

WOMEN'S SERVICE
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THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
EQUAL FRANCHISE AND THE PARLIAMENT RECESS.	207
THE HOUSING PROBLEM. V. By G. W. Currie.	207
A YEAR'S WORK FOR THE LEAGUE. By Hebe Spaul.	208
MOTHER INDIA—A CHALLENGE. By G. B.	208
CHIMNEYS. By M. S. Reeves.	209
THE YOUNG OFFENDER. By C. D. Rackham, J.P.	210

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NOTES AND NEWS.

The School Leaving Age in Dispute.

It is impossible to derive any comfort from last week's House of Commons debate on the Board of Education vote. Once again Lord Eustace Percy's decision to ignore the recommendation of the Hadow Report in favour of raising the school-leaving age to 15 was challenged. Once again it was reaffirmed on behalf of the Government by Lord Eustace himself and by his skilful second, the Duchess of Atholl. Indeed there are times when we are almost inclined to deplore the Duchess' discreet and masterly parliamentary capacity, when, as last week, it is employed in so deplorable a cause. The more vividly the whole problem of adolescent development is illustrated, the more closely the incidence and psychology of current unemployment is analysed, the more clearly does the fact emerge that 14 is a dangerous age at which to pitchfork the young people of this country into the indiscipline of an overstocked labour market. It is therefore a matter for congratulation that Lord Eustace Percy's policy in this respect is encountering a vigorous cross-current of dissatisfaction within his own party—for in such case an ounce of Conservative criticism is worth a ton of Labour invective. On the occasion of last week's debate both Major Hills (no feather-weight in the Government's counsels) and Lady Astor were among the protagonists in favour of an advance in the compulsory school-leaving age. The latter succeeded in stirring a somewhat somnolent House with a speculation as to whether she was in the right party. We ourselves have sometimes wondered.

Training Centres for Unemployed Women.

Miss Ellen Wilkinson made a fine appeal in the House of Commons on 27th July for a statement on the policy of the Government with regard to training centres for women, during the debate on the Minister of Labour's vote. She showed that the figures with regard to the unemployment of women are still appallingly high, that many of the normal channels of women's employment are overcrowded, and war-time channels are closed. She pointed out that many women lost their opportunity of training when on munition work, although nearly 37,000 of them passed through training courses, or, in comparatively few instances, were given instruction in various skilled occupations. These centres had been an unqualified success.

Of recent years, however, the Government had cut down the grants for this service from £65,000 to £44,000, with the result that those centres which still remain cannot remain open during the summer months, and have therefore difficulty in retaining an efficient staff. Although in his reply, the Minister of Labour touched on many points, he did not even answer those relating to the training of women. It may be of interest to mention here that although the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship had asked him to receive a deputation on this subject, and on certain points affecting women in industry, he refused on the ground that he could do nothing on account of expense. As Miss Wilkinson stated, to cut down highly important national work for a pettifogging few thousand pounds is indeed false economy!

A Jubilee Dinner to Mrs. Besant.

On Tuesday of last week a dinner was held at the Holborn Restaurant in honour of Mrs. Annie Besant, and in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Bradlaugh-Besant trial. The dinner was held under the auspices of the Malthusian League, founded in the same year as that in which the trial occurred, and drawing its inspiration from the same belief in the Malthusian horror of an unrestricted birthrate. It was, without question, a notable and very significant occasion. Not the least significant aspect of it was, of course, the presence of Mrs. Besant herself. To set eyes upon that formidable, white-haired, white-robed old lady, to note the combination of a peculiarly sweet smile and a peculiarly gracious turn of phrase with a latent force of personality expressed in line and gesture, and in a Mussolinian imposition of teetotalism and non-smoking upon the assembled company, was to vitalize one's understanding of many notable turns in her long and stormy career. In 1877 she set England on fire by her vindication of the overburdened mother's right of access to the gospel of family limitation. On Tuesday of last week she surprised a roomful of ardent birth-controllers by the vehemence of her denunciation of the abuse of birth control by the well-to-do. It was, of course, this same hard-headed capacity to defend an intellectual position on both flanks which brought her into sharp conflict with the British Government in India before the introduction of a measure of self-government, and later into sharp conflict with the Nationalist extremists when, in her opinion, a reasonable measure of reform had been granted. But to return to the occasion of our comments: Mrs. Besant's presence and her speech were not the only notable incidents of a notable evening. The silent toast to Malthus *In piam memoriam*, proposed by Mrs. J. M. Keynes, was an oratorical gem duly garnished with humour. And Mr. H. G. Well's toast of the Malthusian League contained the timely reminder (without which the proceedings would have lacked an element of reality) that among the absent protagonists of the cause of family limitation was a certain headstrong fighter who has in our own time put the message "over the footlights."

The End of the Malthusian League.

But the proceedings were destined to end upon a note of something like regret for many of those present. In his reply to Mr. Wells' toast of the Malthusian League, Dr. C. V. Drysdale, the son and successor of its first president and founder, announced that the League had outlived its usefulness and was about to

'Keep fit on
cocoa'

BOURNVILLE
SEE THE "Cadbury" ON EVERY PIECE
NAME OF CHOCOLATE

Write
Cadbury, Bournville
about Gift Scheme

dissolve. The celebration of its jubilee was at the same time the recital of its *nunc dimittis*. We ourselves react to this announcement with a certain feeling of contentment. The Malthusian League has fought a good fight for the right of the poor to obtain information on family limitation, and it has played no mean part in the actual diffusion of such knowledge. But that work has now passed to the clinics and to the women's organisations who have espoused this particular aspect of individual freedom. The Malthusian League to-day, in so far as it stands for a distinctive point of view, stands for a particular application of Malthus' gospel which is out of date: for his insistence that a rigid economic individualism is the prime condition of family limitation. Such a view, said Dr. Drysdale, is not popular in these days of "sentimental humanitarianism." He is right, it is not. But we surmise that the popular mind has good reason for its rejection of the political creed of Malthus. It sees family limitation spreading not in response to economic pressure, but in response to economic ambition stimulated by economic improvement. It sees that in the achievement of such improvement, the expanding social services of our time (the "sentimental humanitarianism" which Dr. Drysdale deprecates) play a significant part. It is, in fact, not "sentimental humanitarianism" alone which has killed the Malthusian League, but the surprising sight of "sentimental humanitarianism" walking triumphantly forward step by step and hand in hand with family limitation. A hundred years ago Malthus said that the two were incompatible. To-day we know that they are not.

This Freedom.

In this country many of our Local Authorities dictate to a woman as to whether she may or may not undertake paid work after marriage. Over the water apparently they sometimes go further. We are indebted to our colleague, *The Daily Express*, for the following form of contract:—

"A woman applying for the post of school-teacher at a small salary in a North Carolina seaside village of 400 persons was asked to sign a contract containing the usual stipulations in regard to certification, boarding at the dormitory, sacrificing pay while unable to work, and in addition the following unusual clauses:—I promise to take a vital interest in all phases of Sunday school work, giving of my time, service, and money without stint for the uplift and benefit of the community. I promise to abstain from all dancing, immodest dressing, and any other conduct unbecoming a teacher and a lady. I promise not to go out with any young men except in so far as it may be necessary to stimulate Sunday school work. I promise not to fall in love, to become engaged, or secretly married. I promise to remain in the dormitory or on the school grounds when not actively engaged in school or church work elsewhere. I promise to sleep at least eight hours a night, to eat carefully, and to take every precaution to keep in the best of health and spirits in order that I may be better able to render efficient service to my pupils. I promise to remember that I owe a duty to the townspeople who are paying me my wages, that I owe respect to the school board and the superintendent that hired me, and that I shall consider myself at all times the willing servant of the school board and the townspeople, and that I shall co-operate with them to the limit of my ability in any movement aimed at the betterment of the town, the pupils, or the schools." Comment is needless.

Liberal Women's Club.

The first President of the new Liberal Women's Club, which will shortly be opened at 113 Ebury Street, will be Mrs. Corbett Ashby. The Club, according to this circular, is being opened "Because Liberalism is reviving and Liberal women need a place where they can meet and exchange views." The advantages of the Club are its accessibility, its attractive and inexpensive accommodation, and meals. Particulars can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Lady Stewart, W.N.L.F., 1 Great George Street, S.W. 1. The annual subscription is £1 10s.

Indian Women.

Readers of Miss Mayo's book, *Mother India*, a review of which will be found in another column, will be glad to read the passage quoted below from an article by Mr. Gandhi entitled "Tear Down the Purdah." These noble words show that the full bearings of this question are understood by him, and the fact

that they can be printed should remind us of how far the Indian mind, in some quarters at least, has already moved in the last half-century. A fuller account of the article will be found in "India To-day," the bulletin of the Indian Information Centre, 7 Tavistock Place, London, S.W.

"Chastity is not a hot-house growth. It cannot be superimposed. It cannot be protected by the surrounding wall of the Purdah. It must grow from within, and to be worth anything it must be capable of withstanding every unsought temptation. It must be defiant. It must be a very poor thing that cannot stand the gaze of men. Men, to be men, must be able to trust their women-folk, even as the latter are compelled to trust them. . . . By seeking to-day to interfere with the free growth of the womanhood of India, we are interfering with the growth of free and independent-spirited men. What we are doing to our women and what we are doing to the untouchables recoils upon our heads with force a thousand times multiplied. . . . It partly accounts for our own weakness, indecision, narrowness, and helplessness. Let us then tear down the Purdah with one mighty effort."

Questions in Parliament.

WOMEN POLICE, LONDON.—*Viscountess Astor* asked the Home Secretary how many times during the last three years police-women in London have appeared in Court as witnesses or in charge of sexual crimes against women and children?

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks: I could not, not without exhaustive inquiry, give the number, but I can say that statements of children in sexual cases are always taken either by the Lady Assistant or by a Woman Inspector specially appointed for the purpose, and child witnesses who have no relations or friends suitable to look after them are cared for until the proceedings are over, and provided for after the proceedings are over by either the Lady Assistant or the Woman Inspector with the help of various voluntary organizations.

Viscountess Astor: Is it not true that this year we have had 250 cases of indecent assault on women, and that we have only two women police appointed for the purpose of looking after them, whereas in 1921 we had eight?

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks: I cannot accept my Noble Friend's figures and perhaps she will put them down in another question. I cannot answer for the actual numbers of police force on a particular duty, but I am satisfied as I said in my reply, that the interests of the women and children are cared for by women police and women inspectors.

Viscountess Astor: Cannot the right hon. Gentleman get the figures from his officials? Many of us know that the number is inadequate?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is now giving opinions.

TRADE BOARDS ACT.—*Mr. Buchanan* asked the Minister of Labour if he is aware of the many instances of low wages which are now prevalent in the catering trade; and if he is prepared to conduct an inquiry into this trade with a view to inclusion under the Trade Boards Act?

The Minister of Labour (Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland): Since the publication last year of the Report upon conditions in the Light Refreshment and Dining-Room (non-licensed) branch of the Catering Trade, no fresh facts have been brought to notice which would justify the institution of a new inquiry.

FEDERATED MALAY STATES (SOCIAL HYGIENE).—*Mr. Cecil Wilson* asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies why, in view of the unanimous Report of the Advisory Committee on social hygiene urging that at the earliest practical date the policy should be to suppress all brothels in the Straits Settlements, approval has been given to an amendment of the law in the Federated Malay States under which a very large number of brothels are recognized by the British Government?

Mr. Amery: The Amendment to which the hon. Member refers makes no alteration in the state of the law in the Federated Malay States in so far as any recognition of brothels may be concerned. Its object was explained on the 29th June by my right hon. Friend in reply to a question by the Noble Lady the Member for Sutton (*Viscountess Astor*).

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.*

EQUAL FRANCHISE AND THE PARLIAMENTARY RECESS.

The present year appears likely to draw a blank so far as women's questions are concerned. The closing weeks of the session in the autumn will be devoted to clearing off the work of the year which has been already embarked on, and the new programme of reforms which it was anticipated might fall into 1927 must necessarily be postponed until next year. But the past months have at least witnessed one event which will be remembered when the complete story of the Suffrage Movement comes to be written. Just before Easter the Prime Minister announced his intention to place on the Statute Book legislation giving the vote to women on the same terms as men and from the age of 21, and later in the session, in a memorable speech at the Albert Hall, he declared to a mass meeting of women supporters his faith in the justice of his proposals and his intention to see the matter through.

But it now appears certain that full ten years at least will have elapsed before the granting of the first instalment of the vote and the unconditional enfranchisement of women on the same terms as men. These years have not been spent by women with their hands folded in the serene sense of a partial achievement of their aim. The admirable pamphlet by Dame Millicent Fawcett, "What the Vote has done," gives some indication of the acceleration of progress in the amendment of antiquated legislation relating to the status of women which the first decade of the woman's vote has seen. In other spheres, perhaps, notably the League of Nations and the problems of international relations, enfranchised women have played an honourable part. But they could never forget that many women were still outside the pale of citizenship. It is true that certain societies which existed to secure the franchise for women went out of existence after 1918; others changed their name and widened their scope to include extra-feminist activities. But three at least of the leading suffrage societies went steadily on and did not relax in the slightest degree their efforts to bring about the full fruition of the labours of the past sixty years. We remember well how difficult it was in the early years after the passing of the Representation of the People Act to arouse any interest in the extension of the vote, even among convinced suffragists. By-elections and general elections proved to be the best means of education. Even the most diehard anti-suffragist, if he stood for Parliament, became alive to the dis-

abilities of the young married woman or the woman worker of any age who was not possessed of the necessary husband or furniture. It is to the everlasting credit of these three suffrage societies that from 1918 onward they never flagged. The Home Secretary received the first of many deputations in 1919 and a public meeting was organised for women under 30 the same year. In 1920, for the first time in the British Parliament, a woman arose in her place to plead for her disenfranchised sisters. In 1921 an active by-election policy was inaugurated, and from that day to this no candidate stood for Parliament, without a convincing reminder of the injustice under which many women still suffer. Meetings and deputations were arranged and the widest possible publicity was given to the subject. Those who are following the present position with interest would read the pamphlet, *Equal Franchise, 1918-1928*, which has recently been published by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship; this gives a record of activity extending from the first victory up to the present time.

But the fight is not over yet; the fact that the new session does not begin until 1928 means that the autumn and winter must be spent in work in the constituencies with the double object of educating public opinion and educating our representatives in Parliament. It may be true, as some tell us, that we are beating at an open door; but suffragists know from bitter experience that no measure of reform is safe until it reaches the statute book. We believe there is a large body of opinion in favour of equality of franchise, but it is inarticulate. Women's organisations must exert themselves in the coming months to render this public support of this reform loudly articulate in order to strengthen the hands of a Prime Minister who has shown himself a sincere friend. During the next few weeks, possibly comparatively little can be done, and perhaps the autumn campaign will go with a better swing after the August lull. But even now there are strenuous spirits who will make use of holiday opportunities by holding informal meetings on the shore or in the market place, by writing to the press, or by distributing literature. There is little else politically to distract our attention; other questions are temporarily shelved. So that even if work in August is beyond our powers we can at least make plans for taking some share in the final stages of this great struggle, which we hope will be a matter of history before we reach August, 1928.

THE HOUSING PROBLEM.

By G. W. CURRIE.

V.

In previous articles we have tried to show what these housing problems are, what has been done and what left undone towards their solution. We know that times are hard: we are told that coal and fifty other things may make them harder. But we know also that the country spends every month upon drink as much as we would ask it to spend every year upon housing. We can afford to embark upon this expenditure. The one thing we can not afford is to perpetuate the evils against which we protest. We are really beyond the stage at which the case for action rests upon mere financial argument. These outrages upon humanity cry to high heaven for justice. The fact that in nine cases out of ten the families on whom are rivetted these grinding and degrading conditions of existence belong to the disbanded battalions of Kitchener's army which rolled up in millions to smash up once for all a tyranny which threatened Belgrave Square and Pulford Street alike should appeal to every living soul in whose composition there remains a single streak of decency and gratitude—one single precious memory of sacrifice accepted—the feeblest vision of the obligations of mercy.

Do we forget how when our backs were to the wall as Sir Douglas Haig told us ten years ago, we all spoke of our last shilling? It was to be poured out if need be. But now that the peril is past, what about our first twopenny?

Why, at whatever cost, as *The Spectator* asks, do we not "strike a blow in the teeth of the wrong"?

The machinery which exists to deal with these evils is simply our ordinary local government operating mainly through our elected representatives. For the accumulation of past neglect, our existing authorities cannot justly be held accountable. For any unworthy acquiescence in such evils, for any slackness or slowness in taking steps now that the evils stand revealed for all to see, the responsibility lies at their door.

Look at the recent revelations in Westminster. *The Spectator* is not an irresponsible rag: it is perhaps the most serious journal published in England: and it says that the report of the Westminster Survey Group "makes us burn with shame." We are glad to hear it: it is high time. It describes the report¹ as a sane and plain description whose very moderation makes its indictment doubly damning for us all. Mr. John C. Davidson, M.P., is not an irresponsible politician: far from it, he was chosen by Mr. Bonar Law to be his private secretary, and he is now the chairman of the Conservative Party's organization, with an unheard-of Parliamentary majority at his back. What does his committee report about Westminster? "There are thousands of old Westminster families whose forefathers have lived and worked in Westminster for centuries. . . . They are patriotic, hard-working, independent—just the class the country is most in need of. Yet every day those who know Westminster see these men and their wives passing from discontent to fierce resentment and despair as they realize the impossibility of bringing up their children in even the most elementary comfort and decency on account of the conditions under which they are forced to live." This is Mr. Davidson's indictment: these words are printed under his name and indeed under others also scarcely less responsible if not quite so well known and influential with Mr. Baldwin's Government. The report in question hits the City Council of Westminster straight in the face. "The 1925 Housing Act gives the City Council full power to deal with and remedy these unhappy conditions."

We do not know what sort of reply if any the City Council will make to this frontal attack, which, be it noted, is made by the Westminster Housing Association, whose report is a separate

¹ Copies of the Report may be had on personal application from N.U.S.E.C., 15 Dean's Yard, or by post on receipt of a 1d. stamp.

document from that of the Westminster Survey Group dealt with by *The Spectator*. But we do know that the Council's Health Report published the other day admitted that "841 have been noted as being in a state not reasonably fit in all respects for habitations . . ."

And what of Chelsea? The Chelsea Housing Association has, it is true, secured—one might say extorted—the promise of a scheme to deal with one of the two plague spots in that borough. This action, albeit deplorably belated and under pressure of almost unbelievable exposure, is all to the borough council's credit; but with reference to an equally distressing area much associated with the operations of a financial syndicate holding property behind Cadogan Square, the association's report has much to say and lays grave stress upon "the responsibility resting on the Borough Council for the enforcement of proper sanitary administration . . . the foundation of which is the policy of its leaders."

One word more. The Common Cause rejoices to think that so large a share in this good work has fallen to women. Their work is its own reward: we know they have the deep gratitude of the whole community.

A YEAR'S WORK FOR THE LEAGUE.

By HEBE SPAULL.

The Annual Report of the League of Nations Union which was presented to the General Council of the Union at Harrogate at the end of June, has just been published.

During the past year nearly 83,000 new members joined the Union, bringing the total to well over 600,000. The number of Corporate Members nearly doubled during 1926, whilst 82 Corporate Associates were also enrolled, most of them being Women's Institutes. Women's organizations have been giving increased support during the past year. There are sixty-eight Societies represented on the Women's Advisory Council of the Union, the majority of which have branches all over the country. The policy pursued is that of persuading the central committees to stimulate their branches to take interest in League questions, to co-operate with the local branches of the Union where these exist, and to join the Union in their corporate capacity. During 1926 the Union supplied, on an average, three speakers a week to address women's meetings on the League and the International Labour Organization, these being, of course, only a small proportion of the total number which had such addresses.

The Union's most notable successes during the past year have been scored in the world of Education. The general programme of the Union's work in schools for the last seven years has been accepted by the League as a basis for League instruction in all countries. This has culminated during the past month in the Conference of Local Education Authorities convened by the Board of Education, and in the Conference of Teaching Associations. The principle of League teaching in schools is now universally accepted.

Through a grant of the Carnegie Trustees, the Union's Library is making great strides. Books are sent to members of the Union throughout Great Britain, and the general public, through the Central Library for Students, has access to this fund of specialized knowledge.

In conclusion, the Report aptly sums up the need for the Union when it states that "It is clearer than ever that the Governments must have behind them a vigilant, instructed, enthusiastic public opinion. As memory of the Great War grows more dim, the Union's education work becomes, perhaps, more difficult, but far more necessary."

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL STUDY AND TRAINING, GLASGOW.

Autumn Term begins in October. Two years' course of study and practical work qualifying for a Diploma, suitable for those interested in social conditions or undertaking different branches of public and social service: Welfare Supervisors, Teachers, Hospital Almoners, Police Women, Health Visitors, Secretaries, Poor Law and Employment Exchange Officials, and others.

Practical work is arranged in connection with Queen Margaret College Settlement.

A special course of training for Nurses wishing to qualify for the Health Visitors' Probation Certificate will be started in October. This course will cover six months. Applications must be sent in before the 8th September. The fee for the course will be met in the case of suitable applicants by a grant.

For further information, apply to—

Mr. J. CUNNISON, Director,
THE UNIVERSITY.

MOTHER INDIA—A CHALLENGE.¹

Miss Katherine Mayo derives her title from the famous Indian nationalist song, "Banda Mataram" (Mother-country), the Marseillaise of the Swarajists. Her book is dedicated, and is indeed a challenge to "the Peoples of India," who, as she reminds us, constitute one-eighth of the human race; but it would be difficult for the Western woman to read it without feeling that it is in a great measure a challenge to her also. For in "Mother India" the purdah, that picturesque but deadly curtain behind which the life of the Indian woman is hid, is for a few moments held aside, and very disquieting are the ugly facts disclosed. What we see is the current of everyday life, tainted at its very source. This is no conventional travel book, reflecting the kaleidoscopic panorama of the East. The author did not penetrate into the Sunderbunds for mugger, nor into the jungle for tiger. Instead she explored in regions psychological and has given us a pioneer's map of the structure of social life in India in the twentieth century, which is in effect a devastating indictment of orthodox Hinduism and all its works. Her first chapter, which reads like a nightmare, describes sights in Calcutta which many resident European women have never seen, although they are of daily occurrence at the famous temple of Kalighat. The hair-raising facts in the book will doubtless be denied on principle by some of its Indian readers, but they are not likely to be disproved. On the contrary they are well authenticated and backed by matter-of-fact Government of India blue books, and by quotations from debates in the central and provincial legislatures—which last, by the way, offer the student of psychology the most illuminating footnotes to the history of India.

Her motif is that the Hindu and the Hindu alone is to blame for his own inherent defects of character and the general backwardness of his country resulting therefrom, and that no agency can save him except a new spirit in his own heart. The Hindu delights to ascribe to that Universal Provider, the British Government, all his listlessness, apathy, lack of initiative and shyness of responsibility, regardless of the fact that these racial traits characterized him for many centuries before the British set foot in India. Miss Mayo shows him a more convincing origin, simply "his manner of getting into the world and his sex-life thenceforward." She proceeds to deal faithfully with the facts, horrible as they are, of child marriage—where the husbands are sexually self-indulgent and undisciplined—and enforced child motherhood, when "the little mother goes through a destructive pregnancy ending in a confinement whose peculiar tortures will not be imagined unless in detail explained." Small wonder that "the average physical rating of the population is at the bottom of the international list," or that "it is estimated that in India each generation sees the death of 3,200,000 mothers in the agonies of childbirth."

The conditions of social life inevitably result in the vast mass of women remaining illiterate; only 18 to the 1,000 are in any degree literate. In the first place, every girl must be married before puberty. Custom decrees that much money must be spent on the marriage feast by the girl's father, often to the extent of his being enslaved to money-lenders for the rest of his life. Why then should he spend more money on her? And who is to teach her? All the primary school-work in the half-million villages is pre-eminently women's work, and yet "no Indian girl can go alone to teach in rural districts; if she does she is ruined." The resulting deadweight of unlettered women is perhaps the most formidable bar to social reform.

Miss Mayo deals with the known but imperfectly realized facts of Hindu widowhood (their number alone, 26,834,838, is rather startling); the inhuman barbarity of the orthodox Hindu to the Untouchables, whose cause has been championed recently by Mr. Gandhi; the age-long quarrel of Hindu and Mohammedan. She has an interesting chapter on the British pioneer work in producing the milk supply which is a life and death matter in the Tropics. The Hindu venerates the cow as sacred, but his treatment of it is beyond belief. His religion forbids him to take its life, but gives no instructions about torture, and the worst enemies of the sacred cow are his worshippers. This has an economic aspect, for it is estimated that the loss in revenue arising from the mismanagement of cattle alone is £117,600,000.

Miss Mayo has much praise for the British administration in India, and has grasped some of the difficulties that beset us there. She is no inexperienced critic; herself an American, she had

¹ *Mother India*, by Katherine Mayo. (Jonathan Cape, 10s. 6d.)

formerly studied conditions in the Philippines. She points to two general principles of government: to avoid as far as possible interference in matters concerning the religion of the governed, and never to sanction a law that cannot be enforced. As regards the first it should be remembered that to attack the customs of the Hindu is to attack his religion (which need not in this sense be confused with morality). Such action would be regarded as a "trumpet-call to a holy war," and would give the signal for the mobilization of every demon of racial hatred, resentment, and superstition. As regards the second, to pass an unenforceable law is futile, and brings law and order into disrepute.

Finally, Miss Mayo has a few "winged words" to say about the Indian's sanitary habits, admittedly disgusting and particularly shocking to her civilized Transatlantic soul. Indeed, she regards them as a world menace. India is ridden with disease. The Mohammedan practice of purdah, only too readily adopted by the Hindu, is largely responsible for the curse of tuberculosis prevalent amongst Indian women. India is also the chief breeding-ground for cholera. "From long consumption of diluted sewage Indians have acquired a degree of immunity"; but they suffer from "the continuous drain of intestinal parasites" and have no powers of resistance. "It is a question of adaptation and of the evolution of a sub-grade of existence on which they now survive." This state of affairs can never be cured till the educated women of India are able to teach their fellow-countrymen the elementary facts of health and sanitation. The task is gigantic, but it is worth while. The Indian woman is faithful in performance to what she conceives her duty; and she is teachable. Said I not that the book is a challenge to women as well as to the Indian?

G. B.

CHIMNEYS.

By M. S. REEVES.

In London, though doubtless important, chimneys do not force themselves upon you. They begin underground, end high up in the air, and except that they contribute towards a certain state of atmosphere, they do their drawing in an unnoticeable manner. It is different in a cottage in the country. The first question that springs into your mind is: "I wonder how the chimney draws" when you look at a room or at a cottage or at anything in the country. I can only speak of our own chimneys. I am not intimate with any others but I see the question in our visitors' eyes and I know that their chimneys are as unaccountable as mine.

To begin with, our big open hearth—perfect! If you do not have the logs too long nor too far out in front, and if you keep a certain window a crack open—perfect! You must not cheat. It is to be that particular window and the chimney does not like a screen in front—even on very cold nights.

But the chimney of the room that was once a cow-byre has always been nervous. Certain winds send it mad. You can open and shut doors and windows until you are giddy, and nothing pleases it. At least this was so until the day when the master of the house went to London. We who were left behind hastily determined to divert the energies of the bricklayer who was doing the bottom of the well to the top of the ill-tempered chimney. We put the problem to him. He said he had no objection to add a bit to the height of the chimney instead of doing whatever he was doing at the bottom of the well—if that was what pleased us—but he confided to us that the real way to stop that chimney from smoking every time the wind changed was to climb a ladder and to turn the thing round at the top. He went on to say that the man who lived in the house before us had kept a ladder leaning against the chimney for the purpose. We thanked him but decided to proceed with the building operations. His assistant before setting to work on the rather extreme change of situation of the bricks asked me did I know that the way to manage that chimney was to go up a ladder and turn the thing round at the top. I reassured him and they had a couple of feet added when the arrival of the well contractor caused the bricklayer to drop his trowel down the chimney. The contractor was worried because he had not got anything about chimneys in his contract and had I heard that the people who lived there before always went up a ladder and turn the thing round at the top? I said I had, but if he did not mind we preferred a taller chimney—so—the trowel was recovered and the chimney was 4 feet higher when the master of the house came home. The change was to the good. The chimney decided to draw if no door was open and if one window was—but which window depended on the

direction of the wind. We have since had 6 more feet added and the chimney now draws in all winds but one—provided that a certain door is not open and that a curtain window is. We cannot get on to better terms with it than that, though we have made further experiments.

The kitchen chimney behaves with decorum inside the house, but once the smoke is out at the top it chooses to beat down into the garden. We are taking observations but do not know what to be at—unless we move away the hill which is the feature and pride of the neighbourhood.

The wash-house chimney, which is made of tin and is round and hideous and pokes out horizontally through the wall before it turns upwards to its full 10 feet, takes no risks. It smokes in all winds with all doors open and with all doors shut. It relents a little in one wind—the one which very seldom blows. Mrs. Buss, who washes for us, says that that chimney suffers under the disadvantage of having had an elder-tree cut down and burnt in order that it might be there at all! Such a thing could but bring ill luck, heightened as it is by the fact that the man who was paid to do this thing had cross-eyes!

EQUAL FRANCHISE.

We reprint the following letter from *The Times* of 28th July.

To the Editor of *The Times*.

Sir,—We should like to draw the attention of your readers to the reply given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to Miss Wilkinson's question in the House of Commons on 21st July on the subject of the date at which legislation to give the franchise to women on the same terms as men will be introduced. He stated:—

It will be possible to make provision in the Franchise Bill for any arrangements which may be necessary in connection with the preparation of the register to enable new voters to vote at a General Election in 1929.

It so frequently happens that a dissolution takes place before a Parliament has reached its fifth year that, although we feel no doubt that the Government intends to carry out its pledge to give equal political rights, there does not seem to be any security that this will be possible should the Bill reach the Statute-book late in the Session, and only in time, therefore, for an election in 1929. The pledge given by the Government in the most explicit terms was not that legislation would be introduced, but that it would be actually placed on the Statute-book in time for women to vote on the same terms as men "at the next election." We are disappointed that the Prime Minister does not propose to introduce a measure in the autumn, but we wish most strongly to urge that at least it will be introduced at the earliest possible date in the Session of 1928.

Yours faithfully,

ELEANOR F. RATHBONE,

President, National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship,
15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W.

SAFEGUARD YOUR VOTE.

Again we remind our readers that in order to vote it is essential to be on the register now being compiled. The last day for claims is 7th August. If your name is not on the lists now open to inspection and if you omit to make a claim before 7th August, you will lose your Parliamentary and Local Government vote for twelve months. Therefore examine the lists at once.

OURSELVES.

We shall be publishing during the summer weeks a series of articles from representatives of the three political Parties on the principles and ideals for which the Party stands. The first of these is by Captain J. de V. Loder, M.P., one of the most brilliant of the younger, progressive Conservative group, and part author of "Industry and the State: The Conservative View." It will appear in our issue of 12th August.

WOMEN RESEARCH WORKERS.

Miss Honor Bridget Fell and Miss Margaret Averil Boas are among the three junior fellows elected to fourth year fellowships, valued at £500, by the trustees of the Beit Memorial Fellowships for Medical Research.

THE LAW AT WORK.

By C. D. RACKHAM, J.P.

THE YOUNG OFFENDER.

A few weeks ago an article appeared in this column dealing with the recommendations as to Probation and Hostels made by the Departmental Committee on Juvenile Delinquency. It is worth while for magistrates to look more closely into these recommendations so that they may see what their powers would be under the new proposals.

It will be remembered that in the Criminal Justice Act of 1925 it was laid down in Clause 5 (2) "It shall be lawful for a local authority to contribute towards the expense of maintaining persons who have been released on probation under a condition as to residence", and in (3) "There shall be paid out of moneys provided by Parliament towards . . . the expense of maintaining persons who have been released on probation as aforesaid such sums as the Secretary of State, with the approval of the Treasury, may direct, and subject to such conditions as he may with the like approval determine". A later clause gives power to the Secretary of State to "make rules", and in these rules the conditions mentioned above were to be laid down.

The intention of these clauses was to enable local authorities to pay for any probationer whom the magistrates might wish to send to a Voluntary Home as a condition of the Probation Order. The power of dealing with probationers in this way is taken away by recommendation (28) in the Departmental Committee's Report: "A probationer should not be required as a condition of a Probation Order to reside in a Home for training". The very early death of the new plan reminds me of the infant's epitaph:

"If I was so quickly done for
I wonder what I was begun for."

From the point of view of the Probation Officer it is easy to see the value of the power conferred in the above clauses of the Criminal Justice Act. A lad or girl is placed on probation; the case is not a bad one, but the Probation Officer soon realizes that unemployment or bad home conditions make it impossible for the probationer to succeed unless he or she can be given a chance in fresh surroundings. It is only too probable that no Hostel would be available to which the young person could go, nor would this always meet the case, as a short period of training may be necessary before suitable employment can be obtained. It was the intention of the Criminal Justice Act that under these circumstances the magistrates might make it a condition of the Order that a lad should go, perhaps to a Farm Colony, for 3 or 6 months' training, possibly for emigration, or a girl to a training Home for a few months. The Local Authority would be able to pay the cost, and this would give a much freer choice of an Institution than is the case at present when no payment is, as a rule, forthcoming. The Probation Officer would keep in touch with the young person and would if necessary assist in the finding of employment and in general supervision until the period of probation was over.

The Departmental Committee, in deciding to deprive the magistrates of this power of combining probation and training, have acted in the belief that if probation "in the open" (combined possibly with residence in a Hostel where such was available) is not a suitable way of dealing with an offender then he or she should be sent to a Borstal Institution with a minimum sentence of three years. No alternative is offered between the leniency of the one and the severity of the other. There is a gap here which will surely have to be filled in one way or another. If the plan of using Voluntary Homes in the way described above is not approved of (though the Committee recommend that magistrates should have power to commit a girl to a Voluntary Home for as much as two years in lieu of a Borstal sentence), then some short term State Training Colony is much more needed than the seven Borstal Institutions, all involving exactly the same minimum three year sentence, which are recommended by the Committee.

There is a want of elasticity and variety in the proposals of the Departmental Committee for the treatment of young offenders which would cause great difficulty to magistrates and make their work less effective. Young people of great variety in character and circumstance come into our Courts, and a variety of method is needed if they are to be properly dealt with.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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Telephone: Victoria 6188.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

At the meeting of the Executive Committee on 26th July, Miss Fulford, Chairman of the Fulham S.E.C., was co-opted on to the Committee. Miss Fulford has for many years been an active member of the National Union, and is recognised as one of the most distinguished women Poor Law Guardians in the country. She is Chairman of the Fulham Board of Guardians, the Relief Committee, the Children's Committee, and the West London Poor Law School Board; Vice-Chairman Fulham and Hammersmith War Pensions Committee and Chairman of its Children's Committee. The Committee feels itself very fortunate that she is able to serve.

PERSONAL.

We have received the following letter in reply to a telegram of congratulation to Mrs. Pennington on the occasion of her 99th birthday:—

"My mother, who owing to failing eyesight is unable to write herself, has asked me to write and convey her thanks for the kind message sent by your Union on the occasion of her 99th birthday. . . My mother must be about the oldest survivor of the women who have, for 50 years or more, worked hard for the improvement of women's position in life, and have succeeded in getting passed into law the Married Women's Property Act, Votes for Women, Admission of Women into the House of Commons, on Juries, on Magisterial Benches, etc., etc., and no doubt they will soon be able to vote like men, at the age of 21, and moreover (a doubtful blessing) they perhaps will be able to sit in the House of Lords!

Your Union is very much to be congratulated on the valuable work it has done. It looks as if it will shortly have accomplished all it set out to do."

(Signed)

FREDERIC PENNINGTON.

BOOKS RECENTLY ADDED TO THE EDWARD WRIGHT AND CAVENDISH BENTINCK LIBRARY.

The Ethics and Economics of Family Endowment, by Eleanor F. Rathbone.
A History of Russia, by Bernard Pares.
Autobiography, by John Stuart Mill.
The Church and Woman, by A. Maude Royden.
The Board of Education, by Sir Lewis Amherst Selby-Bigge.
The Ministry of Labour's Report, 1925 (?).
Communism, by Professor Laski.
Capital Punishment in the Twentieth Century, by E. Roy Calvert.
Local Government of the United Kingdom (4th edition), by John J. Clarke.
Towards Industrial Peace (being a Report of the Proceedings of a Conference organized by the League of Nations Union).

MARRIED WOMEN DOCTORS.

Mrs. James Taylor, Chairman of the Glasgow S.E.C. and W.C.A. sent an excellent letter to the Glasgow Press with regard to the dismissal of married women doctors, as an appeal to the British Medical Association.

NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

WEST BROMWICH S.E.C.

At a meeting of the West Bromwich S.E.C. held on 20th July, Mrs. Ryland, Chairman of the Birmingham Citizenship Sub-Section of the N.C.W., gave a very interesting account of the history of franchise for women from the early Saxon days down to the present time. Mrs. A. L. Bodley presided at the meeting, which though small, was very representative. A resolution in favour of Equal Franchise was carried unanimously, and was sent to the Prime Minister.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

"THE HOUSING PROBLEM."

With reference to the two letters which appeared under this heading last week, Mr. Currie writes:—

"Few who have read the report signed by the Bishop of London and published by the National Assembly, or who have first hand knowledge or indeed any knowledge of the notorious facts of the case will agree with Lady Selborne's view that "in London not many houses are in themselves insanitary." The number is large: some of them curable, others not so. But, in any case, as Lady Selborne says, authorities "have ample powers to compel landlords to put their property in order." The trouble is that they make so little use of them. Miss Octavia Hill's work was splendid, and it was successful: but in her day she did not have to deal with the post-war economic gap. The initiative towards this is by modern legislation deliberately entrusted to borough and other councils, along with the necessary financial resources. I really cannot agree with Lady Selborne that "people think that slums can be abolished by a wave of the legislative wand." They are coming, in rapidly increasing numbers, to see that if a wholesale process of exposure of evil can secure actual results in Chelsea, Glastonbury, and Pimlico, there is no particular reason why the same thing should not be done in other places. There is only one thing to do with the view that not much is wrong with things as they are: and that is to destroy it utterly.

I rely upon the accuracy of the last published report of the Kensington Housing Association, which says: "Meanwhile the density of population still varies between 67 to the residential acre in the Holland Ward and 366 in the Golborne Ward. The following official health figures for 1925 are instructive:—

	Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 living)	Deaths from Scarlet Fever Tuberculosis. Notifications.	Diphtheria Notifications.
London	67	—	—
North Kensington.	83	105	191
South Kensington.	65	49	74

It may be that in previous years things were even worse than now in North Kensington. It may also be that in other places they are worse. These official figures point to an over average infantile mortality rate in North Kensington and to several other things also. Whether "slaughter of the innocents" is too strong a phrase is a matter of opinion. In my view it is not. The Golborne Ward of North Kensington cannot be said to be in anything but a highly unsatisfactory state. What returns can be expected from a density of 366 to the acre? It is quite well known that 50,000 poor people live in Kensington. The recent reports I had in mind are those of Westminster, Chelsea, and Kensington. The actual mortality rate is, I should say, in each and every case less disastrous than the permanent impairment of the children's health and morale. Does Miss Keeling not agree that the condition of Golborne Ward is indefensible, and if so, is it capable of cure or incapable? In my view more might have been done than has been done. For that the present Council is, obviously, not wholly accountable. I did not suggest that it is."

WOMEN AND LEAD PAINT.

MADAM,—Miss Bondfield, speaking in the Commons on 19th July in opposition to the Bill promoted by the N.U.S.E.C., made the observation "that women employed in painting babies' perambulators with white lead paint were taken violently ill and died," and she went on to deduce that "it is surely common sense to say that an ingredient which has proved to be so dangerous to people who have handled it should be prohibited." The Bill in question, introduced by Mr. Harney, sought to restore to women the right, recently taken from them, of entering the trade of painter and decorator. Many of us agree with Miss Bondfield that it would be a good thing to prohibit the use of white lead altogether in accordance with the I.L.O. convention. But her argument is ill-supported in her speech. Does she seriously maintain that all women in the painting trade, or men either, are in imminent danger of losing their lives because some women (when, where, and in what numbers she does not say) lost theirs? Miss Bondfield claims to speak for the workers, and again and again

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explicitly or implicitly, it is suggested by her and her colleagues that the feminists have no right to speak for them. In passing it may be said that almost all the liberties working women enjoy have been won for them by feminists, including the right to representation at Westminster or Geneva. But of more immediate interest is the amazing fact that neither Miss Bondfield nor the Government nor the promoters of the Lead Paint Act have taken the trouble to consult those women who are actually engaged in firms of house decorators, or have been so engaged in the past. Women in the trade give testimony that it is possible to live a perfectly healthy life. This does not prove that white lead is not a danger and should not be abolished. It does prove that misplaced philanthropy or vested interests should not take away one of the occupations in which women can engage and by means of which they can do good service to the commonwealth and earn an honest living. Miss Bondfield has a bright and breezy manner, and she evidently amused the House by her speech. But this matter cannot be settled off hand. Those who set out to prove that women, and the race through them, suffer by the use of white lead have proved too little or too much, they have failed to establish that women, given like conditions, are more susceptible than men, and all their arguments or facts in support of the danger of white lead are arguments in favour of basing the protection of the worker not upon sex but upon the conditions of the occupation. It is not necessary to be fanatical or to refuse to consider the opinions of those who differ from us in order to hold firmly to the sound principle that men and women should work together to make each occupation healthy, and that men and women should be free to enter upon any occupation which they find adapted to their capacity.

A. HELEN WARD.

FEMINIST LIBRARIES.

MADAM,—You say in your issue of 22nd July, that you would be interested to know of the existence of feminist libraries. I am very glad to send information in regard to the Women's Service Library which specializes in information on women's employment and other matters of interest to women as citizens. This library contains a carefully chosen collection of books on political and economic questions such as Occupations, Wages, Housing, Public Health, National and Local Government, Agriculture, Family Allowances, etc., etc., to which must be added the relevant Government publications (Parliamentary Acts, Bills, Blue Books, etc.), together with pamphlets, leaflets, and the Reports of Societies.

About fifty daily, weekly, and occasional periodicals are taken in regularly, including the majority of the periodical publications issued by the women's professional Societies; *The Times* is filed for twelve months and Hansard from 1911 onwards. Press cuttings are carefully selected and arranged, year books and directories are provided. There is a valuable historical collection on the woman's movement, and a good collection of the biographies of eminent women. All sections are continually added to, and pains are taken to keep the sources of information up to date. Every endeavour is made to assist students and others to make the full and ready use of the library. A quiet room is at their disposal for writing. The books are on open shelves and the whole of the material on the premises is most carefully catalogued and indexed on the Brussels International System, while the librarian is always ready to help with guidance and information.

The Library is open to all members of the London and National Society for Women's Service, and books may be borrowed and retained for a fortnight. There is no charge to House Members (subscription 10s. 6d. annually); non-house members (minimum subscription 2s. 6d.) pay a fee of 2d. per volume per week for books borrowed. Information is supplied on the special subjects included in the library, and an index to the subject Catalogue, compiled by Miss J. E. Norton, the Society's Honorary Librarian, is now in print, price 1s. 3d.

P. STRACHEY,

Secretary, London and National Society for Women's Service.

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