

# THE WOMAN'S LEADER

## AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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### CONTENTS.

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| THE AGE OF MARRIAGE BILL . . . . .   | 19   |
| LETTERS TO A NEW VOTER FROM AN OLD<br>VOTER. III: THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL<br>PARTIES . . . . . | 19   |
| A LAYWOMAN'S THOUGHTS ON THE DUTCH<br>PICTURES. By A. H. W. . . . .                                | 20   |
| REVIEWS—   |      |
| The House in Dormer Forest. By E. C. E. . . . .  | 21   |
| Adolescence. By M. D. S. . . . .   | 21   |
| THE PROGRESS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT<br>BILLS. By Bertha Mason . . . . .                           | 21   |

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

#### The Age of Marriage Bill.

Last week it was incorrectly reported in our own and in other papers that the Earl of Donoughmore instead of Lord Buckmaster had introduced the Age of Marriage Bill in the House of Lords. Lord Buckmaster moved the second reading yesterday in a convincing speech of much feeling and eloquence. The Bishop of Southwark and Earl Russell supported the measure, and the Marquess of Salisbury spoke sympathetically on behalf of the Government. There was no opposition, and Lord Buckmaster, in thanking Lord Salisbury, appealed to the Government to pass the Bill before the dissolution. Women's organizations will strongly endorse this appeal. The entirely favourable reception in the House of Lords suggests, as Lord Buckmaster said, that "in another place" it might slip through without any serious interruption of the carefully rationed time-table."

#### French Women must Vote!

The above inscription blazed forth on a banner which stretched over the platform of the Congress opened last Friday in Paris and which is described as the most important gathering of women in the history of France. This assembly of the "Etats généraux du féminisme" was presided over by Mme Avril de Sainte Croix, the veteran leader, who is well known in this country, and a significant fact is that M. Poincaré and other ministers are members of the committee of honour. A Bill extending the franchise to women has already twice been voted by the Chamber of Deputies and has twice been thrown out by the Senate. We extend our hearty sympathy to our French sisters in their struggle for the vote and wish them speedy success.

#### The New Electorate.

The new electorate is, in all probability, not swollen only as the result of the attainment of equal franchise. For the first time a systematic effort was made to register all voters, and there can be no doubt that the decision of the Home Secretary to make every householder responsible for an accurate return as in the census has brought into the political net large numbers of men and women who had hitherto escaped the responsibilities of citizenship. When we read that the total numbers greatly exceed the estimates of the Home Office, this fact must be taken into consideration.

#### Rev. Vera Findlay.

The Glasgow District Committee of the Scottish Congregational Union has unanimously recommended that the Congregational Union of Scotland admit Miss Findlay to membership. In the opinion of our contemporary, the *Glasgow Evening News*, this recommendation will be accepted by the national body, but probably not with unanimity, as "there are members of the Union who have publicly expressed their objection to women in the ministry, and to their being admitted as members of the Union." It is to us almost unthinkable that a majority of the Union should yield its judgment to that of the objectors. Here is a brilliant young minister, of strong personality, of undoubted devotion to her calling, and called to the ministry of an important Church in the City of Glasgow. The Union can only do honour to itself by welcoming her to membership. We wish her all success at every stage of her career, and we hope that her parochial duties will admit of her visiting the South from time to time to strengthen the faint-hearted in the matter of the opening to women of the ministry of all religious bodies.

#### Theologically Trained Women?

There are an increasing number of ecclesiastics within the Church of England who are free from prejudice in the matter of the full ministry of women, and a recent discussion in the Convocation of Canterbury is of value as, at least, an indirect contribution to a solution of the problem. The Bishop of Winchester there brought forward a motion, seconded by the Bishop of Birmingham, and carried, to approve a "unified test for candidates for the order of Deaconesses." The Bishop of Winchester observed that "it was obviously reasonable that there should be such a (high) standard if respect for the Order was to be secured and maintained," and the Bishop of Birmingham further endorsed this view with the opinion that "one of the great needs at the present time was that they should have a largely increased supply of educated and theologically trained women." A further resolution by the Bishop of Winchester committed the Canterbury Convocation to the view that "the present standard of pay both for deaconesses and other women workers is too low."

#### Doctor's Plea for Teaching on Birth Control.

We read in the *Morning Post* that at a recent lecture at the British Medical Association, Dr. R. Cove Smith appealed for more training and better experience for medical students. We are glad that one of his profession should make a special appeal for teaching on the subject of birth control. We venture to quote some of his sentences for the information of our readers. "Birth control," he said, "is a subject in which the teaching in London is microscopic. Every one of us, sooner or later, is asked to give some advice on it. Whether we believe in the dissemination of such knowledge or not, surely the medical student ought to have an opportunity of obtaining his knowledge elsewhere than from the sentimental books of lay authors. I do feel that some teaching should be inserted in the medical curriculum."

#### The Local Government Bills.

We must refer our readers to Miss Bertha Mason's very careful analysis of the Committee stage of the Scottish Bill and the report stage of the Bill for England and Wales with its minor concessions. The Bills are proceeding at lightning pace, and little modification can now be expected. We are, however, grateful for small mercies and the substitution of 36 for 24 as the maximum number of persons composing a Guardians' Committee of a County Council is to the good. This was attributed to the representations on this point made from many quarters.

## The Future of Domestic Service.

The meeting called by the National Council of Women to consider the question of domestic service was well timed. Domestic servants have now become enfranchised citizens—provided they remain the given period for residential qualification. It is therefore an appropriate moment to consider what can be done to raise the status of the whole profession, and the conference reopened the subject very successfully. The speakers very properly represented different angles of opinion. Lady Emmott, President of the Council, who has had unusual experience in connection with the Domestic Workers' Insurance Society, presided. The Duchess of Atholl and Miss Margaret Bondfield were at one in their desire to deepen the sense of citizenship and individual importance—to remove, as Miss Bondfield put it, the inferiority complex. Other speakers described attempts at organization. The conference had, as it deserved, an excellent Press, *The Times* devoting a leading article to the discussion of the problem. We are glad to learn that a sub-committee of the Industrial Committee of the National Council of Women has the whole subject under consideration.

## "An Untapped Supply of Female Labour."

Once again, this time from Merthyr Tydfil, comes an appeal to the Government to apply itself seriously to the consideration of finding useful employment in their own areas for those affected by the condition of the mining industry. Mr. W. R. Williams, writing from that town, states that there are, in his district, "ideal sites for new industries, with coal, water, and railway facilities second to none in South Wales," and he adds the significant words, "We have the men who are willing and eager to work, and a practically untapped supply of female labour." We have heard from time to time during the last year or two, of young girls from South Wales coming to seek work in London and falling into bad hands and being led astray. Again we hear of proposals to bring unemployed workers from mining districts into areas where there already exist large numbers of unemployed belonging to occupations other than mining. In spite of all difficulties, technical, political, or otherwise, we refuse to believe that it is beyond the power of a British Government to evolve constructive schemes for providing work for some at least of the women as well as the men in the district where their homes are, as well as the homes of most of their relations and friends.

## Scheme for Helping Girls taking Employment in London.

The Central Council for the Social Welfare of Girls and Women in London, has on the invitation of the Home Secretary, undertaken the general organization of the work for helping and befriending women and girls who come to London to take up employment. Hitherto there has been a lack of co-ordination in the societies specially concerned with this branch of social welfare and lack of knowledge on the part of the girls themselves of the opportunities available. The London County Council has agreed, subject to the Council being put to no expense in the matter, that facilities will be given by the district organizing staff and officers of their care committees to deal with inquiries from girls working or living in the neighbourhood. The Advisory Committee has recommended the establishment of a Central Bureau to keep in close touch with all Societies and to supply information, and has considered the question of assistance being given to girls when travelling. Mr. G. J. Metters, of the Home Office, and Miss M. Brooks, secretary of the Central Council for the Social Welfare of Girls and Women in London, will continue to act as joint secretaries of the Advisory Committee, which among its eight women members includes the Hon. Eleanor Plumer and Mrs. Peter Hughes Griffiths. Lieut.-Colonel Sir Vivian Henderson, M.C., M.P. (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Home Office) acts as Chairman.

## Miner's Daughter Official Labour Parliamentary Candidate.

Miss Jenny Lee, M.A., LL.B., has been granted leave of absence from her work as a school teacher under the Fife Education Authority in order to allow her to commence her campaign in Lanarkshire. She is the daughter of a Lochgelly miner, and her grandfather was a well-known Fife miner's agent.

## Mrs. Bramwell Booth.

Having no inside knowledge of the difficulties in the Salvation Army which have attracted so much notice in the Press, we can

express no opinion about the retirement of General Booth, or the selection of the new General. We cannot, however, allow Mrs. Booth to lay down her work without an expression of gratitude and affection from women outside her own ranks with whom she has co-operated in so many common causes. Those who have sat on committees with her, those who have heard her speak at great meetings (one of her last public appearances must have been at the Central Hall on the occasion of the Josephine Butler Centenary), must hope that though she now relinquishes her official connection with the Salvation Army, her influence and power will not be lost to the great movements for moral and social reform in this country, with which she has found time to identify herself. For her, complete retirement, while still full of vigour, and with her unique experience behind her, must be impossible, and freed from the responsibilities of her former position, we believe years of honoured work lie before her.

## Dame Millicent Fawcett at Colombo.

Dame Millicent Fawcett appears to be using her brief holiday in Ceylon to help the woman's movement. In the *Ceylon Morning Leader* we read an interesting account of a meeting arranged by the Women's Franchise Society, at which she gave an outline of the history of the movement in other countries, including our own. We are glad to hear of the warm reception which she received from the Cingalese women, and that she is passing on to them the wisdom born of her long experience. We hope soon to hear some of her personal impressions.

## QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT.

12TH FEBRUARY, 1929.—COUNTY COUNCILLORS—EXPENSES.

*Mr. Greenwood (by Private Notice)* asked the Minister of Health whether he proposes to take the necessary steps to secure the recommitment of Clause 49 of the Local Government Bill in order to bring that Clause into harmony with the Government's proposals in the Scottish Bill as regards payment of expenses of County Councillors?

*The Minister of Health (Mr. Chamberlain)*: No, Sir. There appears to me to be no necessity for complete uniformity in matters of this kind in England and Scotland.

## HOUSING—CHILDREN.

*Miss Wilkinson* asked the Minister of Health whether in view of the fact that many house agents refuse to place on their books the names of couples who have young children and who are seeking apartments, on the ground that landlords will not accept tenants with more than one child, he will issue a circular to local authorities asking them to make a survey of such accommodation as is available to couples with children, for the purpose of supplying information kept up to date, to such parents, thus obviating much hopeless searching for homes, and at the same time giving to the housing committees more accurate data of the need for houses and flats than is available at the present time.

*Sir Kingsley Wood*: My right hon. Friend does not think that the suggestion made by the hon. Member is practicable. The real solution of the difficulty, as was stated in reply to a question by the hon. Member on the 29th ultimo, is to increase the amount of available accommodation, and my right hon. Friend trusts that local authorities will continue to direct their efforts in this direction.

14TH FEBRUARY, 1929.—LONDON LOCK HOSPITAL.

*Mr. Pethick-Lawrence* asked the Minister of Health whether he has now received the report of the committee appointed to inquire into the London Lock Hospital; and whether it is his intention to have it published.

*Mr. Chamberlain*: I have received the report and am in communication with the governing body of the hospital with regard to it. In the meantime, I propose to reserve my decision on the question of publication.

*Mr. Pethick-Lawrence*: If I put a question down in a week's time will the right hon. Gentleman be able to give me an answer?

*Mr. Chamberlain*: In a fortnight's time, I shall be more likely to be able to give the hon. Member an answer.

## THE AGE OF MARRIAGE.

The debate on Tuesday in the House of Lords on the Age of Marriage Bill, which Lord Buckmaster introduced at the request of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, will, we hope, prove the first nail in the coffin of our present obsolete and disgracefully low minimum legal marriage age of 12 for girls and 14 for boys. The Bill is a simple measure declaring that a marriage between persons either of whom is under the age of 16 shall be void, that is to say, just as if it had not taken place. It has been carefully drafted in order to escape various legal difficulties which have hitherto surrounded the question. At present a marriage under the legal minimum marriage age is not absolutely void, but only voidable by either party on the person under age reaching the age of consent. In future, however, all knots are cut by the simple statement contained in the Bill.

The objection which has obtained hitherto when any proposal to raise the age of marriage has been put forward—that such marriages usually take place when a girl is pregnant and are necessary in order to legitimate a child—is greatly lessened in force by the Legitimacy Act, by which, in those rare cases in which a man who has made a girl pregnant under the age of consent is considered a desirable husband, the child can be legitimated by the subsequent marriage of its parents, provided the father was free to marry at the time of its birth.

In England and Wales there are approximately 3 or 4 marriages a year of girls under 15, and 30 a year of girls of 15, and in Scotland approximately 5 a year of girls of 15 years of age. Not a large number, but representing a sufficient number of spoilt lives to be worth putting right.

One single personal instance of the evil results of any abuse may often do more to accelerate reform than vague belief that they exist. This was recently shown when an amendment to the Criminal Law Amendment Act which had been unsuccessfully urged by Women's Societies in 1922 to substitute 12 months for 9 months as the time limit of the period during which prosecutions may be begun in cases of offences against young persons, passed through all its stages without any difficulty when introduced by a Member of Parliament burning with indignation over an

actual case in his constituency. We hope that a case reported in our own columns last year from a well guaranteed source may produce the same effect. When a young man of 29 was proceeded against for criminal assault of a child of 13, the magistrate suggested that he should marry her. The man at first refused, but the magistrate pointed out that if he married her, she would not be called on to give evidence against him. The man persisted in his refusal, but after some talk with his solicitor finally agreed to do so. The magistrate defended his action by saying that otherwise he would have had to impose a sentence of two years' hard labour. The unnatural marriage turned out very badly and no wonder. That a child of 13 could be married in such circumstances makes one's blood boil, and even though such a combination of callousness with crass stupidity must be rare indeed, that it could happen at all is enough.

But apart from personal instances, the pressing demand for the Bill is based on a sense of our responsibilities both in India, where the evils of child marriage are widespread, and as a member of the League of Nations. The Report of the Child Welfare Committee of the League of Nations Advisory Commission on the Protection of Welfare of Young People on the Age of Marriage and the Age of Consent, has shown that Great Britain ranks among those countries with the lowest legal minimum marriage age in the world; and our representatives on the Committees of the League find themselves handicapped when the need of raising the age of marriage in other countries is referred to, as for example, in the Report of the Committee of Experts on Traffic in Women and Children, where it is stated that in certain cases "the low age of marriage may lead to abuse" by girls being persuaded to leave the country on promises of marriage.

Although we are writing before the result of the debate is made known, we have every reason to hope that the Bill will secure its second reading. Whether there will be time for its later stages this session will be another matter, but it is quite possible that so non-controversial a measure may manage to slip through.<sup>1</sup>

## LETTERS TO A NEW VOTER FROM AN OLD VOTER.—III.

DEAR MADAM,

I took leave of you last week with the confident statement that "election times are not the only times when votes count." I am now reminded by a learned philosopher who shares my hearth, that in saying such a thing I was flatly contradicting a very eminent political theorist of the eighteenth century—Rousseau by name—who said that they were. Nevertheless, I stick to my point; for I know more about the history of the nineteenth century than Rousseau did, and it was during the nineteenth century that representative government really began to work and show results. But of that, more at a later stage.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES.

The thing to remember is this: that the policies by which governments govern are not made by the people who vote at an election, they are made by the active members and still more by the leaders of the political parties which are asking for the opportunity to govern. It is true that these policies have to be made, as it were, with one eye on what the voters at election time will be likely to swallow. For instance, many of the active members of the Conservative Party and most of its leaders believe that a general system of Protection would be good for British industry. But when they made that proposal a part of their policy, as they did at the General Election of 1923, the great mass of voters would have none of it; and so many Conservative candidates were defeated on that occasion that at the next General Election they reluctantly refrained from advocating a general system of Protection, and advocated only a little Protection here and there. And even that little they carefully called by a different name for fear of reviving the fears of the voters. We shall have to give some thought to this matter of Protection at a later stage, for it is likely to crop up again at the next General Election. I mention it here merely as an

example of how the opinions of voters at an election really do affect party policies. Nevertheless, I reiterate my point: with one eye on what the voters will swallow and another on what is likely to stir their rather sluggish and uneducated political imaginations, party policies (which in the case of the strongest party may become government policy) are made by the active members and leaders of the parties. And I will go a step further and say that it is up to you to become an active member, and perhaps a leader of your party—whatever party it may be.

Now it is very difficult to generalize about what goes on inside political parties, because there are three of them, and they are all different from one another. But in general it is safe to say that in most constituencies you will find local organizations representing each of the three, and that these organizations will be more or less active in choosing and running candidates at election time. Moreover, they will be in touch with a party headquarters in London to which they will send up representatives, and perhaps resolutions, for the big national party conferences which are held every year. Beyond that it is difficult to say much about local party organizations, because they differ so greatly from one another. Some appear to be run and financed entirely from headquarters; some are genuinely active and independent groups of local voters, anxious to run candidates of their own choosing, and willing to pay the expenses of their candidates. Some occasionally go so far as to choose a candidate whose opinions are not those of the party as a whole, and who is given no support or sympathy from the party headquarters. The local Labour Party in my own constituency did this at the last General Election, when they chose a Communist candidate whose opinions were so extreme (and it must be confessed, so confused) that the National Labour Party would not own him as an "official" Labour candidate. And the result was that large numbers of voters who approved of the Labour Party's policy and disapproved of Communism (that, by the way, is another word which will need some explaining) had no candidate

<sup>1</sup> See first note on page 17.

to vote for—and felt aggrieved. But it was really their own fault, for if they had formed their local party organization and played an active part in it, that crack-brained Communist candidate would probably never have been selected. Therefore I commend to you the advice given in an admirable small book which was reviewed last week in THE WOMAN'S LEADER (*The New Voter*, by Dore and McKinnell, Longmans, 1s. 6d.). It is this: "One thing the new voters can do, but, like the old voters, may fail to do, is to join the association of whichever party suits them best, pay a little for their politics, attend its meetings, and make their influence felt. There are many less interesting hobbies, to put it no higher. The minority of the new voters who choose to take up this hobby, will find their power amazingly increased . . . they will multiply the value of their own votes many fold by the power they gain of influencing the votes of others." And if, having taken this advice, you find that the local party association which you have joined is wholly concerned with providing its members with cheap annual treats, or conducting personal feuds—do not say in your heart: "party politics are a mug's game, I will have no more of them." Say rather: "This local association is in a rotten state, I must get some others in and try to stir it up."

#### WHAT ABOUT NON-PARTY POLITICS?

But here a new difficulty arises: It is not every new voter who is certain enough of her own party politics to join a party, let alone work as an active party member. And that brings me to yet another question. Is it only through a party political organization that the new voter can make her vote count? If you have an aunt, mother, sister, friend, or enemy, who is a member of the Women's Co-operative Guild let us say, or the Mothers' Union, or the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, ask her what she thinks about that question. And if she tells you so much the better for you; for it will save you the trouble of reading next week's letter.

#### AN OLD VOTER.

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION IS: "WHAT IS THE POINT OF JOINING A POLITICAL PARTY?"

#### A LAYWOMAN'S THOUGHTS ON THE DUTCH PICTURES.

The heart of the great British public (as our politicians would put it) has gone out to the Dutch painters now on exhibition at Burlington House. It is as a member of that public, not as an art critic, I write these lines. It may as well be at once confessed, I write as a woman member of the public, and as such I enjoy the pictures in just the same way as a man member, but I search for something which he does not search for, because he never can remember that it exists, unless indeed he is a journalist, dependent for his daily bread on the Woman Question in its many kaleidoscopic forms. I look for pictures painted by women, I look for women's names on the various committees, and among the various patrons and presidents connected with the exhibition. In these three latter categories I find the names of eight women and one hundred and thirty-eight men. I place this fact on record. I blame no one, because it is hard to say where the blame, if any, lies. Have the men ignored women who could have contributed something of value in the organization of the exhibition? I can think of certain names of women—but I can give no useful judgment without a more exhaustive examination of all the relevant circumstances than is practicable. What then of the pictures themselves? Why no single woman's name? Here, again, a wider, more expert knowledge of the whole history of Dutch art is required, than this present writer possesses. There are, it is known, Dutch women artists of considerable merit. Have the men been right in their judgment that these women artists fall into a rank below that of the standard set up for the Burlington House show? May this question be pondered in the hearts of all concerned, feminist, art critic, patron, artist, alike.

What of Dutch women and their lives, as revealed to us by the pictures on show? This question is capable of some answer at least from the most inexpert laywoman or layman.

It seems to this laywoman that these Dutch women were, to the full, the equal mates of the Dutch men. The Dutch men of the seventeenth century, for example, were amazingly prosperous, and their prosperity was effectively shared by the women. Whether the wives could claim of right, any proportion of their husband's incomes is doubtful but there seems no doubt that the

character of the woman was such that her spouse would think once, twice, and a third time before he denied her that to which she was morally entitled. Yet there is remarkably little suggested by these artists, of what is called in the language of the film magnates, sex appeal. Their women are, for the most part, sensible, rather portly housewives or women of business, comely enough both in youth and in old age, but far too full of their affairs to waste time or effort in overmuch blandishment or coquetry. Both men and women give us the impression of a good nature easily engendered in those who have managed to couple great prosperity with the untroubled conscience say, of a "pampered poodle." Yet here and there, the artists show a consciousness that sorrow and want have not been banished from this world. Also, it is mostly happily apparent that even the prosperity of the bourgeoisie is not wholly material, that art, music, the love of nature and of animals, form at least a part of their conception of the worth while in life. Of religion it is not easy to claim for them a very lively appreciation. The home, the market-place, the river, liquid or frozen, the sea, the town hall, all these provide for them an environment apparently more sympathetic than the rather bare and gaunt ecclesiastical buildings provided by the protestant reformers and occasionally made the subject of artistic study.

But whatever the failings of these Dutch citizens, we British people like them. Their frosts do not suggest burst water pipes or skidding cars, rather hockey on the ice, sleighing, amazingly expert skating, tents with hot drinks. And their sunshine! How sunny, how warm, how suggestive of a land where it is always cheerful morning. How it sits in joyful patches on the floor, or on the spinnet or on the richly coloured eastern carpet on the table! London will be a sadder place when the pictures go. Let us make the most of them, and warm ourselves at them while there is still time.

A. H. W.

(To be continued.)

#### EVENTS THAT MUST NOT BE MISSED.

We propose from time to time to give under this heading information of dramatic, artistic, and literary events of special interest to our readers. Under "Forthcoming Events" we shall continue to chronicle notices of meetings mainly of women's organizations which are sent us. We invite the co-operation of our readers in this, and shall be glad to have suitable events brought to our notice.

The Lady with the Lamp. By Reginald Berkeley. Garrick Theatre (transferred from Arts Theatre Club; see "The Real Florence Nightingale," page 388, in issue of 18th January, and on page 11 of last week's issue).

The Westminster String Quartet (Women) Lunch Hour Chamber Music. Every Tuesday, 1.15-2 p.m. Christ Church, Victoria Street, S.W. 1.

Exhibition of pictures by working men and women. Tate Gallery, S.W. 1.

Society of Women Artists, 195 Piccadilly, W. 1. 11th February to 4th March.

#### BROADCAST FEATURES.

Monday, 25th February, 10.45 a.m.—Law and the Home: The Law and Citizenship; Mrs. Crofts (5XX only).

Wednesday, 10.45 a.m.—A woman's commentary. Mrs. Oliver Strachey (5XX only).

Wednesday, 7 p.m.—Public Departments (all B.B.C. stations except 5GB). 27th February: Ministry of Agriculture.

Wednesdays, from 6th March at 7.25 p.m. Mrs. Sidney Webb. Four lectures on "How to Study Social Questions." London and Daventry.

#### WOMEN'S SERVICE HOUSE.

The London and National Society for Women's Service has launched a new development. Its Club facilities are already well known. It has now established some bedrooms with facilities for residence for the convenience of members. Bedroom accommodation within a stone's throw of the Houses of Parliament, Whitehall, and the headquarters of all national organizations is a luxury not easily attainable, and the enterprise of the London Society in the provision of quarters for its members will be greatly appreciated.

#### THE HOUSE IN DORMER FOREST.<sup>1</sup>

Words are a slippery currency when it comes to trying to define the importance of Mary Webb. Her work is tentative and incomplete, yet it has burst on the reading public with the force of something well-defined and mature. It has none of the obviously popular qualities, yet it is amazingly widely read. It is remote and elusive and brooding, yet it appeals deeply to our brisk, slick, argumentative, ironical age. "Significant" probably comes near to explaining it; "genius" is almost worth risking in relation to her.

*The House in Dormer Forest* is perhaps the most intimate of her novels, the most beautiful, the most tantalizingly unsatisfactory. It is shot through and through with revolt from materialism and makeshifts and second-hand values and opinions. Declaring nature indifferent, society thwarted and corrupting to the individual, it takes its stand on a conviction as unearthy as Shelley's, that unaided and by its own power the soul can escape to "the deep sea where are no tides of change and decay, no sound, no colour, but only an essence."

Probably all great art is prompted by an urge of this sort, but before it is great it must show power to relate this urge to the rest of experience, making of it a coherent whole. But though Amber Darke expresses this creed of living intensely and within oneself, the histories and personalities of the rest of the family, their perversities and dreary fatuities are neither very interesting nor very convincing. They seem devised by rote according to a preconceived formula instead of being the inevitable expression of a conviction.

The fact is that Mary Webb got below the surface of life to the endless subtlety and beauty and torment of its depths, but her analysis was never complete, and all we have of her work is in a way experimental. When Dormer old house is burned to ruins with all its dismal traditions and shibboleths, Amber and Michael Hallows stand in the woods, supremely happy—but determined to make their life "in poverty and discomfort, in crude places beyond the sea." We leave them at the threshold—and the scene is symbolical, for Mary Webb never got that prospect wholly in line with her vision, never entirely squared it with the shy, mystical beauty she loved.

One cannot cease to regret the irony that, when she had got thus far into the significance of experience, but had not reconciled her emotional responsiveness with the world of fact, the fact of death brought her work to an end. But nevertheless, she went further than most of her age, she brought something of the great tragedians into our literature and left work for which we are profoundly, constantly grateful. For the sheer beauty of *The House in Dormer Forest*, the haunting poetry of it, is something unique and precious.

E. C. E.

#### ADOLESCENCE.

In 1926 Dr. Marie Stopes published two companion volumes dealing with the physiological education of the young. The first was, in effect, a plea for the abandonment of specific sex education, in favour of a general teaching of elementary physiology, into which sex and reproduction would enter as a matter of course, and with no special emphasis or mystery as a proportionate part of the whole order of nature. The second volume provided the text book necessary for the carrying out of this programme. In a current review we described this second volume as "a brief and extraordinarily simple matter of fact description of the structure and functioning of the human body . . . lucid, informative, accurate (or so our medical adviser assures us, and excellently illustrated with explanatory diagrams." Now that a new and cheap edition of these two volumes<sup>2</sup> has appeared, we can but record our earlier expression of opinion that *The Human Body* is a book which fills a genuine need on the part of parents and teachers, and which might with advantage be put into the hands of children in their late 'teens. We may add that birth control is not so much as mentioned in its pages!

M. D. S.

<sup>1</sup> *The House in Dormer Forest*, by Mary Webb. (Jonathan Cape, 5s. Collected Edition.)

<sup>2</sup> *Sex and the Young and The Human Body*, by Marie C. Stopes. (Putnam's Sons, 3s. 6d. each.)

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS.

By BERTHA MASON.

#### THE PROGRESS OF THE BILLS.

As stated in our last article the Committee stage of the English and Welsh Local Government Bill was completed on Friday, 1st February.

The Bill emerged from committee practically unchanged so far as its *fundamentals* are concerned, though important changes have been introduced which we welcome, though they may not and do not go as far as perhaps many of us desire.

In regard to the Health Services it is interesting to note that the anxiety which was vigorously expressed by many organized bodies of women in regard to the substitution of a block grant for the percentage grants in aid, in connection with certain of the Health Services was shared and frankly expressed by Members of the House of Commons when the Health Services clauses were under discussion.

Several valuable concessions were made in connection with this part of the Bill, to which we drew attention in our last article. These alterations go some way to meeting the demands of those who from experience and knowledge are best fitted to understand the needs of these services whether under the control of Local Authorities or carried on by voluntary associations.

We hope after the Bill has finally passed to sum up briefly the alterations which have taken place during its progress through Parliament.

#### Local Government Bill for Scotland.

We turn now to the Scotch Bill, the Committee stage of which occupied four days of the week, beginning 4th February.

The main principles of this Bill are identical, it will be remembered, with the principles of the English Bill, but the changes are more drastic and the results more far-reaching in the latter than in the former.

Practically all minor authorities under the Bill as originally drafted were swept away, including Parish Councils, which in Scotland are responsible for the administration of the Poor Law, the District Boards of Control which are the Lunacy Authorities, and the *ad hoc* Education Authorities.

Further, all burghs of less than 20,000 of a population (the number in excess of this figure is very small) were under the original Bill deprived of their powers in connection with the work of health services, the police, and the roads, which powers were transferred to the County Councils.

As in England, power is given to County Councils to delegate certain of their functions to minor authorities. The principle of the co-optation of women on committees dealing with education is compulsory. On District Councils it is optional.

The main clauses which were opposed in committee stage and round which debate centred, were (1) the abolition of Parish Councils, and (2) of the *ad hoc* Education Authorities.

A concession was secured in regard to the first point by a Government amendment which provides for the setting up of elected district councils which will take over the functions of the Parish Councils, except those pertaining to Poor Law administration. A strong effort was made for the retention of the *ad hoc* education authorities, but without result.

The financial proposals remain much the same as originally drafted.

The amendment which received *unanimous approval* was one which grants to County Councillors (Scotch only) not only travelling and subsistence allowances, but also expenses for loss incurred on their ordinary employment while carrying on their public duties.

The Committee stage was completed at 2.5 p.m. on 8th February.

#### Report Stage of the English Bill.

For the Report Stage of the English Bill, three days were allotted under the time-table, 12th, 13th, and 14th February.

Originally the Bill contained 115 clauses. To these were added in Committee twelve others, making the total number of clauses in the amended Bill, 127.

A considerable number of amendments were tabled for Report stage, the majority of which, except the Government amendments, fell under the operations of the guillotine, or were declared out of order.

The first part of the Report stage proceedings was mainly devoted to the consideration of new clauses, or amendments to clauses proposed by the Ministers of Health and Transport

respectively, to give effect to promises made when the Bill was in Committee.

Of these, the amendment to Clause 7 (Guardians' Committees and Sub Committees) is probably the one which calls for the attention of our readers.

Sir Kingsley Wood moved that 36 should be substituted for 24 (the number in the clause as originally drafted) as the maximum number of persons composing any Guardians' Committee of a County Council. He indicated that this change was made mainly in consequence of representations from many quarters that the services of the present Poor Law administrators should as far as it was possible be utilized.

The interesting debate which followed elicited fresh and further support for the opinion which has been freely expressed not only by Poor Law Guardians but by great numbers of persons throughout the country and in *THE WOMAN'S LEADER*, viz. that the transference of Poor Law functions to County Councils, involving as it does the loss to the country of the services of the majority of the 20,000 directly elected, experienced and devoted Poor Law administrators, of whom 2,300 are women, is not in the best interests of the destitute poor or of the community generally.

Sir Edmund Turton, in supporting the amendment, clearly stated that the experience of these devoted workers will be needed to assist the new committees in their work. The transference means a great deal of extra work for the new authorities, and it will be impossible for a small committee in a large area to perform their work satisfactorily. The County Councils, he stated, considered the increase necessary in order to make the new scheme workable.

Other speakers followed on similar lines, while others though realizing the need could give no support to an amendment which increases the number of co-opted members. The amendment was agreed to.

It may be well here to make clear that the increase from 24 to 36 does not alter the limitation in the clause as originally drafted, i.e. that "the number of co-opted persons shall not exceed one-third of the total number of members of the Committee." Therefore the increase from 24 to 36 means that at the most, there may be 12 co-opted members instead of 8.

We are prevented by lack of space from touching on other important matters raised on this stage, beyond a brief reference to the concessions granted by Mr. Chamberlain designed to safeguard the position of Poor Law Officers in regard to superannuation and compensation under the new scheme. The new proposals, we understand, are welcomed by those concerned.

Report stage was completed on the 14th of February, the final stage, Third Reading, being taken on Monday, 18th February. The Bill goes at once to the House of Lords.

**Correction.**—We call attention to an error in our article of the 8th February, which we overlooked in correcting the proof and did not notice until the article was actually in type.

In column 2, page 6, in dealing with amendments to Clause 86 (now clause 94), which gives power to the Minister to reduce grants, we inadvertently stated that *both amendments were lost*. The paragraph should have run thus:—The first amendment moved by Mr. Kelly, to insert after the word "efficiency" the words "*or adequacy*" was resisted by the Minister, and on a division was lost. The second amendment moved by Sir Leslie Scott, to insert after "efficiency" the words "*and progress*" was accepted by the Minister and agreed to.—B. M.

**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 woman'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.

## THE POLICEMEN'S REVIEW.

A MONTHLY PAPER.

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## NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

President: Miss ELIZABETH RATHBONE, C.C., J.P. Hon. Treasurer: Miss MACADAM  
General and Parliamentary Secretary: Mrs. HORTON.

Offices: 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.  
Telephone: Victoria 6188.

### THE GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN FUND.

We print below the list of donations received to 16th February. It should perhaps be explained again that the fund covers organizing work which has been going on for some time in constituencies where women candidates are standing, education of the "New Voter", propaganda, and election literature. The complete plan for the election campaign, which will include the organization of a body of canvassers, motor drivers, speakers, etc., to be available in different parts of the country, will be decided at the Council meeting. The amount of work must necessarily depend on the liberality of the support we receive. We hope soon to reach £300, but we should like at least £500. Please send what you can afford from half-a-crown to a cheque for £100.

|                              | £    | s. | d. |
|------------------------------|------|----|----|
| Already received             | 113  | 17 | 6  |
| Adderley, Miss               | 2    | 2  | 0  |
| Carter, Mrs. Eric            | 1    | 1  | 0  |
| Donaldson, Mrs. Lewis        | 2    | 6  |    |
| Fitzgerald, Mrs. Charles     | 5    | 0  | 0  |
| Fulford, Miss                | 10   | 0  | 0  |
| Lever, Miss E.               | 2    | 2  | 0  |
| Milton, Miss M. A. E.        | 1    | 0  | 0  |
| Morrison, Miss M. C.         | 10   | 0  | 0  |
| Park, Mrs.                   | 10   | 0  |    |
| Pott, Esq., R. F.            | 5    | 0  | 0  |
| Rathbone, Miss Eleanor F.    | 10   | 0  | 0  |
| Schuster, Mrs. E.            | 1    | 0  | 0  |
| Stainer, Miss                | 1    | 0  |    |
| Taylor, Mrs. Claude          | 2    | 2  | 0  |
| Taylor, Mrs. James           | 3    | 0  | 0  |
| Williams, Mrs.               | 10   | 0  |    |
|                              | 53   | 10 | 6  |
| Total received 16th February | £167 | 8  | 0  |

### THE LADY WITH THE LAMP.

So much interest has been taken in this play at the Garrick, and finding that seats cannot be had unless reserved several weeks beforehand, as many seats as possible have been reserved in the upper circle for delegates to the Council on Thursday, 7th March. Those who have not yet applied for seats (6s. 9d.), are invited to write at once to Headquarters, as the numbers are naturally limited.

### PERSONAL.

Members of Societies will be interested to know that Mrs. Walter Layton sailed last week for India, where she will join her husband, who is financial adviser to the Simon Commission. They will also be glad to know that Mrs. Hubback has recovered from her recent illness sufficiently to be able to go to the country for ten days. She hopes to be back before the Annual Council Meeting.

### AGE OF MARRIAGE BILL.

In the note which was inserted last week as we went to press, it was stated that the Age of Marriage Bill was introduced in the House of Lords by Lord Donoughmore. This was an error in the paper from which we obtained our information, Lord Buckmaster being the sponsor of this Bill, which he is piloting on behalf of the National Union. Readers are referred to the article on another page dealing with this Bill, for which the National Union has been working for some time, and which is supported by many other women's organizations.

### ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING.

6th-9th March, King George's Hall, Caroline Street, Great Russell Street, W.C. 1.

May we remind Secretaries of Societies and others of the following Council events? On *Wednesday, 6th March*, at 8.45 p.m.,

there will be the Reception which the Executive Committee is holding in honour of Miss Rathbone at King's College for Women (Household and Social Science Department). On *Thursday, 7th March*, the afternoon session will be followed by a Conference on the administrative work of the Societies and Headquarters, in accordance with the resolutions passed at the Council. It is hoped that every Society will be well represented at this Conference, which will probably be held in King George's Hall. The retiring President is kindly inviting all the delegates to tea immediately before this Conference. On *Friday, 8th March*, the Public Luncheon will be held at the Criterion Restaurant at 1 p.m., when the speakers, as previously announced, will include Sir William Joynson-Hicks, Bart., M.P., Lord Lytton, Miss Ishbel MacDonal, and Mrs. Runciman, M.P. It is hoped that many of the Societies will bring their own Members of Parliament as guests to this luncheon, which is of an essentially political and all party nature.

Copies of the Final Agenda are now available from Headquarters, price 6d.

### NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

#### CARDIFF W.C.A.

At a members' meeting held at the office, 17 Quay Street, on 23rd January the De-rating Bill was discussed, articles in *THE WOMAN'S LEADER* and in the Monthly Letter being taken as a basis. This was followed on 28th January by a public meeting, at which the Deputy Lord Mayor, Alderman C. F. Sanders, J.P., gave an address on the same Bill. Dealing with it from a non-party standpoint, he gave a masterly exposition of the Bill and of the effect which it may have upon the finances of the city, in conjunction with the general reassessment that is now being made. He pointed out, however, that the results of such a complicated Bill cannot be so problematic, and expressed the opinion that not even Mr. Neville Chamberlain himself can possibly foresee them. He regretted the abolition of the Boards of Guardians, with the useful work done upon them by women, and asked how the City and County Councils could possibly find time to undertake the new and specialized work of Poor Relief.

At the conclusion of his address, Mr. Sanders answered a number of questions, and discussed special points. The Deputy Lady Mayoress, Miss M. M. Sanders, presided, in the absence of the Lady Mayoress.

#### CLACKMANNANSHIRE S.E.C.

The annual general meeting was held at Townhead Institute, Alloa, on 4th February, when there was a fair attendance of members and friends. In the absence of Lady Balfour of Burleigh, Miss Spittal presided. The reports submitted by the secretary and treasurer showed that the Society had had a successful year, although there was a slight decrease in membership. The officers and committee were re-elected, and at an interval in the proceedings tea was served. Thereafter Mrs. Taylor, of Glasgow, gave a most interesting address on the work done by the N.U. and the opportunities and duties that awaited the new voter.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### "THE CAUSE."

MADAM,—It is to be regretted that Mrs. Strachey, when she wrote the letter concerning the funds of the W.S.P.U. which appeared in your issue of 8th February, 1929, should still have been without full knowledge of the facts. She corrects her first statement that though enormous sums of money passed through the hands of the Society, no full accounts were ever published, and no audited balance-sheet ever presented. This she does by stating that, as a matter of fact, lists of all moneys received at the Headquarters were compiled, and that cash statements of receipts and expenditures audited by Messrs. Sayers and Wessen, Chartered Accountants, were duly published from 1906 to 1912.

Mrs. Strachey thus unwittingly leaves the public under the impression that they were not so issued in 1913 and 1914—though it is common knowledge that the struggle for the vote was carried on by the W.S.P.U., with ever increasing intensity, until the Great War broke over Europe. I have kept a complete file of the Annual Reports and (audited) statements of accounts from 1906 to 1914, the last two of which—those ending on 31st March, 1913, and 31st March, 1914, respectively—are signed in facsimile by Mrs. Pankhurst as Hon. Treasurer. I give details of the 1914 Report as being typical of the whole. It consists of 67 pages all told, of which 33 are given to a list of subscribers, with the amounts subscribed; follows a balance-sheet, dealing with the sum of £46,875 19s. 2d. Auditor Frank Witting, Chartered Accountant, 20 Bucklersbury, E.C. 1, dated 21st March, 1914. There are also 23 pages devoted to the various activities of the Union during the preceding twelve months.

AGNES A. KELLY.

### "THE LADY WITH THE LAMP."

MADAM,—May I trespass upon your space with regard to Lady Stephen's interesting criticism of *The Lady with the Lamp*, particularly with regard to Florence Nightingale's friendship with Lady Herbert of Lea.

Lady Herbert accepted most graciously the dedication of my *Life of Florence Nightingale*, inscribed to her as the "Life-long friend of Florence Nightingale". I never heard anything from Lady Herbert to suggest that there had been a "rift in the lute" as described in Capt. Berkeley's play.

I may say that my "Life" was published in 1904 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Miss Nightingale's departure for Scutari. It came out some eight years before the late Sir E. Cook's admirable and exhaustive *Life and Letters*. Some members of Miss Nightingale's family and many of her old friends and fellow workers gave me assistance.

Capt. Reginald Berkeley's *Lady with the Lamp* does not profess to be an authentic record in detail of Miss Nightingale's life, but Miss Edith Evans' superb acting leaves no doubt on the mind of the audience that Florence Nightingale was one of the greatest and most progressive women of the nineteenth century.

Lady Stephen writes that she knew Miss Nightingale in her "earliest childhood". This must be a misprint. There is no one living who could have known Florence Nightingale in her childhood, and scarcely in her girlhood. She was born in 1820.

(Mrs.) SARAH A. TOOLEY.

99b Addison Road, Kensington.

[Of course "her" is a misprint for "my"!—Ed.]

MADAM.—It is with real appreciation that I read this morning the article on Florence Nightingale by Lady Stephen. My mother was a younger contemporary of Miss Nightingale, and we as children were brought up with the tradition of a beautiful personality, a wonderful organizer with an abounding faith in humanity, a woman who gave her life to the alleviation of suffering.

I saw portrayed in the play a hard, fighting, jealous woman—all in a good cause, but not our beloved Miss Nightingale whose very touch and presence brought healing. I feel it a personal affront that she should be so misrepresented—even down to the fictitious love-making—in that era lovers did not discuss their children *in posse*.

The last scene is unnecessarily harrowing, as well as being false art, and one rejoices to hear from Lady Stephen that it is not authentic.

To tamper with facts and personalities of historical interest is wrong and dishonest, and I cannot feel sufficiently grateful to Lady Stephen for her letter to *THE WOMAN'S LEADER*. It should be published in all the leading newspapers and periodicals to correct the unpleasant impression given by the play, of one of our most gracious and epoch-making women.

C. M. H.

6 Pump Court, Temple, E.C.

### THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.

MADAM,—May I call your attention to an error in fact which occurs in the summary of the Local Government Bill on page 6, column 2, in *THE WOMAN'S LEADER* of the 8th February.

In the second paragraph it is stated that the amendment moved to Clause 86 to add the word "progress" was lost.

This is not so. The amendment to add the words "and progress" was moved by Sir Leslie Scott, accepted by the Ministry of Health, and agreed to, and is accordingly incorporated in the text of the Bill as amended in Committee, Clause 94 (a) (i).

In addition, two further amendments were moved by Mr. Chamberlain. The first of these, as stated in your summary, specifies certain health services coming under the operations of the Clause. The second ensures that not only the health of the inhabitants of an area, but also their "welfare" is safeguarded.

The result of these amendments will be greatly to strengthen the new power conferred by the Bill on the Minister to take action where local authorities fail to maintain the required standard of health services. GWENDOLEN IVEAGH.

11 St. James's Square, S.W.

[We thank Lady Iveagh for calling our attention to the points in question. Our Local Government Correspondent noted them and sent the corrections to the printers, see page 22.—Ed.]

### "ANTE-NATAL SUPERVISION."

MADAM,—May I add (though this letter will arrive rather late) a word of support of Nina Boyle and of Alice Armstrong Lucas in denouncing compulsion in regard to mothers. Nina Boyle informs us that mothers of illegitimate children are kept in the institutions against their will and certified mentally defective if they resist. In a clause in our New Zealand Child Welfare Bill it is permitted officials to take away an illegitimate child, and the mother loses all right to it. This class of child with us is, in fact, *ipso facto*, a ward of the State. Great injustice has already been perpetrated. A ward of the State has no rights, not even to his own earnings till 21 or later, and he or she may be forced to work in the backblocks under any conditions. I trust British women will fight against compulsion. It is not a mere academic matter, I could give forty instances of injustice. Even when there is no Act, the officials often stretch a point. When an Act is passed, they are all powerful. Give the new countries a lead in resisting injustice.

CONSTANCE CLYDE.

Auckland, New Zealand.

## THE WOMAN'S LEADER

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## COMING EVENTS.

## BRITISH COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE.

26th February. 1 p.m. 17 Buckingham Street. Luncheon. Miss Bicknell, "English Law."

## FABIAN SOCIETY (WOMEN'S GROUP).

12th March. 8 p.m. Caxton Hall. Mrs. Swanwick, M.A. "Women in the Future: Life and Function." Chair, Mr. H. W. Nevinson.

## GUILDHOUSE W.C.A.

4th March. 3 p.m. Final Practice of Songs for Guildhouse Musical Festival.

## LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION.

6th and 7th March. 10.15-2.30. London School of Economics, Aldwych, W.C. Conference on Forced Labour and on Contract Labour. Tickets arranged if desired. Mlle Reitzel, le Prieuré, 15 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.

## MORLEY COLLEGE FOR WORKING MEN AND WOMEN, 61 WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD, S.E.

21st February. 8 p.m. Viscount Cecil of Chelwood: "Arbitration." Chair: Sir John Sankey, G.B.E.

## NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

6th-9th March. Annual Council Meetings. King George's Hall, Y.M.C.A., Gt. Russell Street, W.C. Wednesday, 6th March, 2.30 p.m.,

First session; 8.45 p.m. Reception at King's College for Women, Campden Hill, W. 8. Thursday, 7th March, 10 a.m.-12.45 p.m., Second session; 2.5 p.m., Third session. Friday, 8th March, 10 a.m.-12.45 p.m., Fourth session; 1 p.m., Public Luncheon, Criterion Restaurant; 3-5 p.m., Fifth session; Saturday, 9th March. 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Sixth session. All sessions open to the public. Tickets and further particulars from the Secretary, N.U.S.E.C., 15 Dean's Yard, S.W. 1.

Cardiff W.C.A.—28th February, 3.30 p.m. 17 Quay Street. Mrs. R. C. McLean, B.Sc. "A Travel Talk."

Gillingham W.C.A.—4th March, 7.30 p.m. Arden Street. Members' evening.

Glasgow S.E.C. and W.C.A.—25th February, 8 p.m. 172 Bath Street, Speakers' Class and Lecture on "Procedure at Business and Committee Meetings."

Preston W.C.A.—5th March, 7.30 p.m. Orient Cafe, Friargate. Debate, "Is the Woman Candidate Necessary?"

## THE GUILDHOUSE.

28th February. 8 p.m. Miss Maude Royden: "My World Tour." Chair: Mr. Albert Dawson.

## UNION OF WOMEN VOTERS.

25th February, 55 Chancery Lane, W.C. Mrs. La Chard, J.P., "A Woman Magistrate in the Lambeth Children's Court."

## TYPEWRITING.

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GOWNS well cut and fitted by experienced dressmaker. Terms from 21/-. Ladies' own materials made up. Renovations a speciality.—Grace Mayman, 168 High Street, Notting Hill Gate. Phone: Park 2943. Appointments.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

LONDON AND NATIONAL 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. Bedrooms available from 4th March. Single room (with breakfast) 6s. 6d.; double room (with breakfast) 10s. Restaurant on premises. Apply by letter to the Secretary.

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 24th February, 3.30, Mr. C. Tak Regan, F.R.S.; 6.30, Maude Royden, "Armaments and Miners."

EDUCATED HOME HELPS BUREAU, 190 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W. 1, requires and supplies educated women for all domestic work. Holiday engagements. Registration: Employers, 2/6; workers, 1/-. Suiting fee: Employers, 10/6; workers, 2/-. (Victoria 5940.)

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