

SPECIAL NUMBER:

THE VOTE,
DECEMBER 22, 1916.
ONE PENNY.

The Child in the Nations.

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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Edited by C. DESPARD.

OBJECT: To secure for Women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men.

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WHY WE NEED THE
VOTE NOW

BECAUSE in Great Britain there is still serious inequality between the sexes in the facilities for education and the reward for intellectual eminence.

Women are badly handicapped at the older Universities and in preparation for professions.

With the exception of the Royal Free Hospital (London), no women have been admitted till this year as medical students in any of the London hospitals; a few are now taken "as an experiment." No women are admitted to the Inns of Court to prepare for the legal profession.

WHERE WOMEN
VOTE

IN AUSTRALASIA there is complete equality of education for boys and girls and free education for those who require it from the *creche* to the end of the University Course.

IN FINLAND there is equality of facility and opportunity in School, University, Professional Life, and State Service. Women, experienced as Educationists, sit in Parliament and co-operate with men in making educational laws.

Therefore we Demand the Vote NOW!

Women's Freedom League.

Offices: 144, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L. LONDON AND SUBURBS.



DARE TO BE FREE.

Friday, December 22.—W.F.L. SETTLEMENT, Nine Elms, Children's Christmas Treat.
Thursday, January 10.—MID-LONDON BRANCH MEETING, 144, High Holborn, W.C., 6.30 p.m.
Wednesday, January 24.—PUBLIC MEETING, Caxton Hall, Westminster, 3 p.m. Speakers: Mr. George Lansbury and others. Tea can be obtained in the Hall at 4.30.

Friday, January 26.—RECITAL OF OLD SONGS AND SATIRES by Miss Holloway, and FAIRY TALES by Miss Raleigh. Bijou Theatre, 3, Bedford Street, Strand, W.C. 3 p.m. Tea 4.45. Tickets 1s. (reserved) and 6d. (unreserved), from W.F.L. Office.

Wednesday, January 31.—PUBLIC MEETING, Caxton Hall, Westminster, 3 p.m. Speakers: Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., "The Right of the Soldier," and others. Tea 4.30.

PROVINCES.

Saturday, December 30.—SOUTHSEA. Whist Drive, 17, Lombard-street, 6.30 p.m. prompt. Tickets 1s. each.

Wednesday, January 3, 1917.—SOUTHSEA. Work Party, 17, Lombard-street, 3 to 7 p.m.

Tuesday, January 9, 1917.—SOUTHSEA. Members' Meeting, 17, Lombard-street, 7.30 p.m.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Sunday, December 31.—KINGSTON HUMANITARIAN SOCIETY. Fife Hall, Fife-road, 7 p.m. Speaker: Miss Underwood. Subject: "The Importance of Women Minding their own Business."

Christmas Holidays.

The offices of the Women's Freedom League and the Minerva Publishing Co., also the Minerva Café, will be closed from 1 p.m. Friday, December 22, until 10 a.m. Thursday, December 28.

The Child in the Nations.

At this season of the year when the Christ Child is in all our thoughts, THE VOTE gives its readers a Child Number, setting forth, in the limited space available, some important matters concerning the child, which need drastic reform if good citizens are to be our best national asset. We call special attention to Mr. John Russell's "Open Letter to the New Minister of Education," to the leading article, and Miss Gertrude Ford's poem: "The Nations and the Child," to Mrs. Mustard's plea for "The Child in the Home" instead of in an institution, to Mrs. Harvey's practical advice on the sane treatment of babies, and G. Colmore's pathetic story of some of to-day's children.

NO VOTE, NO TAX!

After many unsuccessful attempts to extract income-tax during the past few years, the Inland Revenue authorities have lodged a petition of bankruptcy against Dr. Winifred S. Patch, of 31, High-bury-place. She has refused to comply with the order of the Official Receiver to give information as to her financial position or to hand over her assets. We await further developments of this struggle between a determined suffragist and officialdom, and congratulate her on this valuable and timely protest.

SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE NEW MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

Sir,—As one who has long been hoping against hope to see some day a Minister of Education with a knowledge of education, I wish to offer my congratulations, first to you, on your appointment to so great an opportunity, and then to the children of England, one and all, who are to benefit from your enlightened labours.

Those labours will certainly in part be concerned with the machinery of education—the scrapping or improving of the old, the inventing, doubtless, of new. But you at least are aware that the living spirit of education is nowhere in the machinery, but only there where spirit meets spirit, where child is in spiritual contact with teacher, or even with task. For it is our own tasks that really educate us, as you, Sir, though you have long known it, must now be rediscovering.

Your own supreme task then is so to inspire your machinery (for machinery that is nine-tenths human surely can be inspired) that every child in England, boy or girl, little or big, high or low, shall every day be set to the tasks, the occupations, the activities that will best encourage unselfish self-expression and self-development—the individual best in the service of the whole.

That supreme task involves three supreme choices—choices which in detail you will rightly delegate to your colleagues, even the humblest, but the ultimate responsibility for which must rest, I think, on you alone.

Those three choices are—first, the choice of the task itself; then the choice of the teacher to set and superintend the task; and lastly, the choice of the conditions in which the task is to be carried out. Some day, when the nation is eugenically educated, there will be a fourth supreme choice—the choice of the child. Even on that choice, when the time comes, your successors should be able to advise. But for the present we must take the child like the weather—as it comes.

As to the nature of the task, I must only say (since this is a letter and not a treatise) that it must cultivate, in however small a degree, both the mind and the heart and; as often as possible, the body (workshops for all!); that it must provoke to self-activity; and that it must be of humanistic content, relating, that is, to some essential aspect of humane social life.

As to the nature of the teacher, he (or she) must be trained and equipped as all other scientist-artists must be trained and equipped. But the best training is to have been taught by wise and humane teachers, the best equipment is respect for individuality (even of little children), and devotion, not to that necessary evil, the salary, but to a noble ideal of life.

Lastly, as to the nature of the conditions, your colleagues would speak with one voice (a great unison chorus hitherto lost in the wilderness) of the importance of smaller classes. For my own fortunate part I have been teaching for nearly twenty years classes of less than twenty. And each day I am more and more convinced of the difficulty, nay, of the impossibility, of educating in the mass. Education is the spark at the contact of mind—or spirit—and it must nearly always happen that the larger the class the less is that contact physically possible.

Another reform in conditions long overdue as a step towards a more humane social life, is the extension (at least in the elementary schools) of the school period. We spend many fine words on education, and then, just as the real education of the immense majority of our boys and girls is beginning, we cut them adrift because there is no money. Sir,

THEY SUPPORT US!

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS.

Have you sent your Christmas Present to the Fifty Thousand Shilling Fund?

E. KNIGHT.

15s. to £1 each per week, it is an iniquitous imposition on the ratepayer's pocket, as well as barbarous treatment of family life. It is our conviction that until women are enfranchised the interests of women and the home will never receive the adequate attention of the State.

The House of Commons will no doubt be compelled at an early date to consider the question of "mothers' pensions" for British war widows and their children. Are we to have the same stupid blunders made in dealing with these desolated homes as we perpetuate to-day in civilian fatherless homes? Are war orphans to be thrust into homes and orphanages and so deprived of the mother-care which is their natural birthright?

The nation's desire for healthy citizens cannot be based on "institution-reared" children; they must have real maternal care, and to give them this they should receive adequate State aid. This would save the ratepayers' pockets, for institution-raised children cost three times more than home-reared ones. Judge Neil, of Chicago, thus outlines the situation:—

"Just as it is unwise to raise chickens in large groups, say thousands in one community, because of epidemics, it is a bad policy to raise children *en masse*. We have found in America that home-life is even better for children than to be raised in little groups. We have discovered that mother's love, like mother's milk, is a scientific necessity. You may put your baby into a cleaner bed than its mother can provide, give it clean cow's milk, tend it with the most scientific and sanitary care, and yet it will pine for the lack of a mother's cuddling. It needs the warmth of her arms, the squeezing and sort of massage she supplies. Mother's love makes all the difference in the world between virile and weakly children."

The war is teaching men how much the nation has lost by refusing to utilise the capability and service of women. It is vital to the national life that the great lesson should be learned and acted on without further delay, that the only way to ensure progress in every department is to do justice to women by enfranchising them.

S. A. MUSTARD.

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A VIVID AND DRAMATIC
NEW BOOK FOR
CHRISTMAS—AND AFTER.

The Pendulum

By J. HAROLD CARPENTER.

(JOHN LONG. 6s.)

Profits on copies sold by the League will be divided (by Mr. Carpenter's kind permission) between the Literature Department and the Despard Arms.

there is money when the need is realised. Can you not help our national unbelief?

Two last reflections. Personally, I cannot believe that our schools will ever contribute, as they might contribute, to the more humane social life till they are peopled by boys and girls, and ordered (as the world, before it can be really humane, must be ordered) by men and women. That at least would not cost money. Nor would a breath in the stuffy over-disciplined class-room of our own much cherished individual liberty. If liberty is really worth anything to England, then it is worth something to her children, and if they are to love it, and understand it, and serve it with all their minds and hearts when men and women, then they must feel betimes something of its value, learn betimes something of its meaning, and experience betimes something of its service.

All the warmongers of to-day, Sir, incredible as it may seem, were once, in this unhappy land or others, little children, and the children of little children. It is my profound conviction that a few inspired Ministers of Education, with free hands and unstinted treasuries, might have saved the world from the present hell and have helped to establish an earthly heaven.—Your humble but loyal colleague,

JOHN RUSSELL.

"THE CHILD IN THE HOME."

To-day, when thousands of "Our Boys" are giving their young lives for their country, it is more than ever important that we should tenderly care for the children in our midst. Even Anti-Suffragists will agree that the rearing and educating of the young is essentially "Woman's Work," and it is because we want to do this work efficiently that we demand full political power to enable us to do it.

Mothers to-day cannot consider their duty done when their own children's needs are supplied; they know they are responsible for that larger family, the children of the State—and this in spite of the fact that a married mother is not considered the legal parent of her child nor allowed the rights of citizenship in this country.

We cannot agree with Mr. Asquith, who, when speaking on the Conciliation Bill, said: "Parliament, I venture to say, has shown itself to the full as regardful of the special conditions and special interests of women and children—(cheers)—neither of whom are directly interested—as it has of adult men who are represented in this House."

It is only necessary to see how the law treats widows and orphans in this country to disprove this assertion.

The State offers through the Poor Law:—

(1) The widow and her family may come into the Poor-house. In this case the children will be taken from the mother and given into the care of other women paid by the State to do the mother's work.

(2) The widow and her family may have out-relief. Before this is granted the family must be proved to be "destitute," and usually the first offer made is to take one or two of the children and place them in "homes." The relief varies in different parishes from 6d. to 2s. 6d. per child per week, with or without two loaves of bread.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking two years ago on this subject, said:—"The out-relief given to the widows who are left with children whom they have to support is miserably inadequate and utterly unsatisfactory." But it is not only this, it is most inhuman treatment to take children away from their mother just at the moment when she most needs their solace. The mother-love is needed in the rearing of healthy children, and no one should separate the family from the mother unless under dire necessity. As these children cost the State from

SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 56.

THE VOTE.

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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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AGENTS.

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THE CHILD IN THE NATIONS.

Once more, for the third time since the Great War in Europe began, nations which have given for centuries lip-homage to the Child of Peace are holding their annual festival in His honour. To thousands upon thousands it will be a sad feast day. Haunting memories of small shrill voices and eager faces and bright eyes shining with child-love will pass like shadows through our homes.

Where are these children of ours now? Many, aged prematurely by suffering, nerve-shaken by the horror through which they have passed, are still living. At the front, in prison cells if they have refused to fight, and in hospitals all over the world they may be found. Some are at home, young, shattered forms for the rest of their lives, sheltered and protected if they have friends, and multitudes have gone through the fiery gate of pain unutterable to where "beyond these waters there is Peace!"

"Happy Christmas!" To myriads of aching souls in Christendom the very words this year will seem like mockery. Shall we therefore be silent? Ah, no! Rather let us try, bidding our own sorrows sleep, to get behind the old, familiar words and find a new meaning in them.

Christmas—the Christ-child. "Unto us a child is born." It is no new thing, nor does it belong to the past. Always they are arriving, strange, sweet guests! Out of the darkness they come: into the darkness whole armies of them are passing, not through necessity, but because we, as a nation, have failed to provide them with fitting life-conditions. And why?

It is the habit of the politicians to blame the working-mothers. Possibly some of them are not so wise as they might be. Their lives, subject to all sorts of violent fluctuations—strikes, periods of out-of-work, illness, and accident to the breadwinner—do not offer them opportunities to act freely. The marvel is that they win through so well. Heaven knows that little help is given to them.

After the war is over, it will perhaps be remembered that during its course certain of our politicians have spoken strongly on housing conditions. Are our gallant boys at the Front, they say, to come back to dens and hovels? If the question of housing reform had been firmly tackled years ago, there would have been now larger and more efficient armies to fight for their country.

Scientific men have made the discovery that fresh, untainted milk is the best food for small children. To-day it is out of the reach of working-mothers, and milk from tuberculous cows is allowed to be sold. Open-air exercise, wholesome and sufficient food, warm clothing and water-tight footwear are generally acknowledged to be essential to the healthy upbringing of the child. To myriads of mothers in our civilised nations these are as unobtainable as the moon. Fathers, teachers, and doctors know this perfectly well. Fools and blind! "Man-power, more, more!" is their cry. "Child-welfare—well! that is a question that can be thought out by and by." Always the woman and the child must wait the moment of the man.

We do not speak in bitterness. Far other should be our thoughts at this sad Christmas-tide. We merely state a fact. To women everywhere belong the bearing and rearing of children. That is the work of myriads of women: that is their pre-occupation. While they are denied their place in the State, is it possible to expect that the politician will listen to their appeal? He has his constituents to serve, and they give him no mandate to legislate for the child.

May it be—this is our wish for the country—that, before another Christmas dawns, the dark shadow that oppresses us having passed away, men and women everywhere will be able to work together for reconstruction, the first plank in which will be to rear a generation strong enough, pure enough, and wise enough to live without war.

"And a little child shall lead them." Why? Because the interests of the child will be felt to be paramount in the State.

Happy, indeed, will be the Christmas that sees this new era open!

C. DESPARD.

THE NATIONS AND THE CHILD.

By S. Gertrude Ford.

I.

"We live by our Fleet," said a nation,
 "By the pomp of the sovereign sea.
 Why raise the mother's station?
 Why seek the child's salvation?
 By the Navy lives the nation,"
 But the Child said, "Nay, by me!"

"We live by the Sword," said another;
 "Our guns make history.
 What if in slums we smother
 And starve both child and mother?
 We live by the Sword, my brother,"
 But the Child said, "Nay, by me!"

And still, as they talked together
 Of the way to be great and free,
 Lands of the storm-swept heather
 Or of palms in windless weather,
 They brushed aside as a feather
 The Child crying "Build on me!"

II.

O Thou, the King of Heaven,
 Thou knewest what Thou didst!
 When in Thy followers, even,
 Earth's glory worked like leaven,
 A glory seven times seven,
 Thou gav'st—the Child in the midst.

Proud builders, scorn the humble!
 Towers, temples broadly built,
 Like a house of cards shall tumble,
 By a child's hand shall crumble,
 The child ye left to stumble
 And starve, in want and guilt.

At pomps and dominations,
 Beleaguering years have smiled:
 This is the way—Salvation's;
 Here lie the world's foundations.
 Save, ye who mould the nations,
 The Mother who moulds the Child!

THEIR GLORIOUS HERITAGE.

"With few exceptions babies are born healthy," this is the experience of a man who devotes his life to the welfare of children. Then why do they not enjoy their heritage of health? Why is there such an appalling death-rate among infants? The reply is "stupidity," the stupidity that is content to run in the old rut, which is deep with the depth of age-long use. This attitude of mind is the "mountain" which must be removed by the faith of those who hold that all things are possible to the child, if only we will pull ourselves out of this deathly groove and march forward *with Nature* along the open, breezy highway of commonsense which leads to health and sanity.

As our grandmothers did, so do we! "Wrap baby up in a nice thick veil; above all, shut the windows when baby is about," to keep out that fatal pure air! "Our grandmothers were *womanly* women, who stayed at home and minded the babies themselves, we cannot do better than follow their advice," and so on till—baby dies, and we are persuaded to "bow to the dispensations of Providence"—the Providence that *by baby's death* is telling us we are wholly and entirely on the wrong track.

I could give you grim facts concerning baby's death, I prefer to tell you that baby lives—if you give it the chance! This is not theory, but plain and simple truth. For two years we have run Maternity Wards at Brackenhill, Bromley, Kent, one hundred babies have been born there, and this number, though small comparatively, is large enough to prove that given a new-born babe, fresh air and pure milk (there is no room here to speak upon the all-important food question), the result is a healthy child. These babies have been born to all sorts and conditions of mothers, from highly educated women to crassly ignorant girls hardly out of their childhood physically, certainly not out of it mentally; to women of all nationalities, and of most divergent physique, a large percentage of whom were suffering from great anxiety, and many from terrors unimaginable, and yet with few, *very few*, exceptions, the babies were healthy and all, *without exception*, have responded to our simple rules—cradles in the open-air by day and open windows by night, and when they have left us at the end of four, six, or eight weeks they have been perfect specimens of babyhood. I know it is beyond belief, but what is more astonishing still, this treatment works equally well with wasting babies. Children looking hardly human for want of fresh air and lack of nourishment—malnutrition is the result of *wrong* feeding as often as the result of *no* feeding—in a few weeks become so beautiful (this is no figure of speech) that their own mothers fail to recognise them.

All things belong to baby, it is we, the mothers, who withhold. I wish space would allow of more than a touch upon the outer fringe of these great mysteries—the welfare of the child *before* birth; the *preparing* of our bodies, these Temples of Life; for the divine ray which may dwell therein; of our, possibly, unlimited power over this most pliable material that lies for months beneath our heart during the most impressionable period of its growth, subject then, and *only* then, to no influence save our own, into which we must pour the light of purer desires, of deeper sympathies, of more selfless devotion, before our children can come *fully* into their glorious heritage. This most sacred act of creation brings us nearest to the divine, and if we will but cry with soul-sincerity: "Let there be Light," there *will* be light!

K. HARVEY.

SANTA CLAUS.

"But I want to stay here, muvver."
 "An' so do I," said Bert and Maud and Jackie;
 and the baby echoed: "Me, too."

None of the children wanted to leave their old home, and mother didn't want to leave it any more than they did; but what could she do? Father had been discharged from the army as unfit, and he was to have no pension, because he must have been unfit, the pension people said, when he went in. So father was back ill; and because he had no pay and no pension and was too ill to work, there was nothing to pay the rent with, and precious little with which to meet the baker's bill. As for the butcher's bill, that was simple enough: there *was* no butcher's bill.

The children did not trouble about bills. What troubled them was that if they moved, Santa Claus would not know their new address and might not be able to find them. Santa Claus had always called, every Christmas Eve, and he would never pass the house without leaving something in every stocking; of that the children were sure; but if he came and found them gone, how *could* he know where they had gone to? Supposing, Polly suggested, they were to leave a message? And the suggestion found favour in the eyes of all, and Bert, who was one of the best writers in his division at school, got hold of a piece of paper and wrote on it: "Please bring our things to 10, Vine-street," and folded the paper and directed it to Mr. S. Claws; and Polly put it on the mantelpiece of the back bedroom just before they left the house.

No. 10, Vine-street was ever so much smaller than No. 12, George-street, but the children did not mind that so very much. They were cramped, to be sure, especially as father had to have a room all to himself, but they did not think much about the cramping. What they thought about was that Christmas was drawing near and would Santa Claus find their message and then find them? They did not, of course, know that their message had been swept into a dust-bin; and they did not know that besides the Saint who follows in the wake of the Christ Child, the Messenger of Peace, to give His message to children in a way they can understand, there walked, this Christmas-tide, through many and many a street, a Servitor of the God of War, whose task it was to clear away the fragments of the manhood that the god had shattered. And they did not know that this servitor had stopped very early in the morning of Christmas Eve at 10, Vine-street. "Pore lambs," said mother, "I shan't say nothink to 'em till Christmas is over"; but because of her anguish and because of her penury the stockings were all empty.

Yet—had Santa Claus got the message? Passing a door that should have been closed, but was ajar, Bert saw what caused him to summon Polly and Maud. Together they stood and looked.

"It's a corfin," said Bert, and he remembered, and Polly remembered, that ever since Bob Taylor had passed through George-street in a mourning-coach, they had wanted to belong to a funeral. But they had thought only of the black glory of it, and of the magnificence of riding in a coach. Now . . .

"A corfin means as somebody . . . That's muvver crying," said Polly. "Dad . . ."

Mother came out of the room. "You 'ere?"

"Is Dad dead?" asked Polly.

"E's gorn, but I meant . . ."

"It's all along of us," said Polly.

"I wish we'd never wrote," said Bert.

"Did Santa Claus bring the corfin?" asked Maud.

"Santa Claus?" said mother. "What cher talkin' about? There ain't no more Santa Clauses for us. Yer dad . . ."

Her voice broke and she sank to the ground amidst the children, and there they all cried together. For the Servitor had ousted Santa Claus.

G. COLMORE.

WAR SAVINGS AND THE GOVERNMENT.

"It is more than a crime; it is a political fault."
—JOSEPH FOUCHÉ.

Each generation repeats these words. In Scotland we are having a War Savings' Week. Every-one is exhorted to save. But what encouragement do the Government give to the thrifty to lay by their pennies? Petition after petition has gone up to the House of Parliament from the women of Scotland, asking that, at least for the period of the war, we should have total prohibition. The Government pays no heed to the insistent cry. Instead we are told to eat stale bread, drink sugarless tea, deny sweets to the children. Under no circumstances poke the fire, for fuel is scarce. Travel less, so as to economise labour, coal, and rolling stock. Yet the Government sanctions a weekly expenditure of 1,000,000 bushels of corn, sufficient for the bread used in the French and British armies, and, where they have partially stopped corn, they have substituted vast quantities of barley. Every week sugar is used in such quantities for our breweries and distilleries as would supply an army of 5,000,000 men. The railways, upon which we are not to travel because they are congested and overworked, are each week burdened with the delivery of 40,000 tons of drink stuffs. Lastly, we have the coal; is it reasonable to ask the public carefully to abstain from poking the fire, while between 5,000 and 6,000 miners work day and night to supply the brewers and distillers? Since the outbreak of war we have spent £400,000,000 on drink. If you add to this the loss caused by inefficiency, crime, disease and poverty caused by drink, the waste is incalculable. The entire savings of the thrifty are swamped by the loss in drink. Not only the Government, but magistrates and judges seem to consider drink a necessity. If you commit a crime and have the luck to be proved drunk your sentence is nominal. On November 14 two men were tried at Dumfries for manslaughter. They drowned a fellow workman; all three were drunk at the time. One man was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment, the other to twelve months. This was the sentence passed upon them. The reporter adds, "both men appeared surprised at the leniency of the sentence." As long as drink is made an excuse for crime, nothing will be done. It is useless to speak of thrift until a practical campaign is encouraged; drink should be abolished, foolish and extravagant advertisements should cease. No paper should be allowed to print these advertisements. Every paper we open in full of them. In one week I received three catalogues from London, advertising "suitable Yuletide gifts," on the front page of one was a "small week-end dressing case" for a lady, price 160 guineas. Yet we are told paper and labour are scarce. Luxuries should be taxed until they are prohibitive. Drink should not be sold. Those who enrich themselves at the public's expense should be punished under the Defence of the Realm Acts. I do not believe in a food controller. The Government as usual has been driven on to action by the will of the people, and

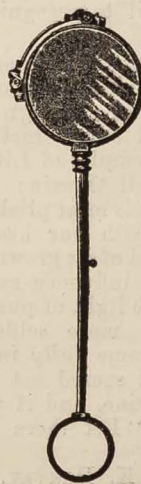
as usual it has entrenched itself behind a rampart of words and meaningless phrases. What we want is not a food controller so much as one who will insist that all, beginning with the Government, practise economy, and that all who are wasteful and extravagant be brought to book under the existing machinery. Nor do I believe that man without woman's help is able to efficiently control food. The Woman's Freedom League long ago offered to supply cooks for the soldiers' camps, to ensure comfort for the men and a saving to the nation. It is a thousand pities the offer was not accepted. On the East coast last week I was told that at a large camp the porridge for the soldiers' breakfast was each day thrown out because it was raw and the men could neither swallow it nor digest it, the result being the men flocked to the nearest shop and bought what food they could, pastries and such like stuff. Thus a double waste of food and money took place, all because the poor fellows could not cook. And the Government prefers to throw out food rather than allow a woman to cook for them. Truly the incompetence of man has been well demonstrated in this war. They would rather muddle away than find salvation through women. They have called upon women to save the country in the industrial world. They have called upon her to practise economy. Let them now call upon women to save the country by inviting their co-operation in the ruling of the country. As George Chapman as far back as 1687 said:—

"Let no man value at a little price
A virtuous woman's counsel."

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STALL TAKINGS.		£	s.	d.
Comforts Stall	...	10	0	3
General Stall	...	11	11	2
Handkerchief Stall	...	13	3	6
Home-made Provisions Stall	...	7	6	3
London Branches Council Stall	...	10	15	5
Montgomery Boroughs Stalls—				
Cake and candy	...	7	10	10
General	...	14	6	2
		21	17	0
Old Curiosity Shoppe	...	3	4	0
Toy Stall	...	4	4	3
White Stall	...	11	16	3
		93	18	1
Vote Stall	...	25	1	0
		£118	19	1



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Mr. McCLEAN will be pleased to test the eyes of readers of this paper entirely free of charge and advise thereon. By our method of testing the sight and fitting the individual face, perfect satisfaction is assured, both with regard to sight and comfort in wear.

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SEE OUR SALE AND EXCHANGE, PAGE 56.

FIFTY THOUSAND SHILLING FUND. Fourth List of Contributions.

	£	s.	d.
Amount previously acknowledged	336	9	4
Branches—			
Clapham (additional)	1	0	0
Montgomery Boroughs (additional)	1	1	0
Nine Elms	1	0	0
Reading	2	0	0
Tufnell Park (additional)	10	0	0
Per Miss Eunice Murray	9	0	0
Minerva Café	5	0	0
Mrs. Sargant Florence	5	0	0
Mrs. Kate Thomson	4	10	0
Mrs. Julia Wood	4	0	0
Mrs. Walter Carey	2	0	0
Captain and Mrs. Carey	1	0	0
Mrs. Despard	1	0	0
Mrs. Murray	11	0	0
Mrs. Dawson Clark	10	0	0
"A Friend" (per Mrs. W. Giles)	10	0	0
Mrs. E. L. Leech	10	0	0
Mrs. Shaw (per Mrs. Julia Wood)	10	0	0
Mrs. A. Tancred	8	0	0
Mrs. Mallalue	5	0	0
Mrs. Corner (per Clapham Branch)	5	0	0
Miss Husband	5	0	0
Mrs. McCracken	5	0	0
Miss C. Newman	5	0	0
Anonymous Sympathiser (per Mrs. E. Jukes)	5	0	0
Miss Nora Tennant	5	0	0
Miss J. D. Thomson (per Glasgow Branch)	4	0	0
Miss Steven (per Glasgow Branch)	4	0	0
Miss F. A. Underwood (per Clapham Branch)	2	0	0
Mrs. Powell	1	0	0
Major A.	1	0	0
"Aberystwyth"	1	0	0
Miss Bell (per Miss Raleigh)	1	0	0
Mrs. E. Taylor-Brown	1	0	0
Miss Kathleen Buck	1	0	0
Miss C. E. Gaskell	1	0	0
Miss J. Maxwell	1	0	0
Miss Metcalfe	1	0	0
Miss Payne (per Mrs. Dawson Clark)	1	0	0
Miss Rumsey (per Miss Raleigh)	1	0	0
Mrs. Sutcliffe (per Clapham Branch)	1	0	0
	384	5	4
Birthday Fund (previously acknowledged)	411	15	6
	£796	0	10

The Electoral Reform Conference.

Last Saturday the *Times*, in its "Political Notes," stated that the Speaker's Electoral Reform Conference was for the moment in suspense, that three members—Sir Robert Finlay, Colonel Craig, and Mr. Walsh—had joined the Government, and three others had resigned. "As the Conference received its mandate from the old Government," it adds, "it will probably not resume its sittings until it has obtained a new one from their successors." On December 19 "A. P. N.," the Lobby Correspondent of the *Daily News*, wrote on the subject as follows:—

"The proceedings of the Committee on Electoral Reform, presided over by the Speaker, are, of course, private, and any echoes of their doings which have reached the Press are unofficial and unauthorised. This is understood, but it is none the less a matter for legitimate comment, since it is now an open secret among Members at Westminster that Sir Frederick Bambury, Lord Salisbury, and Colonel Craig have resigned from this committee on a franchise issue. Great regret is expressed that they should have taken this course. It is interpreted as a sign that the Conservative element they represent is stiffening itself against the spirit of compromise on suffrage questions which up to now had been fostered by the Speaker's Committee." "A. P. N." goes on to remark: "The present, like the late, Government has little, if any, time to devote to this domestic problem, on which a good lead by such a representative committee might have been invaluable. For the problem of the suffrage, on which the next Parliament is to be elected—with the attendant question of a redistribution of seats—is vital to the country after the war—unless, indeed, as some reactionary Conservatives seem to hope, an autocracy or a bureaucracy is to take the place of the democratic Government to which we had attained."

For the time being our picketers may take furlough, but the situation demands ever-increasing activity on the part of all women suffragists and their friends.

Political Meeting.

Mrs. Tanner presided, in the absence of Miss Murray through illness, at a political meeting on December 15, at the Minerva Café. The two things occupying people's minds at the time—the changes in the Government and the talk of peace—made her feel more than ever the imperative need for women to have a voice in politics. Mrs. Whetton declared that it was a hopeful sign to see the anti-suffragists on the warpath again, but they were quite out of date with their arguments that this was not the time, nor the present Parliament the right one to deal with woman suffrage. Mrs. Mustard followed with a word of advice and warning. Though we may under present conditions have a better chance of enfranchisement, we must not sit down and wait, depending on politicians.

Coming straight from the train, Mrs. Schofield Coates was kind enough to speak. The changes in the political situation were taken very, very quietly in the North, she said, though there was much speculation about what Lloyd George would do.

BRANCH NOTES.

Edinburgh Suffrage Shop, 90, Lothian-road.

Our last Branch meeting for 1916 was addressed by Mr. Andrew Young, M.A., a tried and trusted friend of the women's cause and other progressive movements. He spoke on "Women in the Industrial World, To-day and Tomorrow," taking as his text the official book on "Women's War Work." Dealing with the problems that will have to be settled after the war, he insisted strongly on the need for organisation and on the principle of equal pay for equal work. An interesting discussion followed. Last Saturday a successful Christmas sale was held. Contributions from members and friends are gratefully acknowledged. Everything found a ready sale, but, not unnaturally, the amount sent in was smaller than usual. It is most urgent, however, that effort should not be slackened at present, and any further contributions will be most gratefully acknowledged.

Clapham.

A Branch meeting was held at 15, Clapham-mansions on December 14, Miss St. Clair being in the chair. The following afternoon a recital of fairy tales and folk songs was given by Miss K. Raleigh and Miss Anne Squire at the Grafton Galleries, Grafton-street, W., in aid of the Women's Freedom League Settlement at Nine Elms, the programme being arranged by Mrs. Corner, and the Grafton Galleries being placed at the disposal of the Branch for the recital by Mrs. Ronald McAllister. It is hoped that the Settlement will benefit by this effort to the amount of £42.

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THE VOTE

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Children's Jumpers and Frocks from 6s. Sports Coats from 13s. 6d.
Lessons in SPINNING and WEAVING given. Terms on applica-
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ON

Veneral Disease in its Relation to
the Political Disability of Women.

Being an answer to the Home Secretary's Mansion House
Speech. Signed by Sixteen (16) Magistrates of the
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Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage. A record of
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15s.; cheap.

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Also several other dress and blouse
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FOR SALE.—cont.

ELECTRIC IRON, 100 volts;
12s. 6d.

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WHITE WOOLLEN WRAP and
MATINEE COATS;** cheap.

CORDED SILK MACKINTOSH,
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silver, Italian style, set blister
pearls; £2 2s.

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LENGTH,** 27s.

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pleated skirt; 25s.

**DINNER SUIT, MORNING DITTO
and ETON;** suit slim youth about
17; perfect condition; best quality;
bargains.

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flannel shirts, 7s. 6d.; hand-made silver
jewellery, blister pearl pendant and
necklet, 30s.; twin blister pearl
brooches, 35s. 6d.; twin pins, blue
enamel, 19s. 6d.; twin pins, mother of
pearl, 10s. 6d.; pin, topaz, 14s. 6d.;
pin, mother of pearl, 6s. 6d.; brooch,
copper and silver, 8s. 6d.

MISCELLANEOUS.

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—Freehold Building Plots, suit-
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MISCELLANEOUS.—cont.

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able, durable and guaranteed un-
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Profits on sale to go to the seller's own
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