

The Common Cause

The Organ of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

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Notes and News.

Women M.P.s.

In reference to our note last week, Mr. Gulland writes to point out that, as under the present regulations only the Government can introduce Bills, it will not be possible for any Private Members to introduce a Bill making women eligible for the House of Commons. The Conference of the National Liberal Federation at Manchester on September 27th passed the following resolution:—"This Committee, while recognising that all the objects set forth in the accompanying resolutions affect women equally with men, declares its opinion that special measures are needed for the removal of artificial restrictions on their opportunities. In particular, this Committee favours the opening of professions to women on the same conditions as to men; the conferment of University Degrees on equal terms; the admission of women to share in the making of Laws and the administration of justice; a revision of the law relating to the Guardianship of Children; better provision with respect to Maintenance and Affiliation Orders; equality of the sexes in the laws relating to Divorce and Morals; and *urges the Government, immediately on the reassembling of Parliament, to introduce a Bill giving to women the full rights of citizenship by making them eligible for membership of the House of Commons.*" The Liberal Party is now as urgent in its demand for women Members of Parliament as the Labour Party. The Government will no doubt take note.

The "Women's Party."

In case any misapprehension should arise in the minds of our readers as to the "Women's Party" which Miss Christabel Pankhurst, through the medium of the *Daily Mail* and some other newspapers, is asking people to join, we would remind them that this society is the offspring of the old Women's Social and Political Union, the organisation whose militant methods and violent hostility to Mr. Lloyd George aroused so much bitterness in the years before the war. It was from the beginning an autocratic organisation, with an uncertain membership, and a policy dictated by two or three individuals responsible to no one but themselves. Like most autocracies, it was not very durable; it split several times, till at last it was difficult for the public to discern what there was left. Mrs. and Miss Pankhurst have now revived the society, and given it a new policy in which militarism and not feminism appears to be the chief element. It supports Mr. Lloyd George with the same fierceness with which it once attacked him, and has turned its assaults against the Labour Party. There is not, and cannot be, any such thing as a Women's Party in any real

sense, because women like men, are divided on some of the most important foreign and domestic questions. Our advice to women voters is to support the candidates in their own constituencies whose views they believe to be most for the good of the country as a whole, and to see that those candidates are thoroughly educated on the questions which women, as women, have specially at heart.

Mrs. Pankhurst in America.

Mrs. Pankhurst is reported to be denouncing British Labour and the League of Nations idea in America. We hope American suffragists, and others, understand that she speaks for nobody but herself, and possibly the members of her own society. We say "possibly" because Mrs. Pankhurst is not the elected representative of any organisation large or small. She resembles the high officials of Germany in professing to speak for other people and in being quite unable to show any proof that she does so. The claim to represent "Enfranchised British Womanhood" which she is said to have made is so palpably absurd that we think the reporter must have misunderstood her. If she really said anything like this we can only say that it is a fresh proof (added to those which come to us daily from another country) of how hard it is for those who have been autocrats or who have fostered an autocracy, large or small, to understand the realities of a democratic world.

The Women's Service Bureau's "Holidays."

We are interested to hear that during the "holiday months" of August and September, the Women's Service Bureau of the London Society for Women's Suffrage interviewed and advised two thousand three hundred and nineteen applicants. Two hundred and forty-three of these were women seeking work in munitions and aircraft; two hundred and seventy-seven were women and girls seeking guidance as to special training in other skilled occupations; the remaining seventeen hundred and ninety-nine were women requiring more general information about employment and conditions of work for women. The applicants, as usual, were of all classes and all ages and came from all parts of the country. A large number of them have been placed in posts or helped to obtain training, and all have had information and help of some kind. We fear that the workers in the Bureau cannot themselves have had much holiday, but the daily growth of their work for women and for the nation must be a deep satisfaction to them, and they give a living example of what a woman's organisation can do for feminism now, if it will go on working in the true suffrage spirit and with true suffrage vigour, and not think that, because some votes are gained, our work for equal opportunities can come to an end.

The National Union of Women Workers.

At the time of writing, the National Union of Women Workers is holding its Annual Council at Harrogate. Among the subjects of discussion are Equal Pay for Equal Work, Women and Trade Unions, Women on Government Committees, the Laws of Nationality, Hostels for Mothers and Babies, the Solicitation Laws and the Equal Moral Standard. We shall publish an account of the meetings next week.

Women and War Bonuses.

The recent decisions of the Committee on Production, given on cases referred to them by the Ministry of Labour concerning railway shops employees, furnish yet one more instance of the manner in which the question of equal pay is evaded. Bonuses not being wages, it is considered quite fair to make those paid to women smaller than those paid to men. In the decisions referred to there are two headings: (1) Men, (2) Women and Boys. This is a classification against which we must emphatically protest.

THE PROGRAMME OF THE N.U.W.S.S.

MRS. FAWCETT reminded us last week of some things women still have to struggle for, and told us that we must go on working for them not only for our own sakes but for those of the nation. The week before we reprinted the programme of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies as decided by the Annual Council meeting last February. We hope that our readers will have realised the connection between the two things. The programme illustrates Mrs. Fawcett's words, and those who intend to make a practical response to the call of our President for more effort, should study in detail the points at which this effort still has to be made.

The programme is, of course, determined by the objects of the Union, which are, to obtain the Parliamentary Franchise for women on the same terms as it is, or may be, granted to men; to obtain all other such reforms, economic, legislative and social, as are necessary to secure a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women; and to assist women to realise their responsibilities as voters. For this end, the Union proposes reforms which may be grouped under six heads, and which are directed towards obtaining votes for the women still excluded from the franchise; towards an improvement in the status of married women; the opening of all professions and positions in the public service to women; the equal moral standard; the economic equality of men and women; and the international rights of women.

The reforms necessary under the first head need no explanation, they would all be included in a simple change of the electoral law making it the same for women as for men. Under the second head—i.e., the improvement of the status of married women, the Union has undertaken to promote legislation providing that parents shall be the equal joint guardians of their children, each with the power to name a guardian to act jointly with the survivor. It will be remembered that at present the father only is recognised as the parent of a legitimate child. He can, if he pleases, have the child brought up by persons in whom the mother has no confidence. He can decide what kind of education it is to have, and what religious tenets it is to be taught; in the most cases the mother is helpless in regard to him, she can be disinherited of her own child. At present our law takes no account of what we most of us instinctively feel should be the closest and most inviolable of human rights. This must be remedied. With the same object in view, the N.U.W.S.S. seeks to obtain pensions for widows with dependent children, and for widows who are incapacitated by age and infirmity. At present, a poor woman who is left a widow with a family of little children too often has to let them be taken away to orphanages, or to leave them in the care of neighbours (or uncared for) while she goes out to work; to see them starved or to fall back on the Poor Law. And many older women who have perhaps spent their lives in working for their families find themselves, on the death of their husbands, unable to earn and with no resource but "the House." Legislation for widows' pensions is therefore urgent, and can be demanded as a preliminary by those who wish for the endowment of motherhood, and promoted on its own account by those who do not. The N.U.W.S.S. also seeks to obtain legislation which will enforce maintenance orders on cruel and dissolute husbands with the possibility of making such orders a charge on wages when the man neglects to pay. Though Married Women's Property Acts were passed in 1870 and 1882 the law still does not regard a wife's income as entirely her own; for purposes of income tax it is treated as part of her husband's. In Scotland, a man may still veto his wife's freedom of action in dealing with her own property. These defects in law must clearly be remedied, and the N.U.W.S.S. is working to that end.

Under the second head, the opening of the public service and professions to women, the most important reform desired by the N.U.W.S.S. is the admission of women Members of Parliament. A few years ago the idea of women M.P.s was disliked by many, even among suffragists, but now public feeling has changed, and it is widely felt that not only will women not be properly represented unless they have women as well as men representatives, but that the nation cannot be properly ruled unless the best brains are available for its governing body, regardless of sex. The N.U.W.S.S. holds that a Bill should be introduced for the opening of the doors of both Houses of Parliament. When those doors are open others will have to open too; if Parliament needs the brains of women as well as of men, so do the professions, and if the law cannot be as well made as it might be without their help, so it cannot be satisfactorily administered without it; therefore, the N.U.W.S.S. works to enable women to become magistrates, barristers, solicitors and jurors, and to obtain full recognition and powers for the women police.

A special reason for the election of women M.P.s, the appointment of women magistrates and the improvement in the position of women police, is to be found in the lamentable social conditions which have resulted from the acceptance of a double moral standard for men and women. This double moral standard is indeed the root evil against which feminists have to strive. It cannot be swept away by changes in the law, but certain laws which express and affirm it can be altered. Our great hope is in education and in the making and administration of law by those who really believe in the equality of men and women as human beings. The N.U.W.S.S. will work for the recognition of the equal moral standard by seeking to abolish laws like the present "law of solicitation and common prostitutes" based on a double standard, as well as the infamous order 40D D.O.R.A. This is the fourth part of the N.U.W.S.S.'s programme. All the educational work that it does will serve the same object, since all is designed to establish the status of women as complete human beings.

The fifth part of the N.U.W.S.S. programme is to promote the economic equality of men and women. This, as we have many times pointed out, has to be sought for along several paths; equal pay for equal work is one, and free admission to all trades, industries and professions, and to all forms of training for them, is another. It is on this field that the great feminist struggle of the near future will take place, and we hope that we may look to the N.U.W.S.S. to take a leading part in it.

In the last few days the promised land of Peace, which has long seemed as unreal as a remote country only known on the map, has suddenly shone like a vision before our eyes. In the coming months we hope to enter it. We are promised international reconstruction. As President Wilson and Mrs. Fawcett have pointed out, this reconstruction can only be real if it is based on the consent of all, of women as well as of men. The N.U.W.S.S. therefore desires that there should be women among the delegates to the peace conference, and that this conference should use its great authority to uphold free representative institutions based on the will of all the people, in all lands. It also asks that in the international organisation of the future, women should have the same choice of citizenship as men, and that nothing but their own will should ever deprive them of their birthright.

These are the reforms for which the N.U.W.S.S. stands. Can anyone doubt that we have still much to do, and that it is worth while to make great efforts to support the organisation which has already secured votes for women, and will in time secure all the rest?

The Status of the Illegitimate Child in Norway.

By FRU ANKER.

Women have at last got the power to give their children a better chance to live than they have hitherto had, and the first question addressed to the women of Norway, who have had the vote for some time, is:—"What have you done in your country to prevent the death of babies?" The high mortality rate of babies in all countries is a striking illustration of government by men only. We know that in Germany half a million babies are dying annually in their first year, that is fourteen per cent. of the births, and here in England 100,000 babies die annually, which is equal to nine per cent. One feels amazed that women have not cried out in a torrent of appeals to have this state of things altered long ago. It is time indeed to protect motherhood and save the babies.

In Norway a new law has been passed concerning the illegitimate child. This law was part of an effort to improve the conditions of the mothers of the poor, and thereby protect the lives of their children. In Norway the mortality rate is eight per cent.—one of the most favourable in Europe—thanks to our healthy mountain air; but even so it is too high. Of 60,000 annual births 10,000 children die before they are grown up, 4,000 in their first year and 1,400 at birth. A great number perish during pregnancy.

It was shown that the unmarried mother and her child were most in need of help. About 4,000 illegitimate children are born annually in Norway; that is to say, seven per cent. of total births. The mortality rate of these children was on the whole more than twice as great as that of the legitimate during the first year. In the third month after birth, the rate of death was three times as great as that of other children, the number of still-born, 105 per cent., compared to that of the others. This was of course due to the miserable conditions of their mothers. As the law stood formerly, the unmarried mother was left absolutely alone with the whole care and anxiety and the economic burden of the child to come, at the time of life when women are most in need of a man's care, encouragement and support, and when she is in most need of sufficient food and rest. The unmarried mother was, in fact, not so well provided for as a domestic animal which is at least assured of shelter and of sufficient food and rest during this period. She had to work as before to support herself, or more than before to be able to put aside money for childbirth expenses and for the weeks when she could not possibly work. As soon as she was able to work again she generally had to leave the child to others, and to pay for its maintenance. The depressed state of mind of these lonely mothers, their lack of food and rest, caused their children to be born weaker than others, and if these children, moreover, were deprived of a mother's natural care and nourishment, one cannot wonder that they were dying at a double or triple rate to the others. The father had no duty to his own child beyond making a trifling payment of about five pounds a year. He had no duty whatever to support the mother. It is a fact that only forty per cent. of the fathers paid anything at all. Sixty per cent. of them shirked this duty. The law had made the payment dependent on the mother's demand and the result was that the mothers generally failed to demand it from fear of offending the fathers. They hoped against hope that the man would return and marry them, and therefore were afraid of giving him any trouble. On the whole the law helped the father to conceal the existence of the child.

In Norway a man or a woman who has a family cannot will away more than one-tenth of his or her fortune. The children inherit from their father and mother by law. The illegitimate child was placed in the same position towards its mother as a legitimate child; it had the right to take its mother's name—that means actually its grandfather's name—but not its own father's. It inherited from its mother and its mother's relatives, but not from its father. If the unmarried mother married another man, her child followed her to this stepfather's home and inherited from him through its mother.

The new law which was proposed in 1909 and passed in Norway in 1915 by a great majority in our Parliament enacts that:—

"Children whose parents have not entered into marriage with each other have the same legal position in regard to their father as to their mother."

This means:—

(1) That the illegitimate child shall have the right (not the obligation) to take its father's name. The mother chooses

which name it shall have, and when the child is grown up it can decide itself.

(2) The child shall be brought up and educated according to the conditions of whichever of its parents is the most well-to-do.

(3) The child shall inherit from its father and his relatives as if it were born in wedlock.

(4) The establishment of paternity is compulsory.

Every birth is to be notified. A pregnant woman ought to state three months at least before birth to the midwife, when birth is to take place and who is the father. The midwife shall at once report this to the magistrate. A false statement by the mother or the midwife will be punished with penalties or imprisonment up to two years. Refusal on the part of the mother to name the father *within fourteen days after birth* is punished with penalties, and any one who co-operates with her to conceal the name of the father is punished with penalties. If she does not state the name after all the Court must itself call other witnesses to establish paternity.

As soon as information has been given to the magistrate he shall draw up a document in which contributions to child and mother are imposed on the father. The father is notified; if he does not answer, it is considered that he recognises paternity and accepts his duties. This will be the case generally. If he denies paternity he must, within a certain time, appeal to the judge and demand action to be taken against the mother. These proceedings are carried out by the administration without any expense to either of them. The paternity will then be decided by the court. The father must contribute both to the mother and child. The minimum contribution to the mother is a lump sum of £13. This sum is meant to cover childbirth expenses and help for the time when she is nourishing her child and unable to work as usual. In many cases the law will induce the man to marry the girl when he knows that he cannot escape from recognising and supporting the child, and if he has not absolutely lost all affection for her, he may think he may as well marry her, and the child will not grow up branded as inferior to other children. In this way the law will help to give the child a real home. This has already been our experience since this act has come into force.

Rural Housing.

By LADY LAWSON TANCRED.

We hear much about the "Housing Problem" nowadays and many excellent suggestions are constantly made by well-meaning people who put forward schemes that are often impossible of fulfilment. However, we all agree upon some of the main points. For instance, there is the need of at least three bedrooms for all houses that are to contain families of parents and children. This does not mean that all houses must have three bedrooms, as accommodation is required for childless couples, widows, bachelors and spinsters, and cottages with one or two bedrooms can always be utilised for people of this description. It should be made illegal for houses with less than three bedrooms to be let to parents with children of both sexes over a certain age.

The chief difficulty connected with country cottages arises frequently from their being very old. The majority of the more modern houses fulfil at any rate most of the requirements of decent living. Our ancestors had no idea of hygiene, sanitation, decency, or comfort, and even the large country houses of Elizabethan days are very uncomfortable to live in until they have undergone a considerable amount of alteration. Our English villages mostly date back to Saxon and Norman times, and houses have been built in them at intervals ever since. It is doubtful whether we can afford to pull down every one of these cottages and build new ones, when we consider the urgency of dozens of other costly reforms, and the necessity of paying off at least some part of the huge amount of borrowed capital which the War has forced us to spend so lavishly. However, something has got to be done, and undoubtedly very many of the old houses will have to be pulled down if they prove unfit for improvement and repair.

The great weakness of country cottages is often dampness, and if this comes from irremediable causes there is nothing for it but to pull them down. For instance, the cottage that is built below the level of the ground cannot be bodily uplifted to prevent the rain from washing in under the doors. Also, if a house is built with ill-fitting cobble stone foundations, through which rivers of water flow freely, there is no way whatsoever of making that house a dry one. On the other

hand if dampness is caused by trees, or a faulty roof, the house can be made quite satisfactory with comparatively little expense.

It should be made possible for landowners to borrow money from the Government at low rates of interest in order to do such things as raise roofs and thus ensure more air space, knock two houses into one where necessary, enlarge windows, put in economical kitchen ranges and bedroom fireplaces, and effect any other alterations that cannot ordinarily be classed as repairs.

The average country landlord is quite unable to meet the cost of these improvements unaided, owing to high taxation, high wages, and the high price of building materials, all of which have to be met without any increased rental. Many cottages are owned by persons of small means who prefer to invest their money in "something they can see" in preference to stocks and shares which exist apparently only on paper. It is quite unreasonable to expect persons such as these as well as the larger landowners to spend money lavishly upon building and improving houses if they are not to receive a rent that will pay them say four and a half per cent. or five per cent. on their capital.

It is impossible to build a good six-roomed house at the present day for less than £450, and if the landlord is to receive 5 per cent. on capital invested which has to include the value of the ground, he should receive 8s. 6d. to 9s. per week for a newly-built six-roomed house with a garden attached. Even under present conditions this is too much for the average farm labourer to be expected to pay, especially if his neighbour is living in an old cottage which is let for 2s. a week. The difficulty can only be overcome by financial help from the State, at any rate for the next few years. Possibly before long, increased agricultural wages and improved conditions, may make it unnecessary for the State to help in this matter.

The enormous shortage of houses in town and country has been generally estimated at 500,000 houses. If we are to meet this need it will be necessary to encourage private effort besides urging it upon local authorities. The question of the kind of house that is most suitable has been so often discussed that it is unnecessary to dwell on it here, but the writer would urge that the problem of the improvement of existing houses be more thoroughly gone into.

The average landlord often loses much interest in his capital through non-payment of rents, and in cases where illness or poverty are the cause a generous landlord will forego either part or the whole of the money that the tenant owes him. In these cases it is very unfair that the landlord should have to pay the full amount of income tax on money that he has never received, and the law should be altered in this respect. We want to encourage good landlords and good tenants and a spirit of "give and take." The tenant should be protected against the careless or indifferent landlord, and he should have some more effective means of compelling the landlord to undertake necessary repairs.

Nothing has been said so far in this article about bath rooms as they are hardly within the range of "practical politics," for the average country village which has not usually an adequate water supply. We have got to urge all our local authorities to arrange for a proper water supply to be laid on to every cottage. The enormous saving of labour and improved cleanliness that would result would more than justify the necessary addition to the rates in rural areas.

Last, but not least, comes the problem of the "tied" cottage. It is a matter of general agreement that the tied cottage system is on the whole an evil one, but there are cases where it is inevitable. There are many out of the way farms owned by non-resident farmers who place a paid foreman to live on the farm itself and to be at hand, night or day, to attend to the numerous needs of the four-footed inhabitants. Cows, horses and sheep cannot be left entirely alone all night all the year round any more than it is possible so to leave invalids or young children. If these paid employees are to be allowed to continue to live in their houses after they have ceased their employment, it makes it impossible for the farmer to establish their successor in the only cottage from whence it is possible for him to do his work. On large farms it is necessary to have stockmen on the spot for the full twenty-four hours in addition to the farmer himself, in order to deal with expected and unexpected events of every kind. Unless all isolated farms are pulled down and rebuilt near villages (not a very practical proposition) it is hard to see how the tied cottage system can be completely abolished. The same difficulty might arise on farms situated in villages where cottages are scarce. In most cases the problem luckily solves itself because a man, on leaving his employment, goes to live near the spot where he becomes re-employed.

The housing problem is one that is surrounded by many difficulties, and it is one in which the new women voters will be especially interested. Women will be more and more determined that their homes shall be homes indeed, and they will realise their responsibility, not only for their own particular home, but for those of other women throughout the land.

Old King Coal.

The coal crisis will certainly affect the British housewife more intimately than it will affect any other person in the community during the coming winter. Not only will she be affected by the direct reduction of her own domestic supply, and all the changes it will necessarily imply in her daily routine of work, but she will, at the same time, be indirectly affected by the threatened unemployment and the further restrictions on traffic due to the shortage. Moreover, it seems probable that in the majority of homes the best of the fire, like the best of the food, will be reserved for the children and the wage-earners.

How far the shortage is an inevitable accident of war, and how far it is due to sheer lack of foresight upon the part of those set in authority over us, appears rather doubtful; and one vivid little glimpse of the official point of view is certainly not reassuring. The Coal Controller was asked, when the rationing scheme first came before the public, whether an extra allowance would be made in those districts where it is customary to bake at home. He replied delightfully that the present ration was sufficient for "an ordinary fire," and that, personally, he could see no difficulty in baking bread as often as necessary under those conditions. Comment upon this is surely superfluous; but what would have been said if any woman, appointed to a public position which allowed her a large share of control over one of the main industries of men, had displayed such a staggering ignorance of the elementary facts of her subject?

However, by exercising great self-denial, we may contrive to do without that novel delicacy, war-bread baked at "an ordinary fire." The family wash, especially in houses where there are several small children—small houses with a ration of only five or six tons of coal per annum—presents a more serious problem. Many laundries are refusing new customers, so the woman who has hitherto "washed at home" must perforce continue to do so, even if laundry charges were not, at present, quite prohibitive to small households with small incomes and many other expenses. And in winter the clothes have not only to be washed, they have to be dried, and cannot be dried in the open air, they must be draped round the "one ordinary fire" which has to suffice for all purposes. I am afraid the tired clerk or artisan or engineer who comes home to spend a cosy evening sitting amongst the steaming clothes-horses will be quite as disposed to blame his wife for his discomforts as to blame Kaiser Wilhelm the Second, and this will be manifestly unfair. Some cynical person has remarked that family affection will receive the severest test it has ever had this winter when we are forced to gather round the hearth and endure each other's society night after night in the good old fashion beloved of sentimental novelists. Certainly the enforced use of one room for reading, writing, cooking, sewing, the children's games and the entertainment of friends, will give a good many "superior people" their first idea of just what the housing problem means to their less fortunate neighbours; but this may be a very good thing.

The National Kitchens movement has, so far, only touched the fringe of the question. To blame the ordinary British housewife for the little use she has made of the Kitchens hitherto is not quite just. If her fire must be lighted for the sake of hot water, and the washing and drying of clothes aforementioned, it is easier for her to boil a saucepan at the same time than to leave her work and her babies, change her old skirt and apron for her outdoor things, walk to the nearest National Kitchen—which may be some way off—and walk back again in time for the mid-day dinner. And even then the food has often to be re-warped to make it palatable.

Her real troubles begin when everybody has a different dinner hour; when father, or the children from school, or the elder boy from the shipyard, or the elder girl from the office, are coming in and out all day long, hungry and cold and often with wet clothes and boots to be dried. A tremendous amount of labour and trouble and fuel might be economised by the provision, firstly of more National Restaurants in the business quarter of every town; secondly, by the compulsory enforcement of the School Meals Act for, at least, the period of the war. The general

health of the children would improve if they could be kept under shelter and properly fed at school during the dinner hour in the winter months of any year, when too many of them will merely be released to paddle home through the rain or snow to a cold room and a meal of bread and dripping; it would save us a good many little lives. It would also be an excellent thing if the schools could be opened again as Play Centres during the winter evenings; and the cost of lighting and warming such a building for two hours or so would be less than the cost of lighting and warming one of our many superfluous cinema halls.

Tentative suggestions have already been put forward for communal laundries and wash-hoses in populous centres, and the provision of pit-head baths for miners (why not baths and dressing-rooms on the works premises for all men engaged on dirty jobs?) is a reform long overdue. But these desirable things, when we get them, should be established permanently and not as a merely temporary expedient to meet a temporary difficulty; and with the present shortage of labour and building materials we can hardly hope to get them very soon. The "machinery" for school meals, on the other hand, is all ready to be set in motion once more whenever Parliament assembles; it was an astounding example of short-sightedness that it was ever laid idle. It is true that there has been no very strong demand amongst the working-class parents themselves for this reform during the past three years. One reason for this, of course, has been the higher level of working-class prosperity. War wages have, in the majority of cases barely kept pace with the rise in prices; but long spells of unemployment have mercifully ceased; and so long as the father is in regular work, the chief difficulty is to persuade him to accept any form of State aid whatsoever, either for himself or his family. It would be necessary to explain to him that the provision of school meals is merely another form of war economy, in which his co-operation is invited; and no doubt he would contribute to the cost according to his means.

It may be remarked incidentally that no one need envy the pitman's wife because her husband's employment places her outside the coal-rationing scheme for the present. Although she may receive her normal allowance of coal up to thirteen tons per annum, it will no doubt consist, as it usually does, mainly of dust and "slack," giving out about as much heat as half the quantity of "clean coal" supplied to the general public. And in the North of England, at any rate, she almost invariably does all her own washing and all her own baking as well. Pit cottages, too, are so small and inadequate for the families they contain that she would suffer from the rationing scheme even more severely than the rest of us are likely to do.

MADGE MEARS.

"Out of the Mouths of Babes . . ."

Wednesday, October 3rd, was a day of excitement for Belfast children. The proposed general strike of the teachers had come off, not especially well organised in Belfast, for reasons to be noted later; but if teachers had taken it up in a somewhat hesitating and timid way the children had thrown themselves into the struggle with a heart and a half, as they say themselves. Leaflets had been freely circulated by the Central Executive Committee of the National School Teachers' Organisation stating their grievances, pointing out that the highest war bonus given to them was only 8s. a week, while the bonuses given to Civil servants range from 19s. to 25s. a week. The leaflet urged all parents to support the one day strike and pointed out with truth that every other means had failed. Those women who had taken part in the deputation of the previous Saturday to the Chief Secretary knew how true was this statement, and watched with apprehension the fulfilment of their warnings.

Trade Unionism is naturally fairly strong in Belfast, a city of skilled labour, and the parents responded with readiness to the appeal of the teachers. A sketch of what happened at one school may serve to show how the business went, though it must be added that in some schools the full complement of children did attend. At this school the teachers had remained at their post, uncertain how the thing would go. A political element had been introduced into the strike by those who wished to discredit it, a trick constantly attempted in Belfast, and only too easy when political feeling is as high as at present. It was freely said the teachers were really acting in the interests of Sinn Féin, and this of course scared off many who would otherwise have been in ardent sympathy with the movement. It is interesting in this connection to note that the "Irish Times"

published a leader in full sympathy with the teachers, in the course of which the women's deputation of Saturday was especially referred to. The Belfast press gave no editorial notice to the agitation of the teachers and little space to the reports of the meetings held in sympathy. However, the charge had brought a certain amount of dissension into the ranks, and in the particular school the six assistants came in on the Wednesday morning. The approach to the school was not very pleasant: children ran after them calling out "blackleg," &c., and when they arrived it was found about twenty children only were in the school. This number lessened, as several elder children arrived, with messages, real or imaginary, from mothers: "Mother says Johnny is to come home," and Johnny, age six, is haled away with the reproach, clearly heard by the few children in the class-room, "What took ye in there? didn't you know them ones in there is all blacklegs?" Jeanie, age seven, had announced the day before she would not come to school, because "you ones aren't being paid right, miss, and we're going to help you get it." During the morning the children outside paraded round the schools, singing and shouting. In several cases, the schools were closed and the few children inside quietly sent away, for fear there would be actual disturbance. In one neighbourhood about 3,000 children had collected outside a big school, and it looked for a while as if the thing would end in more than songs and shouts. Meanwhile by midday on Wednesday came the official announcement that the authorities had consented to refer the claims of the teachers to the Arbitration Court! These claims had been before them for years: the threat of the strike had been fully explained at least three weeks before: the deputation of Saturday had warned them of the probable consequences to the children—but the announcement which might have averted the strike came after it had well begun. The moral was drawn by Minnie, aged ten, "Sure, Miss, and did you hear how we got them ones to mind what the teachers were after sayin'?"

Well, if the demands of the teachers are not granted by the Arbitration Court, there will be a further strike in November, a prospect regarded with great interest by the children and with anxiety by the mothers, who do not want the children running the street and coming home in wild excitement. "It's hard to mind them when the likes of that's goin' on, but sure what else could they do?" Possibly the authorities may act in time—but the present mischief is done and is past mending.

DORA MELLONE.

Victorian Heroines.—VII.

THE WOMEN OF THE BRONTË NOVELS.

In an unforgettable series of pictures, Mrs. Gaskell has shown Charlotte Brontë as she appeared to the world she lived in. As a child, queer and unchildlike, in the ugly little parsonage at Haworth; at school in the Lowood of *Jane Eyre*; as a governess in a family where, when the little boy says "I love you, Miss Brontë," his mother replies, in shocked disapproval, "Love the governess, my dear!"; at the pensionnat Héger in Brussels; back again in the parsonage watching her brother drink and drug himself to death, and her sisters sicken into consumption; finally in her desolation of loneliness—as much alone if she is trying, in an anguish of shyness, to talk at a dinner party Thackeray gives in her honour, as she is in the solitary evenings at home, or walking heart-broken over the moors.

That is what the world saw: these scenes lived through by a plain, large-nosed, undersized woman, saddened by tragic circumstances, painfully shy, and unable to communicate either charm or intelligence to whatever society she found herself in. In her social relationships she showed only the crust and rind of her nature: it was in her books, and particularly in the presentation of her heroines that she showed her heart. They are all women like herself, suffering, baffled, alone: women who live through a time when existence becomes a "useless, blank, pale, slow trailing thing" as it did to her. They all know the bitter truth of the words she makes Jane Eyre cry out to Rochester: "We were born to strive and endure; do so," and of those she gives to Helen Burns: "It is weak and silly to say you *cannot bear* what it is your fate to be required to bear." Lucy Snowe is lonely with the tearing, racking misery of loneliness which was the portion of her creator. She tastes suffering brewed in no temporal or calculable measure in the dream cup that is forced to her lips and whose draught leaves her sick with unutterable despair. The whole horror of her vision is in those simple words: "Methought the well-loved dead,

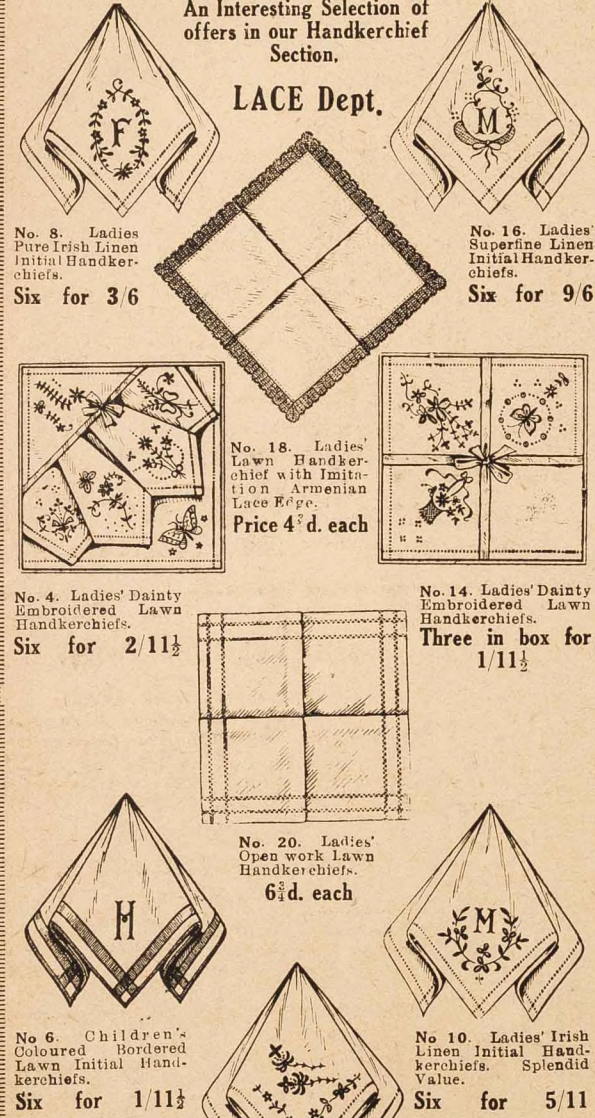
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The Equipment Committee urgently appeal for gifts of games of all kinds for the patients in Corsica and Sallanches. They ask specially for draughts, chess (strong and not easily broken), Halma, playing cards, &c.

The Equipment Committee urgently appeal for gifts of games of all kinds for the patients in Corsica and Sallanches. They ask specially for draughts, chess (strong and not easily broken), Halma, playing cards, &c.

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• Lochgilhead War Work Party, per Miss I. H. B. Macfarlane, Hon. Sec., Invermay, Douglas Pier ... 10 0 0

• Joint Committee of Girton and Newham War Hospital Fund, per Mrs. Isabel P. Scott, Co. Treas., £25 collected by Miss Ricketts for further 6 months for one of the "Old Hall" Beds ... 100 0 0
• Alex. Cupples (Monthly donation) ... 2 0 0
• Miss Eliz. Rae (Monthly donation) ... 2 6
• Elsie Inglis Memorial Fund, per Mrs. Wallace Williamson, Hon. Treas., Edinburgh: Subscriptions earmarked for Scottish Women's Hospitals (Sallanches and Serbia) ... 2,000 0 0

• Messrs. Walter Black & Co., 1, East Nile Street, Glasgow ... 3 0 0
• Scottish Teachers' Fund for War Relief, per Hugh McCallum, Esq. ... 100 0 0
• Wm. Lyon, Esq. ... 2 0 0
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• Mrs. Tiffany, of New York (Monthly donation) ... 5 3 4
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Results of War Work done by the Committee of the Oton W.S.S. and Collection taken at Meeting of the W.S.S., per Mrs. Smith, Hon. Sec. (Serbia) ... 5 0 0
• Domestic Staff, St. Mary's School, Melrose (Monthly donation) ... 10 0
• Per Miss E. Rachel Jamieson, Organiser, S.W.H.: Workmen's Scheme: Rosebank Ironworks, Edinburgh, Employees (Messrs. Brown Bros. & Co. Ltd.) (£20 2s. 6d.), Employees, Messrs. R. & A. Main, Gofric Ironworks, Falkirk (£11 15s. 9d.), Employees, Camelon Iron Co., Falkirk, per A. S. Anderson, Esq., Director (£5), Employees, Messrs. MacTaggart Scott & Co., Station Ironworks, Loanhead, per J. Laurie (£3 17s. 3d.), Employees, Messrs. Thomson & Porteous, Leith Street, Edinburgh (£3 13s. 6d.), Employees, Messrs. Hill, Craig & Co.,

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Mrs. J. H. Gordon, Liverpool, per Mrs. Gordon, Kensington (Royaumont) ... 5 0 0
Miss Robina Matheson ... 5 0
Forward as per list to September 12th, 1918 ... 353 8 10 2 9
Further donations received to September 28th, 1918:—
• Iron Trades Employers' Insurance Association Limited, 105, West George Street, Glasgow, per Harry Lumden, Esq., Joint Secretary ... 35 6 8
• Joseph McCrae, Esq., Hon. Sec. Ambleside W.S.S., Result of Collection taken at Ambleside on September 12th, addressed by Miss Walker, for "Elsie Inglis Memorial Hospital" ... 8 0 0
Mrs. Balderston ... 10 0
Thos. Kirkhope, Esq., for the "Isabella Bertram Kirkhope" Bed, Royaumont ... 10 0 0
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• Proceedings of Flag Day in Kintore, on September 14th, per Mrs. Macpherson ... 5 14 8
• Anonymous ... 10 8
• Per Miss Edith A. Macintyre, Hon. Treas., Dundee W.S.S., Proceedings of Flag Day held in Dundee and District on August 24th ... 280 13 6
• Miss K. M. Loudon, for the "Charles Loudon" Bed, Royaumont ... 25 0 0
• Members of the Leeds West Branch Amalgamated Society of Engineers, per A. J. Kirkbride, Esq. (Serbia) ... 15 6
Miss Maggie Cunningham ... 1 0 0
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• Per Miss E. Rachel Jamieson, Organiser, S.W.H.: Workmen's Scheme: W. S.

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FURTHER LIST OF BEDS NAMED.

Table listing names of beds and amounts in £ s. d. including Vernon Booth (In Memory of an American Aviator who died in Ruyoumont), Charles Loudon (Royaumont, further 5 months), Isabella Bertram Kirkhope (Royaumont, 1 year), "The Murrays" (Royaumont, further 1 year), Annie B. McNeill (Royaumont, further 6 months), "Daly Public School and Workers" (Salonica, further 3 months), In Memory of Commander R. H. Llewelyn (Royaumont, 1 year), "Welsh Ward" (Sallanches, further donation), Hastings and St. Leonards (Salonica, Girton and Newham Unit, further 6 months), "Bingley" (Corsica, further 9 months), "St. Hilda's" (Salonica, further 6 months), Cornwall (Sallanches, further 6 months), Innerleithen and Walkerburn (2 beds) (Salonica, further 9 months each), Helena Finnie (Salonica, further 1 year), Innerleithen and Walkerburn (2 beds) (Salonica, further 6 months), "Old Hall" (Girton and Newham Unit, further 6 months), September (Royaumont, further 6 months), Collected by Miss A. M. Williamson

Forthcoming Meetings (N.U.W.S.S.)

OCTOBER 11. Stevenage—Public Hall—Women Citizens' Association—Chair: Mrs. Unwin Heathcote—Speakers: Lady Nott-Bower, Miss Mercer 3.15 p.m.
Willesden—Willesden Women Citizens' Association—St. Gabriel's Hall, Cricklewood—Speaker: Mrs. C. D. Rackham—Subject: "The Machinery of Government" 8 p.m.
OCTOBER 14. Birmingham—Medical Lecture Theatre, University—Speaker: Mrs. Ring—Subject: "New General Election." 5.30 p.m.
Knebworth—Mission Room—Women Citizens' Association—Chair: Miss Plowden—Speaker: Miss Mercer 3 p.m.
Clapham—Wesleyan Sisterhood, High Street, Clapham—Speaker: Mrs. Watson—Subject: "Some Aspects of the Women's Movement" 3 p.m.
Peckham—Peckham Rye Mission Sisterhood, Princes Terrace—Speaker: Miss Helen Downes—Subject: "The Duties of Citizenship" 6.30 p.m.
Merton—Merton Hall Sisterhood, Morden Road—Subject: "Women's Work" 7.30 p.m.
OCTOBER 16. Birmingham—Women's Settlement—Speaker Mrs. Ring—Subject: "The Women's Vote" 8 p.m.
Bristol—At Southville—Speaker: Mrs. W. C. H. Cross—Subject: "The Need for Women Police and Magistrates" 3 p.m.
Surbiton—By kind invitation of Mrs. Horner, a drawing-room meeting will be held at Caverleigh, Margle Road, Surbiton, to meet the candidates for Kingston and hear their views on the Programme of the N.U.W.S.S. 3 p.m.
OCTOBER 16. Darlington—Mechanics' Institute—Public Meeting—Speaker: Mrs. Henry Fawcett, I.L.D.—Chair: Rt. Hon. H. Pike-Pease, M.P. 7.30 p.m.
OCTOBER 17. Marylebone—Marylebone Women's Liberal Association, 6, Northwick Terrace—Hostess: Miss Bradley—Speaker: Mrs. Watson—Subject: "Women and the Housing Question" 3.15 p.m.
OCTOBER 18. Erection—Oddfellows' Hall, Queen's Road—Speaker: Mrs. Oliver Strachey—Chair: Rev. T. Rhindda Williams 8 p.m.

WING to illness, Miss Maude Royden has been compelled to cancel all her engagements for October, she hopes to resume in November the course of sermons on "The Problem of the Suffering" at the City Temple, Holborn Viaduct, E.C.

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