

THE VOTE,
Oct. 23, 1914.
ONE PENNY

Our Weapon--THE VOTE.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

VOL. X. NO. 261.

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FRIDAY, OCT. 23, 1914.

Edited by C. DESPARD.

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

DANGER AVERTED: THE PRIME MINISTER'S DECLARATION.
CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND
THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.
OUR WEAPON--THE VOTE. C. Nina Boyle.

WAR AND FRANCHISE. *The Rev. C. Baumgarten.*
THE "PROTECTED" SEX.
OUR POINT OF VIEW.
OUR TREASURY.

THE DANGER TO WOMEN AVERTED! The Prime Minister's Declaration.

10, Downing-street, Whitehall, S.W.,

DEAR MADAM,

20 October, 1914.

I am desired by the Prime Minister to say, in answer to your letter of October 15, that the special powers exercised by the police, to which you refer therein, in connection with public-houses, approach to fortifications, etc., are conferred by special Acts of Parliament passed since the beginning of the war, and in force for the duration of the war only. None of these Acts confer any powers, which would have the effect of reviving the provisions of the Contagious Diseases Acts, either in letter or in spirit.

If, in your opinion, any action is taken which has this effect, if you will bring the case to the notice of the Prime Minister, he will at once cause enquiry into it to be made.—Yours faithfully,

M. BONHAM CARTER.

Miss Nina Boyle.

KVINDELIG
LÆSEFORENING

The Women's Freedom League's prompt agitation against any possible revival of the Contagious Diseases Acts has been warmly supported both within the League and by a very large number of Suffrage and other social reform societies. Our good friend, the *Christian Commonwealth*, has again proved a friend indeed, and makes a vigorous protest in its leading article this week, under the heading of "Legalised Infamy." Mrs. Leigh Rothwell was at once dispatched to Plymouth, where Miss Boyle has joined her.

The following correspondence has taken place since the Women's Freedom League deputation to the Prime Minister on October 13, after which Mr. Asquith requested a statement in writing, which was sent to him immediately, as herewith:

13th October, 1914.
The Right Hon. H. H. Asquith, K.C., M.P.,
10, Downing-street, S.W.

SIR,

I have the honour to enclose a paragraph from the *Daily News and Leader*, which contains the matter that a deputation from the Women's Freedom League desires to discuss with you.

Your attention is solicited for two points:—

1. The recommendation is made by the Watch Committee of Plymouth. From bodies such as these, women are almost invariably rigidly excluded; yet the work they undertake is almost exclusively concerned with matters in which women are involved to an even greater extent than men, and in which they labour already under the gravest disabilities.

2. The re-enactment, or the re-crudescence under local police bye-laws, of these infamous acts would wipe away, without consultation with women, the fruits of twenty-five years of earnest work and resolute agitation, associated with the name of Josephine Butler, and create so deep a feeling of insecurity on

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the part of women as to the various reforms they have won but are unable to hold, that the results would be far-reaching and incalculable.

May I point out that the consensus of expert medical opinion is to the effect that the attempt to mitigate the results of vice by these acts has been proved to be futile; and that the false security established by them is in itself a grave danger. The figures relating to Paris—the centre and example of state regulation—are sufficiently illuminating on this point; and the deliberations of the International Medical Congress should, in our opinion, have placed this point beyond discussion at this time.

I would also like to place before you our view that to allow any alteration of the present law, on such contentious lines, at the present crisis, would be to take a mean and most cruel advantage of the emergency. The desperate anxiety, grief and concern, the financial and other difficulties and distresses in which women are helplessly involved, in the nation's peril, are heavy enough without the addition of what we cannot fail to look upon as a gross injustice, and an insult to all womanhood. We are most strongly of opinion that the men who are called upon to serve their country in its need could observe for a brief period a little elementary self-control, and not add to our difficulties by creating a fresh problem; and that the proper way to meet the question is by calling on commanding officers to preserve discipline and good behaviour in camps, barracks and cantonments.

Feeling, as we do, that there must be many aspects of the case which will be apparent to you more readily than to us, and that there will be a definite value in discussing them, we should be glad if you will spare time to receive the deputation from the National Executive Committee of the Women's Freedom League, which waited on you this morning. Its personnel is:—

Mrs. Despard (President),
Mrs. Schofield Coates (Middlesbrough),
Miss Eunice Murray (Scottish Council),
Miss Anna Munro (Chief Organiser),
Miss Nina Boyle (Head of Political Department).

I have the honour, Sir, to be, your obedient servant,
C. NINA BOYLE.

14th October, 1914.

Miss Nina Boyle.

DEAR MADAM,

The Prime Minister desires me to thank you for your letter of yesterday. He has had an opportunity of discussing the points you raise with the Home Secretary. As you will have seen from the report of the proceedings of the Plymouth Town Council, all that happened was that a proposal for the re-enactment of the Contagious Diseases Acts was deferred for further consideration. No local body has the power to take any action of the sort which you fear, without the authority of Parliament. This can only be obtained by passing a new statute, reviving the policy of the Contagious Diseases Acts, and the Government have no intention of proposing this course to Parliament.

In the circumstances, therefore, the Prime Minister, whose engagements, as you are aware, are very heavy at the present time, does not think that it is necessary that a deputation from your League should attend upon him to lay their views before him.—Yours faithfully,

M. BONHAM CARTER.

M. Bonham Carter, Esq.,
10, Downing-street, S.W.

DEAR SIR,

15th October, 1914.

Allow me to acknowledge with thanks your letter of October 14, stating that the Government has no intention of proposing legislation for the re-introduction of the Contagious Diseases Acts.

This assurance is satisfactory so far as it goes, but I must point out to you that there is very wide ground which it does not cover. It is quite in the power of local authorities, acting under advice or pressure from the military, to impose special conditions in certain towns, and to restrain the liberties of citizens, when such conditions and restraints are thought to be for the public safety. Such powers have already been exercised by the police, and rightly so, in many places. Public-houses are closed at certain hours; the public may not approach certain places where fortifications exist; lights may not be shown; but no special legislation has been necessary to enforce these precautions. The granting of wide and undefined powers to military authorities, who advise the police under threats of putting towns under military law if the arrangements be not satisfactory for military purposes, is a source of perpetual danger to women, and leaves—not a loophole, but a broad channel through which such regulations as those under discussion may be introduced, unless we can obtain protection on an equally wide scale.

The announcement in this morning's Press that an Advisory Committee has been appointed to make recommendations to the War Office as to the health of the Army at home and abroad, will not allay the uneasiness which

the Plymouth incident has created and with which this appointment is coincident. I feel, therefore, that before the subject can be dismissed we are justified in asking from the Prime Minister—whose prompt attention to our complaint we warmly appreciate—a wider assurance, not only that no legislation re-introducing the objectionable Acts shall be laid before Parliament, but that no local governing or military authorities shall be allowed to introduce any bye-laws or regulations, however temporary, which shall give arbitrary rights to police or other bodies, affecting the liberties of any section of women as apart from men, and that any attempt having the effect of a re-introduction in any locality of the spirit of the C. D. Acts shall be a matter for the prompt intervention of the Government.—Yours faithfully,

C. NINA BOYLE.

15th October, 1914.

Miss Nina Boyle.

DEAR MADAM,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your further letter of to-day, which will receive consideration.—Yours faithfully,
M. BONHAM CARTER.

I hope to send a considered reply in the course of a day or two.

The reply, which averts immediate danger, appears on our front page.

MORE PROTESTS.

The United Suffragists held an important meeting at the Essex Hall on October 16, at which Miss Evelyn Sharp presided. The speakers were Mrs Ben Webster (Miss May Whitty), Mr. Laurence Housmann, the Rev. John M. Maillard and Miss Kitty Ennis. The following resolution was passed unanimously:—

"That this meeting views with the uttermost indignation and alarm the suggestion in certain quarters that the Contagious Diseases Act should be re-enacted, and in view of this threatened attack upon the liberties and the persona of women re-affirms its conviction that the Suffrage flag must be kept flying during the war, and calls upon the Government at this moment of political reconciliation to grant them protection against such legislative proposals by passing a non-controversial measure for Women's Suffrage when Parliament meets in November."

A request was sent to the Prime Minister to receive a deputation on the subject.

A similar resolution was passed unanimously by the National Union of Women Suffrage Societies at a large gathering at the Kingsway Hall, over which Mrs. Fawcett presided, on October 20.

The British Branch of the International Abolitionist Federation sent to the Plymouth Town Council a strongly worded telegram, which was followed by a letter giving the latest evidence of the failure of the system—its condemnation by the Medical Advisory Council of the British Army, by Special Commissioners in France and the United States, and by the International Medical Congress.

The British Branch of the Federation will supply free leaflets, also pamphlets (at 1d., 2d., and 3d.), dealing with the subject. Apply, 19, Tothill-street, S.W.

In view of the fact that next month the Three Towns—Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse—will be united as a single municipality, further consideration of the proposal was postponed until the meeting of the new council. In the meantime steps are being taken to educate Plymouth in the true facts of Regulation.

A SIGNIFICANT FACT.

A significant fact is mentioned by Madame Avril de Sainte Croix, writing on October 9 last:—"The French Government has ordered that in places where the Army is congregated the tolerated houses of ill-fame are to be closed."

Brockwell Park

A very successful meeting was held in Brockwell Park on Sunday morning last, when Mrs. Mustard was the chief speaker. Miss Le Croisette took the chair. Dr. G. F. Goldsbrough, a local doctor, urged the necessity of woman's voice being heard in the interests of peace, and Mrs. Mustard delighted the audience with a racy speech dealing with the present situation. THE VOTE sold well.

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AT HEADQUARTERS.

Women's Suffrage National Aid Corps.

This Corps, organised by the Women's Freedom League, is holding its first public meeting at Portman Rooms, Baker-street (entrance in Dorset-street), next Tuesday evening, October 27. The speakers will be Mrs. Despard, Miss Ethel Arnold and Miss Nina Boyle, and the chair will be taken by Miss Lind-af-Hageby at 8 o'clock. This meeting will be a special call to Suffragists to take part in National Aid work at the present crisis, and we urge our readers to come to support us next Tuesday evening, when they will hear about our present and future work in the matter of women's work-rooms, women's restaurants, a women's hospital, the care of the children, and our schemes for finding work for those suffering through the unemployment caused by the present war. Tickets from the W.F.L. office reserved and numbered 2/6, reserved and unnumbered 1/- and 6d. Admission is free, and there will be a special collection.

Poster Parades.

There will be poster parades to advertise the meeting this (Friday) afternoon and Monday afternoon. Mrs. Huntsman will be at our office to meet paraders punctually at 3 o'clock these afternoons. Will volunteers come in good numbers?

Suffrage Club Meetings:

Next Wednesday afternoon the speakers will be Mrs. Margaret Wynne Nevinson, the title of whose address is "Women under Militarism," and Mr. J. Cameron Grant, on "Women in the Inventors' World," and the chair will be taken by Mrs. Huntsman. The following Wednesday the speakers will be Mrs. Flora Annie Steel, on "The Responsibilities of Women," and Mrs. Mustard. The chair will be taken by Mrs. Despard. We hope to see a really good number of our friends on both these occasions. The address of the Suffrage Club is 3, York-street, which is a turning out of Jermyn-street, quite near Piccadilly Circus, and St. James's Square.

Discussion Meetings

Friday evening, October 30, Mrs. Marion Cunningham will speak on "Flashes from the French Frontier." Another discussion meeting has been arranged for Friday, November 27, the speaker on that occasion being Mr. A. W. Madsen, B.Sc., his subject being "The War and the Land Question." These meetings, at which discussion is invited, will be held at the Suffrage Club, 3, York-street; and the chair will be taken each evening at 8 o'clock. Admission is free, but there will be a collection.

Mrs. Sproson.

Readers will rejoice to learn that Mrs. Sproson, although still very weak, is well on the way to recovery. It gives us fresh heart to look forward to the possibility of the return to work of this splendid champion of Woman Suffrage.

F. A. UNDERWOOD.

OUR POINT OF VIEW.

Crime and the War.

Mr. Robert Wallace, in his charge to the Grand Jury at the opening of the London sessions, congratulated London on its light list of crimes, and expressed admiration of the "self-restraint" which "the people of London" were showing in spite of the distress. Sir John Barker, chairman of the

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Bishop Stortford Bench, was moved under the same influences to express the genial aspiration that if things went on as they are, they would be able to "disband their magistrates"; and from Hampshire comes another compliment, addressed to a grand jury, declaring a "satisfactory" state of things, and alluding to the "simple" cases which the list consisted of—some "unpleasant" items of drunkenness among soldiers notwithstanding. The list before this last-mentioned Bench, as that before Mr. Wallace, included among its "simple" and "satisfactory" and "self-restrained" examples, the usual amount of crimes against children, of murders and assaults upon women, and men living on the immoral earnings of women; "crime," therefore, of an "unpleasant" or "unrestrained" nature does not, in the minds of these gentlemen, include these abominable offences, and can only be applied by them to theft, embezzlement, forgery or burglary—that is to say, offences against property, not against the persons of women and children.

Vindictive Sex Bias.

The great majority of criminals, at all times—normal or abnormal—are, as everyone knows, of the male persuasion; and the Arcadian conditions to which our jubilant judges are referring may or may not have some connection with the extensive grouping of large portions of the male population in camps. We do not want to labour this point; but what we desire to emphasise is that while assaults on women and children remain at their usual level, and while the persons guilty of this class of crime are being encouraged to enlist—an insult to better men and to the King's uniform—judges are keeping their hand in, so to speak, at the expense of women. Mrs. Watson supplies us with these figures from the London sessions, dated October 6, before Mr. Justice Laurie:—

Mary Buckingham, 62, begging, 3 months' hard labour.
Ellen Beauchamp, 69, begging, 4 months' hard labour.

(Continued on page 6.)

THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY October, 23rd, 1914.

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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.

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OUR WEAPON—"THE VOTE."

Amid the tumult of war and above the clamour of conflicting armies, louder than the tramp of marching regiments, more insistent than the shriek of shell and shrapnel, sounds the voice of the suffering women of the nations locked in strife. The helpless mothers of Belgium struggling with their babies to foodless coast towns and seeking refuge on alien shores; the misguided women of Germany, on whom so desperate an enlightenment must soon dawn; the anxious dependents, the wretched wives and mothers, the workless, the starving, the sweated, the mourners; this great army of unorganised grief and misery is one to whom no glory accrues, over whom no banners wave, for whom none of the triumph of victory brings reward. In our own land armies of invasion have not trampled fair harvests and destroyed national treasures, our women are not fleeing in dread to cast themselves on the mercy of strangers. We have been spared, so far, the worst of the horrors of war. But there is wretchedness enough and to spare; and each new manifestation of the national dislocation reveals more plainly the national wrong that women suffer in having no national representation and no channel through which to voice their need.

From the first outbreak of war, confusion reigned over all that concerned the interests of women. The Expeditionary Force was supplied with a commissariat equipment never excelled for an army of invasion; the wives of the men of the Force waited weary weeks for a meagre and grudging allowance on a starvation basis. An increase in this allowance, and the addition to the Government list of wives "off the strength" and wives of seamen, was spoken of in a leading Press organ as the Prime Minister's "generous concession." The necessary certificates were charged for at exorbitant rates until the scandal of making revenue out of the needs of these unlucky women became too great to be borne. Women were turned out of their quarters in barracks; women out of work were left to charitable funds. There was no Local Government instruction to institute work for women on the same basis as the instruction to open works for men. And when a semi-public attempt is laboured to provide some kind of paid employment for some of the 66,000 odd starving women of the Metropolis, it is subjected to the hopelessly improper limitation of the maximum wage—10s. a week. We should like to hear of any attempt to impose a maximum wage of under the living wage standard on men!

No sooner have the "generous concessions" of the Prime Minister evoked the usual outbreak of approval—we do not find that statesmen are so fulsomely complimented on a chance effort to im-

prove conditions for men!—than these concessions are qualified and curtailed. The soldier or sailor is to be freed from his obligation to make a compulsory payment to his dependents, if he happens to object, or to pretend to object, to his wife's way of spending the money. This is the Government's altogether improper reply to the charge that women are "getting more money than they ever had before," and are spending their allowances on drink. We do not find that the wife has been given power to object to the War Office paying her husband so much if he spends his money on drink or on other women; yet it is not on account of the wives that public-house closing has been interfered with; nor is it the wives whose presence round the camps has roused such a crop of indignant suggestion! We are especially moved by the fierce anger displayed in some quarters at the idea that some women should be better off in the absence of their husbands and the receipt of regular money. There are other people who are also better off because of the war. There are certain contractors, for instance, who offer women 1½d. a dozen for Army blankets; there are some recruits who never had regular meals before; there are innumerable officials and traders and speculators; and if these are to have their pay and profit uninterfered with the very insignificant number of wives who have come out well instead of ill on the crisis need not be grudged their temporary well being.

The other dependents—mothers, sisters, daughters; illegitimate children and unmarried mothers—are all in a parlous condition. Their case is still "under consideration." So is the case of widows. No matter how much better off the wife may manage to be, there is no question about the appalling problem of the widow. From the date of identification of her husband's death, she drops to 5s. a week, and 1s. 6d. for each child. In the days of the South African war, she had deducted from anything owed to her the price of the Government blanket in which her man was buried. Mr. Asquith says her case is one of extreme complexity; we hope the great brain which is considered competent to deal with our national affairs will not be overpowered by the, to us, simple point of providing decently for widows, dependent mothers, and children, of the men whose death is a national service.

The saddest—because least dramatic—of all the women victims of the war, however, are surely those British women who are the wives, unfortunately for themselves, of "alien enemies." No fund provides for these women; no allowance reaches them. Their men are rushed home to their regiments and sent to the front; no communications can get through from them. Others are helpless prisoners of war in the internment camps. The women are neither fish, flesh, nor fowl; disowned by their own country, unprovided for and unwelcomed by their husbands; tragic monuments erected to the male mismanagement which could countenance so vile a betrayal of the interests of the helpless and disfranchised.

Nothing will save women from these tragedies, these grotesque confusions, these avoidable troubles and difficulties, but the vote. With the power to put politicians out of office will come increased regard for our interests and increased respect for our point of view. The national emergency has but made this more plain; and there was never time like the present for putting to the public the true case of Votes for Women. C. NINA BOYLE.

THE FORWARD CYMRIC SUFFRAGE UNION will hold a Sale of Work and Fancy Articles at Alan's Rooms, 263, Oxford Street, on October 23, 2.30-9.30 p.m., for the benefit of Welsh women and children suffering through the war. 1s. admission, including tea, up to 6.30; afterwards 3d.

WAR AND FRANCHISE.

The Rev. C. Baumgarten, Rector of St. George's, Bloomsbury, in dealing with this subject at the Suffrage Club last Wednesday afternoon, said that although the Kaiser might be an authority on war, he confessed, so Miss Topham tells us in her "Memoirs of the Kaiser's Court," which she has recently published, that he did not in the least understand Suffragettes. According to his anti-Suffrage Teutonic mind it was a woman's place to stay at home and mind the children, a theory which found a good deal of support in the mind of the average Briton; indeed, it was a theory held steadfastly both by Lord Curzon and William of Hohenzollern. Yet Britain was fighting to-day for the maintenance of the almost identical principles for which the Suffrage Movement stands. Mr. Lloyd George had said "England is protesting against the doctrine that nations have no right unless they are strong enough to enforce them." Had not Suffragists protested against a similar doctrine being applied to women? A principle was a general truth which was equally applicable in all directions. That twice two made four was equally true of units and millions. So a principle which applied to the conduct of nations should apply also among members of a community. Mr. Lloyd George protested against the further doctrine that the strong could only be expected to concede justice when it was to their interest to do so. The eternal principles which Mr. Lloyd George was now supporting applied not only to nations but found their place in the Suffrage Movement. Our nation was out against militarism, and it met this militarism by militancy. It was out to smash a system which had become intolerable. The difference between militarism and militancy was that militancy was a resort to force only when everything else had failed. Belgium and France could not get justice and they took to militancy; the spirit working behind them could only express itself in this form. There was a great difference between militarism and militancy. You could get militarism but not militancy in Germany; militancy could only proceed from a free people and the free spirit of that people. Mr. Baumgarten said that we desired to secure greater freedom in England. The nation could not be entirely free until it had universal Suffrage, when all men and women had an equal voice as to the form of government under which they would live; the women in our own country must have this freedom. There was only one possible end to the present war. The principles on which Germany was waging it were counter to the whole trend of civilisation; they had to go sooner or later because they were on the side opposing freedom, and those principles would land Germany in an eternal ditch. Mr. Baumgarten urged Suffragists carefully to note down the remarks which were now being so plentifully poured forth by our statesmen on the subjects of freedom, justice and the rights of smaller nations; they would come in very useful when women were again pressing forward their Cause.

The chair was taken by Miss Anna Munro, who appealed to women to keep the Suffrage flag flying at the present crisis. Miss Boyle gave an account of the Women's Freedom League's deputation to Mr. Asquith, and supported Miss Munro's appeal to women not to allow the Cause of Woman Suffrage to fall back. In war time women had to give their service and suffer too; they had to take part in the building up of the nation out of the ruins men had made; it was only just that they should have a share in the counsels of their nation.

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Per Miss Clark, Aberystwyth Campaign—			
"Anon"	1	5	0
Miss Kate Evans	5	0	
Miss A. A. Smith	5	0	
Mrs. Richards	2	6	
		1	17
Per Mrs. Fisher, Refreshments	1	9	6
Dr. Knight	1	7	7
Miss M. I. Saunders	1	0	0
Mrs. Fisher	15	2	
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Mrs. Tippet	14	0	
Mrs. Jackson	10	0	
Miss Hare	6	0	
Miss E. G. Wood	6	0	
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Miss C. E. Lawson	5	0	
Miss King, per Miss Andrews	2	6	
Miss L. Parkyn	2	6	
Miss Molony	2	0	
Miss Gardner	1	0	
Miss Marian Holmes	1	0	
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THE VOTE

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SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES' MEETINGS.

CHANGE OF DATE.—The Catholic
Women's Suffrage Society desire
us to make known that the lecture
on Belgium, by the Rev. Prior
McNabb, O.P., advertised in our
columns last week for October 26,
will take place on *Tuesday*, Oct. 27,
at Kensington Town Hall, at 8 p.m.
Tickets, 2/6, 1/- and 6d.; from the
Secretary, 55, Berners-street, W.

**THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM
LEAGUE** hold PUBLIC MEET-
INGS at THE SUFFRAGE CLUB, 3, York
Street, Jermyn Street, Piccadilly,
every Wednesday afternoon. Speakers
October 28, Mr. J. Cameron Grant
("Women in the Inventors' World"),
and Mrs. M. W. Nevinson ("Women
under Militarism"). The chair will
be taken at 3.30 p.m. by Miss Under-
wood. Admission free.

THE MID-LONDON BRANCH of
the Women's Freedom League
holds open-air Meetings in Regent's
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Speakers next Sunday:—Mrs. Tanner
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MISCELLANEOUS.

WOMEN'S INVENTIONS.—How
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