

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

Representation of the People Act (1918) Amendment Bill in Committee.

As we predicted on our columns last week, there was a general agreement on the part of members of Standing Committee A, which met to consider the above measure on Thursday last, 22nd May, that it should be limited to providing for Equal Franchise only. The greater part of the discussion during the morning was taken up by Lord Eustace Percy on behalf of the Conservatives, and Mr. Foot on behalf of the Liberal Party, urging the Government to announce its intentions with regard to the future of the Bill, and inquiring whether the promoters of the Bill would be prepared to jettison all the clauses other than those dealing with Equal Franchise. It was interesting to hear Lord Eustace say that in his opinion nine out of ten members of his own Party were in favour of Equal Franchise, while it was naturally assumed that there was no difference of opinion on this subject among the Labour and Liberal Parties. The Home Secretary indicated that, while he was unable to state what the Government attitude would be until he had seen the form of the revised Bill, which would receive the support of the opposition, there was no doubt that the Government would carry out its intention as announced during the debate on the occasion of the Second Reading, and give facilities for the later stages of the Bill. Finally Mr. Adamson, promoter of the Bill, proposed that the Committee should be adjourned for a week, during which the representatives of the three Parties should come together in order to see whether an agreed measure on the basis of equal franchise could be arrived at.

The New Bill.

As we go to press we see the amendments put down by Mr. Adamson, which will in effect leave in the Bill, as its only important clause, one extending the vote to women on the same qualifications as those on which men now exercise their right. There is very little doubt that by the time this paper is in the hands of our readers those amendments will have been accepted by the Standing Committee, and the attainment of Equal Franchise will be well on its way. Delighted though we are, we cannot refrain from regretting the amount of time which has been wasted by not following the wishes of women's organizations and introducing in the first place a simple measure for Equal Franchise.

Summary Jurisdiction (Separation and Maintenance) Bill and Legitimacy Bill.—Committee Stage.

Both these Bills were discussed and disposed of in one meeting of Standing Committee B on Tuesday, 27th May. The Summary Jurisdiction (Separation and Maintenance) Bill went through in

record time—literally three minutes—with no amendments. We congratulate the N.U.S.E.C. on the careful drafting which made this possible, though no doubt, they, as promoters, would be the first to admit that the Bill in its present form is, thanks to the exigencies of Parliamentary time, a very small Bill. The Legitimacy Bill aroused considerably more discussion. An attempt was made by Mr. Rawlinson and Sir Gerald Hohler to insert the proviso excepting from the benefits of the Bill those children whose parents were at the time of their birth legally unable to marry. This was defeated by 34 votes to 4. Some slight amendments were made in the Clauses dealing with inheritance in the case of intestacy. The Legitimacy Bill will probably be coming up for its Third Reading and Report Stage in June, and the Summary Jurisdiction (Separation and Maintenance) Bill will be coming up for its Third Reading and Report Stage on Friday, 4th July. We have every reason to hope that both these Bills will reach the Statute Book this Session.

The Unemployed Child.

Since an article on this subject was written, Mr. Tom Shaw has agreed to withdraw the obnoxious clause relating to child insurance. But what effect his concession is likely to have on the Bill, and the possibilities of dealing adequately in it with the problem of the child, seems to be for the moment uncertain. In the course of the debate on Monday night, Lady Astor urged the raising of the school age in a speech which proved clearly how deeply she feels on this subject. The Government's proposals, in so far as they have produced speeches such as hers and as those made by various other members in the course of the recent debates, will at least have served to bring the question of juvenile employment forcibly before the minds of the public. The desire to find a solution which will be really in harmony with the best interests of the nation is widespread and independent of party. With goodwill on all sides, a solution should not be really difficult. The House should be the master and not the servant of its own procedure.

The Whisky Runners.

On 18th January we commented at some length upon the activities of Lieut.-Col. Sir Broderick Hartwell in connexion with the shipment of whisky to within 25 miles of the American coast, for delivery to U.S.A. shippers engaged in the evasion of the Prohibition Laws. The occasion of our comment was the issue by Sir Broderick Hartwell of a circular inviting subscriptions (and promising a sure and quick 20 per cent. return) for the shipment of his fourth cargo. Apparently his somewhat shady business is flourishing, for last week potential participants received renewed invitations (coupled with promises of 25 per cent. quick return) for a fifth voyage, together with a vivid four-page circular describing the futility of the U.S.A. Prohibition Laws. We continue to agree with the editor of the *Spectator* that the offer is "a disgrace to those who make it and to those who respond to it."

Women and Unemployment.

We call our readers' attention to an interesting article by Miss Irwin, General Secretary of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades, which appears in this month's *National Review*. The article is entitled "Our Unemployed Women: A Suggestion," and its main proposals turn on the possibility of promoting co-operative small holdings colonies for women. Miss Irwin develops her theme in the light of considerable personal experience, gained not merely as secretary of a body intimately concerned with the needs and capacities of unemployed women, but also as a practical, and we believe, a successful fruit farmer.

Women's Institutes in Council.

The National Federation of Women's Institutes held their Annual Meeting on 20th and 21st May. There are now over 3,000 Institutes in England and Wales, and the Queen's Hall was crowded with countrywomen come together to discuss in the first place the business of their Society, and in the second such questions as Widows' Pensions, Women Police, and Housing. That village women realize the importance of such matters and realize that they are their concern says much for the political education of women, and augurs hopefully for the development of a sane and well-informed public opinion. One of the best speeches was that in which Miss Margesson urged Institutes to see that these things found a place on their programme and were discussed in the village so that when they came up to the Annual Meeting delegates were in a position to express the well-considered opinion of the Institutes. A resolution urging the Government to introduce legislation giving Pensions to Civilian Widows with Dependent Children was passed by a large majority; an amendment in favour of waiting for an all-embracing scheme of National Insurance being lost.

The Minister of Agriculture was present on the first day and spoke cordially of the value of the work done by the movement. He congratulated it on its non-party character, and said that the best way to ensure the maintenance of this was for persons of all parties to take their share in it.

Liberal Women in Conference.

One thousand women delegates of the Women's National Liberal Federation are holding their annual conference at Kingsway Hall, Kingsway, this week.

The delegates and about a thousand other guests were entertained by Viscountess Grey and the other members of the Liberal Social Council at a reception at the Great Central Hotel on Monday evening, at which Mr. and Mrs. Asquith, and most of the other leaders of the party were present.

The agenda of Tuesday was begun by the presidential address of Lady Bonham Carter, a very comprehensive and able survey of the present position. Mr. Asquith came to speak on the protracted campaign, and had a warm welcome.

The resolutions covered a wide field, the Foreign Policy resolutions coming first. Lady Bonham Carter moved a League of Nations one, advocating the admission of Germany and Russia to the League, and Professor Gilbert Murray moved one dealing with the Treaty of Mutual Assistance. The ratification of the compulsory clause of the International Court of Justice was advocated by Lady Horsley, and carried. Proportional Representation furnished the liveliest debate of the day, Miss Ursula Williams, and Mrs. F. Acland making very able speeches for, and Miss Violet Markham against, among others. Industrial Policies were covered by resolution or amended and extended schemes, including Widows' Pensions, spoken to by Lady Haworth, and Mrs. G. D. Simon. Mrs. Neville Dixey, Mrs. Guedella, and Miss Helen-Fraser, spoke to resolutions urging the Party leaders to elaborate and define the industrial policies of co-partnership and settlement of disputes outlined in the General Election Manifesto.

Free Trade was affirmed again. The general level of speaking was markedly good and able, and the Conference showed its keen interest in the bigger issues of Foreign Policy and economic policies.

Women's Pay at Wembley.

We print elsewhere a notice of the questions asked in the House with regard to the pay of waitresses at Wembley. The complaints as to the pay and conditions of work both of the men and women employed in the Exhibition are widespread. In most cases the only information available on the subject is from ex parte statements on either side. One hears on the one hand of a 15s. weekly wage without tips for a 60 hours' week, and on the other hand, Messrs. J. Lyons and Co. state that some waitresses are making as much as £8 a week. It is obviously impossible to express any views as to the rights and wrongs of the case until an unbiased statement with chapter and verse is available, but without being unduly prejudiced it is difficult not to assume that there could not be so much smoke without some fire. The complaints are too frequent, the tales of bad conditions too widespread, to be without some foundation. The whole thing is regrettable from every point of view. The Exhibition is so completely an official thing that one cannot help feeling the Government has an unusual responsibility to the workers employed there, even though they are employed by ordinary commercial firms. One wonders, too, what effect these discontents will have on the minds of the colonial visitors to the

Exhibition. These are for the most part accustomed to a high standard of living for their industrial workers, and we fear tales of 15s. for 60 hours can hardly fail to weaken their belief in the Mother Country.

A Useful Guide.

The National Council of Women has drawn up a useful seven-page pamphlet (price 2d., obtainable from the N.C.W., Parliament Mansions, S.W. 1, or from the International Council of Women Pavilion at Wembley), containing a list of "Women's Societies in London" classified under such headings as Citizenship, Education, Health, etc., together with their addresses and hours for interviews. It is hoped that this may prove of use to visitors to the British Empire Exhibition, by enabling them to get into touch with the work of any organization in which they may be interested.

Miss Picton-Turbervill in an American Pulpit.

The Rev. Robert Johnston, Rector of St. John's Church, Washington, U.S.A., invited Miss Picton-Turbervill to occupy the pulpit at Evensong on Sunday, 11th May. In spite of torrential rain the Church that evening was crowded when Miss Picton-Turbervill preached on "Christ and Modern Life." St. John's Church, we are informed, is considered a conservative one, and that such an innovation should have been made is a welcome sign of the times. We congratulate the rector on having made the innovation, and trust that others in the Episcopal Church of the United States will follow his example.

Questions in Parliament.

BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION.—Mr. Duncan asked the Home Secretary whether he was aware that women employed in the restaurants and tea shops at Wembley are being paid 15s. for a 60-hours' week, and whether he will see that the provisions of the Shops' Act are enforced in these establishments.

In reply, Mr. Davies stated he had no information as to the hours or wages of these employees, and that the enforcement of the Shops' Act rested with the local authorities, and not the Home Office.

TEACHERS' SALARIES.—In reply to a question from Sir R. Aske, as to whether the Government proposed to establish equal pay for men and women teachers of the same professional status, Mr. Trevelyan stated that the Government took the view that the salaries of teachers in State-aided schools should, if possible, be determined by agreement between the teachers and the local authorities, "at all events, in the first instance." He added that the Burnham Committee is at present considering the existing arrangements.

WOMEN AND THE CONSULAR SERVICE.—The Duchess of Atholl asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department whether the claims of women resident in the locality could be considered in appointing Vice-Consuls, if no British male resident with the necessary qualifications were available, and if the pay were not sufficient to attract persons from other localities.

The answer was in the negative. Mr. Ponsonby pointed out that the Sex Disqualification Removal Act gave the Government power to reserve to men any branch of the Civil Service in the overseas possessions or in any foreign country. Under this section of the Act a notice was issued in August, 1921, that "all posts in the Diplomatic Service and in the Consular Service are reserved to men."

LEGITIMACY BILL.—In reply to a question from Mr. Vincent, Mr. Clynes stated that the Government would welcome a second reading of the Legitimacy Bill, but that they could not grant it any special facilities.

WOMEN IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.—In reply to a question from Mrs. Wintringham as to the number of appointments made under the temporary regulations for competitions admitting women to the Civil Service, Mr. Graham stated that as the result of the competition held in December, 1922, the number of women appointed to administrative posts was 3, to special posts 2, to executive posts 7, and to higher clerical posts 22.

LATE NEWS.

As we go to press we hear that the Government's Guardianship of Infants Bill will be introduced into the House of Lords this week. A full account will be given as soon as it is printed.

POLICY.—The sole policy of THE WOMAN'S LEADER is to advocate a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women. So far as space permits, however, it will offer an impartial platform for topics not directly included in the objects of the women's movement, but of special interest to women. Articles on these subjects will always be signed, at least by initials or a pseudonym, and for the opinions expressed in them the Editor accepts no responsibility.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND THE CHILD.

The Unemployment Insurance (No. 2) Bill, expounded in the House by the Minister for Labour (Mr. Tom Shaw), promises a substantial increase in benefits. The allowance for men is to be raised from 15s. to 18s.; that for women from 12s. to 15s. A man will receive for a dependent wife 5s. (as before), for a child under 14 2s. instead of 1s. Boys and girls under 16 are for the first time to be brought into insurance, receiving after 30 weeks' contributions a benefit of 5s. and 4s. a week respectively. All this, together with the proposed lessening of the waiting period and abolition of "the gap", will no doubt do much to lessen the suffering caused by unemployment, and that the financial provisions of insurance have been found to work out so satisfactorily as to make such an increase possible without unduly burdening the taxpayer is a great triumph for the comparatively new principle of social insurance. We are apt to forget how new it is and how far this country is still beyond nearly all other countries in this kind of legislation.

Yet taking these latest developments on their merits, there is much in them to cause us a qualm of doubt and above all to make us reflect ruefully how very much Ministers of the Crown resemble each other, however they may differ in their Party colour and personal antecedents. Whatever the native hue of their resolution, how quickly it becomes sicklied o'er with the pale cast of bureaucratic caution. How easily the fieriest Pegasus of them all becomes accustomed to blinkers and bearing reins and to jogging along the high road. One pictures the invisible charioteer as a kind of blend between an immaculately correct Permanent Secretary and a floridly efficient Party Wire-puller—uncongenial personalities, but alike in their determination that Pegasus shall not break away in pursuit of any impracticable, or at least politically unremunerative, ideals.

In Tuesday's debate Dr. Macnamara was very effective in twitting the Labour Ministry with the contrast between their professed policy—extended education for all, constructive work instead of doles, etc.—and their present proposals. He and several other speakers of all parties, including the intransigent Labourite, Mr. Maclean, pointed out that the suggested lowering of the insurance age to 14 would inevitably deter parents from keeping their children longer at school and

so actually injure the chances of improved education. Mr. Shaw's reply—that on the contrary the prospect of having to pay insurance contributions out of the youngsters' earnings would encourage parents to keep them at school—was most unconvincing. If, as he astonishingly claimed, the usual earnings of a boy between 14 and 16 are from 15s. to £1, the insurance payment of 4½d. per week will not be grudged by any parents. On the other hand, 5s. a week during unemployment is likely to be regarded by them as a substantial bird in the hand. Again, there is its probable effect on Local Authorities. Mr. Shaw complained of their reluctance to take advantage of the power they already possess to raise the school-leaving age. How much less likely are they to venture on this step, when they know that they will thereby be depriving their working-class electors not only of their children's problematic earnings but of the certainty of unemployment benefits. The speakers in the Debate spoke consistently of boys, ignoring girls altogether. Yet we are inclined to think that these will suffer most in their educational prospects from the new proposal. An unemployed boy is a nuisance at home and even the short sighted parents can see the evil effects on him of idleness. But an unemployed girl can be made a useful domestic drudge and yet remain technically "unemployed". The temptation so to use her is likely to be much strengthened by the proffered benefit.

Another point which will be noted by our readers is the inadequacy of the increase in dependent's allowances. A certain Unionist candidate ascribed his defeat at the last election largely to the unreasonableness of the married women electors in his Scotch Constituency. At every meeting, he complained, he was assailed with shouts of "Do ye think a wumman can keep a wean on 1s. a week." It is doubtful if these ladies will think even 2s. a satisfactory sum for the purpose and certainly if a single man needs 18s., 5s. for a wife leaves much to be desired. But perhaps they are used to a humble estimate of their needs. It was a Scotchman (though it might just as well have been an English, Irish, or Welshman) who after the marriage service thus adjured his bride: "Ye'll mind, Jeanie, that the Minister tell us that husband and wife were one. Ye'll mind, Jeanie, that I'm that one."

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER.

FROM OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.

THE HOUSE WITHIN THE HOUSE.

Inside the membership of 615 there are a number of Houses of Commons. There is one concerned with golf, one concerned with gossip, which is not confined to one sex, and one concerned with the work of Parliament.

It should be interesting to collectors of statistics to make an analysis of the number of questions asked and speeches made in a Session, and to find out what a comparatively small number of Members do the regular work of the House. A casual glance at a month's reports will give an idea of the bent of many members' Parliamentary life.

On Monday last, to take an illustration, Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck asked the Minister of Labour what progress he has made in negotiations with representatives of employers in the drapery trade with a view to bringing the trade under the Trade Boards Acts?

The question is only one of many asked by this popular M.P. over many years dealing with the subject of the sweated workers, and is an index to his mind. On Tuesday, to take another example, Mr. Trevelyan Thomson asked the Minister of Health whether, in view of the paragraph in his circular letter of 12th May to local authorities agreeing to their request that they should retain their power to use building materials purchased in the cheapest market wherever situated, he will now allow them the same latitude to purchase cement in connexion with roads.

The question reveals the municipal parliamentarian, and is an accurate pointer to the work of a member who is jocularly known as "Necessitous Areas" because of his persistence in pleading their cause. Or to take a final illustration. Mr. Hardie on Wednesday asked the Minister of Health whether he can explain why a term of years of apprenticeship is specified in the report on the building industry, while adopting the principle of admission to these trades by test? The late Mr. Keir Hardie's brother is keenly interested in science and in its application to industry,

and a collection of his inquiries and speeches would reveal a searching and scientific mind.

But, alas! the official report only gives the reader an index of "the House within the House," and tells little of those who came to "Nod and glance and bustle by." The Scotsmen, however, are always in their places when money is to be got, and so needy Scottish fishermen will get a grant of £150,000, while Englishmen, in a similar plight get nothing! Some day I shall be provoked to write an article on "Duty done in Dull Days, the Test of Devotion," and it will have special reference to the work of the Committees of the House, where there is sometimes a difficulty in getting a quorum for the necessary business of the Government.

This last week has shown the need for a knowledge of the rules of the House on the part of the rulers of the people. If Ministers who have been in the House for years had only broken their brains on its rules the present Government would have been saved more than one humiliation.

It has been a bad week for His Majesty's Ministers. We have discussed the case of Scottish Teachers, the Administration of Justice, Friendly Societies, Export Trade, the Blind, the Disabled Service Men, and have heard the last of War Charges Validity. The House always shows up well when an appeal is made to its humanity, and Friday was no exception; but as the two Bills passed are referred to Standing Committee A, I am afraid there is no further chance for them this Session. This Committee has made a start with the Equal Franchise Bill, and hopes are now high that contentious clauses will be jettisoned, and speedy progress made.

The whole House was sorry, I think that Mr. Willie Graham and Mr. Tom Shaw should have been rebuffed on the pension question and on unemployment, but if pledges are given outside the House, talk of "rabbits" inside the House merely invites trouble. The Government were compelled to withdraw their proposed Pensions Increase Bill, amid a chorus of stinging

(Continued on page 145.)

WHAT I REMEMBER.¹ XXXVIII.

By MILLICENT GARRETT FAWCETT, J.P., LL.D.

LAST STAGES OF THE SUFFRAGE STRUGGLE—(Continued).

At first, as I have said, and up to 1908, no physical violence was used by the Suffragettes, though much violence was used against them. On 23rd October, 1906, Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, accompanied by a little group of friends and sympathizers, went to the Central Lobby of the House of Commons, and there created what is technically called "a disturbance"; i.e. they waved flags bearing the words "Votes for Women," and mounted the padded seats from which they began making speeches in support of the claim of women to representation. She and three other women were arrested and sentenced to two months' imprisonment as ordinary offenders. Their whole object was to demonstrate that women were no longer prepared to wait patiently until some crumbs of citizenship should be thrown to them from the rich man's table. Mrs. Cobden Sanderson's more personal object was to prove that working-class women were not going to be left unsupported to bear the brunt of the agitation which the W.S.P.U. had initiated. She and others had found that the police were far more ready to arrest a working girl than a woman belonging to the wealthier classes. On this very occasion the police were heard to say "We want Kenny," meaning Miss Annie Kenny, the Lancashire mill girl whose name was identified with the W.S.P.U. from the outset. Miss Kenny had not taken part in this particular demonstration at all, but she was arrested all the same, although she was only present as a spectator. The very different treatment accorded to working-class women and those of another social status made a very unfavourable impression on the public. Lady Constance Lytton, when she was imprisoned in her own name in 1909, was far more indulgently treated than when she disguised herself as a working woman and was arrested again under the name of Jane Warton.²

I have in my possession a copy of a letter from the then Home Secretary, in which he says he will give special instructions to the police about my sister, Mrs. Garrett Anderson (which could only be interpreted to mean that she was not to be arrested), on the occasion of one of the W.S.P.U. demonstrations, at which she had announced her intention of being present. But no preliminary warning had been given by Mrs. Cobden Sanderson and her friends, and as I have said no favour was shown to them by the police; they even arrested one young girl who had taken no part in the demonstration.

Those who thought that these unusual proceedings would strike the Women's Suffrage Movement dead were soon proved to be wrong. The very reverse was the case. The secretaries and other active members of the older Suffrage Societies were worked off their feet, every post brought applications for information and membership; women's suffrage was the topic of conversation in every household and at every social gathering; the newspapers, too, were full of it. Money rolled in in an unexpected way; where we were formerly receiving half-crowns and shillings, we were now getting £5 and £10 notes. One of my relatives (by marriage) said to me: "I was lukewarm, now I am boiling," and she was typical of thousands. It is not to be denied that some people sent cash as a practical expression of delight at anything that was damaging to the Government. For instance, a lady in Ireland from whom I had ordered my usual supply of bulbs for autumn planting, sent them, but without a bill, writing: "I do not send a bill; give the money to those good women who are persecuting the Government." But there was also behind the movement the support of the innate political instinct of the British people. For instance, at one of our meetings, filled to suffocation so that we were obliged to get another hall for an overflow, the local M.P., one of our supporters, was present. He spoke in subdued and chastened tones of "recent events" and of "the very mistaken tactics which we so greatly deplore," and expressed the belief that the prisoners in Holloway, Mrs. Cobden Sanderson and her friends, "had deeply injured the Cause we all have at heart." Whereupon a working man's voice was heard from the back of the hall, "They've rose the country, Sir," and this, with the aid afforded by the Government, was quite true.

Feeling as I did on the subject, I was often asked why I did not leave the Constitutional Movement and become a militant. I asked myself this question very insistently, too. I was before

¹ This article is one of a series which will extend over several weeks.

² See *Prison and Prisoners*, by Lady Constance Lytton.

all things desirous that we should keep our artillery for our opponents and not turn it on one another: on the other hand, I could not support a revolutionary movement, especially as it was ruled autocratically, at first, by a small group of four persons, and latterly by one person only; the militant societies had, moreover, split into two, in 1907, chiefly on this question of the autocratic despotism with which the W.S.P.U. was ruled. In 1908 this despotism decreed that the policy of suffering violence, but using none, was to be abandoned. After that, I had no doubt whatever that what was right for me and the N.U.W.S.S. was to keep strictly to our principle of supporting our movement only by argument, based on commonsense and experience and not by personal violence or law-breaking of any kind. It remained quite true that far more violence was suffered by the Suffragettes than they inflicted on their opponents. I will mention two instances:—The turning of a hose upon a Suffrage prisoner in her cell on a mid-winter night in Strangeways gaol, Manchester, because she had barricaded herself into her cell. This was not only disgraceful torture, it led to even more tragic consequences. The other was the throwing downstairs by the stewards at a Liberal meeting at Bradford, of a man who had dared to support the militant women. His leg was broken, and he brought an action claiming damages at the Leeds Assizes in March, 1911, and was awarded £100. I must mention here what I myself have seen, and a sickening and terrible sight it was: Suffragettes being carried by main force out of an Albert Hall meeting: the Suffragette violently struggling, but powerless in the clutches of four men, two to her shoulders and two to her feet, and while in this defenceless position violently smitten on the face by enraged male members of the Liberal party: both fists and umbrellas were used in this cowardly assault.

A CHOICE OF BOOKS.

A RUSSIAN GENTLEMAN: YEARS OF CHILDHOOD. By SERGHEI AKSAKOFF; translated by J. D. DUFF. The World's Classics. (Milford, 2s. each.)

It is good to know that Mr. Duff's translations of Aksakoff's family chronicle are now, through this reprint, within the reach of every reader. The third volume of the trilogy, *A Russian Schoolboy*, is to follow shortly. The charm of these books is impossible to describe—they must be read.

JANE WELSH CARLYLE: LETTERS TO HER FAMILY, 1839-1863. Edited by LEONARD HUXLEY. (Murray, 21s.)

Two hundred of Mrs. Carlyle's letters, recently come to light, and edited by Mr. Huxley, form the third volume of her published correspondence. These are written from Chelsea, most of them to her cousins, Helen and Jeannie Welsh, and describe her life, her husband, her ailments, and her friends. Mazzini, Dickens, Thackeray, are among the latter, and Lady Ashburton, to whose parties she is invited, is treated with a not always friendly sincerity. Written as they are to her most intimate friends, the letters are sometimes scrappy and sometimes repeat themselves, but there are very few without her peculiar flavour.

EAST PERSIA: A BACKWATER OF THE GREAT WAR. By Brigadier-General W. E. R. DICKSON. (Arnold, 15s.)

In this book we have the well-told story of a line of communication some 700 miles long through a roadless desert which was somehow kept open and friendly relations with the unpromising inhabitants which were somehow kept up, and German Bolsheviks who were somehow checkmated. We are introduced to strange company, including a Persian Governor who adds "Hanging and Throat-cutting" as an inducement on his card of invitation.

WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS. By NAOMI MITCHISON. (J. Cape, 7s. 6d.)

After reading *The Conquered*, Mrs. Mitchison's next book was eagerly looked for, and amply rewards us. It consists of stories of "the early and later days of the Roman Empire." They are soaked in their period, which is recreated for us without effort, and without a touch of the school book or the antiquary, in the peculiarly clear and sympathetic vision which is the author's special gift.

THE SOLICITATION LAWS.

The N.U.S.E.C. at its Annual Council adopted a resolution calling upon its branches to study the administration of the Solicitation Laws with a view to obtaining their repeal. The main provisions of the law, which directly refer to solicitation are contained in the Metropolitan Police Act, 1839 (which operates only in London), and the Town Police Clauses Act, 1847, and these are in both cases contained in a section dealing with numerous other kinds of street disorder. A few towns have special by-laws of a similar character, but somewhat differently worded.

Section 54 of the *Metropolitan Police Act* runs as follows:—

Penalty. "Every person shall be liable to a penalty not more than forty shillings, who within the limits of the Metropolitan Police District shall in any thoroughfare or public place commit any of the following offences:— . . .

Offence. (11) *Every common prostitute or nightwalker loitering or being in any thoroughfare or public place for the purpose of prostitution or solicitation to the annoyance of the inhabitants or passengers. . . .*

Power of Arrest. and it shall be lawful for any constable belonging to the Metropolitan Police Force to take into custody without warrant any person who shall commit any such offence within view of any such constable."

The corresponding section in the *Town Police Clauses Act* (which operates in nearly all districts outside London) is as follows:—

Offence. Section 28. *Every common prostitute or nightwalker loitering and importuning passengers for the purpose of prostitution in any street to the obstruction annoyance or danger of the residents or passengers, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding forty shillings for each offence, or in the discretion of the Justice before whom she is convicted may be committed to prison there to remain for a period not exceeding fourteen days, and any constable . . . shall take into custody without warrant and forthwith convey before a Justice any person who within his view commits any such offence:— . . .*

Penalty. . . .

Power of Arrest. . . .

There is another provision under Section 54 of the *Metropolitan Police Act*, which does not occur in the *Town Police Clauses Act*, but which has been adopted in the By-laws of a few towns outside London, under which many women and a few men have been arrested and convicted for solicitation, viz. :—

(13) *Every person who in any thoroughfare or public place shall use any threatening, abusive, or insulting words, or behaviour, with intent to provoke a breach of the peace or whereby a breach of the peace may be occasioned.*

Cases of ordinary solicitation are also occasionally dealt with under a provision of the *Vagrancy Act*, 1824, by which common prostitutes guilty of riotous or indecent behaviour in streets or public places may be sentenced to imprisonment for one month, or for a longer period on second or subsequent convictions.

These are the laws which members of the N.U.S.E.C. should study in administration, and which it is proposed to repeal. The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene has a Bill drafted for this purpose, and it desires to substitute the following provision for all the sections quoted above:—

Every person who in any street or public place wilfully causes annoyance to any person by words or behaviour shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding forty shillings for each offence.

Nothing is enacted to replace the repealed provisions in the *Vagrancy Act* since "behaving in a riotous or indecent manner" is sufficiently met by other provisions of the existing law.

If this proposed new provision is made law it will bring about changes which need consideration, but which would undoubtedly place the law dealing with street solicitation on an absolutely equal basis between men and women and also between women and women. This equality does not exist now either in law or practice; in fact, the present practice is considerably worse than the law.

The first and obvious change would be that *all persons* who wilfully cause annoyance to any other persons by word or behaviour will be liable to be arrested by a constable without a warrant. At present only "common prostitutes" are so liable. The question which at once arises is:—Is it desirable to give the police summary power to arrest any man or woman who, in their opinion, is wilfully annoying some one? This is a very wide discretionary power and, even with the very best intent on the part of the police, may lead to miscarriages of justice, the effect of which may well be to blast the character of some perfectly innocent men and women. It is sufficient to recall the almost unanimous outcry in the Press against such discretion being given to the police when a certain well-known man was recently convicted, on police evidence, for annoying women,

and subsequently acquitted in the Appeal Court. Yet the Press has been almost uniformly silent on the injustice of the 6,000 annual convictions, on police evidence only, of women alleged to be "common prostitutes."

To guard against wrongful arrest it would be necessary to insert a proviso that no person should be taken into custody *except upon complaint by or on behalf of the person aggrieved.*

It may be well to interpolate here that the prostitution or other irregular relations of adult men and women is not, under British law, a legal offence, nor is it a legal offence to be a prostitute. The legal offences are simply those items italicised in the above laws, namely, annoyance, obstruction or danger of inhabitants or passengers, riotous or indecent behaviour, and insulting words or behaviour *likely to cause a breach of the peace.* Some people may think prostitution itself should constitute a legal offence, but that is a wide and quite distinct question and would require an article to itself.

The following suggestions may be useful to those who desire to study the administration of these laws:—

(1) Call on the Chief Constable and ask him a few general questions on morals legislation and its local application. These points should be elucidated:—

If there is any local prostitution against which police measures are necessary? (This question applies more to rural areas.) Under what Acts or By-laws the police take action against prostitutes soliciting?

Is there any Act or local Bylaw under which the police can deal with men who accost or annoy women, and, if so, what are its terms? (This does not refer to any form of indecent annoyance, as this is dealt with by the section against exposure with intent to insult females and also by the Common Law.)

(2) Call upon the Clerk to the Magistrates and ask if many cases of solicitation or of prostitutes "wandering" come before the local Courts, and, if so, when they are heard.

(3) Attend the Courts to hear such cases and mark specially what the actual charge is. If charge is inaudible (as it generally is) inquire the section or bylaw under which the woman is charged.

Note what evidence is tendered either as to "annoyance" or as to "indecent behaviour," and as to woman's character.

(4) Study any Press reports of solicitation cases and if any point seems interesting either write to or call upon the Clerk to the Magistrates.

(5) If there is a woman J.P., such inquiries may be made through her.

Another item upon which information may be sought is:— Does the Chief Constable think the police would have any difficulty in maintaining street order, provided they were well supported by local public opinion, if the special laws against prostitutes soliciting were withdrawn and replaced by a general provision equally applicable to all persons?

A point to be remembered is that, in all ordinary offences, evidence as to character and previous convictions of a defendant cannot be given *until he is convicted* (i.e. found guilty) of the particular offence with which he is then charged. This is to safeguard the prisoner against prejudicing the Court to his disadvantage. Now the very fact that a woman is charged as a "common prostitute" inevitably creates, before she is tried, that very prejudice of the Court against her which the law disallows in the case of other prisoners. ALISON NEILANS.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER (Continued from page 143).

comment, which Mr. Robertson, a Scottish Whip, tried in vain to stem. Sir J. Davidson made a fierce attack on the Ministry, and Captain Berkeley supplied the comment of the parliamentary Humorists' Association when he said "If I may intervene in this somewhat heated controversy between the Whips and the Scorpions." Mr. Shaw did not get his salary voted, as the closure of the debate was refused, but he will have to face the music again on Thursday as, "through the usual channels," his vote has been asked for once more.

The proposal of the Government to include children of fourteen years has aroused fierce opposition on the part of educationists, and on an amendment moved by Mr. Masterman, who has done well in the last month, the Minister of Labour was forced to bow to the sense of the House and cut out the paragraph of the financial resolution dealing with this idea.

Last night the House chuckled greatly when Mr. Sidney Webb, unconsciously, assumed the duties of Mr. Speaker, and, discussing anew Mr. Baldwin's newspaper adventure, the lobby enjoyed a member's ironical comment that the Right Hon. Gentleman had not been fortunate in the last twelve months in his encounters with the people. GREEN BENCH.

[The views expressed in this column are those of our Parliamentary correspondent, and are not our editorial opinion. Like so many other things in this paper they are expressly controversial, and comment upon them will be welcomed.—Ed.]

COMING EVENTS.

ASSOCIATION OF HEAD MISTRESSES.

JUNE 13 and 14. Fiftieth Annual Conference at County Secondary School, Putney, under the presidency of Miss F. R. Gray, M.A., J.P. On Friday evening Conference Service will be held in Temple Church, and sermon will be preached by the Very Rev. the Dean of Bristol.

GUILDHOUSE W.C.S.

JUNE 2. 3 p.m. The Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Lecture by Miss Cicely Ellis on "William Morris: Poet, Socialist, and Manufacturer." With specimens of his work.

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE CLUB.

JUNE 5. 8 p.m. 55 Gower Street. Informal discussion.

LONDON SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE.

JUNE 4. 3.30 p.m. 35 Marsham Street, S.W. Miss Phyllis Lovell on "Political Work as a Career for Women."

JUNE 5. 7.30 p.m. "Should Married Women be excluded from the Labour Market?" Opener: Mrs. Barton (Women's Co-operative Guild).

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

JUNE 16th to 20th. British Empire Exhibition, Wembley. Public meetings on "The Good Old Days and Now," 1851 and 1924. Admission free by ticket only from I.C.W. Pavilion and Information Bureau, E.S.S. 2, British Empire Exhibition, Wembley, or from N.C.W. Office, Parliament Mansions, Victoria Street, S.W.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

CHINGFORD W.C.A. JUNE 2. 3 p.m. Mrs. Rankin on "Widows' Pensions."

HUDDERSFIELD S.E.C. MAY 31. 3 p.m. Annual Meeting. Address by Lady Pares.

REPTON. JUNE 2. 3 p.m. The Hall, Repton. Lady Pares on "The Need for, and Work of, Societies for Equal Citizenship."

STAFFORD W.C.A. JUNE 2. 7.30 p.m. Lady Pares on "Education of the Woman Voter."

PARENTS' NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL UNION.

JUNE 3. 2.30 p.m. Big School, Westminster School, S.W. Annual Meeting. Chair: Rev. H. Costley-White, M.A. All members and friends welcome.

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SELF-CONTAINED furnished FLAT to let, Priory Road, Hampstead, for 6 months or longer. 3 bed, 1 sitting-room, bath (geyser); gas-fire. Plate, no linen. Large garden. Close Met. station and buses. 4 guineas p.w.—Box 1,065, WOMAN'S LEADER, 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.

WEEK-ENDS IN THE COUNTRY.—Saturday to Monday, 20s. Week-end tickets, 6s. Little country house; garden; near station.—Miss Basnett, Foxley Villas, Wokingham, Berks.

PROFESSIONAL WOMEN.—Floors to let at 32 Norfolk Square, Hyde Park, W. 2. Close to Paddington Station.

WENSLEYDALE.—Comfortable board-residence in country cottage; no motor dust. Lunches packed when desired. Special terms long period.—Smith, Low Green House, Thoraby, Aysgarth, Yorks.

FOR PROFESSIONAL WOMEN AND OTHERS.—Double and single bed-sitting rooms, near Gloucester Road and High Street, Kensington. Gas fire, own meters. Telephone, Western 1201.—Box 1,066, WOMAN'S LEADER, 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.

AN ENCHANTING HOLIDAY near London; bracing and inexpensive. Private tents and chalets (furnished). Ladies only. Good cooking; tennis, croquet; lovely walks and bus drives. Try a week-end.—Crofton Orchard, Orpington.

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LEARN TO KEEP ACCOUNTS.—There are especially good lessons in book-keeping at Miss Blakeney's School of Typewriting and Shorthand, Wentworth House, Mauresa Road, Chelsea, S.W. 3. "I learnt more there in a week," says an old pupil, "than I learnt elsewhere in a month." Pupils prepared for every kind of secretarial post.

GOVERNESS wanted, 19th June to 6th August. Lady required daily from 3 to 7.30 school-days, all day Saturday, to take charge 3 children (11, 9 and 8). Mending, no house-work. Might be permanent. Experienced children, good at games. Guide preferred.—Write particulars, Box 1,068, WOMAN'S LEADER, 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.

INCOME TAX RECOVERED AND ADJUSTED.
Consult H. M. Baker, 275 High Holborn, W.C. 1, the only Income Tax Agency owned and managed by a woman. Telephone: Holborn 377.

POST VACANT.

SECRETARY Wanted for the Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship and the Glasgow Women Citizens Association, to enter upon duties 1st September. A knowledge of office work, including shorthand, desirable. Organising experience necessary. Candidates must be women of good education—a Scotswoman preferred. Salary according to qualifications.—Apply by letter to Hon. Secretary, 172 Bath Street, Glasgow.

FOR SALE AND WANTED.

COLOURED ART LINEN.—Remnant bundles of coloured art linen for cushion covers and fancy needlework, 8s. 6d. per bundle, postage 6d. Write for Bargain List—TO-DAY.—HUTTON'S, 41 Main Street, Larne, Ireland.

SECOND-HAND CLOTHING wanted to buy for cash; costumes, skirts, hoots, underclothes, curtains, lounge suits, trousers, and children's clothing of every description; parcels sent will be valued and cash sent by return.—Mrs. Russell, 200 Raby Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. (Stamped addressed envelope for reply.)

HOUSES FOR SALE.

BUNGALOWS, summer or permanent, 3-5 rooms; 3 sold, £250-£500. View, water, bath, conveniences; healthy; golf; buses. London, 80 miles.—Drake, Ufford, Woodbridge.

DRESS.

THE HAT DOCTOR, removed to 52 James Street, Oxford Street, W. 1, cleans, reblocks and copies hats at lowest possible price. Renovates furs. Covers satin or canvas shoes or thin kid with brocade or velvet. Materials and post, 13s. 6d.; toe-caps, 8s. 6d.; your own materials, work and post, 8s. 6d., in three days.

MISS MALCOLM'S DRESS ASSOCIATION, 230 Fulham Road, London, S.W. 3. Bargain Gowns, Evening and Afternoon, at 21s.

"FROCKLETS." Mrs. Elborough, c/o Madame Sara, 163 Ebury Street (5 min. Victoria Station). Tel., Ken. 9347. Children's Dresses of original and practical design, Coats, Caps, etc., etc. Snocks a speciality. Fancy Dresses. Open daily (Saturdays excepted) 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

LONDON SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE, 35 Marsham Street, Westminster. Secretary, Miss P. Strachey. Information Bureau. Interviews, 10 to 1, except Saturdays. Members' Centre open daily. Restaurant open to 7.30 (not Saturdays).

THE PIONEER CLUB has reopened at 12 Cavendish Place. Town Members £5 5s.; Country and Professional Members £4 4s. Entrance fee in abeyance (pro. tem.).

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 1st June, 3.30, Lecture by Rev. Hudson Shaw: "John Ruskin." 6.30, Maude Royden: "The Ethics of Birth Control."

JOIN INTERNATIONAL HOUSE CLUB, 55 Gower Street, W.C. 1. Subscription, 7s. 6d. per annum. Luncheons, and Teas in the Cafeteria. Thursday, Club Suppers 7 p.m. and Discussion Meetings 8 p.m. 5th June. Informal discussion.

HOUSE ASSISTANTS' CENTRE

510 King's Road, Chelsea, S.W. 10.

Telephone: Kensington 5213.

The Employment Office connected with the above Centre was closed on December 14th, 1923, but the office has been open for interviews on as many Fridays as possible. Every Friday has been impossible, owing to illness, and the office will be closed altogether for interviews until further notice, except by special appointment made by letter three days at least beforehand.

ANN POPE, HONORARY SECRETARY.
(Member of the American Home Economics Association.)

HOME-MADE CAKES, made with butter and eggs (no substitutes), can be obtained from Nan's Kitchen, 15 Furnival Street, Holborn, London, W.C. Layer cakes, eclairs, meringues, etc. Regular orders undertaken. A room for tea and light luncheons. Recommended by Ann Pope.

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