscenity of the men, of their words and their threats. They shook their fists in our faces with volleys of oaths. We understood by their language that certain among them had a personal and vested interest in the evil thing we were opposing. It was clear they understood that their 'craft was in danger.' The new teaching and revolt of women had stirred up the very depths of hell. We said nothing—we simply stood shoulder to shoulder, Mrs. Wilson and I, and waited and endured . . ."

A Generation Afterwards.

Rather more than thirty years after this—and many other similar scenes—had occurred, there was flashed along the telegraph wires the news of a peaceful death in a remote north-country village, and the next morning the whole press of the country bristled with special eulogistic memoirs. "A great saint had passed away, one who would live long in minds made better for her presence, in pulses stirred to deeds of daring rectitude, and in the grateful memory of many a forlorn and fallen sister, whom she had redeemed by the power of sympathy and love."

It needs no great perspicacity to guess that the saint of the press memoirs bore the same name as the reviled speaker of the earlier scenes. History repeats itself in never-ending cycles. Pioneers and reformers from the beginning of time have had stones flung at their heads in life, and laurel wreaths laid at their feet in death. So it is no cause for wonder that Josephine Butler, who was hooted and cursed and ostracised,—not only by the men whose vile trade she was opposing, but by her own friends, by educated people, by those high in office—who was hunted and driven through the streets in the latter part of last century, figures now in one of the stained glass windows of the Lady Chapel in Liverpool Cathedral; chief in a group of women famed for their good deeds—daughters whom the Empire delights to honour.

A Dubious Distinction.

Josephine Butler set her hand to work that was bound to bring a plentiful crop of abusive opposition in its train, for she struck at a system that pandered to the worst passions in men. The State Regulation of Vice, against which she led a long and strenuous crusade, is an attempt to secure the health of men of unclean lives by a surgical outrage upon women who are their partners in immorality, *or upon any other women* whom the officials who work the system may choose to suspect and denounce.

This system, which was introduced very largely throughout Europe by the first Napoleon, was adopted in England first in 1866 by the passing of a tentative Act, then more fully in 1869 by the passing of the Contagious Diseases Act. Our country thus had the dubious distinction of being the first—and including her Colonies—the only nation, daring at that time to put the Acts on the Statute Book.

By these regulations the authorities were empowered to send any woman to prison for refusing to undergo the surgical injustice prescribed by them. The first refusal was punishable by a sentence of one month's imprisonment, with hard labour; for the second refusal a sentence of three months' hard labour could be imposed. In cases of actions under the common law by respectable women for outrage under this Act, the last Clause of the 1866 Act provided that the woman should not recover damages if the official

had offered her money sufficient, in the opinion of the magistrate, to make amends.

Legislative Creation of a Slave Class.

It is easy to see what a state of terrorism this licence could bring about. As pointed out in the famous Women's Protest, which was issued a few months after the passing of the Acts, it placed the reputation, freedom and persons of women absolutely in the power of the police. The merest suspicion on the part of an officer was sufficient justification in the eyes of the law for arresting a woman, taking her to the examination house, and there compelling her to undergo the degrading and painful surgical outrage. Large numbers of women, many of them of good character, chose prison rather than submit. It is stated in *The Shield*, the Organ of the Abolitionist Society, that two girls went to prison five successive times, before the medical men, magistrates and police who worked the Acts would stop pursuing them. In the same paper there are terse but terrible records given of girls driven to suicide, of innocent women dragged by the police through the public streets appealing vainly for help to the passers-by. No wonder that any heart that contained a spark of the love of justice and liberty was set afire, hearing of these happenings. No wonder that many women, when they realised what these Acts meant for their sex, found that no price was too heavy to pay for their repeal!

A Reformer in the Making.

Mrs. Butler was a born leader and reformer. Her gracious personality was calculated to win friends for any cause she championed, while her "gift of tongues"—for she was a speaker of great power—made her public work peculiarly effective. She possessed, too, a spirit of indomitable perseverance and optimism that was invaluable in a leader of—what looked at first like—a forlorn hope. Her enthusiasm and faith never failed through all the long and bitter years of struggle. When the spirits of her most faithful helpers were beginning to flag, Mrs. Butler cried shame upon those who talked of surrender. "Surely," she wrote, "we have not forgotten the reformers, confessors and martyrs of all ages, with the very meanest of whom we shall be unworthy to claim relationship if we give way to weariness."

Her early life and training had tended to develop in her a keen sense of responsibility towards the less fortunate members of society. She was brought up in a home of progressive thought and under the influence of a father—John Grey, of Dilston—who was himself a keen reformer and a personal friend of Clarkson, one of the most energetic workers in the abolition of the Slave Trade. From quite early days Josephine Grey, who was born on April 13th, 1828, heard of the sufferings of those who were in a state of bondage, and the recital of these keenly awakened her

feelings, as she herself says, "especially concerning the injustice to women through this conspiracy of greed and gold and lust of the flesh, a conspiracy which has its counterpart in the white slave owning in Europe."

A True Helpmeet.

Her marriage to a man of peculiarly noble character, George Butler, son of the Dean of Peterborough, deepened and strengthened her desire to help her generation. The first few years of her married life were spent in Oxford, where her husband acted as tutor, examiner and lecturer in the University. Here they met many leading people, and Mrs. Butler says:—

"In the freequent social gatherings in our drawing-room in the evenings there was much talk, sometimes serious and weighty, sometimes light, witty and brilliant, ranging over many subjects. It was then that I sat silent—the only woman in the company—and listened, sometimes with a sore heart, for these men would speak of things which I had already resolved deeply in my own mind, things of which I was convinced, though I had no dialectics at my command with which to defend their truth. Every instinct of womanhood within me was already in revolt against certain accepted theories in society, and I suffered as only God and the faithful companion of my life could ever know. Incidents occurred which brought their contribution to the lessons then sinking into our hearts. A young mother was in Newgate for the murder of her infant, whose father, under cover of the deathlike silence prescribed by Oxford philosophers—a silence which is in fact a permanent endorsement of injustice—had perjured himself to her, had forsaken and forgotten her, and fallen back with no accusing conscience on his easy social life, and possibly his academic honours. . . . My husband suggested that we should write to the chaplain of Newgate, and ask him to send her to us when her sentence had expired. . . She came to us. I think she was the first of the world of unhappy women of a humble class whom he welcomed to his own home. She was not the last."

A Heavy Cross.

But though the Christ-like work of rescue and compassion was begun in this way, it was Sorrow's heavy hand that drove her out into the highways and by-ways on her martyr-like crusade. In 1864 her only little daugher, Evangeline, was killed before her eyes. Leaning over the balustrades in her eagerness to welcome her parents, the child overbalanced and fell into the hall below at their feet. This terrible happening filled Josephine Butler's heart with a greater yearning than before to help those whom life had battered and bruised. "I was," she says, "possessed with an irresistible desire to go forth and find some pain keener than my own, to meet some people more unhappy than myself—my sole wish was to plunge into the heart of some human misery, and to say (as I now knew I could) to afflicted people—'I understand; I, too, have suffered'."

"Inasmuch—"

In 1865 her husband was appointed Principal of Liverpool College, and it was in that great seaport that she began an organised and systematic attempt to help the flotsam and jetsam of the outcast sisterhood.

"It was not difficult to find misery in Liverpool," she writes. "There was an immense workhouse there—a little town in itself. On the ground floor was a Bridewell for women, consisting of huge cellars, bare and unfurnished, with damp stone floors. These were called the 'oakum sheds' and to these came voluntarily creatures driven by hunger, destitution, or vice, begging for a few nights' shelter or a piece of bread, in return for which they picked their allotted portion of oakum.

"I went down to the oakum sheds and begged admission. I was taken into an immense, gloomy vault filled with women and girls. I sat on the floor among them and picked oakum. They laughed at me, and told me that my fingers were of no use for that work, which was true. But while we laughed we became friends. . . . The result of my visit was to draw down upon my head an avalanche of miserable but grateful womanhood. Such a concourse gathered round our home that I had to stop to take breath and consider some means of escape from the dilemma by providing some practical help, moral and material. . . . We had a dry cellar in our house and a garret or two, and into these we crowded as many as possible of the most friendless girls who were anxious to make a fresh start. This became inconvenient, and so in time my husband and I ventured to take a house near our own, trusting to find funds to furnish and fill it with inmates. This was the 'Home of Rest' which continued for many years and developed, about the time we left Liverpool, into an incurable hospital, supported by the town."

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An Imperative Call.

Several crowded years followed: years filled with good deeds; but through them all an undercurrent of unrest and disquietude was running through her mind. A very brief debate had taken place in the House of Commons on the occasion of the passing of the first Act dealing with the State Regulation of Vice, in 1866. Mrs. Butler was one of the few persons who read it, and in one of her early speeches she tells of her first conviction that her life's work was predestined. "It was in that year that the knowledge first broke upon me that this system, which I had so long regarded with horror, had actually found a footing in our England. It seemed to me as if a dark cloud were hanging on the horizon,

threatening our land. The depression that took possession of my mind was overwhelming. I found a record of those days in an old manuscript book, and in turning over its leaves, I found a note of that debate in the House, the date, and a written presentiment, which I could not escape from, that, do what I would, I should be called to meet this evil thing face to face—a trembling presentiment, which I could not escape from, that, do what I would, I myself must enter this cloud."

No wonder she shrank from the ordeal. The details of the subject that she had to handle were so repulsive, so degrading, that to any refined, sensitive woman it meant of necessity an ever-present martyrdom. But, luckily for suffering womanhood, her sense of duty and her love for humanity triumphed; she buckled on her armour for the fight, and her husband consecrated her banner of revolt with the invocation, "Go—and God be with you."

An Insult to Women.

In 1869 the full Acts were passed, and an appeal to lead the fight against them was sent to her from a group of medical men who had for some time been making strenuous efforts to prevent this "Crowning Crime of Christendom" as it was called.

"The experience gained during their efforts," she writes, "had convinced them that in order to be successful they must summon to their aid forces far beyond the arguments, strong as these were, based on physiological, scientific grounds. They recognised that the persons most insulted by the Napoleonic system with which our legislators of that day had become enamoured, being women, these women must find representatives of their own sex to protest against, and to claim a practical repentance from the Parliament and Government which had flung this insult in their face."

The Necessary Weapon of Castigation.

But the repentance was long in coming, naturally. The insulted members of the community being denied the one weapon which alone can rouse the Parliamentary conscience to a sense of sin, were condemned to wage a war that was prolonged and bitter in the extreme. Needless to say that Mrs. Butler and her colleagues were staunch and fervent supporters of the enfranchisement of women, for they were handicapped at every stage in their fight by the unrepresented condition of the victims of the legislation with which they were at war. Speaking years afterwards on the subject, Mrs. Butler said:—

"For twenty-one years I worked, with my dear fellow-workers, in a public manner against these hateful laws. . . . During these years there was one thing which made our battle harder than it would have been—we had to fight outside the Constitution. We have been knocking at the door of the Constitution all these years, and there are men who even now tell me that they would give us

anything in the way of justice but the Parliamentary vote. . . . The Prayer which I now offer is that the veil may be taken away, and the selfishness—the perhaps unconscious selfishness—may be removed from the hearts of men who deny women equality, and keep them outside the Constitution. Think what we could do in the cause of morality; think of the pain and trouble and martyrdom that we might be saved in the future if we had that little piece of justice."

Mrs. Butler also tells how, in 1873, when the crusade that she led was in full swing, Mr. Henley, a Member of Parliament who had till then been opposed to granting the parliamentary vote to women, voted in favour of it. He told her that the experience he had had of the injustice which Parliament (not excluding even the good men in Parliament) was capable of inflicting on women, had convinced him that women must labour for, and obtain, direct representation on equal terms with men.

Mazzini's Views.

But perhaps the most interesting of all the testimonies quoted by her as to the necessity of votes for women is that contained in a letter from the famous patriot Mazzini.

"Can you doubt how eagerly I watch from afar, and how heartily I bless the efforts of the brave, earnest British women who are striving for the extension of the suffrage to their sex, and for the repeal of the vice-protecting Acts, which last question is but an incident in the great general question of justice to women? . . . You cannot fulfil your task without *liberty*, which is the source of responsibility; you cannot fulfil it without *equality*, which is liberty for each and all.

"Your claim to the suffrage is identical with that of the working men. Like them, you seek to bring a new element of progress to the common work; you feel that you too have something to say, not merely indirectly, but legally and officially, with regard to the great problems which stir and torture the soul of mankind."

These words were penned over forty years ago, but they might be a quotation from a speech by Mrs. Despard herself, so perfectly do they express the ideals of the women who are engaged in the great fight of to-day.

The "Arguments" of the Opposition.

All the features of virulent abuse and persecution which have always attended a war waged by right against might, by virtue against vice, marked this campaign. Public meetings were broken up by organised rowdyism. Mrs. Butler was hunted from towns and hotels, stoned, howled down by hooligans and roughs of the worst description. But in spite of that, or perhaps partly because of it, she won support wherever she appeared. Women flocked to her standard, the best men ranged themselves on her side; for she

wielded the finest weapon in the whole armoury of war—a just Cause.

Response from the People.

Her first public meeting on the subject was held in Crewe, where there is a great manufactory of locomotives, and a mass of workmen. From the beginning the working classes rallied round her enthusiastically; naturally, for the majority of the victims of the legislative abuse she attacked was of themselves.

"I scarcely knew what I should say at this meeting, and knew not at all what I should meet with," she writes. "A friend acquainted with the workmen led me after work hours to their popular hall, and when I had delivered my message, a small group of leaders among the men bade me thrice welcome in the name of all there. 'We understand you perfectly,' they said; 'we in this group served an apprenticeship in Paris, and we have seen and know for ourselves the truth of what you say. We have said to each other that it would be the death-knell of the moral life of England were she to copy France in this matter.' "

Meetings in Leeds, York, Sunderland and Newcastle followed that in Crewe, and so great was the power of her eloquence that within three weeks after the first little propagandist effort, the working men of Yorkshire and Lancashire had organised mass meetings in all the big towns, and agreed on a programme of action.

The Women's Protest.

Towards the end of 1869 the Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts was founded, and on the last day of that year, their solemn protest appeared in the *Daily News*. It was widely copied by the press, and the signatures to it included such names as Florence Nightingale, Harriet Martineau, Mary Carpenter, Mary Priestman, Agnes McLaren, Ursula Bright, Margaret Lucas, all the most prominent women in the Society of Friends and many others. An influential "roll-call" indeed! These were names that not even the most callous or prejudiced M.P. could belittle, and they had their effect in rousing some of them to a sense of the women's sentiments on the matter. A perspicacious few even scented danger. "Your manifesto has shaken us very badly in the House," a leading member remarked to Mrs. Butler. "We know how to manage any other opposition in the House or in the country, but this is very awkward for us—this revolt of the women. It is quite a new thing; what are we to do with such an opposition as this?"

This Protest pointed out that as far as women were concerned the Acts removed every guarantee of personal security which the law had established, and put their reputation, freedom and their persons absolutely in the power of the police. It further showed the danger of making the path of evil easy for men, "inasmuch as a moral restraint is withdrawn the moment the State recognises and provides convenience for the practice of a vice which it thereby declares to be necessary and venial." It also pointed out that before rushing into experiments of legalising a revolting vice, the Government was bound to try to deal with the *causes* of the evil, which were moral, not physical.

A Way they have in the Press.

After the first shock induced by this powerful and unexpected manifesto, the opponents of the reform gathered their forces for an organised stand against the women's demand. The publicity given to the protest was followed by a great conspiracy of silence in the press, "which continued unbroken," says Mrs. Butler in her "Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade," "until the autumn of 1874, when a well-known ex-Cabinet Minister spoke powerfully at a public meeting on our behalf. This silence could not be in most cases attributed to a regard for the feelings of readers, for statements in favour of the Acts were constantly admitted. . . . We felt more and more that publicity was one of the necessary conditions of success for us. The stratagems of our opponents only raised deeper indignation because they were covert and secret."

In describing an immense mass meeting that was held in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, and which was addressed by men of such eminence as Jacob Bright, M.P., William Fowler, M.P., Professor Sheldon Amos, Mr. Thomasson, her husband (the Rev. Canon Butler) and others, she says: "About 6,000 people attended that meeting, and yet, except in a local and partial manner, it was unnoticed by the Press."

That the Press still follows this ostrich-like policy of pretending that a movement for reform does not exist because it chooses to ignore it, many strenuous workers in the cause of Liberty to-day know to their cost.

But, in spite of the boycott by the newspapers, the work of propaganda and education went on apace. Great meetings were continually held up and down the country; petitions were signed, and literature dealing with the subject was scattered broadcast.

"Educated" Hooligans.

In Glasgow the medical students seem to have upheld the traditions of their fraternity with their usual enthusiasm. Judging from quite recent experiences, the style of argument adopted by these hilarious youths is one that is handed down from one generation to another with unabated vigour and enjoyment. Mrs. Butler speaks of their "noise, violence and rudeness" at a meeting that she held in that city. Eventually the police had to be called in to quell their exuberance, and numbers of them were locked up for the night.

"They were punished," explained a Bailie to her the next

day, "for the offences of barking like dogs, mewing like cats, crowing like cocks, whistling, and rattling their sticks."

By-Elections.

A campaign of opposition to candidates who were against the repeal of the vice-protecting Acts was carried on energetically at by-elections by the Abolitionists. One very strong advocate and practical supporter of the opposed system was defeated three times at three different places in his attempt to enter Parliament. It goes without saying that the reformers had to run the gauntlet of the coarsest abuse and calumny during these contests, for political cupidity and anger at opposition are then at their highest. I have already mentioned an incident that occurred at Pontefract. At the Colchester by-election in 1870, Mrs. Butler had to be moved in the dead of night from her hotel to obscure lodgings, as the mob threatened to set fire to it.

This particular contest, however, proved to be somewhat of a turning point in the crusade. Colchester was looked upon by the Government—A Liberal Government was in office then, by the way—as a safe seat; but, after a hotly contested fight the Government nominee—who was a strong supporter of, and had, indeed administered the Regulation System during his rule as Governor of Malta—was defeated by a big majority. "The moral of this election," says Mrs. Butler, "was not lost upon the Government. They learned that this question was not one with which they could trifle or ignore."

The Usual Government Panacea.

Meantime great pressure was brought to bear from the Trade Unions and various organisations of working men. Leeds, Newcastle, Birmingham, Sheffield, Liverpool were all to the fore. Petitions were poured into Parliament. Such was the effect produced that at last the cumbersome legislative machine made a slight move. Needless to say it followed the line of least resistance, and moved in the direction in which Governments generally move when a question is raised by the people on which the members of the Government themselves have little knowledge and less conviction. It appointed a Royal Commission to consider the matter.

Josephine Butler was called to give evidence before the Commission. In a letter to her husband she gives a vivid picture of the ordeal. It was a severe one, for she was the only woman present before a large and august assembly of peers, bishops, members of Parliament, representatives of the military and naval services, doctors and others; a large majority of her questioners were hostile, and the subject was a serious and difficult one to handle. "To compare a very small person with a great one," she

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says, "I felt rather like Paul before Nero—very weak and lonely." The Commission—which never had the support of the Abolitionist Associations—ended, as most Royal Commissions do, by presenting an abortive report, which managed to face both ways at once, by pronouncing itself hostile to the Abolitionists, while at the same time it condemned the compulsory treatment of the persons of women, which is the centre and core of the whole system of the State Regulation of Vice.

Growth of the Movement.

By 1874, a large number of eminent men and women had ranged themselves openly on the side of the fighters, for it was soon recognized by the best that this was no question of a sex revolt. "It was a campaign for justice, for the assertion of constitutional liberties, for the equality of the rights of citizenship for both sexes, a protest against the creation by legislative enactment of a slave class; and it was this aspect of the movement which won for it the support of men like Mazzini, Victor Hugo and William Lloyd Garrison," says *The Tribune*, in its eloquent tribute to Mrs. Butler's work. It is impossible to enumerate the host that rendered yeoman service. The Society of Friends, with Mr. Edward Backhouse, their president, was always to the fore with its support. James Stuart, M.P., William Fowler, M.P., Jacob Bright, M.P., Professor Francis Newman (brother of Cardinal Newman), Henry Broadhurst, M.P., Henry J. Wilson, M.P., and hundreds of others, all gave of their best aid.

It was in this year—1874—that Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Stansfeld, who was an ex-Minister of the Crown, spoke at a great public meeting in Bristol, an event which attracted the attention of the whole country. Some dozen different societies had also by this time sprung into being, having committees and correspondents in more than six hundred towns.

Going Further Afield.

It was of course inevitable, seeing that the system against which the crusaders were fighting was an international one, that they should extend the field of their operations as time went on. In March, 1874, a few friends of the Cause met to confer together at York.

"Having hitherto," says Mrs. Butler, "felt themselves in a battle for the Abolition of the State sanction of vice in Great Britain only, they had become aware that a large and powerful organization on the Continent was seeking to increase the efficacy of the vice regulations, and for that purpose was appealing confidently to England to take the lead in organizing under all the Governments of Europe an international scheme for the application of these regulations to every country and to every seaport throughout the world."

It was promptly decided at this Conference that the war should be carried into the enemy's camp, "by establishing relations with leading opponents of the system in France, Belgium, Italy, Prussia, etc., by stimulating opposition in those countries and holding international congresses."

A Fearless Missioner.

Naturally, no better agent could be found for the purpose than Mrs. Butler, so in December of that year she started out on the first of her Continental missions. I have no space in this short review of a life so crowded with activities as her's was, to do anything like justice to the extent and the value of the work that she accomplished in connection with this international movement. Her missions in France, Switzerland, Italy, &c., succeeded in rousing the attention of the most eminent politicians, and in winning the support of such men as M. Aimé Humbert, M. Jules Simon, Signor Giuseppe Nathan, and others. Indeed, she became as well known on the Continent as in her own country, and many pathetic stories are told of the love and admiration that were showered on her by the unfortunate sisterhood she befriended. She visited the hospitals and public registered houses and probed into and exposed their iniquities and inefficiencies. It is not too much to say that this gentle Englishwoman became somewhat of a terror to the police authorities of the various countries she visited. Largely as a result of her work the first International Congress took place in Geneva in 1877; it was attended by over 500 men and women delegates, representing the most advanced minds of Europe and the United States.

Victory at Last.

The first gleam of victory dawned in this country in 1883, when a resolution, condemning compulsory examination, was brought forward in the House by Mr. Stansfeld, and carried. In accordance with this resolution the Government suspended the operation of the Acts, but they were not finally repealed until 1886. Mrs. Butler's account of the debate in the House is full of interest. It contains, too, an anecdote with a moral that will appeal with peculiar force to the women who are conducting a crusade for political liberty to-day.

"We have arranged," she says in a letter to her son, "for a great meeting of prayer; we shall hold it close to the House of Commons during the whole debate, if there is one, and all night if the debate lasts all night. We have invited about twenty of our best friends in the House to join us. Some of our Parliamentary friends counselled this course, saying that it was well that all the world should know with what weapons and in Whose name we make war, even if they scoff at the idea, as of course so many do."

In a later letter she says:—"I did not remain in the Ladies' Gallery, but came and went from the prayer meeting to the Lobby of the House. We saw John Morley take the oath and his seat. . . . I then went to the Westminster Palace Hotel, where we had taken a large room for our devotional meeting. There were well-dressed ladies, some even of high rank, kneeling together with the poorest, and some of the outcast women of the purlieus of Westminster. Many were weeping. . . . I felt ready to cry, but I did not, for I long ago rejected the old ideal of the 'division of labour,' that 'men must work and women must weep.' A venerable lady from America rose and said, 'Tears are good, prayers are better, but we should get on better *if behind every tear there was a vote at the ballot box.*' Every soul in the room responded to that sentiment."

A Plea for a Better Way.

As some persons have supposed that the opponents of these Acts objected to any measures for the diminution of the special diseases which they were supposed to check, it may be as well to point out here that Mrs. Butler in her first pamphlet on the subject pleaded earnestly for a better and more scientific way of dealing with the matter. She suggested that the provision of ample free hospital accommodation, worked on a *voluntary* basis and as far as possible by women doctors, would be more likely to lead to a decrease of disease than any compulsory system. Such a plan would also tend to lead more definitely to reformed lives as well as cured bodies, as there would be a better chance of moral influences prevailing with the inmates than under the old degrading system.

Other Work.

Although the work of this arduous campaign will ever remain the greatest monument to Josephine Butler's memory, it did not constitute her only sphere of activity. She worked hard for the higher education of women, and was President of the Council for promoting that purpose from 1867 to 1873, in company with Miss Clough as Secretary. She also lent all her influence to assist the passage into law of the Married Women's Property Act.

Her literary work included a Life of St. Catherine of Siena, a book which gave abundant proof—if it were needed—of the deep spirituality of her nature. She also wrote a volume of "Recollections of George Butler"—a beautiful pen-portrait of a saintly man—and many pamphlets dealing with social and political problems. "The Constitution Violated," an appeal to the principles of Magna Charta, which was issued in the early seventies, was perhaps the most weighty and widely read of these.

Full of Years and Honour.

She died on December 30th, 1906, at the age of seventy-eight, and the world is greatly the poorer for her passing, as it is the

richer for her living. She has bequeathed to it the record of a noble work nobly done, and the memory of a life that must ever be an inspiration and a hope—a life replete with deeds of charity, kind love and stainless days.

> "These riches shall not fade away with life,
> Nor any death dispraise."

THE DANGER TO-DAY.

In this Centenary year of the birth of Josephine Butler, what is the position in this country?

The danger to-day is that the old method of Regulation of prostitution may be replaced by compulsory treatment of venereal disease and the old fortress of injustice, inequality and an unequal moral standard rebuilt under the name of Public Health.

The Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases of 1913 reported against any return to the policy of the old C.D. Acts, and recommended the provision all over the county of clinics for the free, voluntary confidential treatment of venereal disease.

For the past eleven years this system of dealing with these diseases—free, voluntary and confidential—has been carried out and has been very successful, with constantly improving results, in reducing their amount. Diseased persons, however, who will not seek treatment and "defaulters," a certain percentage at every clinic, who cease treatment too soon, are the despair of every zealous Medical Officer of Health and, as a tempting short-cut to further reduction of the disease, many Local Health Authorities have tried for years past to obtain additional powers—compulsory notification, compulsory treatment, detention, penal measures.

All these are dangerous double-edged weapons; notification removes from treatment the all-important confidential element, compulsion never succeeds in diminishing venereal disease, but by frightening new cases from seeking treatment at an early stage would give worse results than our voluntary system.

The price of liberty is eternal vigilance and only constant watchfulness can meet the assaults of expediency and preserve our heritage of justice.

Those who wish to know more of the life and work of Mrs. Josephine Butler are advised to read "Josephine Butler: An Autobiographical Memoir," edited by G. W. and L. A. Johnson. Third edition. 5s. net. J. W. Arrowsmith, Ltd.

Women's Freedom League

"DARE TO BE FREE."

What we are working for.

Full Equality in every direction of Women with Men

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12. The recognition of an equal moral standard for men and women and an even handed justice in the law and its administration in regard to sex offences, and no woman charged with soliciting or similar offence to be convicted on police evidence only.

PAMPHLET

CITY OF LONDON POLYTECHNIC
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