

THE COMMON CAUSE OF HUMANITY.

The Organ of the National Union of

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES.

NON-PARTY.

Societies and Branches in the Union
602.

LAW-ABIDING.

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The N.U.W.S.S. is an association of over 52,000 men and women who have banded themselves together, under the leadership of Mrs. Henry Fawcett, for the purpose of obtaining the Parliamentary vote for women on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men. At this great national crisis, however, they have for the time being suspended their political activities, in order to put themselves and their Union at the service of those who are organising the relief of distress caused by the war. They desire to help in the most effective way, by work rather than doles; to preserve the life of the race for the future by special care of mothers and young children; and generally to illustrate in their own lives the truth that the Suffragists' demand is for duties rather than for rights, and their ideal is the service of humanity. WILL YOU JOIN?

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Notes and News.

Professional Women's Patriotic Service Fund.

We warmly commend to our readers the new Fund to be raised by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, of which we published an account in our issue of December. We can imagine no better use to which money can be put than this, which at once comes to the help of professional women by offering them employment, and to the help of the nation by offering it, when efficiency is so urgently needed, the expert services of competent professional women. These women do not wish for relief in the form of doles. They are as anxious as everyone else to serve their country at this time, but they cannot do so without a salary, as their livelihood depends on what they earn. In the meantime, many societies and patriotic relief organisations are calling out for voluntary workers, and the supply of competent voluntary workers able to give all the time that is needed is not adequate. Such organisations would be grateful for the services of a competent trained worker, but they have no means with which to pay her. The Professional Women's Patriotic Service Fund will perform the much needed task of bringing work and worker together. Money should be sent to the Secretary, N.U.W.S.S., 14, Great Smith Street, S.W.

Mr. Masterman, Liberal Candidate for Swansea.

Mr. C. F. G. Masterman has been nominated Liberal candidate for the Swansea District Division, by eighty votes to sixty-four. The proceedings at the meeting at which this decision was made, are described in *The Daily News* as being of "a lively character." Readers of *THE COMMON CAUSE* are aware that Mr. Masterman's record as a Suffragist is exceedingly unsatisfactory, and it is understood that he will be questioned on the subject by the N.U., though in accordance with the decision of the Union temporarily to suspend its political activities no active part will be taken in the ensuing election.

The Case of the Childless Widow.

We greatly hope that the Select Committee now sitting to consider the whole question of payments to soldiers' and sailors' dependents is at least taking evidence from women, though it is a Committee on which women may not serve. We are especially anxious that the case of the childless widow may not be treated entirely from the point of view of those who regard her as a helpless person, only to be helped by life-long "maintenance." We believe that most women who are still able-bodied and young enough to learn, would infinitely prefer to be put into a position to earn their own living, and we hope the Select Committee will favourably consider the possibility of such a solution.

Investigation by Women Officials.

Equally important is the question of administration. Approved Societies for the purposes of the Insurance Act have decided to put investigations concerning women into the hands of women, and there can be no doubt that this is an example to be followed. For two reasons—first, because the women whose cases have to be investigated would infinitely prefer it; and, secondly, because women officials would naturally be more competent in such matters—we earnestly press for this important point. Already the almost inconceivable tactlessness of the administration has needlessly hurt and embittered many whom it was proposed to benefit, and we are confident that any proposal which will lessen the likelihood of such soreness in the future, will be welcomed by those in authority. The employment of trained and paid women officials will, we believe, do this.

"In Case of Invasion."

A brief report is given in *The Times* of January 5th of the orders issued to the inhabitants of the East Riding of Yorkshire by Lord Nunburnholme, the Lord Lieutenant. These orders are described by *The Times* as "elaborate instructions." As far as women are concerned, the instructions are these: "Non-combatants and women and children when ordered to leave home must go by such roads and byways as are pointed out to them. They must not go by the main road for that must be left free for troops. If they meet troops on the road, they must leave the road immediately by getting into the adjoining fields."

The Women's Part.

We perfectly realise that—as implied in these concluding sentences—the safety of women is and must be second in importance to the free and unfettered action of the troops. Recent experience has shown us all that non-combatants cannot be protected, and must give up all expectation of being protected, if the chance of protecting them conflicts with military tactics or military strategy. They must not use roads which the troops are likely to need, and if even in the byways they should meet troops, they are immediately to get into the fields. Everyone

who knows what war is will recognise that this is inevitable. What we ask is, that the authorities should face the fact also; abandon any idea of protecting non-combatants in invaded areas; and empower them, as far as possible, to protect themselves.

What Women Might Do.

We do not suggest for a moment that non-combatants should attempt to assume the dangerous rôle of unauthorised fighters. But we feel that the terrible suffering of the Belgian population should have taught us more sense than to invite a repetition of them here, by merely directing the women to pour out into the lanes and byways. We strongly urge that they should at once be asked to organise themselves; to appoint leaders; to make it known where women are to go, and whom they are to obey, if need arises; to ascertain at once in what houses there are children too small to walk, invalids, old people, or women expecting confinement; to arrange that some women shall be responsible for these, and shall remove them, if possible, to a place of safety, or stay with them till the end. The assumption that women must never be allowed to risk their lives in such service is preposterous in view of the fact that in any case they cannot, and will not be protected; it is ungenerous in view of the known willingness of women to make this sacrifice. The strongest and bravest of our men are abroad already, but the corresponding active, energetic, and devoted of our women are here. They would be proud to carry food and water to the men defending them, to help the sick and the aged, to use their known powers of organisation in order, at least, to lessen the horrors of war. We feel that we do our country a service in calling attention to this unused capacity for service. The Women's Volunteer Reserve has made a splendid beginning. Some work of the sort should be authorised and organised everywhere.

A Message from Germany.

The Socialist women of Germany have sent a touching message to their sister Socialists of Great Britain. Clara Zetkin writes with passionate grief of the horrors of war, alike in East Prussia, in Galicia, and in France and Belgium, and speaks of her determination "to bear (the Socialist) ideals inviolate through the storms of this time." We cannot but welcome a message from women of one belligerent country to those of another, at this terrible time; but we believe that women who hope "for wars to cease" must take heed lest they substitute for one kind of war not peace but another strife. Clara Zetkin speaks of a future "when men and women of the working class have resolved to bring to the defence of their own interests and the realisation of their aims, as much power, passion, and inspiration . . . as imperialism now demands for its own ends." Suffragists will always desire to stand for the oppressed against the oppressor, but we believe they will strive earnestly against a conception of society which instead of nation against nation sets class against class.

The Treatment of Madame Thoumaian.

"Favourable conditions," Madame Thoumaian says, were promised to the Armenians by Sir Edward Grey on December 15th, yet only a few days later Madame Thoumaian was herself charged and fined £20 or one month as an "alien enemy" travelling without a permit. Madame Thoumaian is herself Swiss, and had received a letter from a Member of Parliament stating that the Home Secretary had promised she should be put to no inconvenience. In 1893, when Madame Thoumaian's husband was charged in Turkey with being a revolutionary and a rebel, notwithstanding a report of his innocence by the British Consul of the town, it was through the influence of his wife that Lord Rosebery, then Foreign Secretary, interfered and obtained his release, and she is well known as a distinguished peace advocate. Madame Thoumaian, naturally, greatly resents this treatment of the Armenians, and many others will sympathise with her when she asks for "justice and redress."

This Week's "Common Cause."

We publish this week an article on Indian aspirations and ideals by Sir William Wedderburn, which is of special interest at a time when we are all deeply stirred by the response of India to the Empire's need. We also publish an interesting and constructive commentary on articles which have already appeared in our columns, by Mr. Aneurin Williams, M.P. In order that readers may have the advantage of reading this article in close connection with the preceding ones, we are obliged to hold over articles by Lt.-Colonel Edward Gunter, on Conscription, National Service, and Universal Service, which will appear later.

Soldiers' Wives Vindicated.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has been conducting an inquiry into several questions which have arisen from the war. We have great pleasure in reproducing part of an article in their organ, *The Child's Guardian*, in which the result of their inquiry is made known on a point of special interest to our readers—that of the alleged increase of drinking among women.

"The reports of the Inspectors were most satisfactory, for although it was stated that in 26 Branches there was an increase in drinking, in 122 Branches there was no increase, and in many of these there was much less drinking. In 12 Branches there was an increase shortly after the war broke out, but the conditions have now improved.

"It is unfortunate that such sweeping statements and unreliable assertions were made by people who apparently had no reliable data to go upon. General conclusions appear to have been drawn from isolated instances. From the Society's point of view it can be said without the slightest hesitation that no greater slander has ever been circulated concerning the habits of any body of people than the assertion that soldiers' wives as a class were lacking in the spirit of self-restraint, or that they were given to neglecting their children. It is true that in the reports of police-court proceedings it was found that some mothers had spent their separation allowances in drink, and that children had in consequence been neglected. In every case that has been tested it was found that the habit of drinking had extended over a long period.

"In almost every Branch, Inspectors have been able to exert a beneficial influence over a large number of the people who are ordinarily given to drink. The sobering influence of the times, to which reference has already been made, has had its effect here. In scores of cases Inspectors report that women have been persuaded to pay off old debts, arrears of rent, and to provide clothing for their children. In a large number of cases it is said that the condition of children is much better now than ever before. In many Branches, acting on the advice of Inspectors, soldiers' wives have opened accounts in the Post Office Savings Bank.

"The returns contained in the earlier reports dealt mainly with conditions in large cities and towns. To put the whole question beyond any possible doubt a further inquiry was ordered, and Inspectors were told to communicate with the district correspondents in the smaller towns and villages, and to obtain reliable information as to what was taking place there. The result of this inquiry was as satisfactory as the other.

"All the reports on this subject have, by request, been supplied to the War Office, and proposals have been submitted to the authorities for providing for the children of soldiers whose mothers are known to be of drinking habits. Before war broke out it became necessary in some cases to apply separation allowances for the benefit of children, and this plan is being continued. Payment of the allowance is made to the Society; when it is necessary children are removed, and payment made for their maintenance to suitable people who are caring for them.

"If, instead of indulging in general denunciations, people who know of cases where children are suffering would report the facts to the Society, it would practically always be possible to give relief.

"A letter was received from a Captain in the Royal Field Artillery, mentioning the case of a man in his battalion who had returned from France wounded, and been recommended for the Victoria Cross. On taking a few days' leave he found his wife drinking and his children neglected. This so distressed the soldier that in his desperation he said it would have been better that he had been killed instead of wounded. An Inspector visited the case at once. The woman was warned, and benefited by the good advice given her. The children are now well cared for, and the man has gone back to his work in the Army, relieved of the awful anxiety as to what would happen to his little family, of whom he was so fond. In appreciation of what has been done the Captain who reported the case sent a donation to the Society's funds.

"Since inquiries were made by the Inspectors, much discussion has centred round the drink question, and many extravagant statements have been made. There is no reason to minimise the evils likely to befall children whose mothers are drunken. The Society knows too much of this terrible question to belittle its effects. At the same time there is reason to preserve some sense of proportion and to refrain from slandering soldiers' wives, who have enough anxiety at the moment. Plain speech is necessary on this subject. It is becoming far too

common to pass strictures on a whole class because of the misdeeds of a few. There is, as can be seen from the evidence adduced by the Society, no more reason to cast a slur on the reputation of soldiers' wives because some women are addicted to drink, than there would be to stigmatise the British as a cruel and callous nation because a small proportion of the people neglect or ill-treat their children."

India's Loyalty, and Indian Aspiration.

No one can doubt that if India had turned against us in the world crisis through which we are passing, the great fabric of the British Empire would have been strained, even to the breaking point. Indeed, the position would have been serious if the response from India had been doubtful, or half-hearted; if there had been hesitation on the part of the Indian Princes, who command the hereditary allegiance of the masses, or of the educated class, who control advanced public opinion. Happily there has been no hesitation either among the thinkers or the fighters; and India has shown "a splendid and unswerving loyalty," placing personal service and her vast resources at the disposal of the King-Emperor.

If we ask why the Princes and people of India are eager to stand by England in this time of storm and stress, we find that it is because they believe that—whatever its shortcomings may be—the British Empire stands, on the whole, for freedom, toleration, and progress. But it would be fatal to assume that India is satisfied with her political condition, and that, as regards reform, the time has come to rest and be thankful. The blighting influences of official distrust must be put away for ever; we must boldly carry to its logical conclusions the doctrine of trust in the people; and India must be welcomed to an equal partnership in a free Empire.

This is the only right—and the only safe—course to pursue; the only way to strengthen and perpetuate the existing good feeling. And the true note was struck by Mr. Charles Roberts when, speaking in the House of Commons on behalf of the Secretary of State, he said that "in the atmosphere of friendship and goodwill which unite England and India to-day, there is surely a bright hope for the future": "the common endeavour of these days will enable India to realise that she is occupying, and is destined to occupy, a place in our free Empire worthy alike of her ancient civilisation and thought, of the valour of her fighting races, and of the patriotism of her sons."

This forecast of a happy future indicates no fresh departure in British policy. The sentiments thus cordially declared towards India, are those which in modern times have animated the best leaders of public opinion in this country: statesmen such as Edmund Burke, John Bright, Professor Henry Fawcett, Lord Ripon, and Lord Morley. And on these same lines the British people, by successive Acts of Parliament, and by Royal Proclamation, have ordained a continuing policy of justice and sympathy, abolishing all race and class disabilities, and conferring on Indians full rights of citizenship. In conformity with those principles, enlightened Secretaries of State and Viceroy have extended to India a share in free institutions: higher education, with colleges and universities; liberty of the press, and of public meeting; and (by the Morley-Minto reforms) a certain instalment of self-government. All these progressive measures, and the policy which dictated them, have met with grateful acceptance throughout India by an intelligent and law-abiding people.

Looking to these favourable conditions, together with the *Pax Britannica* within our borders, and complete religious toleration secured to all, how are we to account for the vehement discontent of which we have heard so much in recent years? What were the causes which brought about this "unrest" in every province of India, with its sinister by-products of secret conspiracy and outrage? The answer is not far to seek. There is nothing wrong with the guiding principles of Parliament and the Crown; and when, in the Indian administration, there has been loyal fulfilment of statutory obligations and royal pledges, peace and contentment have reigned. There has been trouble only when these obligations and pledges have been disregarded, in the pursuit of military adventure abroad, with police repression at home.

The remedy is to be found in a vigorous enforcement of the fundamental principles of British rule. But it is here that the difficulty comes in, for the execution of these progressive measures is in the hands of officials, whose professional interests are opposed to reforms which tend to limit their authority, and reduce their emoluments. The fault is not with the individuals

but with the system, which has created in favour of foreigners a monopoly of place and power, thus establishing them in direct antagonism to the aspirations of educated Indians, who are competitors for high office, and who naturally desire to share in managing the affairs of their own country. Thus we find this curious condition of affairs that, as regards policy, the Indian people are in complete accord with the British Government; but the permanent Civil Service intervenes between them as a non-conducting body, rendering nugatory the orders of the King's Ministers on the one hand, and on the other hand, in India, repressing as seditious all manifestations of popular feelings. As his name denotes, the public servant should be the servant of the public, not its master; but unfortunately, in India the permanent Civil Service has usurped the mastery, thus creating a mischievous *imperium in imperio*, and proving the truth of the saying that the official, like fire, is a good servant but a bad master.

As regards the comfort of the people in their daily life, the remedy must be sought in decentralisation, with the development of local self-government, and the employment of voluntary unpaid agency in the districts and villages. To secure the authority of Parliament and the Crown, the British system, which excludes permanent officials from the Cabinet, should be followed; and the Viceroy and the Provincial Governors should be provided with Executive Councillors from outside, with ripe experience in public affairs. In the India Council at Whitehall the Secretary of State is dependent for advice and information on retired members of the permanent service, and in order that he may be master of the situation, he should have on his Council a due proportion of Indians representing independent Indian public opinion.

While I write, the Indian National Congress is assembling at Madras for its annual session. Those members of the British public who desire to know what are the aspirations of educated India, will find them detailed in the resolutions which have been passed by the Congress from year to year since 1885; and they will see that these resolutions are one and all in strict accordance with the declared policy of the British Government. As regards the European crisis, we shall now learn the considered view held by India's unofficial Parliament. What that view will be, no one in India doubts. It will be voiced by the President, Mr. Bhupendranáth Básu, a trusted member for many years of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, whose pamphlet, recently published in London under the auspices of the Victoria League, explains, in the words of the title, "Why India is Heart and Soul with Great Britain."

What we ask is, that the British people, being now convinced of India's loyalty, will give a fair and kindly hearing to India's aspirations.

W. WEDDERBURN.

NEWS FROM ABROAD.

U. S. A.

An important piece of news comes from the United States. After months of pressure, the Rules Committee has given way and "reported" the Bristow-Mondell resolution (for nationwide Women's Suffrage) to the House. This means that a vote in Congress on the Nation-wide Amendment is now imminent, and that for the first time in twenty years members of Congress will record their votes on the question of women's enfranchisement.

"Success in the United States House of Representatives," says the American *Women's Journal*, "will be the first big step in the short cut to equal suffrage." The vote of the Senate will be remembered as favourable, but only by one vote, too small a majority for practical purposes.

During the present year, the question of Women's Suffrage will come before the following States: Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania; and American Suffragists will now be preparing for these campaigns.

FRANCE.

La Française raises the question as to whether women should not help to rebuild destroyed towns and villages. A report on this subject has already been made to the Musée Social, and it is hoped that women will obtain their place on the Committees for examining plans of rebuilding. "Questions of domestic accommodation, hygiene, and adornment," says *La Française*, "will enter largely into these proposals, and it has been too long forgotten that these questions are of peculiar interest to women."



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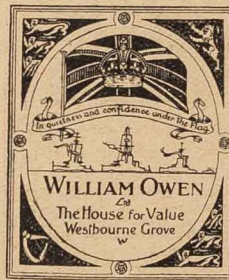


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