

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 1919.

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

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

THE DISABILITIES OF MARRIED WOMEN.
E. Ayres Purdie.
WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.
WOMEN AND THE CIVIL SERVICE.

THE MANGLE AND THE BOY.
E. M. N. Clark.
MISTRESSES AND MAIDS.
OUR INDIAN SISTERS.
Margaret Hodge.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

"It will be the duty of the New Government to remove all existing inequalities of the law as between men and women."

NO SHIRKING!

ELECTION MANIFESTO signed by
MR. LLOYD GEORGE, Prime Minister. MR. BONAR LAW, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

WOMEN AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

The Women's Freedom League, which has always stood for the principle of equal numbers of men and women on all important bodies, heartily endorses the following letter, a copy of which has been sent to the Organising Secretary of the League of Nations:—

To A. M. O'Brien, Esq.

Dear Sir,—In answer to the Resolution of the Northern Men's Federation passed in Edinburgh on June 8th, a member of your Council has written to the Secretary of the Edinburgh Branch of the Northern Men's Federation to say that, instead of sending resolutions, women should work to get on to the Committee of the League of Nations. I am to write and point out to you that this is not possible, unless women are invited to do so by the promoters of the League, and that, as the Government, or Administration, of the British Section of the League, is now in formation, now is the time to invite women for election on to its committee or governing body.

It has always been a maxim of my organisation that it is dangerous for a nation to have its women disaffected, and that the quarrel between the Suffragists and the Government that denied them equal rights with men, was largely responsible for stirring up the strife among the common people, that has followed on the memorable combat.

There were no women speakers at the great inaugural meeting of the League at the Albert Hall on June 13th,

but the Rt. Hon. J. R. Clynes, M.P., told the audience that Labour was to have a seat at the International Congresses of the League, and my Committee feels that if male labour is to have direct representation there, female labour has a right also to send its woman representatives in order that woman's labour shall, like man's, be protected internationally. It follows, therefore, that if woman's labour has representation, other sections of womanhood have also rights to be internationally respected, and my Society respectfully wishes to point out that Great Britain is strong enough to lead in the matter, and can furnish the names of many great-minded public women, such as Mrs. Fawcett, Lady Cowdray, Lady Selborne, Mrs. Sidney Webb, and many others, who would represent all shades of public opinion and who are quite competent to sit at any political International Congress.

I am to say that with the sexes, as with the classes, a better understanding of the needs of humanity and its aspirations will be arrived at by thus working out the problems of life together in all the national and international conferences of the League, and that it is not safe to assume that man alone can speak with authority for woman, any more than woman alone can decide what is best for man.—I am, yours obediently,

MRS. M. ARNCLIFFE-SENNETT,

President of the Northern Men's League
for Women's Suffrage.

THE DISABILITIES OF MARRIED WOMEN.

"By the common law of England a wife is treated as the subject of her husband, so far as her separate existence is recognised at all; in many respects her identity is completely merged in that of her husband."

What are women going to do about it now that they have gained the vote? Are they prepared to sit down tamely under conditions such as the above?

Let us proceed to examine a few of the results which inevitably proceed from these conditions.

One result, now happily obsolete, was that in ancient times a specially horrible punishment was reserved for a subject who killed the monarch, or a wife who killed her husband. These were looked upon as the two gravest crimes which it was possible to commit, and ensuring penalties designed to terrorise most effectually those who might otherwise be disposed to remove a tyrannical monarch or husband. Even now, many good people almost unconsciously regard the murder of a husband by his wife as a far more grave and reprehensible action than its converse. Wife murder, indeed, is still a fairly commonplace form of crime.

Coming to results obtaining in our own time, a woman, as soon as she marries, loses her nationality and domicile. Common law imposes upon her the nationality and domicile selected by her husband. I remember that I once won an income-tax appeal case in which this point cropped up. My client, a married woman, was asked if she was an English subject and owed allegiance to King George. I immediately objected to the question on the ground that by common law a married woman was the subject of her husband and could not owe allegiance to another person. This was a staggerer for the other side; but after a protracted discussion it was agreed that the law was as I had stated it, and, therefore, the question was withdrawn. I have sometimes wondered to what extent this state of things affects women in the Civil Service. Civil Servants have to take the oath of personal allegiance to the monarch. Female Civil Servants are dismissed on marriage. Of course, it is obvious that if the law makes their nationality, domicile, and allegiance follow their husband, then marriage (which nullifies the woman herself) nullifies equally her oath of allegiance to a monarch. I should imagine that this view of the subject carries very great weight with Governments in deciding their attitude to married women. Of course, it need hardly be said that the puerile legal ideas concerning the status of married women are two-edged weapons which can cut both ways. I have never complied with the Act for the Registration of Business Names (one of Dora's brilliant efforts). On receiving the form which has to be filled up, I discovered one question demanded my nationality. I wrote against it that being married I had none. The form was returned to me explaining that what was required was my husband's nationality. I replied that this was an entirely different thing from what I had been asked at first, and that, though I was anxious to comply with the Act, I was, of course, unable to make a statement concerning the nationality of any person other than myself. So the Act has never been complied with, and I have long hoped I might be brought before a magistrate, but my hopes have been blighted. The authorities apparently prefer to retire unobserved from the deadlock they have created; and I am thinking of demanding the return of the 5s. fee which I paid to them for the purpose of a registration which they have never effected.

Within the last few days the Government has admitted in the House of Commons that passports allowing married women to leave the country are not issued unless they have obtained the permission of their husbands. This system is one which has been discarded by the Bolsheviks and adopted by this country. It was peculiar to the Russian Empire under the Tsarist

régime, where a married woman not only was prevented from leaving the country, but could not even travel from place to place within it without her husband's knowledge and consent. Wives travelling in defiance of these conditions were seized by the police and bundled back to their lawful owners in the place from whence they came. This system is no longer good enough for Russian women, but is good enough for English women. I wonder how many women noticed this incident in the Commons or registered a protest against the system. One can easily imagine all the indignities that can be inflicted on women citizens under such a system. Men travel to and fro on their lawful occasions, and leave the country for business or pleasure when it suits them. Who ever dreams of asking them if their wives are consenting parties to their departure? If anybody, for example, seeks to engage me for work which necessitates my temporary presence in another country (a thing which frequently occurs) my acceptance of the work is to depend upon another person's consent! What a position for the head of a business to be placed in! And some women have husbands who would say, in such a case, "How much am I to get for giving my consent?"

It will be a shock to many domestic employers to learn the risk they incur in employing married women who reside on their premises. If an employer permits a married woman to sleep under his roof after the husband has forbidden it, the employer is liable to an action by the husband for damages for "harbouring" the woman.

Of course the average husband is far from being aware of his common law rights, and most of them would, we hope, be as disgusted with such rights as are the women over whom they could exercise them. But what I have already seen as a danger resulting from these rights of husbands, and what is likely under present conditions to become an increasing menace, is the opportunity offered to a man to blackmail his wife. Many women, unfortunately, possess thoroughly worthless and unscrupulous husbands. These women may often want to accept situations as domestic workers, shop assistants, or other indoor employees, or they may want to emigrate, or to visit relations in other countries. The husband says to them something like this: "I have certain rights which I can exercise to your detriment. It will pay you, it will be to your interest, that I should not do so. How much are you prepared to give me to refrain from asserting my rights as a husband?" It is blackmail made easy. The husband of a successful doctor or trader could extort money from her by simply threatening to change his nationality, which, by automatically altering hers, might ruin her practice or her business. I am not dealing in fancies, but in actual facts.

I have simply mentioned outstanding injustices, and, unfortunately, "Common Law" is the unwritten law of the country, not to be found in any statutory enactments, and therefore the more difficult to combat because so intangible. There is nothing actual to repeal or amend.

Statute law is no better than common law; for from the Income Tax Act of 1918, which was passed by the House of Commons but a few months since (and after women had votes) I cull the following choice extract: "Incapacitated person means any infant, lunatic, married woman, idiot or insane person." Shame on those that passed this! Where were those men who should have risen in the House to resent and resist this insult to their wives and mothers? But doubtless to those who possess a sense of humour it might also present itself in another aspect, as a back-handed reflection on men at large; the inference being that a woman who is such a fool as to marry any man is mentally on a level with lunatics, idiots, and insane persons. And I have noticed that the modern young woman who thinks at all about things is inclined to be of this same opinion.

ETHEL AYRES PURDIE.

WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Women and Housing.

It is good news to learn that at least three women are to sit upon the new Advisory Council appointed to give advice and assistance to the Local Government Board in connection with its new housing scheme. These are Lady Emmott, Mrs. E. Barton, and Mrs. Sanderson Furniss. All three have done good service in the past in connection with housing reform; Lady Emmott as chairman of the Women's Housing Subcommittee of the Advisory Council of the Ministry of Reconstruction, Mrs. Barton as member of the same, and Mrs. Sanderson Furniss as member of the Executive Committee of the Garden City Association.

Women Bankers.

Banking, as a future career for women, has received much encouragement from the recent decision of the Institute to treat women in the future on the same equality as men. The decree, that women as well as men must become members of the Institute before they can sit for examination, conveys no hint of hardship to the feminine mind. A fair field and no favour has ever been the basic principle of suffragist demands.

The Rose Sidwick Scholarship.

The sudden lamented death, just as she was returning home, of Miss Rose Sidwick, one of the members of the British educational mission which visited the United States last year, is to be memorialised by American University women in the endowment of a scholarship which will be awarded annually to British women for purposes of research work. Every American college and university which Miss Sidwick visited has subscribed to the fund.

Women and Thatching.

At a recent competition at Reigate, four women gained the maximum marks for skill in thatching. Two local farmers, judges in the contest, said they had never seen better thatching done by men.

At Last!

The London County Council has at last decided to give some training to would-be women cooks. A free course of instruction, under an experienced chef, will commence in September at the Westminster Technical Institute in Vincent Square. A maintenance grant of £5 will be paid, and a meal provided on each day of attendance. Candidates must be resident in London, between the ages of 17 and 35, and have been in domestic service for at least a year.

It is now some ten years or more since the L.C.C. inaugurated a three-year course to train boys to become chefs at this same Institute. It created a good deal of interest at the time, being specially designed to give London boys an opportunity to fill important posts in the kitchens of large hotels, which, in those days, were almost entirely monopolised by foreigners. The course, it appears, was designed as a mere introduction to culinary mysteries, for even at the end of their three years' training, the boy chef still had to enter the hotel kitchen as a mere scullion, and spend many years longer in the perfecting of his art. Such a procedure illustrates, no doubt, the complexity of cookery as a high art, but it does not explain why the profession of a chef should not be thrown open to both sexes. Is it that the bogey of possible marriage (and subsequent uselessness!) threatens in the background here as in many another system of apprenticeship?

Women's Royal Air Force.

The Air Ministry announce that it is proposed to embody a special provision in the Finance Bill exempting from taxation benefits payable to officers and other ranks of the Women's Royal Air Force.

Girl Swimmers.

The younger generation of women cannot be accused of disliking cold water. In London the girls complain that many of the swimming baths are closed to women on several days of the week, and one girl said the bath she frequented was so full that it was almost impossible to see the water. More baths are needed as year by year the number of girl and women swimmers increases. Regular and better-paid employment, with its resulting better food, better clothes and more opportunities for healthful exercise, are not only bringing happiness to the individual girl and woman: they cannot fail to raise the national level of health and well-being.

Wanted—a Women's Factory.

The "Edith Cavell" National Projectile Factory, at Overnewton, Glasgow, is about to be sold by the Ministry of Munitions. Is it too much to hope that a building, named in honour of the heroic nurse, should be henceforth devoted to women's interests and women's trades? A factory for women engineers, or for women printers, or, indeed, for any women's trade, would not only act as a stimulus to the particular industry in question, but would absorb some of those unfortunate surplus women who are accused at present of undercutting the men. In a recent address to men at Whitefield's Tabernacle, Miss Royden pointed out the absolute necessity of those industries which had expanded during the War—especially the engineering industry—throwing open their doors to men and women alike. Equal pay for men and women, she contended, would result in a natural selection of industries in which women could participate, and a far happier and more communally useful selection than was allowed them with their present selective scope.

Tit for Tat.

The recent protest by Mr. Hercules, editor of the *African Telegraph*, in reply to Sir Ralph Williams' letter in the *Times*, contending that "intimate association between black men and white women is a thing of horror to almost every white man or woman," unveils another side to the picture. According to Mr. Hercules, there are 600,000 half-castes in South Africa alone, and a similar number with a like parentage to be found scattered over the various islands of the West Indies. Intimate immoral association between white men and black women, he shrewdly observes, is evidently not viewed with quite so much horror by Englishmen when abroad!

A Contest of Wits.

Two French newspapers, *Femina* and *La Vie Heureuse*, are offering a prize of £40 for the best recent English work of imagination by an English woman writer. Amongst the names of those French ladies who compose the committee appointed to decide the award, we are glad to see that of Mme. Cruppi, whose sympathetic little volume, "How Englishwomen Gained the Vote," was reviewed in last week's issue of THE VOTE. Other well-known French women writers on the committee are Mme. Alphonse Daudet, Mme. Adam, Mme. de Brintelles, etc. This is not the first time *La Vie Heureuse* has offered prizes to women writers. In 1905, as a protest against the exclusion of women from competing for the prize offered by the Goncourt Academy, this enterprising newspaper began a series of competitions, allotting a similar prize to the present one, for the best novel of the year written by a Frenchwoman. This year sees a widening of the original project by the inclusion of Englishwomen. Who knows if in time the scheme may not develop into an international affair? The English women writers who will act in collaboration with the French committee include Mrs. Belloc Lowndes, Lady Dilke, Miss Beatrice Harraden, Mrs. Katharine Tynan Hinkson, Mrs. John Lane, Miss Evelyn Sharp, Miss Winifred Stephens, and others.

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 To the Advertising Manager—on advertising.
 To the Secretary—on all other business, including 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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Women and the Civil Service.

Things are certainly moving in the Civil Service. Last Saturday a report (issued by the Ministry of Reconstruction) of the sub-committee of the Women's Advisory Committee, which was appointed to consider the position after the War of women holding temporary appointments in Government departments, contains the following recommendations:—

(1) Women should be eligible for all grades of appointment in the Civil Service on the same terms and conditions as men.

(2) That women should be admitted by the same examinations and at the same age as men to the junior clerical, senior clerical, and administrative classes.

(3) In the filling of professional and technical posts women should be treated equally with men. Where a woman is a candidate for such a post a committee of selection should include a woman, or women.

(4) One of the Civil Service commissioners should be a woman, and that a woman should be appointed to the section of the Treasury dealing with Civil Service organisation.

(5) Throughout the Civil Service women should receive equal opportunities of promotion with men, and equal rates of pay.

It is further recommended that women who have been temporarily employed in Government departments during the War, or otherwise than in Government departments in the work of direct utility to the prosecution of the War, be eligible for selection for permanent posts in the Civil Service. These, however, should be required to appear before a Selection Board on the same footing as His Majesty's Forces.

This particular sub-committee consisted of eight members, six of whom were women. The chairman was Mrs. Granville Streatfield, the other members being Miss Philippa Fawcett, Mrs. Vaughan Nash, Miss L. F. Nettlefold, Miss Reta Oldham, Miss Tuke, Mr. C. R. Pitt, and Mr. Graham Wallas, with Miss Hinton Smith acting as secretary. It is particularly gratifying to those who have always demanded "Equal pay for equal work" to note this committee's contention that "the system of a lower scale of pay may lead to the appointment of women on the ground of cheapness rather than of merit. This result would be not only detrimental to the service, but also inequitable to the men, who would be 'under-cut.'"

We hope that the Government will act on the findings of this report without delay, and throw open every grade of the Civil Service—the highest posts as well as the lower ones—to women on the same terms as to men. The country will then have a far better chance of getting full value for its money than it has at present with its restricted choice of male servants.

The Pre-War Practices (Restoration) Bill.

The Women's Freedom League has written to the Minister of Labour (Sir Robert Horne), to all members of the Labour Party in the House of Commons, as well as to several other Members of Parliament, urging that the following words be added as a fourth sub-section to Section I. of this Bill:—

"Provided always that no person shall be subject to any disability on grounds of sex."

It is pointed out in the Women's Freedom League's letter that the Bill, as it stands, will legalise men Trade Unionists' pre-War injustices to women by keeping them out of the better-paid trades and sections of trades, thereby imposing a new legal disability on women, in spite of the Prime Minister's and Mr. Bonar Law's pre-Election joint pledge that "it will be the duty of the new Government to remove all existing inequalities of the law as between men and women."

The letter further points out that if the words we suggest are inserted in this Bill the Government will be enabled to fulfil its pledges to men Trade Unionists without treating its pledge to women as a mere scrap of paper.

It is curious to note the kind of arguments which are being used by men trade unionists, and by supporters of this Bill in the press, in order to appease the opposition which it has aroused. We are told that the Bill will be a dead letter as soon as it is passed. Then why in the name of common sense waste public time in passing it? It is to be a basis on which negotiations can afterwards be made with women to improve their position in industry; and one writer goes so far as to assert that this Bill is a first measure of reconciliation in the interests of men and women workers, and expresses the hope that they will all agree to support the Restoration Bill! We wonder what these same people would say if this Bill happened to be a Bill framed by women for the exclusion of working men from all the better-paid industries, and discussed in Committee and the House of Commons solely by women?

Women as Undercutters.

A woman having taken over a definite man's job during his absence on war service is in honour bound to relinquish it on his return. If a case of failure in this respect exists, it should be given the utmost publicity. Women, however, on the staffs of Government departments created during the War cannot be described as holding men's jobs; yet women in these departments are particularly referred to in articles and letters which have appeared recently in the Press, stating the earnest opinion of men that "women in these departments should now retire," as there are so many men out of employment. Is this even-handed justice? When has "the right to work" of an independent man been questioned on the score of a number of women being out of work—or on any question. Is it reasonable to complain that some women, formerly idle, even "find work a pleasant distraction"?

It is complained that in these same War departments men are dismissed, while women are retained. One only of two conclusions is possible from that fact: (1) the women cost less on the whole; or (2), the women are, on the whole, more efficient. If (1) is agreed upon it is obvious that the remedy is to enforce the payment of an equal wage, irrespective of sex, to prevent undercutting by women. Reject this conclusion, and the cause of preference for women must be their superior efficiency. That would be much to the credit of women, and be a remarkable testimonial to their commercial value. It would also suggest the agitation of the men for their removal to be inspired by fear or jealousy.

To sum up: It is too late now for men to attempt to shut women out and limit their freedom, when they have proved themselves essential to success in war, and to be capable of honest self-supporting independence. Man's first aim should be the prevention of undercutting by the immediate adoption of the principle of "Equal pay for equal work" in all Government departments.

THE MANGLE AND THE BOY.

No one can be more conscious how illogical and inhuman the law can be than the judges and magistrates who have to administer it. In a recent police court case at Willesden, a woman relinquished all claim to her husband, whom she said she did not want to have back, but she demanded the return of her mangle and her boy. "You can take out a summons for the return of the mangle which you say is yours," replied the magistrate, "but the boy is his father's property." From the tone of the reply, it may be gathered that this particular magistrate possesses a somewhat sardonic sense of humour, and he would probably agree that in this instance "the law is a hass." It is likely that the insulted mother denounced the law in less measured terms.

The law which this magistrate was called upon to administer holds that "the father is the natural guardian of his infant children and is entitled to the care and custody of them in preference to their mother." This is the statement made by Mr. Montague Lush in his work, *The Law of Husband and Wife*. He also states that "it does not follow as a matter of course that a party guilty of adultery, desertion, or cruelty should be for ever deprived of the custody of his children." A man who was cruel to his wife would not necessarily be cruel to his children, but the mother, whose shortcomings had been visited on her by the application of the kitchen poker, might well be excused if she were to think lightly of the law compelling her to regard her offspring as her husband's exclusive property. It is true that the right of guardianship may be delegated to the mother if the court considers that the father is unfit to exercise it, and she may have the custody of her children under seven. It is true also that there may be bad mothers as well as bad fathers, and the most zealous feminist would not desire to take a child away from a good father's care and to place it at the mercy of a bad mother. But a law which denies to the mother an equal right with the father to the custody of the children is one that is repugnant to natural feeling and to common-sense.

Insensate as the law may appear to us now, it is possible that to regard the father as the guardian and protector of his family was a natural and desirable arrangement in the days of man's primitive history when law was in its infancy. The patriarchal authority of the father of the family lingers in an aggravated form among the less developed peoples of the East, while it tends to disappear among the progressive nations of the West. Laws which perpetuate it are an anachronism in the modern community. It may be argued that men are better than their laws, and this we may gratefully acknowledge; if it were not so, no woman of spirit would consent to be either a wife or mother. But laws which outrage the better sense of the community must be swept off the Statute Book—their very existence has a malign sub-conscious influence.

The laws relating to the powers of both parents need revision. Years ago, Matthew Arnold warned parents that they could not claim to own their children as they owned the pictures on their dining-room walls. But practically, if not theoretically, the law gives the parent the rights of a proprietor, and unless he or she is guilty of physical cruelty or fails to provide food, clothes and lodging, it is very difficult to enforce the rights of the child, though the parent's neglect may be of a nature to ruin the child's character and career for life.

The entrance of women into the profession of the law will be of immense advantage to women on whom the laws relating to the guardianship of children press heavily. But we do not only want changes in administration; we need better laws. Times change, and laws, customs and institutions must be modified in accordance with the needs and aspirations of the present.

E. M. N. CLARK.

MISTRESSES AND MAIDS.

Schemes for solving the problem of domestic service have been particularly numerous of late, though few, apparently, have materialised. One more practical than its predecessors, however, has recently been evolved by a section of the National Federation of Women Workers (The Domestic Workers' Union), and held its first meeting at the Y.W.C.A. Hall, 26, George Street, Hanover Square, on Wednesday of last week.

At the afternoon meeting, reserved for mistresses, Mrs. Ayrton Gould presided, and explained that one of the privileges to members of the Union would be a bona-fide agency, run by the members themselves for their own benefit, and not for the purpose of making a profit, as in the case of the old pre-War registry, which did little else than pocket fees. The Union aimed at fair conditions for both mistresses and servants alike. For resident servants, these comprised a ten-hour working day with fixed time off for meals and recreation, proper sleeping accommodation, uniform (where worn) provided by the mistress, 14 days' holiday in the year on board wages, with a minimum wage of 12s. 6d. weekly. For non-resident servants, 10d. an hour without food, or 3s. 6d. a day with meals, and a 48-hour week. It was hoped to definitely start work in September, and to establish social clubs and training centres in connection with the scheme. Miss Jessie Stephen, secretary of the Union, and also an ex-domestic servant, pointed out that freedom rather than high wages was the demand of the modern servant. A higher standard of domestic efficiency was needed, for the upkeep of the home was just as nationally important as the work of the Prime Minister. The inconveniences of present-day houses, and the lack of labour-saving devices, were largely responsible for the present unrest.

Dr. Marion Phillips presided at the evening meeting, which consisted chiefly of domestic servants, with a sprinkling of mistresses. She enumerated the drawbacks of domestic service as at present constituted, viz., lack of independence, insufficient privacy, long and uncertain hours, payment by truck, inferior food and housing as compared with the employer, and urged the audience to definitely organise themselves under Trade Union principles so as to produce better conditions. A lively discussion followed at the close, in which caps and the "living-in" system figured as the more prominent grievances!

WOMEN'S RALLY IN PARLIAMENT SQUARE, JULY 4th.

The Bill of the greatest importance to women, which is before Parliament at the present time, is the Women's Emancipation Bill, which is due to come up for its report stage and third reading in the House of Commons on Friday afternoon, July 4th; and we ask our members and friends to show their interest in the passage of this Bill into law by walking quietly up and down Parliament Square, outside the Houses of Parliament, between 12 and 5 o'clock that afternoon, while the Bill is being discussed. Members should wear their badges and the colours of the League. Flags also can be carried. No obstruction must be made, the object of the Rally being merely to show that women are especially interested in this particular Bill, and that they expect to see it carried into law as it stands; that is to say, with the inclusion of Clause 2, which extends votes to women on the same terms as to men.

WOMEN CANDIDATES FOR PARLIAMENT.

We learn that the following women have been duly adopted as Parliamentary candidates for the next election:—

MRS. HOW MARTYN—for the Hendon Division of Middlesex; adopted by the Women's Election League, Hendon.

MISS MARY MACARTHUR—for Stourbridge; adopted by the Labour Party.

MRS. EDWARD PEASE—for East Surrey; adopted by the Labour Party.

OUR INDIAN SISTERS.

There is no assertion more misleading when divorced from its original context or more frequently misquoted than that contained in the lines—

"East is east and west is west,
And never the twain shall meet."

In this well-known couplet, Rudyard Kipling has merely crystallised the views of the so-called Imperialist, and apparently justified them, that India cannot be treated as the other parts of the British Empire, because there is a radical difference between the Oriental and the Occidental mind.

Very few people in this conservative old land would venture to deny to-day that English education has been beneficial in its effects, and that the Acts of 1870 and after have tended to raise the moral standard and enlarge the intellectual interests of our people. Statistics indubitably prove that the convictions for crime in 1910 were just 25 per cent. more of what they were in proportion to the population in 1840. Yet when the cry rises in India for education, and becomes articulate and insistent, we answer it by severe acts of repression.

There is no statement that occurs more frequently in the smug and self-satisfied speeches of Anglo-Indians than the following: "Only 1 per cent. of the Indian women can read and write. How can the people then be fitted for self-government?" The three R's have always been the utilitarian and Podsnappian ideal of a liberal education. But it is time for us to question ourselves as to whether this boasted knowledge is education at all. Indiscriminate and uncritical reading leads frequently to the increase of blind prejudice and fanatical party feeling, as the last election plainly revealed to us, for nearly every constituency was influenced by an unscrupulous Press crusade. We have standards for education which would appear curious in the eyes of the ancient Greeks. If a man cannot read, write and cipher, we hold up our hands in horror, but if he has a University pass degree, although his judgment may be defective, his imagination undeveloped, and his reasoning powers conspicuous by their absence, he has for us the half-mark of an educated man.

The 99 per cent. of Indian women, so contemptuously dismissed as uneducated and ignorant because they cannot read our language (and what percentage of English, or even Anglo-Indian women can read or write in Hindi?) are really trained on the old Greek lines. They learn the legends of the past, inspiring in their heroism, and ennobling in their records of self-sacrifice; they can recite the musical poems of their ancient singers, and they have that wonderful gift of culture which the consciousness of a long heritage of civilisation alone can give to a race that can look back upon a great and glorious history. They are artists, too, for the beauty of their surroundings in that Eastern land of romance and mystery cannot fail to work miracles in the training of the taste. In any assembly of well-dressed women in the Western world the Indian woman does much more than hold her own. She is conspicuous for the exquisite beauty of the colours and classic grace of her drapery, and she inspires a real aesthetic joy by the charm of her presence. The Purdah women, too, have much time for thought, and their wise and well-digested counsel is greatly sought by their mankind. Where could we find better material and finer appreciation for a really liberal modern education than in India?

Recent years have proved to us that our Indian sisters have what all educators feel to be the main aim of all teaching—a consciousness of their own ignorance and a keen desire for knowledge of those subjects which are so vital to the comprehension of modern and Western life. The Renaissance of women's education in India during the last four years is something little short of miraculous, and that, in spite of, rather than because of, the aid of the British Government. In the Madras presidency, alone, 243 new girls' schools were opened in January, 1918, and from Lahore we hear great

accounts of the new science school, where from 200—300 women, many of them Purdah, are attending classes and studying questions of hygiene, so necessary in a country where any and every epidemic sweeps away the population by the million.

Your Indian sisters are stretching out their hands to you across the vast ocean, asking you to give to them some of the privileges and some of the liberties that you have gained. Can you be so churlish as to refuse your help? They have given ungrudgingly of their best to the service of the Empire. Read the records of the magnificent work of the Indian troops in Palestine, in Egypt, at Gallipoli, and in Mesopotamia. Think of the anguish and self-sacrifice of the mothers, wives and sisters of these men, who suffered so cruelly and did so valiantly for a Western cause in these Eastern lands, and then complacently repeat to yourselves the couplet of Rudyard Kipling. Believe, if you can, those smug and self-satisfied British patriots who will assure you that your Eastern sisters are as yet unfit for those liberties and privileges which are the undisputed possession of Western women.

To quote Mrs. Sarojini Naidu: "It is the women and not the men who are the makers of the nation, and if the Indian nation is to be all it aspires to be, if it is to be strong in the strength of wisdom, of righteousness, and of the joyful energy of every manly faculty, it is essential that women should be properly educated." The people of to-day have to re-learn the lessons of the olden days—

"Where women were honoured—there the gods abided."

MARGARET HODGE.

INDIAN WOMEN DEMAND THE VOTE.

We learn from Mrs. Cousins (Madras, S. India) that forty-five branches of the Women's Indian Association have issued an emphatic protest against the refusal of the Southborough Franchise Committee to extend the franchise to women, and they appeal to British suffragists to urge Members of Parliament to set aside the decision of this committee. The Women's Indian Association acknowledges that the Indian Reform Bill is intended to be a big step in the development of self-government, but declares it is essential that the disqualification of sex should be removed from it at the outset. It points out that although the population of India numbers more than three hundred millions, less than ten million men will be enfranchised, and that the proportion of qualified women would probably be less than one million. The Association further states that there is no present social condition which forms an impassable barrier to Indian women exercising the right of voting. "Literacy" has not been made a qualification; for members of the lowest class, the outcastes, have been given franchise rights; it is only women who remain altogether outside the franchise barrier! Then, too, the Purdah system prevails only in part of India, and does not exist either in Madras or Bombay. Moreover, the Women's Indian Association suggests that the Purdah difficulty could be overcome if the precedent followed by Australia, when women's suffrage was first granted there, can be applied to India, namely, the recording of votes by women at their homes by special election officers for the purpose, who might be women in India. We ourselves have received another suggestion, that there should be separate entrances for men and women at the polling booth in India. In any case the Purdah difficulty is not an insuperable one!

The Women's Freedom League has arranged a meeting to be held in the Essex Hall, Friday, July 11th, 8 p.m., to demand votes for Indian women, at which the principal speaker will be Mrs. Besant, and the Chairman, Mrs. Despard.

O Tempora, O Mores!

Oriel College, Oxford, has entrusted all its domestic arrangements to a woman, and next term a married tutor and his wife will reside in rooms in college.

Women's Freedom League.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.



DARE TO
BE FREE

Wednesday, July 2.—Open-air Meeting, Hyde Park, 7 p.m.

Thursday, July 3.—Political Sub-Committee Meeting, 144, High Holborn, 12 noon. Open-air Meeting, opposite The Clock Tower, Regent's Park, 7 p.m. Speaker: Miss I. O. Ford.

Friday, July 4.—Rally in Parliament Square, while the Women's Emancipation Bill is being discussed in the House of Commons, 12 to 5 p.m. Mrs. Despard's Birthday Party, Caxton Hall, 7 p.m. Tickets 1s. each from W.F.L. Office.

Saturday, July 5.—National Executive Committee Meeting, 144, High Holborn, 10.30 a.m.

Wednesday, July 9.—Open-air Meeting, Hyde Park, 7 p.m.

Thursday, July 10.—Political Sub-Committee, 144, High Holborn, 12 noon. Open-air Meeting, opposite The Clock Tower, Regent's Park, 7 p.m. Golder's Green Branch Meeting, 13, Temple Fortune Court, 8.15 p.m.

Friday, July 11.—Lecture by Mrs. Annie Besant, on "Indian Women as Citizens," Essex Hall, Essex Street, E.C.4. Chair, Mrs. Despard. Admission, 5s., 2s. 6d., and 1s. Tickets from W.F.L. Office.

PROVINCES.

Wednesday, July 2.—Middlesbrough: Garden Party at "Agecroft," Games, etc., from 5.30 to 8.30. Tickets 1s. each; proceeds towards the Despard Birthday Fund and Middlesbrough Branch Activities.

Swansea.—Will members please keep in mind July 10th, when Mrs. Dawson has promised to hold a garden party at Cwm Garw? All members are cordially invited to attend. Goods will be on sale at a "White Elephant" Stall, for which contributions of flowers, vegetables, pictures, ornaments, or anything saleable, will be gratefully accepted. Further particulars will be sent to individual members in the course of the next fortnight.

Friday, June 27th. Ashford. Garden Meeting, "Glen-garriif," Albert Road, 3 p.m. Speaker: Councillor Edith How Martyn. Subject: "Women Magistrates." Chair: Mrs. Kither. Mrs. How Martyn will also conduct a Mock Election. Tea will be provided at a small cost.

Wednesday, July 9th. Ashford. Women's Club Meeting at "Woodbrooke," 2 Jemmelts Road (by kind permission of Mrs. Bankes), 2.30. Speeches by members of the club.

Thursday, July 10th. Hastings and St. Leonards. Mrs. Darent Harrison will be at Home to members and friends at 1, St. Paul's Place, 4.30 p.m. Speaker: Edith How Martyn. Subject: "Local Government." Chair: Councillor T. Samson.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Tuesday, July 1.—Under Thirties' Meeting, Memorial Hall, 8 p.m. Women's Freedom League Group Procession form up at back of Office, 144, High Holborn, at 6.30.

Under Thirties Meeting.

The Women's Freedom League is joining in a public meeting, to be held at the Memorial Hall, Tuesday, July 1st, at 8 p.m., to demand the vote for women on the same terms as for men, and equal opportunities for women in the professions and public service. This meeting will strongly support the Women's Emancipation Bill.

All speakers will be women under thirty, and admission to this meeting is free. Members and friends of the Women's Freedom League, the Women's International League, the I.W.S.P.U., the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, and the Free Church League will form a group procession at the back of our office at 6.30 p.m., which will start to march to the Memorial Hall at 7 o'clock. The members of each society will wear their own colours and decorations, and carry their own banners. We urge all our friends to join in this group procession, and show a united demand for votes for women on the same terms as for men.

The City Temple, Holborn Viaduct.

Miss A. Maude Rooden will preach next Sunday at the 11 a.m. service.

Rev. Dr. Fort Newton will preach morning and evening during July, when Miss Royden takes a holiday.

Women's Freedom League Settlement.

Our last treat before the summer holidays was provided by Miss Riggall, on Saturday, who begged tickets for the Zoo from a friend, and paid for fares, oranges and sweets for 35 very happy and appreciative children. These trips are all many of the children know of a "country holiday," and one applicant for a ticket based his claim on the fact that he had been ill, and it might do him good! If any readers know of a cottage home in the real country that would take two or three children at the end of July we should be glad to have the address: the mother of some ex-guest-children is anxious to get a holiday for three who have lately had slight operations and need building up. £6 from the Sheffield Branch of the Women's Freedom League is very gratefully acknowledged, also donations from Mrs. Jacobson, G. L. Prior, Esq., Miss Riggall, Miss Agnes Fennings, Mrs. John Russell, Anon. (American Y.M.C.A.), Mrs. Blum, Helen and Rodney Simon, and 27s. from Mrs. Kelly towards a holiday for a convalescent working mother.

THE BIRTHDAY FUND.

If you have not yet sent in your contribution to the Birthday Fund, you may still be in time to give it to me at the Party or to send it to me to be added to the list. But do not put it off any longer, for delays are dangerous, and your League requires all your support.

G. KNIGHT,

Hon. Treas.

144, High Holborn,
W.C.1.

MRS. DESPARD'S BIRTHDAY PARTY.

We hope to see a big crowd of members and friends of the Women's Freedom League to celebrate Mrs. Despard's birthday at the party we are giving in her honour at Caxton Hall, Westminster, next Friday evening (July 4th)—the day on which the Women's Emancipation Bill will again come up for discussion in the House of Commons!

Mrs. Despard will receive all comers from 7 p.m. to 7.45 p.m. A musical programme, arranged by Miss Alix M. Clark, will fill the time until 8.15 p.m., when there will be five-minute speeches by Miss Munro, Mrs. Tanner, Mrs. Whetton, Mrs. Zangwill, Mr. Cameron Grant, and Dr. G. B. Clark. A presentation of money will be made to Mrs. Despard for carrying on the work of the Women's Freedom League, the chair being taken by Miss A. M. Clark.

There will be a home-made provisions' stall, sent by our Montgomery Boroughs Branch, and a flower stall, contributions for which will be gratefully acknowledged.

Tickets of admission, 1s. each, to be obtained from our office. Refreshments will be provided at moderate prices.

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on
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in
CAXTON HALL,
at
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BIRTHDAY
PARTY!

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WANTED, Organiser for the Women's Freedom League.—Apply, by letter only, giving full particulars, to the SECRETARY, Women's Freedom League, 144, High Holborn, W.C.

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