# The Common Cause

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

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## Notes and News.

### Organise! Organise!

While the war lasts many women are neglecting their opportunities of joining their trade organisations. It is true that some of them are leaving the worst-paid employments to go into the war industries of to-day, where they will probably soon find themselves enrolled in the Federation of Women Workers if they do not happen to join the union of their specific trade. But unless the workers left behind organise themselves their condition will remain far from satisfactory; and after the war the munition makers returning to those industries will find things as bad as before. The slight rise in wages which has taken place in unorganised industries since 1914 bears no sort of relation to the enormous decline in the purchasing power of money. A very few facts will make this point clear. Untrained women in some of the munition businesses are easily earning 30s. and more a week, exclusive of overtime money. Girls in the dressmaking trade are to think themselves lucky if they receive 16s. a week after they have spent eighteen months at their craft. It is fixed as a minimum; but as it is part of an improved scale presumably the minimum was formerly less. We turn to the nursing profession, also feebly organised from an economic point of view. Here we find the Metropolitan Asylums Board lamenting the fact that London is short of six hundred nurses, and hoping that it may get some untrained "educated" women for board, laundry, uniform, £20 a year and some bonuses. These war bonuses cannot be regarded as a permanent addition to wages. The fixed wage—the wage which the educated woman can say she is worth—is £20 a year; considerably less than that of a London parlourmaid in a fairly good situation. Until lately the women teachers were by comparison in an even worse position, since they possessed not only education but professional training and experience. Their self-effacement had its fine side. Less laudable was their reluctance to say that they belonged to a trade union. The London unit of the National Federation of Women Teachers has given them a splendid lift out of the rut of genteel abnegation and is now, we see, forming a reserve fund to continue the campaign until the principle of equal pay is conceded. But the moral of all these instances is that they who will not organise are lost.

### No Place for the Nondescript.

There is another side to the matter. Organisation makes negotiation go more smoothly between employers and workers. The case for the workers can, as a rule, be put more cogently when it is expressed by accredited representatives. The formation of joint boards of employers' and workers' representatives under the Whitley scheme is actually having the effect of thrusting the blessings of organisation upon some professional people who formerly could not "demean" themselves by saying that they belonged to a trade union. In certain occupations the employers themselves are telling their workpeople to join their trade unions so that on both sides differences can be settled without confusion. Public War Employment Committees are being formed on a similar principle, and only a few seats are allotted to individuals who cannot claim to speak as members of a profession or trade. The result of all these tendencies is that nondescript persons will be edged out unless their ability qualifies them to act as arbitrators or chairmen. The effect of this upon the position in public affairs of educated, unpaid and often useful women should not be overlooked. If women of this type become ineligible for serving upon employment committees it will be more than ever needful that qualified spokeswomen should be found among organised wage-earners. Here lies the difficulty, since wage-paid work leaves little time for public work, and vice versa.

### Children's Rights.

We are beginning slowly to recognise that not only men and women but children, too, have their rights. At present the State does not interfere with the legitimate children of the well-to-do unless they are victims of glaring cruelty. Many a comfortable nursery has its tragedies of unkindness or sex-favoritism, but these tragedies work themselves out in strict privacy. The children of the poor come more under public eyes, and children who are both poor and also illegitimate are recognisably in need of protection. The rights and position of the illegitimate cannot easily be determined, especially when they happen to conflict with those of half-brethren born in wedlock. We commend, however, to attention, the excellent pamphlet on "The Problem of the Unmarried Mother and her Child," written by Mrs. Edwin Gray, Convener of the Public Service Committee of the National Union of Women Workers. With many of her proposals for the amendment of the law we believe that our readers will be in hearty concurrence.

### Women's Suffrage for Sweden.

We hope soon to be able to congratulate the women of Sweden upon their enfranchisement. Mr. Branting, the leader of the Socialist party in Sweden, stated in the course of an interview, published in last Sunday's "Observer," that he believed a great measure of electoral reform would be carried next year, giving the franchise to women as well as men on a wide basis, and abolishing the condition whereby an elector must pay income-tax.

### Our Mrs. Fawcett and Another.

To the members of the N.U.W.S.S. their President, Mrs. Henry Fawcett, is unique. But her surname is not unique. There is another Mrs. Fawcett who is known as a speaker on industrial and other questions, and newspaper readers should therefore be careful not to make either of the two Mrs. Fawcetts responsible for the utterances of the other. Similarity of name and ideas do not necessarily go together.

### Expansion.

The National Union is at this moment embarking upon a new enterprise, the wide expansion of its Information Bureau, and the stocking and opening of a Lending Library, with membership open both to individuals and societies. The need for the fuller education of women, in preparation for their larger political life as enfranchised citizens, is momentarily more and more felt and more and more realised by the woman citizen herself. The National Union aims at putting within her reach full and accurate information upon all leading problems of social reform, and especially upon feminist questions. Further details of the Information Bureau will be found elsewhere in our columns.

# TOWARDS EQUITY.

LORD MORLEY, in a vivid passage in his *Recollections*, describes the journey to Osborne which he and his colleagues of a Liberal Government made when they were just coming into power. He says briefly :—

"*Saw the steamer carrying off the outgoing Ministers. Recalled Emerson's saying that every ship looks romantic except the ship we are in. For once I thought Emerson mistaken.*"

To-day Suffragists are on board a romantic ship Are they aware of it? In the midst of this most dire drama of the world's life some of them may easily forget that their own great hour is at hand, the hour when their ship sails into the political sea. Before Parliament reassembles let us make use of a quiet time in order to determine what our aim is to be. Presently, many Parliamentary Bills, many urgent practical questions will demand consideration, and some of us may well grow confused with details, cries and counter-cries. Let us think.

We know that we are working towards the realisation in every department of life of "Equality of Opportunity." It is a noble, comprehensive object, covering many objects. But members of the National Union all know that equality of opportunity may be given, and yet equality itself may not—indeed, certainly will not—follow. If all were really equal they would remain equal. The human plain would show neither heights nor depressions; we should not see the dominant rising, the weaker subjecting themselves. We do not dream, therefore, of a future equality; we do not even truly desire it. We value too highly the variety and multiplicity of gifts which men and women bring to the common stock for us to crave that each individual should have a portion of every quality there is, and exactly the same portion too. Life is not a fruit salad of which we must all help ourselves to a bit of everything. But we do desire equality of opportunity in so far as it may be achieved. We say that no one should be arbitrarily prevented from having an opportunity of using and strengthening his or her powers, varied and unequal as we know those powers must always be. Notably must there be this equality of opportunity (or, at all events, a much lessened inequality) in the early stages of life—the educational stages and those in which the young woman or man enters a chosen employment.

If we reckon that this point is one upon which Suffragists generally are agreed we may look beyond. We may ask ourselves, then, what is to be our ideal in public affairs. Have we an ideal which explains ourselves to ourselves, explaining at the same time why we desire equality of opportunity so profoundly as we do and why we are preparing to battle against manifold injustices? Equity, surely, is our ultimate ideal. Equity is not identical with equality. Equity is the application of justice to persons who are different. If we try to give an instance, we may say that the first judgment of Solomon was a judgment of equality, the second a judgment of equity. It is the principle most precious to human society.

Among the general ideas which in various epochs have held sway over the mind, two need to be specially analysed when we think about equity. The one view is that the possession of power, of wealth, or of great inherited opportunities is a trust to be exercised for the benefit of other people, but not to be shared among them. The "trustee" decides how he shall administer life's best gifts; he does not invite the beneficiaries to decide for themselves, lest in their ignorance and folly they should err. This view, carried to its worst extreme, becomes an arrogant autocracy: at its best it takes the form of liberality heavily adulterated with patronage.

The second view is that all goodness and wisdom are the monopoly of the despoiled, and especially of the despoiled when they are in revolt. Sympathy with the victims becomes transmuted into unlimited admiration of them. But to be poor is not to be infallible; and a certificate of poverty does not *per se* qualify the possessor for a saint's halo. The transition of thought frequently goes a stage further. The injured revolt against the holders of power. The cause of the injured is recognised as a just one. Therefore, say their sympathisers, the injured themselves are just people. There comes possibly a third stage. The injured revolt with success, dethroning the autocrats while they themselves climb into the seats of the mighty. For a time they continue to enjoy the admiration of their original sympathisers, who confused the justice of the cause with personal righteousness on the part of the ill-used. Gradually, the admirers drop away, giving their pity to the new victims and endowing these with all the virtues. Thus the currents and counter-currents toss and sway, break or are broken, in deafening storm.

Will the storm ever cease? No; but it may, by the help of all, rage much less fiercely. We who are women democrats can help towards the establishment of an equilibrium even while we know that we can never reach the "Absolute" in this or any other direction. We shall not enter the political field to the battle-cry of "God and my Right!" "Justice for All" is what we ask. There was a time when some even broad-minded thinkers held that an act of justice might not always be expedient; and they dissented for this reason from the enfranchisement of women. But we now perceive that ultimately justice is the highest expediency. By justice, however, we understand justice to all; not simply or solely the concession of a particular demand to those who happen to be strong enough to enforce it. The sort of justice for which Suffragist women must work is not a weak giving way to the side from which the greatest pressure comes at a certain moment, but a creative, an active justice which rectifies evils so soon as they are known to exist, stimulates latent powers, and recognises public services even from the unfashionable middle class. Women in their own lives, and as directors of the relations of their children towards each other and themselves, have seen that nearly every evil springs from inequity. The sufferers from inequity become disturbers of the social peace, promoters of bitterness. The loss of their portion of good health, knowledge, or training leads them to commit blunders and to injure other people. They are humiliated because they know that only other humiliated people recognise them as their peers.

With equity come happiness, ease of mind, a natural give-and-take. The wounds in the human organism may be temporarily assuaged by the application of generosity and kindness: only by equity can they be healed. Equity applied in public life enables each to do his best. It does not endeavour to find a "common denominator" for the capacities of sexes or types, or range the whole human family in an examiner's "order of merit." It recognises diversity of circumstances and gifts, and awards to all their due, neither punishing the injured for their weakness nor crowning the powerful with glory.

We regard equality of opportunity as a measure of equity—as a stage towards that perfect equity which humanity can never attain. She who sets out towards equity is a traveller on the longest journey, but in her Pilgrim's Progress she will be ever moving towards the light.

## American Women in War.

BY HELEN FRASER.

All our National Union members know something of the position of the Suffrage question in America in the war. The Woman Suffrage Amendment to the Constitution passed through Congress on the day our Bill received the Lords' assent. It must now go through the Senate by a two-thirds majority. The Suffragists, when I left America, still needed two votes in the Senate to secure that majority, and a great deal of their work at this time is devoted to converting likely Senators. President Wilson has made strong appeals and urged that it should be passed without delay.

Even when this majority is secured and the Amendment through, the American Suffragists' task is far from over. To make enfranchisement apply universally two-thirds of the States must then endorse it by carrying it in their own Legislature and extensive State campaigns will have to be carried out.

The carrying of New York State last year for Woman Suffrage was the Suffragists' greatest triumph. It is the most important State yet carried. It is rather amazing to find what an intense and considerable body of anti-suffrage opinion exists there still, and in the East and South. The leader of the anti-suffragists in the Senate is a New York State Senator. The Suffrage Societies in New York State are doing a great deal of educational work, and were getting the women out in good numbers in June to register for the Primaries.

The whole political system of America is, to any one of us, appallingly elaborate and difficult to understand. The written



Constitution itself makes change difficult. State rights are most jealously held and guarded—and on what we regard as National questions Federal powers are often very limited, though the desire and tendency is undoubtedly, I think, to add to them. The Child Labour Law, which came into force in September, 1917, and is now declared invalid, is an example of the difficulty of Federal action. This law forbade the shipment from State to State (Federal Law can in no case touch internal State commerce) of goods made in mills, factories, canneries, workshops, mines and quarries under conditions specified in the Act. It prevented children under fourteen from working ,and those between fourteen and sixteen years from working more than eight hours or after 7 p.m. and before 6 a.m. The Act was challenged by certain States and the case brought to the Supreme Court, the body that decides all questions of State and Federal rights, and a majority of five (four dissenting) decided that the Act was an infringement of State rights, so it is gone. It was worked for since 1904. Julia Lathrop says it would have removed 150,000 children from industry, but would still have left 1,850,000 child workers in trades not subject to Federal restriction.

At one of my meetings Mrs. Chapman Catt said to me at the end: "I was thinking, as you talked, how simple your problem is compared with ours. I could say of no industrial law, of no scheme—as you can—it is so and so. I should have to give you forty-eight different laws. To take the very simplest foundation Acts; in the vast majority of American States there is no registration of births, though in many it is carried out in the big towns." The infant mortality figures are simply comparative, based on the returns there are.

Add to all the complicated government, the problem of millions of people of every type and kind flowing in, as they have for years past, in that ceaseless tide of immigration. Think of the South, negroes the vast majority of its population, "coloured people" as Americans always call them. Two million of the population of New York read their morning papers in languages other than English. Millions of the American people, especially women, do not speak English. One Mayor told me that, out of one hundred and twenty men, he had forty who did not speak English when drafted—probably a specially high percentage, but giving an idea of their problem. They sometimes said to me, "They call us the Melting Pot, but we didn't melt." The Greeks, Portuguese, Lithuanians, Poles, Italians, Swedes, Czechs—all the races—tend to get into their own colonies and talk and shop and work and live together. The women of America, and the Suffragists rather specially, are doing a great deal of what is called Americanization of the people in the war. Mrs. Chapman Catt, as Chairman of the Educational Committee, Women's Committee of Council of National Defence, has this as part of her work. The real Americanization, of course, is done with the children in the schools, though there it is surprising to find that hundreds of schools had German as their foundation language before the war and English just as a language. This again came from State rights, and the population being in parts predominantly German and following a definite pan-German policy. I have often, watching the choirs of children who sang the patriotic songs at some of my meetings, speculated as to the race of the children and have picked out myself, easily, ten to twelve distinct racial types. Any ordinary American city has from ten to twenty-seven different races in it, and my sense of humour would never let me talk of the "Anglo-Saxon race." America will melt and merge, and the war is going to do a great deal towards making it one, but it had a heavy task in coming in—and it is wonderful to see the unity there is. The spirit everywhere is excellent and marked by great seriousness and determination.

Dr. Anna Howard Shaw is leader, by virtue of her position as Chairman of the Women's Committee, Council of National Defence, of all American women's war work. Dr Shaw's position is unique. I never heard anyone suggest that any other woman could take that place. All America endorses the choice. The Women's Committee, it seemed to me, had not as much power as it advantageously could have had, and there is a tendency always to set up separate women's committees although many of the women leaders would prefer joint ones. Their great pieces of work are carried on under the Red Cross and include not only hospital work but Allied relief, care of soldiers' dependents, and every kind of civilian work. Five million women work in the supply depots. They have telephone girls in France, women in Y.M.C.A. huts, and the American Women's Hospitals, for which Suffragists have done a great deal. They have thousands of women in Government departments at Washington; and there are naval women called Yeowomen of the Navy. The two flying women carry mails, and there are motor corps, ambulance women, &c. Women are going into civil employment in large numbers and are in munitions more and more, though not at all as extensively as we are. They are on 'buses, subways, street-cars and in large numbers on railroads. The Labour people have taken as a foundation basis "equal pay for equal work," but the problem is not so simple as with us. Suffragists will recollect hearing some years ago of New York women teachers winning the principle of equal pay. They never had it, and in the early summer there was a struggle going on again really to secure it. I found the general attitude sound on the question, but equal pay is not always a reality any more than with us.

The women's colleges and the Universities have done and are doing remarkably good work. Units from Smith, Vassar, Wellesley, and Bryn Mawr are in France. Vassar has five hundred college graduates in training as nurses this summer vacation, Wellesley has a land training scheme, Mount Holyoke a scheme for training welfare supervisors and forewomen, Smith one for training graduates to care for shell shock and nerve cases. Their food work has been admirable. I have seen such endless thousands of cans and bottles of fruit and vegetables, seen the courses arranged by the Home Economics Departments at many of the Universities and Colleges, seen exhibitions and demonstrations, and I know, having been living among them, how willingly they denied themselves white flour and meat and bacon and fats for the sake of the Allies.

There is an American Women's Land Army. I had the privilege of taking part in the meeting that inaugurated it, and in New York State alone it had two thousand women at work this summer. Large sums of money have been and are being raised in America, not only for charities—and we know how generous they have been to us—but for War Loans and War Savings Stamps. The Women's Committees have raised a large proportion of the loans in some States.

The Hut work and work like our Patrol work is largely done by Y.W.C.A. The Zone Law of the Military Authorities round camps gives power to arrest and detain and deal with girls and women there for immoral purposes, and there is a great deal of such action taken.

I shall always remember the many kindnesses of Americans to me; their delightful and gracious hospitality, their anxiety to do everything for me, the honor they paid me as a representative of our women whose work they admire and respect, and whose sacrifices they appreciate. It has been a great privilege to see this great people going into this struggle, with their limitless energy, their inspiring enthusiasm, their boundless zeal. Many of them have in spirit been one with us from the beginning; and Americans fell in the war before their nation joined the Allies.

The women of America want to know us better, to understand us, to like us. They see, as we do, that we women have a great part to play in the future, and they know the strength that comes from unity will help. We women of the two great English-speaking peoples have everything to gain by closer understanding and co-operation. We build for the future in drawing together

## The Need for More Women Doctors.

However soon the proposed Ministry of Health may be established it cannot hope to exercise much influence upon the national welfare without an army of fully trained medical men and women to work the machine; and few people realise how seriously the ranks of the profession have been depleted during the past four years. The same thing is true, no doubt, of other professions; but it does not take quite so long to make a clergyman or a lawyer as it does to make a doctor; nor are we faced with quite the same imperative demand for more clergymen or more lawyers. The teaching profession affords a better parallel and the increasing employment of women teachers points the way towards the only possible solution of the problem. We *must* have more women doctors to replace the thousands of young students who volunteered for military duties in the first year of the war, and now lie buried, with all their hopes, under the clay in Flanders and under the sands in the East and under the waves, to replace those thousands of others who might have turned towards medicine, but who are at present marching straight from school into the Army—for how many will return, after an indefinite period of military service, to settle down to four or five years steady grind at college?

Women had to fight hard enough to force an entrance into

the medical profession; but it must be admitted that their old opponents, having once capitulated, have done the thing thoroughly. Doctors are sometimes credited with extraordinary indifference towards their own interests—at least they have recognised that these interests lay behind the principle of "equal pay for equal work!" Nor need any woman fear that she will not be heartily welcomed and respected (always provided she proves herself competent) by her male colleagues, whatever branch of work she may choose to undertake.

It will generally be found, though, that women prefer some salaried appointment, whilst men are more ready to accept the physical and mental strain of general practice on the chance of making a little more money. The reason is obvious: very few public appointments at the present time offer a doctor a salary sufficient to bring up a family on unless he has some private means as well, and medical women are, as a rule, less dependent upon their own earnings than medical men; for a doctor's education is costly, and only exceptionally well-to-do parents care to spend so much over the education of a daughter.

We are, therefore, faced with the fact that one of the best-paid professions open to women is still *only* open to those who are already financially independent!

Now it is a very unfortunate thing that the nation should be deprived of the services of many really talented and capable women who would make admirable doctors if only they had a chance to qualify. So few parents have grasped the fact that a few hundred pounds spent in equipping a girl for a profoundly interesting and valuable profession—a profession which will render her independent and self-supporting all her life, if need be; which will add enormously to her usefulness as a wife and mother, should she choose to marry; and which would always be ready for her to turn to again in case she were left widowed or unprovided for—is money better spent than if it were all carefully hoarded up for a legacy twenty or thirty years hence. And so the girl who might have become a first-class surgeon or pathologist becomes a second-class Government clerk; or, at best, a hospital nurse earning (with luck) twenty pounds a year, and working ten hours a day to earn it.

It would manifestly be extremely foolish to persuade anyone to take up the study of medicine unless the idea were thoroughly congenial, but the majority of young women have simply never given the matter a thought, because it has never been presented to them as a possibility.

No doubt we lose a good many excellent male doctors in the same way, but thrifty middle-class parents will scrape together enough to send a boy to college when they would never dream of sending a girl. And another unfortunate result of this state of things is that women doctors, who often have to deal exclusively with very poor patients, have to learn from these patients just what a restricted income means, whilst the struggling general practitioner, himself the son of a struggling curate or clerk, has the most intimate sympathy with poor Mr. Jones's desire to get back to work at the earliest possible moment, and poor Mrs. Smith's worries about the rent.

What we need, and need badly, is a system of medical scholarships—preferably State scholarships—at girl's schools and colleges (not forgetting our new secondary schools). We need them for the boys also; but in the girl's case, for the reasons I have indicated, the need is greater.

And of course, in order to weed out unsuitable pupils—pupils who "do not know their own mind"—it would be advisable if such scholarships referred chiefly to genuinely "medical" subjects, elementary anatomy and physiology, etc. The whole question of medical education is going surely but slowly into the melting pot, and it appears probable that in the near future instruction will become more and more practical, that less time will be wasted over irrelevant subjects and that the whole course will be "speeded" up and brought more into line with modern conditions—and it certainly might be with advantage. It also appears not unlikely that the general public will soon become more enlightened over questions of hygiene, and so gradually the atmosphere of mystery surrounding the medicine-man will be dissipated and the profession will be, in every sense of the word, open to the average intelligent citizen.

In the meantime we must remember that, although it is always a good thing to begin one's studies young, it is quite possible for a woman in her twenties or thirties to enter herself as a medical student. There are many girls now strenuously engaged on war work who will feel uncommonly flat when the outbreak of peace throws them back to the old trivial round of social life again. Very naturally, and very creditably, they will want to go on serving their country: here is an admirable opportunity to serve it!

MADGE MEARS.

## Victorian Heroines.—VI.

THE WOMEN OF MRS. GASKELL'S NOVELS.

Mrs. Gaskell wrote five novels, besides the long-short story "Cousin Phyllis," the sketch-novel "Cranford," and many unimportant magazine-tales. She wrote also the "Life of Charlotte Brontë"; and with that became for the first time a true creative artist. I had not realised how striking is the division of her novels into two kinds—those in which the story is the thing, and those in which the characters are—until, to write this article, I went through all her work again. Before she met Charlotte Brontë she had published "Mary Barton," "Cranford," "Ruth," and "North and South," besides the negligible magazine-tales, of which only "Lady Ludlow" need be specified, and that because it is an almost unintentional caricature of the gentle but the resolute snobbishness which gracefully informs her picture of "society" from first to last. After the "Life" (1857) came "Sylvia's Lovers," "Cousin Phyllis," and "Wives and Daughters." In these books she, for the first time, fashioned living women as the central figures. I shall avoid the word "heroine" in writing of her four creations. Always a question-begging one, it is here peculiarly inapt, for the supreme of Mrs. Gaskell's art—the "Clare" of "Wives and Daughters"—can, by no stretch of the fancy, rank among heroines. Clare of the many names, but always "Clare" no matter what the others, stands first on the Honours List. The *proxime accessit* is her daughter Cynthia Killpatrick; next comes Phyllis Holman in the pastoral called by her name; and last, some way behind, but still a medallist, is Sylvia Robson, central figure, and (I grant) almost professional "heroine" of "Sylvia's Lovers."

The central figures in the earlier novels have little or none of the variety-in-inconsistency which gives true life to characters in fiction. The stories written around Mary Barton, Ruth Hilton, and Margaret Hale ("North and South") do very literally circumscribe these women. They had to be "like that" or else the scheme broke down. Thus, Mary Barton's foolish love affair and her remorse, her patience and her courage and initiative, serve to show the state of things in Manchester in 1848; Ruth Hilton's guilelessness and sweetness, religiosity, maternal love and final fatal sentimentality bind up in one burnt-offering the "lovely woman stoops to folly" theme again. Margaret Hale's high spirit, filial love, and secret-growing passion for the grim Thornton, whom she had at first contemned—all but exist because the story is to show how dark and true and tender is the North . . . . Creative artists often use the qualities displayed by all these women, but Mrs. Gaskell used them in the uncreative way. The characters must make the story, if they are to "live"—that is, the novelist must do exactly the reverse of what, in these books, Mrs Gaskell did.

She made the great step forward first in "Sylvia's Lovers"; then, with a more reticent but surer grace, in "Cousin Phyllis," most original of all her books; finally, in "Wives and Daughters," she brought off the dual *tour de force* of Clare and Cynthia—remarkable, not only as delineations of true individuals, but as one of the most subtle showings-forth of likeness-in-unlikeness that any novelist has given us.

Was it development or change? I think that it was both: development of talent brought about by change of outlook liberating talent. "For in the noble-hearted puppets . . ." Pass the phrase: it gives the sense of waxworks never weary in well-doing that we suffer from in "Mary Barton," "Ruth," and "North and South." In these most admirable dolls a loyal reader can discern, at moments, Mrs. Gaskell doing what she really liked to do. Now and again she yields to the allurement of her own insight, and *creates*; then, terrorised by plot and duty to it, thrusts away the living woman, and pulls the noble-hearted puppets from the box. When Ruth, after long years pursued and pleaded with by her false lover, dismisses him with words that even he must recognise as final, she climbs up to a place above the sands whence she may watch him far upon his way. But when she reaches the high point he is not visible, and she climbs slowly down and cries, "Oh, if I had not spoken angrily—I shall never, never see him again. . . . I wonder if I might stop here, and die away." . . . And the next moment, Ruth, who has in that one lived and breathed, does "die away." "She forgot herself in looking at the sunset; human care and sorrow were swallowed up in an *unconscious* sense of God's infinity." How false and feeble that is! Which is the more fatal to the living Ruth—the sunset that is always on tap for heroines, or that terrible "unconscious"? Of all words this is the murderous one when writers are for killing their creations dead! But Mrs. Gaskell was to be redeemed from a career of murder by a heroine of flesh and blood. The hour of her salvation was the hour in which she met the shy, distrustful Brontë-thing, and conquered her. For Charlotte Brontë trusted Mrs. Gaskell, let herself be known by Mrs. Gaskell, and thus saved her from the sunset-and-unconscious line of business. Once the woman lived in touch with a true character, the writer ceased to play with puppets. Before that Mrs. Gaskell's limpid, charming eyes were fixed, professionally, not on women, but on "womanliness." She had always seen her women much more frankly than she showed them. Her quick, nervous yieldings to temptation in each of the three earlier novels are proof of that; but she conceived her duty to the novelist's art in terms of the preacher; therefore, to her women's characters, in the old sequence of sacrifice, repression, secret weepings, sudden bursts of courage and initiative, followed by devotion or despair or death. But with the Brontëan entrance her scene changed—her mental scene, not any other. Her outward life ramained the same—that gracious, ordered, active, pleasant life of which there is so little that is interesting to record. And that life was to the end congenial to her. One change indeed did show: she longed to get away from Manchester, and from the activities which caused a surely shrewd-tongued somebody to say that Mrs. Gaskell, the Unitarian minister's wife, was "a good bishopess *perdue*"! The brown bird from the Yorkshire moors first sang that discontent into her soul, though it was not for Yorkshire moors that Mrs. Gaskell pined. The moorland was not in her nature. In everything she wrote we see what *her* elysium was—the smiling southern English country, hedgerows, flowers, birds, and rose-embowered cottages that cluster round the statelier homes of kindly feudal tyrants. She often deals explicitly with this variety of snobbishness—the graceful, ladylike variety to which she herself was decidedly addicted. It shows in all her books, well-laced with irony indeed, but definite and constant. Even in "Wives and Daughters" it is strongly present—nay, the story hinges on it, and were story all, or even much in this delightful book, the story would have spoilt it. But in "Wives and Daughters" character is all; and that was Charlotte Brontë's doing. She could not change the deeper matters of the law—the affinity with Nature's aspects, and the outlook, or the uplook, at "grandees"; but in the things less deeply rooted, in the outlook upon character, and thence upon relations and reactions, and the use that we can make of these, if we be story-tellers . . . in such things Mrs. Gaskell changed, how vastly for the better I need not again point out. She saw now the value of a woman as an individual, with faults as well as virtues; she saw that women's natures need, and take, free play as much as men's do. Women, Mrs. Gaskell saw at last, may be imperfect without being "wicked." In her early books her girls continually looked upon themselves as wicked. They never were, nor anything approaching it, but they must think so, or they could not be "true women" . . . all this fell away from her. It was a keen eye that saw the fickleness of Cynthia, but a fond eye that melted at her charm. "Clare," with all her triviality and falsity, yet is kindly shown; nothing is extenuated, nothing is set down in malice. We dislike her and delight in her, as we should have done in life, and not a grain of anger enters either feeling. Again, and surest of all tests, how much more vital is the "good girl" in this book! Molly Gibson still has much of the old quality about her. How, for instance, she does haunt sick-rooms! These were the spiritual homes of the Victorian heroine; but even by the many bedsides Molly lives and breathes, and is an individual girl. Sylvia Robson, too, in "Sylvia's Lovers," is a girl "human to the red-ripe of the core." She is a good deal more conditioned by the story than the "Wives and Daughters" women, for the story here is a tremendous business. But Sylvia, by her wilfulness and charm and passion, by her anger and revolt and stubbornness, *modifies* the story; she is not its passive instrument; only at the end does any puppet-work break our illusion. We do not quite believe in Sylvia at the end. But with such a monster-story character was doomed, and Mrs. Gaskell made a gallant fight for Sylvia.

Though not so interesting nor so complicated as these characters, the "Cousin Phyllis," in the idyll of Hope Farm, is in some ways most remarkable of all. Once conceived, this girl has not a "difficult" delineation; but to keep her as she was conceived was all the feat, and that was more than merely difficult; it was a task for a great artist, which is to say that it transcended difficulty and became a question of sheer keeping faith with vision. If Mrs. Gaskell had once let her eye stray from the first conception of her Phyllis she was lost, and Phyllis with her. But she never did, and this was more than art, and more than difficulty. Such success will never, perhaps, yield all the interest, the "amusement," of success with characters like Clare and Cynthia. Thus, "Cousin Phyllis," in its exquisite sobriety, may be thought of seldom, where the other book is thought of constantly. But the girl can never be forgotten, though she be not frequently recalled. In her stately innocence, her bookishness, her beauty and her piercing pathos—sufferer not alone from lover's fickleness, but also from the good boy-cousin's clumsy good intentions—Phyllis Holman is a masterpiece of reticent delineation. Compared with "Cranford," the great popular success of Mrs. Gaskell, how rare "Cousin Phyllis" is! "Cranford" has too many lovers, admirable as it is, and has too many imitators. Were the word "inimitable" a test-word in criticism—as it certainly should be—how would these two books rank? There can be but one answer: "Cranford" has been imitated and well imitated twenty times; the other never could be—it is done once for all. I do not place "Phyllis" first upon the list of honors, because Clare and Cynthia are more universal types, and are less conditioned both by time and place; but were I writing only from the point of view of Mrs. Gaskell's mastery of her material, without reference to that material's range, this exquisitely-balanced little pastoral, which might have been worked up into an epic, and then spoilt, would be for me the step by which Mrs. Gaskell mounted to the stars.

ETHEL COLBURN MAYNE.

## Obituary.

### DR. MARGARET TODD.

Dr. Margaret Todd, whose death took place in a nursing home in London on the 3rd inst., did great service to the women's cause, both as a medical woman and as a writer. She gave an insight into some of the powerful motives, the more profound ideas which have compelled women like herself to emerge from the condition of tutelage and dependence in which others were content to pass their half-lived days.

She was a Scotswoman, and was born in 1859, the daughter of Mr. James Cameron Todd, of Glasgow and Rangoon. She was educated at Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Berlin, took to teaching for a time, and then began a course of medical study at the Edinburgh School of Medicine for Women. She took her medical degrees in Edinburgh in 1894, and also the M.D. degree of Brussels. *Mona Maclean*, the novel published in 1892, put before the reading public the whole story of a medical woman's experiences as they appeared to the students and practitioners of that period. It was written under the pseudonym "Graham Travers." Other tales followed: *Windyhaugh*, *Fellow Travellers*, and *The Way of Escape*.

She crowned her work as a novelist by becoming a biographer; and she found a worthy subject in her friend Dr. Sophia Jex-Blake, whose life was published only too short a time before the biographer herself passed away. By some the biography has been accused of excessive detail; but Dr. Todd was anxious, and rightly so, that future generations should be made aware of the meshes of petty social prejudices through which the pioneer women of last century had to cut their way to freedom.

## Correspondence.

MADAM,—Several members of the London Society are going to make "hot bags" for the forthcoming Sale in support of the Women's Service Bureau. Many people who are not members may like to help to support this effort, because the Bureau works not on local but on national lines, and has been a guide and philosopher to women from all parts of the country. Also the "hot bags" which will be sold at the Sale may be used, as will be seen, for many national purposes.

The "bags" should be made of Turkey Red calico, or other suitable material, in several sizes, and stuffed either with oat husks (which kindly-disposed farmers will give for the good cause) or dried moss. The buyers of them will find them good for at least three purposes, according to their size or shape: (*a*) For pillows for the wounded in French hospitals (urgently needed); (*b*) for lining packing-cases to make the famous "hot box" for cooking; (*c*) for putting into articles of personal luggage or anything handy in the house, to keep cans of hot water hot (for twelve or fourteen hours or more if packed tightly)—a great consideration now fuel is disappearing fast.

Those willing to help should write to me and I will send particulars—husks, moss, covering material, labour, all are wanted.

A. HELEN WARD.

Bull Farm Cottage, Beaconsfield, Bucks.

## Reports, Notices, etc.

### News from Societies.

**OLTON.**—On Friday, August 30th, a meeting was held (by kind permission) at "The Convent." Miss Smyth was in the chair, and Mrs. Osler gave an interesting address on "The Responsibilities of Citizenship." She drew attention to many subjects which especially demand the help of women's thought, and advised careful study. Questions and discussion followed, and a collection was made for the Scottish Women's Hospital Units in Serbia.

**MANCHESTER, BUILE HILL PARK.**—As several members of the Society thought it desirable to have a monthly meeting, a Garden Party was arranged to take place at the Buile Hill Park on August 29th last. An invitation was sent to the members of the Regent and the Hulme branches, and forty-six women responded to the invitation.

After Mrs. Errock's address the meeting was thrown open for discussion, and several questions was asked and answered by the speaker. Arrangements were made to have a monthly meeting, and the first will be held at the Women's Social Club, Regent Road, Salford, on October 7th, at 8 o'clock in the evening.

## Items of Interest.

The Labour Party is organising a National Conference of Women to discuss questions relating to "Women's Civic and Political Rights and Responsibilities." The Conference will be held at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on October 15th and 16th. The subjects on the programme include proposals for legalising the election of women M.P.s, for lowering the qualifying age of women voters to twenty-one, for removing all legal restrictions which prevent women from entering professions, and for increasing the representation of women upon public commissions and committees. A resolution is further to be moved which calls upon women "to throw their strength into the development of a strong political organisation embracing both men and women, and not to follow the lines of sex division."

The National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland (N.U.W.W.) will hold its annual meeting at Harrogate on October 8th, 9th, and 10th, when the report of the Committee for the Revision of the Constitution will be considered. The report, it is understood, embodies some substantial changes both in the name and rules of the National Union of Women Workers. Resolutions will be laid before the Council on many subjects, including the principle of equal pay for equal work, and the admission of women to all professional corporations and trade unions.





## National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

**The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.**
*President*: MRS. HENRY FAWCETT, LL.D.

*Hon. Secretaries:*
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MISS EVANS, MRS. HUBBACK (Information and Parliamentary).

*Offices*—Evelyn House, 62, Oxford Street, London, W. 1.
Telegraphic Address—Voiceless, Ox, London. Telephone—Museum 2668.

## Headquarter Notes.

### Information Bureau.

Under "Notes and News" allusion is made this week to the National Union's important undertaking in expanding its Information Bureau, whereby it is hoped to bring knowledge concerning women's interests and social questions within reach of all serious enquirers. The National Union through the Bureau offers any Society of the Union or individual, free of charge, information in any way connected with the political, economic and social interests of women. For other societies the annual subscription is a guinea. By paying an annual subscription of ten-and-six or twopence per volume per week individuals are entitled to full use of the library. If they prefer, boxes of selected books on special subjects will be sent to them at a charge of 5s. a box. A yearly subscription of a guinea will enable any society to similar boxes, sent as often as desired during the year. Carriage must be paid by the borrower both ways.

### Treasurer's Note.

"Our Bargaining Power" was the title of the leading article in last week's COMMON CAUSE, pointing out the indispensable help of women in supporting the various party or group programmes, and their power of bargaining that such party programmes should include the proposals which the Council of the N.U.W.S.S. has determined to push. Our societies must keep these "Equality" proposals not only before their own members, but also before the women citizens of their locality and before the local party agents, and they must apply to Headquarters for information and advice. But while they *apply* to Headquarters, they must also *supply* to Headquarters the funds for this active, wide-awake policy, and we beg every society to make a great effort to send a contribution soon for our autumn work.

### Literature Department.

A new leaflet on Regulation D.O.R.A. 40 D, entitled *Back to the C.D. Acts*, is now on sale, price 3s. per 100, or 4d. per dozen. It contains the actual text of the regulation and summarises its injustices to women, injustices both of theory and practice. The leaflet is the joint publication of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene and the N.U.W.S.S. Consequently it is based upon careful study and wide experience of the operation of D.O.R.A. 40 D.

There are also two new leaflets, *The National Union and Reconstruction* (price 2d.) and *The New N.U.W.S.S.* (price 3s. per 100), which explain the present position of the Union and its intended future work. *Mothers, You Must Vote*, *To Women in Business*, *To Women in the Engineering Trades*, and *To Women in the Teaching Profession* (price 1s. 6d. per 100 each) are four appeals—worded to suit four different types of women—for a wise use of the vote, pointing out the chief disabilities under which each type rests and should be the first to attempt to remove.

The National Union has further issued a series of leaflets explanatory of the Representation of the People Act: *And Shall I Have a Parliamentary Vote?* by Miss Macmillan, price 3d., is a lucid explanation of all women's qualifications to vote under the Act. *Six Million Women* (price 1s. 6d. per 100) is an explanation still further simplified; while *Women—the Service and Lodger Voter* and *Women War Workers and Their Votes* (price 1s. 6d. per 100) are leaflets devoted to explaining the particularly intricate qualifications.

Finally, there is a series of leaflets upon the Women's Citizen Association movement. *What Is a Women's Citizen Association?* (price 1s. 9d. per 100) and *Ten Reasons for Joining a Women's Citizen Association* (price 1s. 6d. per 100) speak for themselves. *The Women Citizens' Association Handbook*, by Miss V. Eustace (price 6d.), describes in fullest detail the best methods of forming and organising a Women Citizens' Association.

### An Apology.

We very much regret that a misprint appeared in last week's issue: Page 247, *Literature Department;* in the sentence beginning "The Directory of Useful Addresses" the phrase "the particulars as to Local Government history and qualifications" should read: "The particulars as to Local Government history and qualifications being kindly revised by the Women's Local Government Society (Incorporated)."

## N.U.W.S.S. Scottish Women's Hospitals.

Subscriptions are still urgently needed, much new work being undertaken, and should be sent to Mrs. Laurie, Hon. Treasurer, S. W. H., Red House, Greenock. Cheques to be crossed "Royal Bank of Scotland." Subscriptions for the London Unit to be sent to the Right Hon. Viscountess Cowdray, or to Miss Gosse, Joint Hon. Treasurers, S. W. H., 66, Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W. 1.

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

*SEPTEMBER 13.*

**Bristol**—Meeting at 46, Downs Park West—Speaker: Miss Cooke, National Union Organiser 3.15 p.m.

*SEPTEMBER 16.*

**Birmingham**—Halesowen, Church House—Mrs. Ring 7.30 p.m.

**S. Islington**—Islington Congregational Church, Upper Street—Subject: "Women's New Responsibilities"—Speaker: Mrs. Bertram 3.30 p.m.

**Birmingham**—Handsworth Infant Welfare Centre—Mrs. Ring 5 p.m.

*SEPTEMBER 18.*

**Birmingham**—Lapworth—Mrs. Ring 7.30 p.m.

*SEPTEMBER 20.*

**Stoke** and **Newcastle**—Victoria Hall, Hanley Town Hall—Public Meeting—Speakers: Mrs. Ring ("How the Vote Can Help Working People") and Dr. Saleeby ("The Coming Ministry of Health")

*SEPTEMBER 22.*

**Newcastle-under-Lyne** and the Potteries in general will observe this day as "Franchise Sunday"

*SEPTEMBER 23.*

**N. Islington**—Blenheim Congregational Hall, Hornsey Rise—Subject: "Women's Duties of Citizenship"—Speaker: Miss Margaret Jones 3 p.m.

## Coming Events.

*SEPTEMBER 15.*

**St. Martin's-in-the-Fields**—A Memorial Service for Mrs. Long, Chief Controller, Q.M.A.A.C., drowned in the sinking of the "Warilda" 3.15 p.m.

**Morley Hall,** George Street, Hanover Square—Miss Alice Buckton will give a public reading of the Pageant Drama which she is about to produce under the auspices of the Y.W.C.A. 2.30 p.m.

**Whitechapel**—An Exhibition of Women's War Work is to be opened next month at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. There will be exhibits of all kinds of work, agricultural, hospital and munitions.

**The National Federation of Women Teachers** (London Unit).—The London Unit of the National Federation of Women Teachers celebrated its recent triumph in the salary campaign at a mass meeting at the Kingsway Hall, on Thursday, September 5th. A reserve fund for the continuance of the fight for equal pay was started; messages of sympathy and congratulation on recent victories were sent to other women workers, and a resolution forwarded to the President of the Board of Education requesting him to consult the Council of the Federation in the framing of the new Pensions Scheme for women teachers.


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## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

MISS MAUDE ROYDEN preaches in the City Temple, Holborn Viaduct, E.C., next Sunday, at the 6 p.m. service. Subject: "The Problem of Suffering: I.—Is Suffering the Test of Virtue? ('Doth Job fear God for nought?')"

WESTMINSTER LABOUR PARTY (Women's Section).—TWO MEETINGS to be held in the Fabian Hall, 25, Tothill-street, Westminster, S.W. 1. Wednesday, September 18th, 8 p.m., "How to Start a Maternity Centre," Mrs. Barton; Wednesday, September 25th, 8 p.m. (open to men and women), "International Aims of the Labour Party," Dr. Marion Phillips.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FRANCHISE CLUB, 9, Grafton-street, Piccadilly, W. 1.—Subscription: London Members £1 11s. 6d., Country Members £1 5s. per annum from date of entrance (Irish, Scottish, and Foreign Members 10s. 6d.). Weekly Lectures; House Dinners; Valuable Feminist Lending and Reference Library available to Members; Excellent Catering; Luncheons and Dinners à la Carte.—All particulars, Secretary. Tel.: Mayfair 3532.

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