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WHY WE RESIST OUR TAXES.

BY

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WHY WE RESIST OUR TAXES.

BY

MARGARET KINETON PARKES.

When Suffragists combine in any effective act of protest against unrepresentative government (take, for instance, the Census Protest), the Press is very ready to report their doings, but is very reluctant to make a fair statement of the vital reasons why those things are being done. The real, logical ground of the protest is covered up as much as possible in misrepresentation and ridicule.

The Women Tax-Resisters have been paid a similar compliment. Though for the past twelve months they have both preached and practised the duty of passive resistance to unconstitutional government, the Press, while recording our protests, has done very little to make clear the fundamental principles of our action.

In what follows I endeavour to set forth as briefly as possible our main reasons for asking all Tax-paying Women within the different Suffrage Societies to recognise this form of protest both as a duty and a necessity.

A few facts with regard to the constitution of the Women's Tax-Resistance League are first necessary.

This League came into being in order to band together women belonging to different Suffrage Societies, who were agreed as to the value of Tax Resistance as a weapon in the fight for the vote, so that concerted action might take the place of the isolated

protests made hitherto. It is an entirely independent organisation, but it includes members of both the militant societies—The Women's Social and Political Union and The Freedom League—and also members of the following societies which are not in any way committed to militancy—The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, The London Society for Women's Suffrage, The New Constitutional Suffrage Society, The Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise League, The Church League for Women's Suffrage, The Free Church League, The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, The Actresses' Franchise League, The Artists' Franchise League, and the Women Writers' Franchise League.

Our motto, "No Vote, No Tax," means that we resist the payment of Imperial Taxes. Local Rates we pay willingly, because we have the Municipal Vote, and we shall with equal willingness pay Imperial Taxes when we have the Parliamentary Vote.

Our grounds for refusing to pay Imperial Taxes are as follows :

THE REASONS WHY.

(1) The Constitutional Principle.

The Government of this country which professes to be a representative one, and to rest on the consent of the governed, is Constitutional in its relation to men, Unconstitutional in its relation to women. Men have secured their Constitutional Rights in the past by resistance to unconstitutional government, and the verdict of history has approved their action. Nay more, we find them advocating this course to-day as a protest against real or imagined infringement of rights. Only recently a noble lord wrote to "The Times" as follows:—"If the Unionist party is really in earnest in resisting the Unconstitutional and revolutionary methods of the Government, why should they not organise a refusal to pay taxes until a Referendum be introduced?" and Sir John Lonsdale, M.P., speaking at Belfast as recently as

September 25th, said, "they would disregard the authority of an Irish Parliament, and would refuse to pay its taxes."

We women stand on the same ground, and by our resistance to Unconstitutional Taxation we seek to make the Government of this country not—as it is now—Constitutional toward men and Despotism toward women, but Constitutional to both alike.

As Mr. Laurence Housman says in his article "Conscience Money":

"In the matter of tax-paying no action that they take can be called "constitutional." For a woman to say that she pays her taxes "constitutionally" is to claim a privilege she does not possess. She may pay them voluntarily or submissively—that is quite a different matter—but she cannot pay them "Constitutionally" when she has no voice whatever in the Constitution that imposes them. A slave may accept the conditions of his slavery with resignation or with cheerfulness, but he cannot do so "as a free citizen." For that he must be made a free citizen first, and when he is a free citizen he is no longer a slave.

Unable to act constitutionally, women may yet act with constitutional intent—with the determination, that is to say, to bring into difficulty and disrepute any Government which denies them their constitutional claim."

(2) The Duty of the Governed.

While Governments owe to the governed the duty of just government, there is also the duty of the governed to compel Governments, by all the means in their power, to govern justly, and to safeguard impartially the liberties of all. Under representative Government men can do this by means of the Vote, the weapon with which they can throw Governments out of power. Women have not that weapon, yet the duty remains of using such others as they possess to expose unjust Government and make it difficult. They have not fulfilled that duty if they limit themselves to petitions and other modes of propaganda which

the Government continues to ignore. They must press on to a point where, like the Voter, they can make their power felt and cause inconvenience to the Government which refuses them redress.

Tax Resistance is the most orderly and the most logical means of getting that point. If the Government would supply us with a more constitutional weapon we would use it. It is the most constitutional weapon which lies to our hand, for it attacks their one-sided system of Government at the point where its unconstitutional claim upon women makes it vulnerable.

It should be remembered that Representative Government can set up no moral claim to obedience where it ceases to be representative; for Representative Government is based not merely upon a theory but upon a practice, tested and approved by history, namely, that it is necessary for the welfare of the State that all interests should be represented. So long, therefore, as women do not use every means in their power to impress this upon both Government and Nation, they are allowing the real welfare of the State to be, in a very literal sense, over-ruled, and are making it more easy for reform to be delayed.

(3) Responsibility for Others.

We are often told that property is a trust; and in this connection, so long as women are unenfranchised it is particularly true of the propertied and Tax-paying Women. With many sections of the community, and also with the Government which taxes her, she "counts" as a great many women who have no means of making their influence felt do *not* count. "The Women Who Count," therefore, owe a special duty at the present time to the "Women Who Do Not Count," but whose claim to just government is equal to theirs. And they can by making use of their propertied condition do much to bind class to class and to increase the sense of solidarity among women. Tax Resistance gives them an opportunity for this.

(4) Respect for the Law.

It is not right that unjust laws should be respected, or that their administration should be made easy. Often in the past when unjust statutes have been allowed by our legislators to remain in force, pressure has been brought to bear upon them by judges who would only give nominal sentences, and by juries who refused to convict, so that the law has been repeatedly held up to public contumely and ridicule. It is recognised now that those judges and juries did right, and by refusing to make bad laws effective forced the Government to do its duty. Women are not made judges, nor are they allowed upon juries; but by Tax Resistance they too can bring into disrepute the unjust laws which forces Unrepresented Women to pay taxes over which they have no control. We maintain that it is their duty to do so.

(5) Tax Resistance as Propaganda.

Having dealt with the principles of our action we can now pass on to the practical advantages. There can be no doubt that every Tax Resister provides in the locality where she is known and respected a valuable object lesson in support of the Cause which we all have at heart. She helps to prove, by submitting to inconvenience and loss, that women really do care about and resent their voteless condition. Merely to talk about it often leaves men entirely unconvinced. She also places before the public a specific grievance, which English people seem specially to understand and appreciate—the fact that her money is being taken to pay for things which she by no means approves and about which she has not been consulted.

The press boycott is powerless in a locality where a woman whose name is well-known has made this protest, and either allowed her goods to be sold or gone to prison for a debt unjustly imposed. On every occasion where such a protest has been made, local interest and understanding of the whole Suffrage Cause has been increased. Time after time, men have testified that they

have never seen so clearly before the very serious injustice which is done where representation is refused to a woman who has fulfilled all the duties and financial obligations of a ratepaying householder.

(6) **We Appeal to a Fresh Audience.**

The type of men and women who frequent the auction rooms where we make our protests is a type which can seldom be got to attend Suffrage Meetings. These men and women are forced, by the circumstances of our interruption, coming as it does in the ordinary routine of sales, to pay attention to our case; and we find them on all occasions impressed by the justice of our demand, and also by the evident sincerity of the women who make it. Many collectors and bailiffs have been converted by coming into contact with the women who are resisting, and by hearing from their own lips the reasons of their action. Auctioneers testify to their changed attitude by willingly allowing Suffrage speeches to be made in their rooms, and often themselves publicly express their sympathy. One indeed on a recent occasion concluded his remarks by saying "If I had to pay rates and taxes and had not a vote, I should consider it a great disgrace on the part of the Government, but I should consider it a far greater disgrace on *my* part if I did not protest against it."

(7) **It Helps to Define our Claim.**

The mistake is very generally made by men and women who do not attend Suffrage Meetings or read Suffrage Papers, that we are asking for *all* women to have the Vote, and that our claim is, therefore, too extravagant really to deserve serious attention. Tax Resistance helps to bring home the fact that it is the woman householder who is foremost in making this claim, and that she—the woman for whom the Conciliation Bill is designed to secure Enfranchisement—is making it with ardour and persistence, even at some cost to herself. At the present stage of the fortunes of

the Conciliation Bill this plain demonstration of the case is exceedingly valuable. The average common sense of the British Elector tells him that the householder qualification for the vote has nothing to do with sex; and thus he is brought to see more clearly the justice of our claim.

(8) **A Common Platform.**

As has already been shown by our list of membership, Tax Resistance forms a common bond of action for Suffragists of all shades of opinion. Many Suffragists of "Militant" spirit have definitely made Tax Resistance their chosen line of protest, and we also number among our members many Constitutional Suffragists who have recognised that to refuse payment of Imperial Taxes under existing conditions is more Constitutional than to subscribe willingly to an Unconstitutional Tyranny.

It should be remembered that a great part of the Constitution of this country remains unwritten, and exists not in the letter but in the spirit, and as history shows, has gathered around it a cloud of witnesses, who for its defence had to be law-breakers rather than law-abiders. The reason is clear; the Constitution being, on certain fundamental points an unstatutory one, it is quite possible for a statute to be passed which violates not its letter but its living spirit. Mrs. Rutter, for instance, shows clearly in her book "The Constitution Violated" that the C.D. Acts were a violation of Magna Charta, which though not a law in the Parliamentary sense, is part of our Constitution.

Similarly a law which compels persons debarred from Representation to pay taxes violates one of the fundamental principles of that Constitutional spirit for which Englishmen have fought—that "Taxation and Representation must go together." Surely then the most "Constitutional" thing we women can do is to refuse to pay taxes.

We have on our side, in the pages of history, judges, jurors, members of Parliament, nay, Parliament itself, members of the

Free Churches, members of nearly every great organisation that has fought in the past for freedom and political reform. All these great bodies and classes of our countrymen have resisted unjust laws or royal prerogatives which in their letter were opposed to the spirit of the Constitution.

Why should we women lag behind them in defence of that same spirit which our legislators are defying to-day? The delay of justice always produces fresh injustice, and so we have this year the added grievance that women are to be forced to contribute to the payment of members of Parliament while, at the same time, they have no election of these members, and no means of calling them to account for action of which they disapprove.

In the face of that violation of the spirit of English Liberty we say that Tax Resistance is the most Constitutional line of action for women to take. We believe it will also prove the most effective.

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**WOMEN'S TAX RESISTANCE
LEAGUE.**

MARRIED WOMEN

AND

TAXATION,

BY

ETHEL AYRES PURDIE

Associate of the London Association of Accountants.

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WOMEN'S TAX RESISTANCE LEAGUE.

MARRIED WOMEN & TAX RESISTANCE.

The position of married women in relation to the direct annual taxes, such as Super Tax, Income Tax, Property Tax and Inhabited House Duty, is a very simple one, and easily grasped. No married woman is liable for any of these taxes. It is illegal to demand payment from her, to enforce or attempt to enforce payment, or even to ask her to furnish particulars of her property or income.

This total exemption of the married woman from taxability, arises out of the ancient and now nearly obsolete law of coverture, which holds that a husband and wife are "one," and the *husband* is that "one." Therefore the Income Tax Act, which was passed in 1842, but still holds good, stipulates that no married woman shall be held liable for taxes. Section 45 of that Act reads thus:—"Provided *always*, that the profits of *any* married woman living with her husband shall be deemed to be the profits of *the husband*, and the same shall be charged *in the name of the husband*, and *not in her name*, nor of her trustee." This clause has never been repealed, and still governs the case of the Super Tax, the Income Tax, the Property Tax, and the Inhabited House Duty.

The word "profits" signifies income of *all* kinds and from *all* sources. The term "living with her husband" is a purely technical expression, not to be taken in its literal sense, but only according to its legal significance. In law a woman is living with her husband so long as no legal separation exists. Thus a husband may be imprisoned for life, may be in a lunatic asylum, or have entirely deserted his wife and emigrated, or be constantly travelling about alone on business or for pleasure; yet, unless a divorce or a judicial separation has been obtained, the wife, in the eyes of the law, is still living with him, and therefore is still under coverture, and he must pay the taxes.

The late Mr. Hallett Fry, barrister-at-law and an acknowledged tax expert, in his book on Income Tax says: "A married woman is not recognised as a *taxable unit*. Her husband is the person liable. No equity removes from him the personal liability for payment of the tax on his wife's income." Mr. Edward Jenks, M.A., Director of Law Studies to the Law Society, in his book entitled "Husband and Wife under the Law," says: "The husband, not the wife, is personally liable for payment of the tax on her income."

It is evident, therefore, that the husband's liability is a statutory and personal one, and nothing short of divorce or judicial separation relieves him from it. A decision on these lines was given in the Courts a few years ago, in the case of the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury. It may be remembered that the Countess sought and obtained a judicial separation from her husband. She was afterwards charged with income tax, and brought an action to obtain a declaration that, as a married woman, she was not liable for taxes, and to restrain anyone from charging her with them. Her action failed, as it was held that after the decree of judicial separation had been pronounced, she became a "feme sole," and thenceforth was liable for the tax on her income. This case clearly proves that "femes couvertes," as wives are styled in legal phraseology, are not liable for taxes.

The ruling powers persist in asserting and maintaining the disabilities of marriage. They refuse to recognise a "married woman" (which is the legal description for a woman who is neither a spinster nor widow) as the legal parent of her own child; they do not allow her, except in London, to vote at municipal elections or to stand as councillor or mayor, even if she is wholly and permanently separated from her husband.* Thus the law of coverture is strictly administered when it appears expedient. It is therefore only just and logical that married women should remind the authorities that one of their "disabilities" consists in their legal exemption from payment of taxes, and that the husband, being the "one," must pay the taxes for his wife, who is nil.

It is a generally accepted axiom among men that those who call the tune must be prepared to pay the piper, and if men pass and maintain laws which confer on them all the privileges of parents and citizens to the detriment and prejudice of their wives, they should, as honourable men, be prepared to pay for these substantial benefits. This was clearly the intention of the legislators who framed and passed the Income Tax Act, seeing that it states, in unmistak-

*This does not apply to Ireland and Scotland.

able language, that tax is to be charged on the husband and *not on the wife*; in other words, the wife is to be totally exempt from taxation. This is, as the law stands at present, a perfectly fair and reasonable arrangement, especially when it is remembered that, throughout the Income Tax Act, wives are classed with "lunatics, infants, idiots, and insane persons."

Married women in receipt of incomes can testify, from their own experience, as to whether the law in regard to their non-taxability is obeyed, or whether it is openly and flagrantly defied. It appears that large numbers of married women are paying taxes regularly, without making the slightest protest against the illegal procedure of which they are the victims. This is probably due to their ignorance of their legal status (or rather, lack of status) just as many of them are unaware that they are not the legal "parents" of their children.

When pressed on the subject of married women and taxes, the Somerset House and Treasury officials will not, in fact dare not, deny that their methods are illegal. If asked to show their authority for imposing taxes on married women they cultivate a diplomatic silence. All the chicanery of the "Circumlocution Office" is brought into play, and anyone who likes can repeat the experiences of Arthur Clennam in "Little Dorrit," by writing a few letters to the Treasury, or making a call at Somerset House, where "knowing nothing" has been brought to a fine art. Officialdom finds itself incapable of understanding the simplest question, when the question happens to be one to which it can find no answer, and is asked by a woman.

For example, in the middle of September last, Mr. Hobhouse was asked why married women are taxed when the law says they are not to be taxed. This gentleman is the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, and Mr. Lloyd George's deputy. After three weeks' consideration of this point-blank enquiry, which could not have been put in a simpler way, he achieved this reply, "Mr. Hobhouse regrets that he does not fully understand the exact point to which you wish to draw his attention." Even this answer was only obtained from him by reminding him, after the lapse of two weeks, that a reply was expected. By the end of September he discovers that "he is precluded from discussing the affairs of taxpayers." As the question he was invited to discuss only related to the affairs of married women, and married women are not legally "taxpayers," it is evident that he suffers from a tendency to confusion of ideas, when it suits his own ends.

Both he and his chief, however, have been forced to admit, in reply to questions asked in the House of Commons, that the Revenue authorities have no legal power to tax married women, or even to ask a married woman to state how much her income is, because her income belongs to her husband, and the wife cannot be supposed to know anything about it. An amendment to the existing law was proposed by Mr. Walter Guinness, M.P., to ensure that a wife's income should, for the future, be deemed to belong to her, and not to her husband, but this amendment was rejected by the Treasury authorities on the ground that if they accepted it, they would lose £1,500,000 a year, while wives would benefit to the same amount. It appears, therefore, that the Government consider themselves entitled to defy and set at nought the Married Women's Property Act, on the ground that it pays them to do so. This is a strange example for a constitutional and responsible Government to set to the country, and two or three M.P.s to their credit ventured to make a strong protest, Mr Stuart Wortley being foremost among them. That illegal practices affecting women can be continued in the face of the Government's admission of their illegality, is deeply significant of the ignorance of women regarding public affairs, and of their past indifference to the injustice meted out to them.

Mr. Lloyd George recently stated, when discussing the land taxes, Form IV, etc., that "taxes are the law of the land. They are on the statute book of the realm. It is the business of the able officials at Somerset House to administer them as part of the law of the land." It is women's obvious duty to teach Mr. Lloyd George that he at least must obey these laws. Married women should make it their business to enquire why he does not instruct his "able officials" to administer the law of the land as laid down in Section 45 of the Income Tax Act.

A deputation of married women who recently sought to ask him this question, were unsuccessful in obtaining an answer; but if the query were being put by the thousands of married women whom he is illegally taxing, he would be forced to give some attention to them. Mr. Asquith said a little while ago, "I put some questions the other night. I have not received any answer to them. I have found from past experience that it is a *very useful thing* to go on putting inconvenient questions until people either attempt to answer them or give up the attempt in despair." Now married women cannot do better than follow the excellent example set them by the Prime Minister.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer voted against the Conciliation Bill on the ground that it does not deal fairly by married women, and protested that *he* would be no party to such an injustice. This, coming from such a quarter, is rank hypocrisy and humbug. Let us remind him that his own house needs putting in order first, and when he has removed the beam that is in the eye of his own Department, he can proceed to deal with the mote that he perceives in the eye of others.

Married women must resolve no longer to be illegally taxed for the upkeep of a country in which the privileges of citizenship are denied them, and in which they are less than aliens, since any male alien can acquire citizen's rights for £5. (It is interesting to note that a number of aliens have expressed the opinion that this price is too high and have had Mr. Winston Churchill's sympathy in this view.)

If a married woman's name is found to have been put on any assessment, notice of charge, or demand note, it should be returned to the tax officer with an intimation that it is out of order and needs correction. It will usually be found that the officer will at once remove such name, but if he does not, or if he raises any objection, the matter should be reported to this League, which will take it in hand. It should be noted that the so-called Property Tax, otherwise Income Tax, Schedule A, is a tax on income just the same as any other, and is subject to the same law. Mr. Edward Jenks, the author of "Husband and Wife in the Law," says in that book, that if a married woman possesses house property from which she derives an income of £1,500 a year, it is deemed to belong to her husband, and he must pay the Property Tax of £87 10s. od. on it.

Various married women, including leading actresses, doctors, titled women, business women and others having property, businesses, investments, etc., or being in receipt of salaries, have succeeded in demonstrating their non-taxability, and thereby involved the Revenue in a total loss of the tax illegally charged on them.

A married woman doctor, being in absolute ignorance of her legal rights, was twice distrained upon in her own freehold house, and her own goods were seized and sold for Income Tax, Property Tax, and Inhabited House Duty. When the Revenue officials were on the point of perpetrating this outrage for the third year in succession, she fortunately became aware, through the Tax Resistance League, of her legal position, and thereupon challenged the officials to

repeat their offence. *All the taxes charged upon her were at once withdrawn.* The officials have so far found no solution of the difficult problem, and taxes due in January 1910 still remain unpaid.

The Board of Inland Revenue has been presented on her behalf with a claim for the return of all taxes paid by her, with interest thereon at 5% per annum, and £500 damages for the illegal distraints. Other married women have been saved various amounts, such as £16, £26, £50, etc., which they would have paid but for the timely legal advice and assistance they were able to obtain from the Tax Resistance League.

The writer of this pamphlet being a married woman refused to furnish a return of her professional income when officially ordered to do so, and a tax official was then sent to put her through a personal catechism as to her profits. She promptly requested him to leave her office. The man, knowing he was acting against the law, and finding to his surprise that she was quite aware of this fact, had no choice but to accept the unforeseen and unwelcome ultimatum, and to retire with as much dignity as he could muster in the circumstances. She has not been molested since, though this happened two years ago, nor has any tax been paid.

Now the same law which these women have successfully invoked, applies with equal force to all married women, and as some have claimed and obtained their legal right of exemption from taxes, all must follow suit. Those who have been paying taxes in ignorance of the law, must show, by demanding the return of their money, that they are now alive to the injustice they have suffered.

In many cases where wives have declined to pay any more taxes, the husbands are not living in this country, and cannot be reached by the Revenue officials; but even when the husbands are living here, the authorities are extremely loth to approach them, or to attempt to enforce payment of the tax from them. We may safely assume that the Government will not be anxious to embroil themselves in a quarrel with a large body of men (whom moreover have votes) by forcing husbands to pay tax on incomes and property which they do not possess, and over which they have not, *at present*, a vestige of control.

If a husband cannot obtain any information about his wife's affairs, it is obvious that he will be unable to make a return as to the amount of her income. Therefore all information regarding property or income should be steadfastly refused. Any demand, whether private or official, for

such information, can be ignored by a married woman with absolute impunity. *The Crown does not recognise the Married Women's Property Act, and is not bound by its provisions.** But it recognises, and is bound by, the provisions of the Income Tax Act. So if a man demands to know the particulars of his wife's income, she need not, unless she chooses, make any reply at all. But if she elects to make a reply, it should be, "For the purpose of taxation my income is nil, as the Crown considers that it belongs to you." She would then be giving a perfectly rational and logical answer, as it would, of course, be entirely contrary to all tradition and precedent for a wife to insist on regarding property as hers which the Crown has decided to regard as her husband's. The same rule will apply if a wife's trustees are questioned about her affairs.

It is believed, however, that Mr. Lloyd George was hoping to cut the Gordian knot in a drastic fashion, by making it legally compulsory for the wife to disclose all the details of her income to her husband, under pain of a heavy penalty if she refuses, and by giving the husband a legal right to seize her property for the tax!

This is in consequence of many complaints, made to him in Parliament last spring and previously, that a husband has no legal power to compel his wife or her trustees to disclose her income or to pay the tax. It was, therefore, suggested that legal compulsion should be brought to bear on wives and trustees. Mr. Lloyd George agreed with the complainants' views, and gave a pledge that he would meet them by extending the law in their favour. The aggrieved members in the House have recently been pressing him to carry out his pledge. But since the Women's Tax Resistance League took the field he has shown himself reluctant to redeem his pledged word, and has betrayed an unmistakable anxiety to evade the dilemma in which he had so rashly involved himself; a dilemma presumably brought about through a mistaken idea on his part that no woman would be paying any attention to what he proposed to do. But women will undoubtedly resent any infringement of the provisions of the Married Women's Property Acts, and will rouse themselves to prevent it at *any* cost. If giving the vote to women is expected to introduce discord into the home, what would be the result of giving the powers of a Revenue official to husbands?

An interesting and curious debate on the subject, which threw a powerful searchlight on the discreditable

* This is stated in a letter addressed by the Board of Inland Revenue to the writer of this pamphlet.

methods of official administration, took place in the House of Commons on Wednesday, 23rd November, and is reported in Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 20, No. 92, pages 345 to 352. It may be obtained from the Tax Resistance League, price 4d., post free.

Married women who have at any time applied for repayment of the tax deducted from their dividends, will know the stereotyped and thoroughly disingenuous answer made to such applications. The official reply is "Oh no, they are not *your* dividends, they are your husband's; we will make repayment to him if he desires it, but we do not recognise you." Instances are occurring every day in which the tax, that has in the first place been illegally charged in the name of a married woman and deducted from her dividends, is handed over to the husband by the Revenue officials. In this way it is quite easy for a man who has nothing at all of his own, who pays no tax himself, who does not even contribute to the support of wife or children, to draw a regular annual sum from his wife's investments. A case was lately reported to this League of a woman who long ago left her husband on account of his conduct, which made it impossible for her to live with him. She took her children with her, and brought them up entirely by her own efforts, never meeting or hearing from her husband again. But every spring until the day of his death, 25 years afterwards, the Revenue authorities handed this man the amount of the tax deducted from his wife's dividends during the year. The poor woman had in this way been robbed of over £200, which would have been of the greatest use to her for her children's education. After her husband was dead, she was permitted to reclaim the tax herself, the form on which repayment is claimed being only issued to *spinsters* and *widows*. Another lady had a husband who went to China to take up an appointment, and subsequently dropped all intercourse with his family, and ceased to send any money for his children's support. After 5 years had elapsed, she tried to recover the tax on her dividends, but was informed that her husband was the only person entitled to claim this repayment. But a few weeks later the Revenue officials suddenly discovered that she was supporting her children by writing books, and at once demanded that she should pay tax on her income from this source. Fortunately she was equal to the occasion, and returned the demand with a note pointing out that her husband was the only person who was entitled to pay the tax!

The Gilbertian muddle in which the Revenue authorities have become involved produces some extraordinary anomalies. Thus one lady of our acquaintance enjoys an income of £1,000 a year, on which she does not pay, and

cannot be compelled to pay, any tax, for her answer to all Revenue demands is, "I am a *married woman living with my husband*, and must refer you to him." As her husband lives in the Antipodes, is not an English subject, and has no English residence, this effectually disposes of further argument. Another married woman living with her husband, not only in legal fiction but in reality, has a total income from all sources of less than £40 a year. It barely meets her personal expenses, yet income tax at the rate of 1/2 in the £ is charged *in her name* upon this small sum, and deducted before it reaches her. This reduces her modest income by more than £2 a year, not a penny of which will the Revenue officials return to her. When she not un-naturally demands the reason why she is taxed, and her rich friend with twenty-five times as much income is not, Mr. Hobhouse again replies that the Revenue authorities "are precluded from discussing the matter." She finds that the only means by which she can escape the illegal taxing of her little income, is by re-investing her capital abroad, when she will receive the income in full without any deduction, and cannot then be made to pay any tax on it. This is the course she is about to adopt, and who can blame her? We are still hoping, however, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will tell us why Revenue officials persist in refusing to refund to married women the tax deducted from their dividends, when the law has said that not they but their husbands are liable for it.

Those married women who have any "inconvenient questions" to ask, should note that Mr. Lloyd George's official address is "Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W." The official who should be addressed at Somerset House is Sir Robert Chalmers, Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue. Further information will be forwarded if desired.

Funds for the League's campaign are urgently needed, and donations will be warmly appreciated by the Committee. They should be sent to the Secretary,

Mrs. KINETON PARKES,
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Women's Tax Resistance League.

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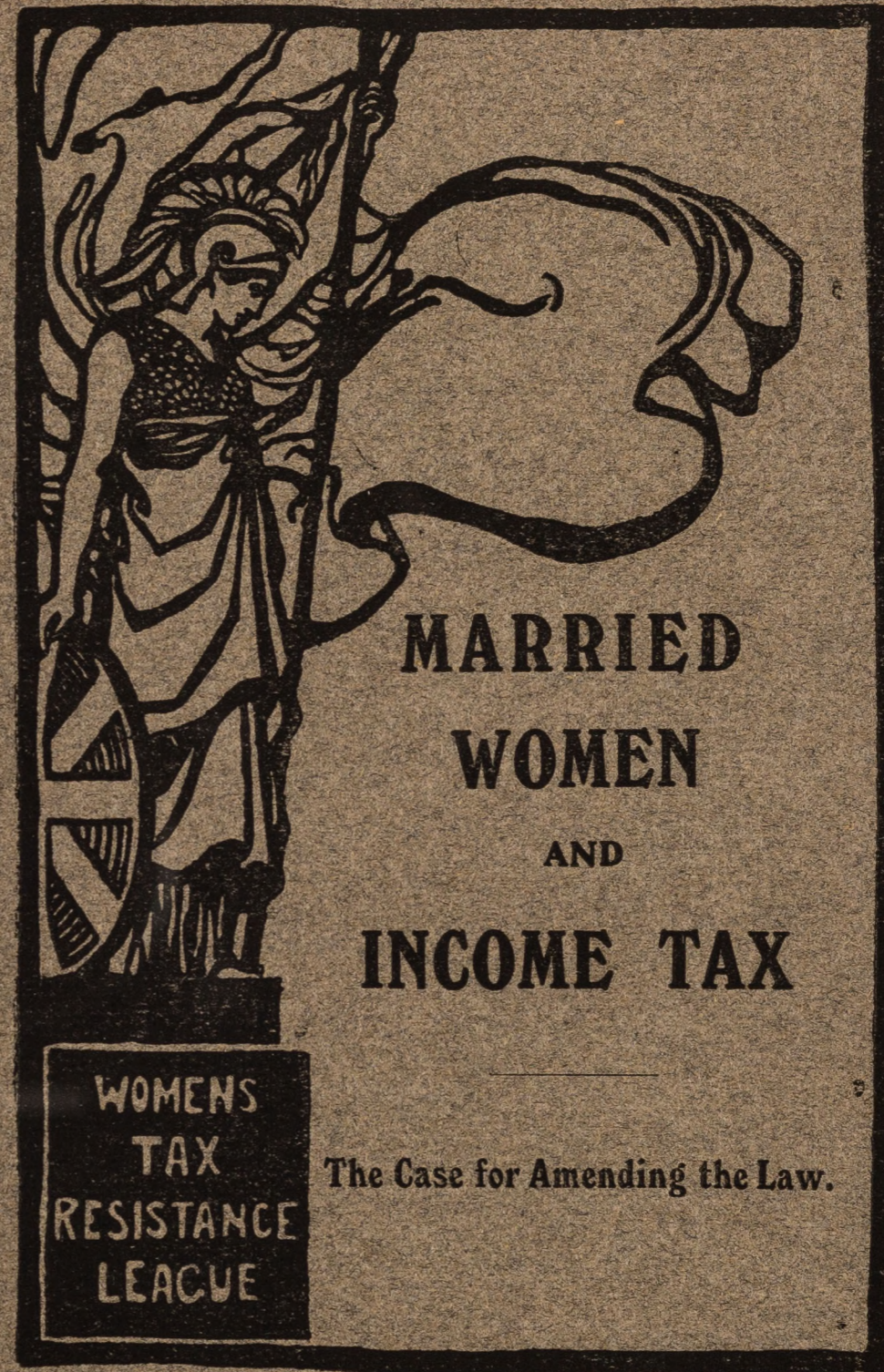
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MARRIED WOMEN AND INCOME TAX:

THE CASE AGAINST THE PRESENT LAW.

"TAXATION without Representation is Tyranny."

THIS has been the text of many a Suffrage speech since the beginning of the agitation for the Enfranchisement of Women over forty years ago, and tyranny in any form is harmful to the common weal. Nevertheless, the conviction that to submit to tyranny is to become, in a sense, a party to it has only in recent years taken a definite form, and women have begun to realize that it is the duty of all patriots to resist and protest against the tyranny of Taxation without Representation, and to refuse to be any longer passive victims to the system. To organize this resistance the Women's Tax Resistance League, which pledges its members to refuse to pay Imperial taxes, was formed in 1910. It soon became apparent that a large number of tax-paying women, though willing, were unable to resist taxation, namely, those women paying income tax on unearned income, from whose dividends income tax is deducted before they are paid.* The two main classes, therefore, from whom resisters can be drawn are those women who pay Inhabited House Duty and those who pay Income Tax on an earned income. To resist Income Tax on an earned income is to defy the law, and to be prepared to take the consequences.

One of the first women to take this step was Dr. Elizabeth Wilks; but the fact that she was a married woman led to developments at first quite unexpected, which have brought prominently before the public the injustice and anomalies of the present state of the law regarding the Taxation of Married Women.

THE CASE OF MR. MARK WILKS.

The points of the case are clearly stated by Earl Russell, in his speech in the House of Lords on October 14th, 1912, from which we quote:—

* Such women are realizing in increasing numbers that they can evade payment by investing their money in foreign securities, the interest of which can be made payable abroad.

"The position in this case was as follows. Mr. Wilks is a schoolmaster, in which capacity he earns a comparatively humble income. His wife, Elizabeth Wilks, practises as a doctor, in which capacity she earns an income, as I understand, considerably superior to his. The exact amount of it I do not know, because Mr. Wilks was unable to inform me any more than he was able to inform the Commissioners of Inland Revenue. He has no means of ascertaining the amount of his wife's income, but it is admitted to be considerably larger than his own. In the ordinary course of events Dr. Elizabeth Wilks, the wife of this gentleman, was asked for the payment of her Income Tax, and, being a Suffragette, she refused to pay. She was maintaining the old Liberal theory, 'No taxation without representation.' I do not know how far that theory meets with support nowadays. Naturally the Inland Revenue were not going to be done out of their taxes because of the political views of this lady. They therefore adopted the ordinary methods, and finally the method of distraint. But an interesting point in this case is that the distraint was made, not upon the goods of Mr. Mark Wilks, but upon the separate goods of Dr. Elizabeth Wilks....

"Mrs. Wilks then decided to assert the rights which it appeared to her the Income Tax Acts gave her. She pointed out that under those Acts she was not liable either to make a return or to pay the taxes; that under those Acts the income of a married woman living with her husband was deemed to be his income, and that therefore the obligation was on Mr. Wilks to make the return, and, when the assessment had been made, to pay the taxes. The Treasury accepted that view, and applied to Mr. Mark Wilks for the return. Mr. Wilks replied that he was not in a position to make a return of his wife's income, because he had no idea how much it was and she did not choose to tell him. That is a position which, under the Married Women's Property Act, she is perfectly justified in taking up. Her husband has no concern with her income, and can receive no information about it except by her courtesy. He has no more right to demand any particulars of her income or to handle her income than I have to handle the income of any of your Lordships. Mr. Wilks, therefore, informed the Treasury that he could not make the return.

"The Treasury, after considerable correspondence, decided to assess him upon their own basis. They assessed his income and also that of his wife, and charged both at the rate of 1s. 2d. in the £. That was an incidental unfairness in the case. Mr. Mark Wilks,

who was obviously entitled to the 9d. rate on his earned income, was refused that rate because he was not able to make a return of his total income—that is to say, the income of himself and his wife. A letter was written to him by the Treasury pointing out that this was so. Under date June 8th, 1912, the Surveyor of Taxes wrote:—

"I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th instant, and to inform you that the only return of your income (1911-12) which I am able to trace contains only particulars of your own salary. This does not constitute a complete return of your total income from all sources as required for the purposes of claiming abatement and relief.... Duty is therefore chargeable on your salary at the rate of 1s. 2d. in the £."

So that the first unpleasant incident that happened to Mr. Wilks because his wife would not tell him her income, and he had no means of ascertaining it, was that his own income was charged at 1s. 2d. in the £ instead of at 9d. The Surveyor then wrote to Mr. Wilks, in answer to a further letter from him, stating that:—

"In order to claim abatement or relief it was necessary that you should have included in your return your wife's income, and as you did not do so the return that you did make cannot be held to be the 'true and correct statement' provided for by the Income Tax Acts, and your statement was accordingly no return in the sense of the decision of the Judges...."

"The next process, having made the assessment, was that they required Mr. Wilks to pay the duties, amounting to £33 12s. 10d., 'due from you under the Statutes relating to the Income Tax'; and it was added that the costs of the writ amounted to £1 6s. 8d., which 'must be paid together with the duties.' Then there ensued a correspondence between Mr. Wilks and the Inland Revenue, in which they pressed him to pay, and added that if he did not they would unfortunately be obliged to take the unpleasant step of applying for his commitment. Mr. Wilks stated that he did not receive his wife's income; that he had not got it to pay with; that his own income was barely sufficient for his maintenance, and that it was impossible for him to raise such a sum of money as they required him to pay. And finally, after considerable correspondence with the Treasury extending over from twelve to eighteen months, a writ was issued, and Mr. Wilks was taken up and lodged in Brixton Gaol....

"Mr. Wilks sent a petition to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue stating his position, and they replied to the effect that they were unable to release him.

He received a letter from the Inland Revenue, dated September 24th last, as follows :—

“The Board of Inland Revenue have had before them the petition addressed to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in which you apply for your immediate release from prison.”

“I might add that meanwhile, of course, this gentleman’s prospect of continuing in his employment was suffering, and he was running considerable risk of losing his position :—

“In reply thereto I am directed to acquaint you that the Board have not at any time accepted, and cannot now accept, the view that payment of the Income Tax, for which judgment was obtained in the High Court, has been impossible for you owing to your lack of means.”

“I do not care whether it was or was not possible. It does not affect my case in any way whether Mr. Mark Wilks could have scraped together £33 out of his income to pay these duties or whether he could have persuaded his wife to lend him the money. His contention was that out of his income he had not the £33 to pay with. The letter proceeds :—

“I am to remind you that this matter has been the subject of correspondence for upwards of two years. The Board’s information is that during that period you have personally been in receipt of a regular income out of which you could have paid the amount due if you had been willing to do so. But in spite of explanations of the law and warnings of the consequences of non-payment, your attitude has throughout been one of refusal to recognise the liability which the law clearly imposes upon you. In these circumstances the Board desire, before considering the question of your release, to know what proposal you have to make with a view to securing the satisfaction of the debt due from you to the Crown.”

“I pause here to say that in the remarks I make this afternoon I do not challenge the complete legality of Mr. Mark Wilks’s imprisonment. Indeed, its legality is my case. The law is an absurd law ; it is contrary to the Married Women’s Property Act, and should therefore at the earliest possible date be amended. I in no way challenge the legality of what was done, but I do challenge its natural justice and its common sense. There was, I take it, no further correspondence with the Commissioners ; but without Mr. Mark Wilks, so far as my information goes, having made any arrangement to pay the money or any proposal for the liquidation of the debt due to the Crown, and most decidedly without his having paid it, he was, after a certain period, released from Brixton Prison. Now, what is exactly the position of the Treasury in this matter, and what attitude do the Government take up in enforcing this rather antiquated provision in the Income Tax Act ? If they take

up the attitude, not only that it is legal—which I admit—but that it is a justifiable and a reasonable and proper law, why have they released Mr. Wilks ? I do not understand what justification there can be for the releasing of Mr. Wilks in these circumstances. There was ample legal justification for his imprisonment, and I think it is not altogether a regrettable thing that that course was taken by the Treasury, because it has called attention to this provision of the law. The provision is such that, in the case of a man totally impecunious married to a wife with a considerable separate income, it would be absolutely in the wife’s power to have him detained in prison whenever she chose not to make a return and not to pay her Income Tax. We are told sometimes that legislation is unduly favourable to men, but this particular legislation might hit us very hardly if our wives were inclined to take advantage of it.

“This is really an antiquated piece of legislation no longer appropriate to the circumstances of the case. When a wife’s income was in effect her husband’s income, when he had control of it and was able to use it, it was extremely reasonable to require him to make a return of it and to let the obligation for any taxes imposed upon it fall upon him. But the whole circumstances have been altered by the passing of the Married Women’s Property Act, and the provision is no longer justifiable. In addition to that, it is unreasonable because you are putting a particular difference in taxation upon two people who live together when they happen to be husband and wife as distinct from the case when they are father and son or two brothers or two sisters in the same house ; and incidentally it does not tend to the establishment of the regular relation of matrimony, because you put a distinct premium upon two people living together without the legal bond of matrimony, for if only they were not lawfully married they would then not be liable to this harsh provision of the Income Tax Act. That also is a point that might well be considered . . .

“I hope, therefore, that we shall be assured this afternoon that at as early a time as possible this provision, which is quite out of date and in no way accords with existing facts, will be considered and the law amended so as to place it upon a basis where it can be enforced without causing an outcry.”

In replying for the Government, Lord Ashby St. Ledgers laid much stress on Mr. Wilks’s supposed ability to pay. This has really nothing to do with the case ; neither have the advantages which people may derive from setting up house together. Lord

Rothschild has just as much control as Mr. Mark Wilks over Dr. Elizabeth Wilks' income, and might quite as well have been proceeded against if assumption of ability to pay was the reason of the proceedings. As Earl Russell pointed out, if the fact of sharing expenses makes one party responsible for the Income Tax of the other, brothers and sisters, or friends living together, should be treated in the same way as husbands and wives. In the first instances there is almost always a real saving of expenses, whereas in marriage it is probable that expenses will increase in a right and natural way by the birth of children. The only rational proceeding is to hold the person to whom the income belongs responsible for the tax, and no argument which will hold water can be advanced for any other course.

METHODS OF THE REVENUE AUTHORITIES.

Lord Ashby St. Ledgers most ingenuously stated of Mr. Mark Wilks :—

“ If the Revenue Authorities had believed he was unable to pay the Tax, such pressure would not have been exerted as was exerted in the present case ” ; thus admitting that, in the case of an impecunious husband, the authorities have really no legal means of collecting the tax. In default of this, they resort to the illegal device of sending in the claim to the wife, in the hope that her ignorance of the law will lead her to pay the money.

The early history of the Wilks case is typical in this. Mr. Lloyd George tried to evade this point in the answer in the House of Commons on October 9th : “ Previously to 1909–10 the Tax was recovered by distraint, but it was *subsequently claimed* that the goods on which distraint was made belonged to Mrs. Wilks.” This answer must have been deliberately misleading, seeing that Mr. Lloyd George was at the time in possession of the following facts : (1) Prior to 1909–10 the claims for Income Tax were regularly sent to Mrs. Wilks, not to her husband ; (2) on one occasion a pearl necklace was taken for distraint, surely not in the belief that it belonged to Mr. Wilks ! (3) the receipt for the taxes and the surplus sum realized by its sale were given to Mrs. Wilks.

Evidently a policy of bluff and intimidation is consistently pursued by Government officials concerned in the collection of the

Revenue, and the ignorant and defenceless (who should be protected by the State) are its customary victims. It is through the Mark Wilks case that the whole country has become alive to the flagrant injustice of the law, and though the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been compelled to promise to give the matter his consideration in the next Finance Act, it is clear that this is a concession to public outcry, and not to considerations of justice, as evidenced by the study of the Debate on the Finance Act of November 23rd, 1910, to which Earl Russell referred. On this occasion Mr. Walter Guinness moved as an amendment to Clause 6 regulating the Income Tax, the addition of the following words : “ Except that the incomes of husbands and wives shall in future be treated as separate.” In the speech which followed Mr. Guinness made it abundantly clear that the present Income Tax Act—

- (1) Penalizes marriage.
- (2) Is unjust to husbands.
- (3) Is unjust to wives.

PENALIZATION OF MARRIAGE.

The effect of the present law in penalizing marriage is excellently shown by Mrs. D'Oyley Carte in a letter to *The Times* some time ago. We quote from her the following specific instances :—

(1) A man earning £360 a year marries a woman earning £160 a year. If single, the man would pay 9*d.* in the £1 on £200—viz., £7 10*s.* (£160 being exempt). The woman would pay nothing at all. Being married, however, they will be charged on a joint income of £520. Of this, £120 is exempt, and 9*d.* will be charged on £400—viz., £15. In this case the penalty tax on marriage is £7 10*s.* a year.

(2) A man earning £270 a year marries a woman with an income of £150 from investments. If single the man would pay 9*d.* on £110—viz., £4 2*s.* 6*d.* (£160 exempt). The woman would pay nothing. Being married, they will be charged on a joint income of £420, of which £150 is exempt, and will pay 9*d.* on the man's earned balance of £120—viz., £4 10*s.*—and 1*s.* 2*d.* on the woman's unearned £150—viz., £8 15*s.*—that is, £13 5*s.* in all. In this case, the penalty tax on marriage is £9 2*s.* 6*d.* a year.

INJUSTICE TO HUSBANDS.

The injustice to the husband is shown in its most extreme form in the Mark Wilks case; but the fact that the law requires that he should make a return of his wife's income as well as his own before he can claim abatement may also press hardly on him. Mr. Guinness put this aspect of the case very clearly. He said: "It is impossible to compel a man to disclose what he does not know. I understand that in a large number of cases, the husband is not in a position to give the income of his wife; the wife in her turn can point out that she is not legally bound to make a return, because the Income Tax law holds that her income belongs to her husband, and she obviously cannot give a return for an income which does not belong to her. In any case, it is unjust to expect the wife to disclose her income to her husband, seeing that there is no reciprocal obligation on the husband to put his wife in possession of the facts relating to his own income."

This particular hardship was admitted by Mr. Hobhouse, who, in his reply on behalf of the Treasury, definitely stated: "If the wife declines to disclose her income to her husband, the only method of arriving at the income of the couple is by making an estimated assessment on the husband to include his wife's Income, or what is believed to be his wife's Income. If she refuses to disclose to her husband what her Income is, it is quite clear that there may be a very serious difference between the actual and the estimated income." In addition to the possibility of his suffering from an unduly high assessment, the husband will also, if he possesses an earned income, be taxed on it at the rate of 1s. 2d. instead of 9d. in the £ (as in the case of Mr. Wilks), because he cannot give the information required on the form of Application for Abatement.

INJUSTICE TO WIVES.

Unfair though this may be to the husband, yet in actual practice the wife is far more frequently the sufferer. As Lady McLaren (now Lady Aberconway) has pointed out in a letter to *The Times*,* the alternative courses of being overtaxed, or disclosing her income to her husband, may be equally distasteful as long as there is no similar obligation on the husband to declare his income to her. And where abatement is due on the joint incomes the injustice to women of the law

* August, 1909.

as at present administered is still more evident. In the vast majority of cases the woman who possesses an unearned income derived from investments is obliged to pay a very unfair proportion of the tax.

A consideration of the method by which the tax is collected will make it quite clear how this arises. All Companies registered on the Stock Exchange are under a Statutory obligation to deduct Income Tax. If, however, the individuals to whom the dividends belong can show that they are not liable for Income Tax, or that they are not liable for so large a sum as has been deducted, they can claim from the Revenue authorities a refund of the surplus charge—unless they happen to be married women. Because married women are not recognized by the Income Tax Act, claims made by them are absolutely ignored, the demand for any refund due to the wife must be made by the husband, and the money is paid to him. The extraordinary position thus exists that, though (as has been proved in the Mark Wilks case) the only people in the country whose incomes cannot be taxed—provided they are not subject to super-tax—are the married women, yet Income Tax, having once been deducted, they can under no circumstances get it refunded!

The following actual cases illustrate the different ways in which women suffer. We quote from an article, by Mrs. Ayres Purdie, on the 'Favouritism of the Law':—

"A man has £230 a year and his wife £170 a year. She pays Income Tax (deducted before receipt) to the tune of £9 18s. 4d., and he pays 2s. 6d. It sounds impossible, perhaps, but when you know the rules it is quite simple. To begin with, he gets an abatement of £160, which leaves him with £70. Then he gets a further abatement of nearly £67 for insurance premiums a great part of which premiums are paid by his wife on her own life. This leaves him with a taxable income of slightly over £3, on which he pays 9d. in the £, amounting to half-a-crown. This couple have no children. If they had any he would begin not only to pay no tax himself, but to have some of hers repaid to him. She, however, under any circumstances, will always be mulcted of the £9 18s. 4d.; unless she becomes a widow, when she will be able to reclaim the whole amount. (The official forms supplied to those reclaiming Income Tax read: 'A woman must state whether *spinster* or *widow*.') If we reverse the financial position of this couple, and assume that she receives £230 and he only £170, she would then be paying £13 8s. 4d. Income Tax. Contrast this with his payment of half-a-crown in

the same circumstances, and observe how highly she is 'favoured.' He, however, would then pay nothing and would receive a 'refund' of nearly £3 10s. a year."

In a case such as this it is quite possible, and even probable, that the husband does not realize that the wife is paying his tax for him, and that he owes her £9 18s. 4d. a year. In another case, also quoted by Mrs. Ayres Purdie, the husband cannot fail to realize that half the rebate which is paid to him belongs to his wife, and if he is an honest man will hand it over to her, regarding himself as merely an instrument in obtaining it for her. There is, however, no power to compel him to do so, and the position may be the one Mrs. Purdie suggests: "A man and his wife have £100 a year each, taxed (at 1s. 2d. in the £) by deduction before they receive it. There are four children, on each of whom the husband is entitled to claim a rebate of £10 a year. (The wife, it should be noted, can *never* claim any rebate whether she has a dozen or a score of children. And, if a widow, having children, re-marries, the rebate on these children goes to their *step-father*.) Consequently the husband can, and does, reclaim not only the tax deducted from his own income, *i.e.*, £5 16s. 8d., but also the £5 16s. 8d. deducted from his wife's income. So he really pays no tax at all, and gains £5 16s. 8d. while she loses a similar amount. Thus the actual position is, that the wife is only worth £94 a year, while he is worth £106 a year, though *nominally* their incomes are the same. If single, each could claim repayment of £5 16s. 8d., therefore marriage represents a loss to the wife, but a profit to her husband."

That the husband sometimes deliberately takes advantage of this state of things is seen in two other instances. A lady receives £200 a year from dividends. Her husband earns £140. This he keeps for his personal expenses, while her income is used for her support and that of their three children. £190 of their joint income is exempt from Tax, £10 abatement being allowed on each child so the husband pays no tax on his £140. The wife wrote to claim rebate on £50 of her £200. She was told that the claim must be made by her husband. He demanded the refund of £8 15s., the tax for three years, and kept the whole of it when it was paid to him in due course by the Income Tax authorities. For this conduct his wife has no legal remedy. In another case a lady, after marriage, was obliged to resume her old work in the Civil Service at a salary of £200, because her husband, having failed in a good business, took a situation with such a small salary attached that he could not keep

his wife and children. The wife found 1s. in every pound of her salary deducted. On claiming a return of the tax, she was told that her husband only could claim rebate as her property for purposes of taxation was his. The husband was extremely sensitive on the necessity of his wife's work, and refused steadily year after year to make any statement of their joint income, although £160 of the income was legally exempt. This lady paid nearly £200* in tax before she could persuade her husband to sign his name to the claim filled in by her.

It is obvious that for this state of affairs there is no moral sanction, and recent happenings have caused some doubt as to whether they are legally justified. Quite recently the Commissioners of Income Tax decided that a local Surveyor of Taxes was acting in defiance of the law in demanding Income Tax from a professional woman, whose husband happened to be living in New Zealand, and the proceedings made it quite clear that the difficulty in getting the tax from him gave no shadow of justification to the attempt to extort it from his wife. Mr. Gibson Bowles, too, has proved, by winning his case against the Bank of England, that Income Tax must not be deducted from money coming from Public Funds without the express sanction of the Finance Act. Can there be a right so to deduct it in express defiance of the provisions of the Income Tax Act? The Wilks case has made it quite clear that married women are not taxable units. By what authority, therefore, have they been treated as such up to the present?

INCONSISTENCY OF THE LAW. DEATH DUTIES.

Even, if with regard to this particular point, it is the administration of the law rather than the law itself which has been at fault there is still abundant cause why the existing law should be amended, and in the Debate in the House of Lords from which we have already quoted so largely the Marquess of Lansdowne brought a further indictment against it, and Viscount Haldane, from the Government Benches, quite admitted the justice of his charges. The following verbatim report of the speeches is full of interest. The Marquess of Lansdowne:—

about £10 a year for 20 years.

“Although I do not pretend to any knowledge of the intricacies of this matter, there certainly seem to be some points at which the operation of the law is extraordinarily inconsistent. Take, in particular, the contradiction between the manner in which the property of married couples is treated, in the one case for the purpose of Income Tax, and in the other for the purpose of what we generally describe as the Death Duties. Unless I am quite wrong, in the case of assessment for Income Tax during the joint lives of husband and wife, the separate income of the two is aggregated and treated as one single income. The effect of it is that there are people who come within the Income Tax limit who but for that condition of the law would not do so; there are people who cannot claim a rebate of Income Tax who but for that condition of the law would be able to claim it; there are people again—the noble Lord referred to them—who are brought within the operation of the Super Tax who would not be in that position if the law were different. All those features of the case are, no doubt, advantageous to the Treasury, because they bring more grist to the Chancellor of the Exchequer’s mill.

“Take, on the other hand, the case of the Death Duties. In that case when the husband or wife dies, the estates, which were pooled for Income Tax purposes, are treated as separate estates. In some cases that works very hardly indeed. Take the case of the death of a professional man. The breadwinner of the family disappears, and the widow obviously finds herself in very straightened circumstances; yet Death Duties are charged upon any part of the husband’s estate which is retained by the survivor. It is rather difficult to see why a married woman should pay Death Duties on an income which she has in fact shared with her husband during his lifetime, and on which Income Tax was levied upon the assumption that it was not a separate income but a joint aggregate income.”

“The Lord Chancellor (Viscount Haldane): My Lords, no doubt it is true, as the noble Marquess has just pointed out, that the Income Tax and Death Duty laws are full of anomalies. In the case of Income Tax, the law dates from a period when the position of married women was very different from what it is to-day, and legislation has become commonplace which would have been looked upon with the utmost disfavour half a century ago. To-day we treat the income of a married woman as nearly as possible as though it were the income of an unmarried person, and yet

the machinery for enforcing the Income Tax laws remains in a large measure what it was half a century ago. The result of that, of course, is hardship. I entirely agree that the case of Mr. Wilks is one where there is an anomalous state of the law which cannot be defended, and my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as Lord Ashby St. Ledgers has told the house, has undertaken to consider it. Some of the points touched on by the noble Marquess are points which well deserve our attention, but we cannot be too careful lest in making changes we stumble into the temptation, which is very great to those who are fashioning machinery for the collection of the revenue, to take advantage of provisions which belong to a past state of the law while at the same time taking advantage of changes which have been made in quite other directions.”

The warning against “trying to have it both ways” is specially timely just now, when the only guiding principle as to whether man and wife should be treated as one or two seems to be the effect on the Revenue. At the time that the matter was brought forward in the Commons by Mr. Guinness, Mr. Hobhouse, speaking for the Government, quite plainly stated that the great argument against the first course, of assessing husband and wife separately, was, that the Treasury would lose one and a half millions. One is not surprised that this prospect fills them with dismay; their anxiety for money has recently led them to the point of summoning a widow for a dog licence which had already been taken out for the year by her late husband. In this case they would have actually lost 7s. 6d. by considering husband and wife as one! That Lord Ashby St. Ledger’s only idea of preventing a repetition of the Wilks case is by making it legal to extort the money, rather than incur the expense and public odium of imprisoning resisters, is made evident by his contribution to the Debate:—

“The Revenue Department is charged with the duty of collecting the revenues. The successful establishment of Mr. Wilks’s contention would involve a very serious loss to the Exchequer, and it is obviously the duty of the authorities to take all the steps at their command to prevent such loss. The only two methods which the Revenue Department has in these cases is to proceed either by distraint, or, in default of distraint, by imprisonment. It may occur to your Lordships that, seeing that Mr. Wilks was in possession of this income from the London County Council, there should have been some power to attach his income to meet

the debt and avoid the necessity of proceeding by imprisonment. I am advised that there is no such power, and that therefore it was not open to the authorities to take such a step. It may be a matter for consideration whether the ordinary proceedings of attachment of income might not be extended to cover Crown cases, and also whether a debt to the Crown should not be recoverable on the husband's or wife's goods when they are living together. If that had been possible the present case would not have gone as far as it has."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has also indicated that he has no intention of so altering the law that it will no longer inflict injustice on women. In answer to a recent question put by Mr. Walter Guinness, he admitted that abatements on the Income Tax of married women were only allowed by the Inland Revenue to the husband, even in cases where the latter had no income of his own, but refused to make any amendment to alter this—on the ground that "it would involve very considerable changes and adjustments in the Income Tax law." As *The Common Cause* pointedly remarks: "In other words Mr. Lloyd George deliberately elects to go on paying the money of women to men who have no right to it because it would be troublesome to his department to have their habits and regulations disturbed." It behoves us all, therefore, as far as lies in our power, to make the administration of the present law so difficult and expensive that to make "changes and adjustments" will be the lesser evil. It is true that no tinkering will meet the case. A suggestion has been made to amend the law by so apportioning the Tax that husband and wife are each liable for their proportionate shares. This would obviate the unfair incidence of the Tax on either party, but the Exchequer could only retain its one and a half millions by continuing to penalize marriage; and, if either party failed to make a return, the Tax due from the other could not be ascertained. The co-operation of both parties would, therefore, be necessary; and from women no co-operation can be expected until they cease to be helots and become citizens.

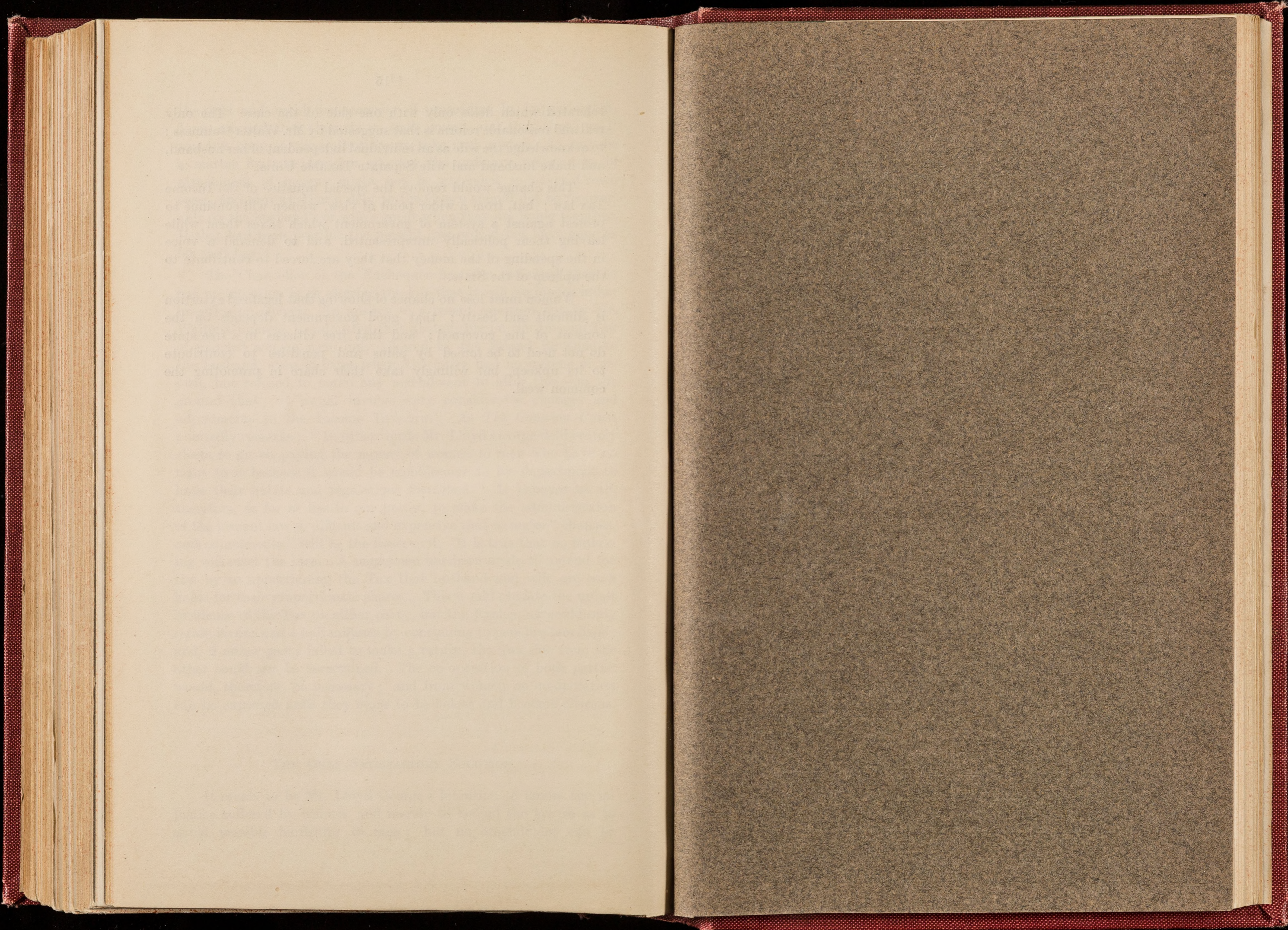
THE ONLY SATISFACTORY SOLUTION.

It seems to be Mr. Lloyd George's intention to ignore the injustice suffered by women, and merely to amend the law so as to avoid possible hardships to men; but no amendment can be

tolerated which deals only with one side of the case. The only real and reasonable reform is that suggested by Mr. Walter Guinness: to acknowledge the wife as an individual independent of her husband, and make husband and wife Separate Taxable Units.

This change would remove the special injustice of the Income Tax law; but, from a wider point of view, women will continue to protest against a system of government which taxes them while leaving them politically unrepresented, and to demand a voice in the spending of the money that they are forced to contribute to the upkeep of the State.

Women must lose no chance of showing that legalized extortion is difficult and costly; that good government depends on the consent of the governed; and that free citizens in a free state do not need to be forced by pains and penalties to contribute to its upkeep, but willingly take their share in promoting the common weal.





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No. II.

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BY

HENRY W. NEVINSON

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THE CLAIM ON OXFORD.

SINCE my four years at Christ Church I have seen a good deal of other Universities. I have known students in Paris, in Jena and Berlin, in Madrid, in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kieff, Warsaw, and Helsingfors, in Athens, and in some sort of a Colonial University as well. With dons and professors also I have consorted, and among all these University people have found a common characteristic, which Oxford alone appeared not to share. One might call it a Progressive spirit, or a spirit of Liberalism, if Progress had not acquired rather unattractive and doctrinaire associations, and if our present Government had not made the name of Liberalism to stink like dead flies. As it is, one has to call it the love of freedom. For though that seems a little vague and ethereal, yet we all know freedom when we feel its opposite, and, as Goethe said, the word has so sweet a sound that we cannot do without it, no matter what errors it may imply.

Let me give just one instance—a scene at which I was present during the attempted revolution in Russia eight years ago. It was St. Nicholas' Day—the Tsar's christening day (December 19th, 1905)—in Moscow, and to celebrate their Emperor's Christianity a vast mob of religious people, merchants, officials, police agents, and 'hooligans' (for the Russians have borrowed our word) had assembled on the great square before the Governor-General's residence, clamouring to be led to the slaughter of all Jews, foreigners, and revolutionists. Leaders of the 'Black Brigade' or 'Men of Russia' had worked the crowd up to the frenzy of lust and greed that a good massacre requires. From a balcony the Governor-General promised to inform the Tsar by telegraph that he could confidently rely upon the unshaken loyalty and unflinching courage of Holy Moscow's citizens. Loud rang the cheers. The patriot blood rose hot. All waited the word for pillage

and murder. But suddenly, at a corner of the square, someone raised a cry, 'The students are coming! The students!' Loyalty shook, courage flinched. Like an infectious wind, panic swept over the advocates of slaughter. Sledges dashed away in flight. Plunging, falling, and crashing into each other, the bloodthirsty upholders of law-and-order rushed down any street, and hid round any corner to preserve their lives. The Governor-General withdrew in haste to despatch his telegram. In a few seconds I was looking upon a square of trampled snow, peaceful, silent, and empty. Not a student had appeared.

If in Oxford one could imagine a parallel to that scene, would a single reactionary run at the cry, 'The Varsity men are coming'? Would not their arrival be acclaimed with cheers? Would they not be welcomed as the buttresses of the obsolete, the jolly champions of things as they were? It is strange. The spirit of our University alone confronts the new idea with violent opposition. The hostility is not directed against any particular line of thought. From the time when it hounded Father Ignatius to the time when it screwed up Bernard Shaw, the distinguished people who have suffered from it have possessed little in common. Their one and sufficient offence lay in the new idea. Other Universities may greet the new idea with interest or with joy. Oxford alone suspects it as a crime too bad for hanging, and answers the intruding footstep with the growls and barking of her enchanted adorers.

WHY OXFORD OPPOSES CHANGE.

Partly it comes of riches, for where every youth of nineteen or twenty is compelled to spend upon himself for every six months of term time as much as the average working man makes in four years for his home and family, the youths are likely to regard every change as an earthquake threatening the stability of their comfort. The special character and influence of the national Church go for something, too, and so does our national disbelief in things invisible. Doctrines, theories, generalisations—with what eupeptic contempt we reject them all! Let starving Parisians and Poles in their messy restaurants squeak and gibber over shadowy ideals and perilous dreams of liberty. *Nos miseri homines et egeni*—so in

our well-ordered Halls the Latin Grace may daily begin, but we know it to be a daily lie. For us the solid food, the talk of solid boats, of games at ball, and tangible successes! And for us no danger lurks—danger that welds the very bond of comradeship, prunes daily trivialities with a hook, and is the haggard nurse of change.

But Oxford resists the new idea partly also, I suppose, because she is passing into a museum. Museums are needful and fascinating establishments. They collect the scattered leaves of earth's autobiography, in which page by page we may trace the long travail of creation up to now. We are never quit of the past, but in no museum can we draw the breath of life. In the anthropological department, for instance, we cannot ourselves share the joyful pride of prehistoric man scrawling reindeer upon bones, or of Athenians enamoured of their city, or of Renaissance Popes contemplating their fine bastards and Virgilian imitations, or of Newton voyaging in space alone. Such joy and pride kindled in their day, but roaming the museum among their relics, we live but on vicarious adventures or a rapture many times removed. In such an atmosphere, gradually we might become like those curators who, surrounded by derelicts of perpetual flux, expect unchanging stability in the outside world, when, emerging into daylight, they turn a key upon the past.

The city's very towers and mouldering walls, the grass-plots consecrated by immemorial labour, the creepers concealing in picturesqueness whatever sternness and strength the architectonic outline might possess, all combine to envelop us in stagnant and sepulchral air. We know our beautiful city stands in perpetual protest against banal politicians and scrannel doctrinaires. Venerable is she to us as a receptacle for precious antiquities of thought, a poor-house for weary decrepitude, a rescue-home for fallen causes. As Christ yearned over Jerusalem, we yearn over her beauty and her wealth of memories. But in the midst of our veneration we cry, 'O thou that stonest the prophets!'

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT OPPOSED AS A NEW IDEA.

Prophets give utterance to the Divine word, which takes new form from age to age. As the poet said of knowledge, they set their forward countenance. They are

the Futurists of thought, the men of the new idea. Pobiedonostzeff, Procurator of the Holy Synod and for many terrible years High Priest of Russian reaction, was well acquainted with dynamite. Yet he said, 'Dynamite is almost innocuous compared with the destructive force of a new idea.' Curators of museums, cherishing the bones of prehistoric monsters, feel a proper dislike of dynamite, and we may well expect curators of thought to regard the new idea with disfavour. It is likely to disarrange or even obliterate the cherished specimens by which they live. Take this dynamic idea of woman's political emancipation, for instance. It is a new idea, as history goes. It has become vital and disturbing only within the last eight or nine years. We cannot wonder if it has startled and annoyed many curators in the beautiful museum where we have all imbibed some knowledge of antiquities. Why, even a leading cleric of the Churches that boast themselves distinctively 'Free,' has denounced women suffragists as 'bipeds.' Even a curator in that University which claims a more progressive spirit than ours, has compared them with the 'Tarantists' of a distant epoch. Even the officials of a Liberal Government, whom we employ to keep a sharp look-out for new ideas, to consider them with sympathy, and examine their claims with justice, have attempted to stifle this new and troubling portent by successive acts of scornful animosity, suppression, coercion, treachery, mendacity, and breach of faith such as would have stirred even Liberals to a passion of indignation if their political opponents had been in power.

AS REGARDS 'MILITANCY.'

So there is nothing to surprise us in the opposition we may meet. Where new ideas are concerned, the officials of Churches, Schools, and Governments are cowards by profession. Cowardice is their *métier*. They fear for their established principles, their cherished antiques. They fear for their habits, their careers, their work, and their leisure. Let us leave the dead to mummify their dead, and feel no alarm if the quick revolt against the endeavour of the dead hand to reduce their new idea to the mummy of a babe. Fortunately for all of us laymen in politics, we have no need to elaborate an amateurish defence of 'Militancy.' The thing has been done once for all by one of those expert and professional politicians

whom we endow to direct us in the affairs of State, while we busy people, occupied with the routine of daily life, trustfully follow their guiding wisdom. Speaking to the Actresses' Franchise League on February 10th, 1911, Mr. Ellis Griffith, M.P., now Under-Secretary of State for Home Affairs, declared with equal truth and eloquence:—

I do not think there would be a movement at all if it had not been for the militant part of it. There must be, in the carrying out of a movement such as this (which is really in the essence a revolutionary movement) of necessity a revolutionary campaign, because women who have not the vote cannot express their opinion constitutionally at all. That is the very hypothesis of the movement. They cannot bring influence to bear directly upon the Members of Parliament because they have no votes to send those Members into Parliament.

Under these circumstances I think our thanks are due to those women who have brought the movement to its present position. And I am bound to say, too, that I think their conduct of this campaign has been such as to show that they are capable of combined and organised effort. They have shown not only impulsive action, but sustained and constant devotion. They possess high ideals, and they have shown themselves willing to bear insult and ridicule and humiliation on behalf of those ideals.

I recognise their enthusiasm, and I reverence the devotion which they have shown to their great cause. It is by such means, and by such means alone, that the final victory will be won.

With those noble and logical sentences I entirely associate myself, and it is pleasant when our duty in following the guidance of a professional politician so exactly coincides with our own amateur conclusions. Since making that speech, Mr. Griffith has been elevated to Ministerial rank, and, in association with Mr. McKenna, has devised and defended the Cat-and-Mouse Act for the extended persecution of Militant Suffragists. To foreign observers that succession of events might seem inconsequent, but no British politician need find it unintelligible.

Lest, however, a suspicion of revolutionary tendencies should attach to Mr. Ellis Griffith because a Liberal Prime Minister thus rewarded him, let us take a sentence from a Conservative whom all agree to respect. Speaking in the House of Commons on January 27th, 1913, while ex-

posing Mr. Asquith's breach of faith after the Speaker had ruled out the Woman's Amendment to the Reform Bill, Lord Robert Cecil cried to the House:—

Conceive what any body of *men* would have done if they had been treated in the way women have been. It would not have been a casual outrage. It would have been an insurrection.

Or let us take the words of one who has no place upon one Front Bench or other, but in his writings probes the deep wounds of our society like a skilful and pitying surgeon. Speaking of Militancy in the *Times* of June 13th, 1910, Mr. John Galsworthy wrote:—

With full sense of responsibility, I call on the Government to end this danger. This war is not a piece of wanton rebellion, but the symptom of a deep wound, in the minds of thousands of women; a symbol of a deep sense of injustice, spreading, in spite of vigorous opposition and wide indifference, day by day and year by year in this country . . . Facts must be faced. What will be the effect on the national life of keeping this wound indefinitely open? Sir, the inevitable effect will be blood-poisoning.

So we see that one of these three distinguished political guides has justified Militancy and advocated its continuance. The other two explain its origin, and attribute what both regard as its dangerous and threatening spirit to the neglect and injustice of the present Liberal Government. In regard to that neglect and injustice, let me recall in brief summary the mere headings of a history which anyone may expand from the files of *Votes for Women*, *The Times*, or *Hansard*.

A TRAGEDY OF ERRORS.

Begin with the autumn of 1905, when it was evident the Liberals would come into power with an enormous majority, and Miss Christabel Pankhurst with Miss Annie Kenney openly raised the demand for the first time at Sir Edward Grey's meeting in Manchester (October 13th), no notice being taken of their written question. Pass onward year by year through the Acts of our Liberal Government's 'Tragedy of Errors,' as Mr. Massingham has justly called it. In April, 1906, the Keir Hardie resolution was talked out amid scurrilous jesting. In March, 1907, the Dickinson Bill was talked out. In February,

1908, the Stanger Bill was passed by 179, but referred to a Committee of the Whole House and strangled. In May, Mr. Asquith promised to introduce a Reform Bill open to a Woman Suffrage Amendment. In March, 1909, the Geoffrey Howard Bill for Adult Suffrage was passed by 35, and dropped. In July, 1910, the new Parliament passed the Conciliation Bill by 110: it was referred to a Committee of the Whole House, time refused. In May, 1911, the Conciliation was again passed in the next Parliament, by 167, and Mr. Asquith pledged himself 'in letter and spirit' to grant full facilities in 1912. In November, he and Mr. Lloyd George 'torpedoed' the Bill and rendered the pledge futile by again announcing a Reform Bill so drafted as to admit a Woman Suffrage Amendment; this the Government would not oppose, but would adopt, if carried, as part of the Bill. In March, 1912, the Conciliation Bill was defeated by 14, chiefly owing to the absence of Labour Members, and the treacherous opposition of thirty-one Irish, who had formerly supported it, but were now terrified by the Premier's avowed hostility to woman's political freedom. In July, on the second reading of the promised Reform Bill, Mr. Asquith asserted that 'the House would not stultify itself by reversing its considered judgment' in regard to Woman Suffrage, but forgot to add that the same House had passed the defeated Bill by 167 the year before. In January, 1913, we saw the shameless fiasco when the Speaker ruled the Woman's Amendment out of the Bill, and the Government tamely submitted to his ruling, though nominally condemning it. No serious effort was made to fulfil Mr. Asquith's promise of an opportunity at least as good. The absurd introduction of another Private Member's Bill—the Dickinson Bill hashed up again by a Liberal Committee for the Party advantage, and defeated by 45 in May—afforded no such opportunity, and up to the present (February 1st, 1914) the Government remains exposed to such stings of conscience as may torment the gay deceiver.

On February 23rd, 1912, speaking of a suspicion that the Government might perhaps draft the promised Reform Bill in such a way as to give no opportunity for the Woman's Amendment, Mr. Lloyd George said in the Albert Hall: 'No Government could commit such an outrage on public faith without forfeiting the respect of

every honest man and woman in the land.' No language could better describe the position to which the Cabinet Ministers and their supporters in this wretched business have reduced themselves. Even if we grant that their fiasco over the Reform Bill Amendment was due to stupidity or carelessness alone, they might have overruled the Speaker, causing him to resign; they might have held him down in his chair, as braver men have done; or they might have resigned themselves rather than fail of the promise to which they had pledged their honour. But the thought of honour never entered into their counsels. They tried to put the women off with an inferior article, as though a man, having promised marriage, claimed to have fulfilled his pledge by seduction. And by this breach of faith they forfeited the respect of every honest man and woman in the land.

THE ATTEMPTED COERCION.

As Lord Robert Cecil said, in the case of men such treatment would have led, not to casual outrage, but to insurrection. I can only hope it would have been so. There is plenty of precedent for violence where the franchise is concerned, and it seems the rule that privilege, whether of Crown, birth, property, or sex, does not yield to reason alone. If freedom's history were determined by reason, without passion's aid, perhaps mankind would be happier. But reason had here done her utmost, and the argument of academic debate might have continued for generations without result, except as providing Members of Parliament with a cherished theme for frivolous or indecent jesting such as no Member, except one Cabinet Minister, would now care to display in the House. Then came the 'defiant deed,' which, as Walt Whitman said, makes all argument appear beggarly. Whatever may be the future history of our liberties, Mrs. Pankhurst and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence will always be remembered as the originators of that deed. Taking the form of deputations to the King's Ministers and of public protests, it was at first, as I believe, strictly constitutional. It involved no loss or injury to anyone but the doers of it. Denunciations as violent and scurrilous as any denunciation of subsequent acts at once arose, but the point was gained. The defiant deed had brought woman's enfranchisement into the foremost rank of political questions.

Add to the Government's treatment of the Bills their treatment of the women themselves. Where women have raised their question at public meetings, remember how Cabinet Ministers have hounded on the Liberal stewards to every violence and wanton assault, calling upon them to fling the women out ruthlessly, urging them on to further barbarity, advising the use of sacks and hazel sticks, and standing upon the platform grinning their approval while women were being stripped and beaten, and in some cases injured for life. Remember, again, the vindictive and variable sentences, the resolve to treat political offenders as common criminals, the introduction of the forcible-feeding torture in answer to the protest of hunger-strikers against this injustice—a torture that even in Russia led to the assassination of the Governor who ordered it.* One woman was dragged to the torture chamber by the frog's march, her head bumping on the stairs. Another was kept in irons, with extreme pain. Because another barricaded her cell door against the torturers, a stream of icy water was turned upon her with a firehose, and the officials of that particular gaol received special commendation from the Home Office shortly afterwards. Another was released as a lady of title, but afterwards, when disguised as a workwoman, was tortured like the rest. Some were brought by the process to the point of death or insanity. Even under the Cat-and-Mouse Act, itself an expedient of singular barbarity, this detestable form of torture, which Mr. Masterman on behalf of the Government once defended as 'hospital treatment,' is retained and practised still.

In the streets, women on peaceful processions or deputations were exposed to the full brutality of the police, against whose perjury the evidence of honourable and highly educated men and women counted for nothing. On Black Friday (November 18th, 1910), apparently by the order of authorities not to make arrests, women on deputation were handed over to the bestial assaults of plain-clothes policemen and other scoundrels, and the Government refused an enquiry, though distinguished barristers on both sides of the House demanded it. Since then, peaceful indoor meetings have been violently en-

* He was Dmitri Kropotkin, Governor of Kharkoff, 'a weak but not a bad man,' as his cousin writes. See Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, II, 238-239.

tered by the police, and arrests made during the proceedings—actions that one would have thought impossible outside Russia. To prisoners convicted of the same offences under an ancient statute, and even lying under the same sentence, justice has been meted out 'by discretion.' Mr. Lansbury, Mr. Larkin, and Mr. Conolly have been early released without re-arrest. Mr. John Scurr, upon a similar charge, has never been tried at all. But women, like Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, having no power of votes behind them, are kept in gaol till on the point of death, are repeatedly re-arrested, and then kept in gaol again till their protest of conscience again brings them to the point of death.

Such instances of cruelty and injustice might be enumerated till they filled this pamphlet up. If anyone wonders that the acts of defiance have increased in number and seriousness, he must have spent a monastic or academic life, careless of mankind. Between 1,500 and 2,000 honourable and naturally peaceful women have already endured imprisonment for their cause—a cause thus persecuted by a Party which professes to believe in liberty, or at least dares not openly to profess its detestation of it as the Tsardom openly detests the demand of its unhappy victims. There must, I think, be something wrong with a State—some 'blood-poisoning' in our system—when these things happen and hundreds of women regard their badges of imprisonment as the noblest decoration they can wear.

A FALSE IDEAL OF WOMEN.

It is sometimes said that such conduct is unwomanly—that whether or not defiance is a man's proper attitude towards injustice, it certainly is not a woman's. It is said that Suffragist women in general do not maintain the ideal suggested by Mr. Arnold Ward's eulogy upon the Anti-Suffragists:—

That devoted band of women who have emerged in order to retire; are agitating against the cause of feminine agitation; and purchasing by the garrulities of the day the silence of a life-time.*

That charge is true. Suffragists are not like 'Antis' or hermit-crabs in emerging only to retire. They are a

* Speech in the House of Commons, July 12th, 1910: Parliamentary Report, p. 268.

devoted band, and they do agitate against the effeminate agitation that flutters the 'Anti' breast; but they are eloquent rather than garrulous, and when their cause is won, we may expect from them an earnest co-operation for the common welfare rather than the silence of a lifetime. The charge of unwomanly action can only be brought by those who seek to maintain an antiquated ideal, which should now be labelled with date and habitat, and carefully deposited in the museums of which we spoke.

That many women revolt against an obsolete ideal thus thrust upon them gives a shock to tender-hearted gentlemen who have taken a mixture of trustful helplessness and bleating innocence, moulded it into the form of an advertisement for corsets, and with upturned eyes worshipped it as Womanhood. In a wild outburst of philology, a Suffragette lately said it is time we took the hood off that woman. In her Reminiscences, Miss Ellen Terry narrates that upon a Highland moor Sir Henry Irving once encountered a mountain lamb, coaxed it to approach, began to fondle it with a display of chivalrous emotion at its tender weakness, and into its shell-like ear was murmuring 'Drink, pretty creature, drink,' or whatever else was suitable, when suddenly the ewe-lamb bit him. I cannot doubt that it was an illuminating moment.

In the same way now, the chivalry of many receives a shock. They mourn the ingratitude of 'the spoilt darling of the law.' 'Have we not done all we could to soothe and protect her?' they protest. 'Has she not fed at our table and lain in our bosom?' They have done all this, and so has she. Nevertheless, she turns, and for them too it may be an illuminating moment. By a similar misconception, a poetic Anglican priest has argued that 'for women to enter the arena of political strife would destroy the bloom of the peach.' In their anxiety to cherish or devour women, such people forget that already nearly six million peaches in this country work for their daily bread, not counting the wives of clerks and workmen upon whom the immense weight of household labour falls. They forget that the majority of Englishwomen have long served as our 'sweeper-caste,' cleaning up the mess of life like the sweeper caste in India. In any case, the peaches would not have much bloom left to be destroyed when they entered the political arena. But those who argue that politics are too dirty a job for woman's

purity of soul appear to have no objection to wallowing in the dirty job they have made of politics themselves, and to have no objection to sending the pure souls of Primrose Dames or Liberal Women to work for them at elections in the very dirtiest department of the political trade.

OUR BLESSED AMENITIES.

Others also have been startled. The proud chairman of his caucus, the Party organizer, the Party journalist, the members of the National Liberal Club, the politicians ambitious of Party reputation and emoluments, have all marvelled that such things could be. Passion of any kind, but especially passionate indignation, is outside their ken. In their own significant phrase, they have always 'played the game,' always kept the ancient rules—one party 'in,' the other party 'out,' one party batting, the other party fielding, both parties adjourning for lunch and tea together at the appointed intervals. When at a recent by-election in Reading (Autumn, 1913) the Liberal and Conservative candidates with their wives met by mutual arrangement at afternoon tea and agreed not to issue placards that might cause each other pain, the *Westminster Gazette*, which most exactly represents the Parliamentary tone, exclaimed, with comfortable rapture, 'This is as it should be.' It reminds one of Mrs. Gamp settling down for a pleasant evening, and, indeed, the 'amenities of our political life' are among the proudest traditions of our country. Like the umpires at an Aldershot field-day, they prevent the contest from ever becoming serious. But when our good, easy politicians are confronted by people who care nothing for the amenities—people over whose actions the *Westminster Gazette* cannot coo 'This is as it should be'—people who bring a very long spoon to supper if they sup at all, and who are not out for a field-day, but hate the enemy with a fury of indignation—then the shock is likely to be violent, and one can only hope it may be equally instructive. If it shatters the amenities which make Parliamentary life a silly sham, and if it proves that every controversy worth fighting must be accompanied by an intensity of opposition such as would gladly remove the enemy to 'another place,' not necessarily the House of Lords, then, indeed, full compensation will have been gained for any material damage the 'militants' may have done.

THE 'TELESCOPIC EYE.'

The shock may have an illuminating effect upon another common class beside. I mean the Mrs. Jellabys of our peculiar country—the people who keep their attention fixed on the Congo, the Putumayo, San Thomé slavery, Balkan atrocities, Russian tyranny, or Portuguese prisons, but are blind to the wrongs of our own people, whether at large or in gaol. These are they who pour the eloquence of excited panegyric over rebels and revolutionaries in all countries but their own, and emblazon upon heroic tablets the names of all political assassins from Moses, who murdered the oppressive Egyptian, down to the last Nihilist who shot a Grand Duke, but stand appalled with horror when unenfranchised women break windows in Regent Street or burn an empty house. In a well-known verse, Ebenezer Elliott once described the sort of blindness that afflicts such natures:—

Their lofty souls have telescopic eyes,
Which see the smallest speck of distant pain,
While at their feet, a world of agonies,
Unseen, unheard, unheeded, writhes in vain.

The lines were quoted last November 29th (1913) by Mr. Lloyd George in a speech characterised by his customary eloquence. Strange coincidence! He was speaking in Holloway about distant agricultural fields and sporting coverts. He was speaking within sight of Holloway gaol, almost within sound of the cries of women tortured by his colleague's order. Unseen, unheard, unheeded by him was that world of agony at his feet!

Someone may object that Suffragists themselves from time to time have exposed or denounced the abominations of slavery, despotism, and atrocities in far-distant scenes. It is true; and if the struggle against injustice allowed them time to be proud of anything, they might be proud of that. But they could be proud of nothing if indignation at those foul evils left them cold to the wrongs and evils at our door—the women of our streets, the women in our divorce courts, police courts, sweating dens, workhouses, mills, shops, schools, and professions, the women from whom taxes are extorted without their voice, the women who tread the backstairs of politics, the women compelled without their consent being asked to obey laws that meddle more and more with their daily life, and subject them more

and more to an inhuman officialdom against which woman's nature honourably revolts. No one who remains blind to these wrongs can pride himself upon sympathy with equatorial aborigines or Siberian exiles. And for my part, if women had remained passive under the insult and injustice of their exclusion from common citizenship, and had accepted the advice patiently to await the 'remote and speculative future' (Mr. Asquith's phrase) when their enfranchisement might possibly suit the convenience of one or other Parliamentary Party, I should have despaired, not only of this cause, but of the country.

'THE FRANCHISE FOR FIGHTERS!'

It may be just worth while to give a word to the metaphysicians and Territorials who forbid women to vote because they cannot fight. We must assume that they would limit the franchise to men of military age—men between twenty and forty, let us say—and to the small percentage of those whose physique comes up to the army standard. The constituencies would then be very small, and most of the House of Commons, including the metaphysicians, would be debarred from voting. A Bill on that basis would, I think, be unpopular even with unbending militarists. I doubt if it would get through. But that, I admit, is no answer in philosophy. A more cogent answer is that these metaphysical or bloodthirsty objectors, knowing little of war outside the cover of books or the cover of field-days, have mistaken its nature. They only think of war at a safe and comfortable distance—a series of movements which we conduct by despatching bodies of men, and follow in daily papers by the fireside. But if fortune gave them firsthand knowledge, they would learn that when war enters the territory, the danger and suffering of women equal, and usually far surpass, all that men risk and suffer.

Take our own latest war—the war in South Africa. From first to last, 6,189 Boer men died from the fighting or from sickness while prisoners. Of Boer women, 4,313 died in the Concentration Camps after their homes were burnt. Of Boer children under sixteen, 22,057 died in these Camps. Nor can the sufferings of women in war be estimated only by the death of themselves and their children. The misery of watching the destruction of their houses and possessions, the wretchedness of life even

under the enemy's protection, must be counted as accumulating unhappiness. In South Africa the most hideous side of war was not seen, for most of our soldiers are kindly, working-class men with some sense of decency. Such abominations as I have myself known to be perpetrated upon women in war time by Greeks, Servians, and Turks, and by Russians during the revolution in Georgia and the Baltic provinces—the organised and official ravishing, sometimes executed in public, the devices of perverse and sensual torture—need not be described here. Ignorant as our metaphysicians may be of war, one might expect of them imagination enough to perceive that the stake of suffering gives women a right to an equal voice with men in the question of peace or war, small as the direct influence of the male voters in any country is upon that vital point. But, indeed, the argument of physical force is hardly worth contesting further. It is the last refuge of an 'Anti.'

BURKE'S VINDICATION OF ENFRANCHISEMENT.

Others, again, refuse enfranchisement because those who claim it have displayed a spirit of revolt, or because they themselves profess a disbelief in democracy and ridicule all this ado about a vote, or because they think women's interests are better safeguarded by men, just as lords and squires once believed themselves the providentially appointed protectors of the working classes. These contentions will be treated in other Tracts of this series, and in passing I would only recall a few passages from Burke's great speech on 'Conciliation with America'—one of the speeches of which Lord Morley has said that 'they compose the most perfect manual in our literature, or in any literature, for one who approaches the study of affairs, whether for knowledge or for practice.' Speaking on March 22nd, 1775, Burke, in answer to the objection that the Colonists were displaying a spirit of revolt, exclaimed:—

The question is, not whether their spirit deserves praise or blame; but what, in the name of God, shall we do with it?

A little further on, in answer to those who made light of the whole principle of British liberties, he replied:—

In order to prove that the Americans have no right to their liberties we are every day endeavouring to subvert the maxims which preserve the whole spirit of our own. To prove that the Americans ought not to be free, we are obliged to depreciate the value of freedom itself; and we never seem to gain a paltry advantage over them in debate without attacking some of those principles, or deriding some of those feelings, for which our ancestors have shed their blood.

And as to making distinctions between one kind of English blood and another, so as to grant freedom to one class and keep the other in subjection, he said in the same speech:—

The temper and character which prevail in our colonies are, I am afraid, unalterable by any human art. We cannot, I fear, falsify the pedigree of this fierce people, and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates. The language in which they would hear you tell them this tale would detect the imposition. Your speech would betray you. An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery.

THE COMPARISON WITH SLAVERY.

If it is thought that slavery is too strong a word to apply to the present condition of women in this country, let us remember that sentence of Swift's in which, writing of the government of Ireland without true representation, he said:—

All government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery.*

Every form of slavery has its defenders, as I discovered during my own investigations of the negro slavery in Angola and San Thomé. How often was I not told that the servitude was quite paternal in its clemency, that the natives were really better off as slaves than as free, that their food was more regular and more copious on the plantations than in their own villages, that hospitals and doctors were provided for them, that they much preferred to stay as they were, and quickly löst their desire for liberty! In the case of women, our 'Anti's' resort to precisely similar arguments—the arguments of slave-

* *The Drapier's Letters*, IV.

dealers. But only slavers believe in those arguments now, and they would abandon them if they were not lucrative. The Anti arguments are lucrative not only in the sense of maintaining women as a 'sweeper caste,' a prostitute caste, and a sweater's labour-supply, but in the more insidious sense of maintaining a partly sensual pleasure in domination, and certain prerogatives of superiority, sanctioned from the nursery onward. By tradition, and owing to the full force of ingrained and unreasoning habit, such arguments keep their power; and yet I am confident the present Lord Chancellor was not exaggerating when, speaking in the House of Commons, he said:—

I believe the time will come when people will look back upon the state of things to-day in which we have drawn this political distinction between men and women with as much amazement as we look back upon the period when slavery was a recognized institution.*

THE CONTEST AND THE VISION.

The struggle in which we are engaged has been hard and long. So it may continue, for we are contending with the powers and dominions of certain hell-deep instincts that lurk beyond the touch of reason. It is not only for economic reform that we strive, nor for a voice in legislative enactments, though the right to those essential advantages would be worth a decade of revolt. Ours is a finer purpose, even a spiritual. Our endeavour is to release the spirit of millions from the depression of life-long and unalterable inferiority. We Oxford men find it hard to imagine what it is to be excluded throughout life from most of its higher passions, interests, and pursuits. It is like being born to poverty, but more hopeless still. From childhood's games and lessons onwards, the dominant note in woman's existence has been suppression, resignation, the acceptance of inequality. Commands imposed upon her have been negative. They have not joyfully affirmed and encouraged the use of her inborn powers. She has been taught to seek her happiness in self-denial, not to discover it in the splendour of self-fulfilment. It is an old saying, but it remains true, that the franchise is the necessary and conclusive symbol of personality. It is not identity that the symbol stands for—

* Parliamentary Debates, July 11th, 1910. Mr. Haldane's speech, p. 82.

not identity, for no man or woman who has drawn the full breath of life desires man and woman to be the same. The symbol stands for equality in difference, and that itself is the right to personality—to freedom of opportunity, expansion of sphere, and the holding of opinion. Its purpose is to afford to one-half of our race, as to the other, the 'active exercise of vital powers along the lines of excellence, in a life affording full scope for their development.' That definition of happiness is ancient, as we know, but I have found no better.

So the contest before us is singularly fine, and the hope is great. Fixed as the eye of Oxford too often is upon nugatory traditions and an irrevocable past, she has at certain moments in her prolonged history responded to unselfish and unpopular inspirations. That simple rhyme, 'When Oxford draws the knife, England's soon at strife,' appears to show that in one epoch, at all events, our University took the lead in thought; for one may assume the knife to symbolise a pioneer spirit of rebellion by which alone the growth of thought is gradually advanced. And here to the youth of Oxford an opportunity of splendid revolution is again offered. Many who are dead or ageing have striven to prepare the way. Before your feet the promised land now lies revealed. Yours is the ultimate inheritance of the beatific vision. Looking out upon the future we older sons of Oxford may behold a nobler race of men and women, more equal in opportunity, freer in companionship, happier with the joy of self-fulfilment, more difficult to please in their standards of excellence, but in all high passions, whether of love or thought or action, more vital and self-assured. It is for you to enter upon a land more beautiful for that transfiguration.

GOULD, Gerald

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New Tracts for the Times, No. I.

THE DEMOCRATIC PLEA.

The recognition of equality is a necessary part of the love of freedom. Respect for the spiritual dignity of others is essential to self-respect. One of the greatest works of Christianity was to show this, to give new beauty and new strength to the ideal of democracy. Plato, the most enlightened of the ancients and a strong woman-suffragist, had, nevertheless, not transcended the conception of a perfect state as a state in which certain people coerced others into perfection. Christianity has changed all that. It has insisted, for those who have eyes to see and ears to ear, on the sacred uniqueness of the individual. It has taught those who are no longer children to put away childish things. Just as no one in the conduct of private life can grow, can develop character, except by the making of mistakes and the accepting of responsibility, so with a nation and the citizenship of a nation. *We*—not just these few or those many—we, the all, the whole, the community, must make our own mistakes and accept our own responsibilities. Such is the belief of democracy. For that belief men and women have fought and died in the past, and certain concessions to it have been wrung from the dirty and tenacious hands of tyrants; but only quite recently has the biggest step of all been so much as seriously contemplated. From the greatest of human hopes and the surest of human gains half the population of even 'democratic' countries has been by a tacit conspiracy excluded. I am speaking not merely of the outward and visible sign and weapon of the vote, but of the principle of recognised equality: yet neither as sign nor as weapon is the vote to be despised. The spiritual dignity and sacred uniqueness of any woman or man are, in a sense, private and inviolable things. But they have one public safeguard and one public symbol. That safeguard, that symbol, is the vote.

For people who hate poverty and wrong there are at most two attitudes of mind available—the democratic and the chivalrous. The former renounces the claim to decide for others: not the claim to guide, to lead or to inspire, but the claim to coerce. The latter can make no such renunciation. The weak point of chivalry, even in theory, is that it depends upon submission: to protect may be all very well, but to force protection upon an unwilling fellow-creature is to assume an unwarrantable superiority; it may easily be to deteriorate from a protector to a persecutor, to change the rôle of St. George for that of the dragon. The weak point of chivalry, in practice, is that it does almost invariably work out as persecution in the end, and that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is never anything but a fine pretext for persecution from the beginning. Towards poor men, rich men mostly abstain from the chivalrous pose: towards women, rich or poor, men's pose of chivalry has been practically universal. Yet, as Charles Lamb wrote, 'more than half the drudgery and coarse servitude of the world is performed by women.' We talk of protecting the weaker; and, having five millions of women engaged in industry, we regularly, determinedly, systematically underpay the vast majority of them. True, a few sentimentalists call out for the forcible removal of woman from industry altogether; but as they have never consulted her as to whether she wants to be removed, and as, even if she does, they have never been able to suggest any 'sphere' for her after removal—save starvation or degradation—it would seem at any rate the lesser of two evils to retain her services and pay a living wage for them. For a woman to toil twelve hours a day, seven days in the week, earning a wage of from five to fifteen shillings, in order to support herself and her parents, or her children, or her crippled or drunken or workless husband—this is not a form of sensual indulgence from which a justly-incensed community is bound to drive her out upon the street. If you can neither do without the woman's work nor keep her from degradation if you stop her working, you are both economically and morally wrong in refusing her a full return for her services. I put the case to Mr. G. K. Chesterton, many months ago, in a letter to the *Nation*. This was my challenge:—

There are a great many women in the labour market. Some of them are there because they want to be, others because they must be. With the former, what Mr. Chesterton wants to do is evident—he wants to take from them the free choice he allows to himself and claims for other people of his own sex, to thwart their endeavour, to bully them by artificial disabilities *out* of the labour-market. I say artificial, because he himself acknowledges that natural disabilities cannot keep them out. This is a tenable position, though for a man who holds it to call himself a Liberal, and pretend to champion the cause of liberty, is childish. But what of the women who are in the labour-market because economic conditions have forced them there? What does Mr. Chesterton propose to do about them? If he says, 'Support them in some other way,' I ask him, 'How?' Neither he nor anyone else has anything in the remotest degree resembling a practicable scheme for running the manufacture, business and service of the world without wage-earning women—and he knows it. Very well; then the women must continue to work for wages. But, as long as they are voteless, they will have to work for insufficient wages. Mr. Chesterton knows that as well as I do—as well as everyone else who has ever considered the history of Trade Unionism knows it. And here, of course, is the answer; here is what this strange champion of the poor and the down-trodden really wants to do about them. In order to gratify his own abstract and disputable theory as to the way in which the community ought to have developed in the past, he wants thousands of women to labour in destitution and sin for the present, and on into the future. And there is no way out for him. He cannot answer my dilemma any other way, because there is no other way to answer it.

When I wrote of what Mr. Chesterton 'wants'—using, in the heat of the moment, a somewhat unfair word—I referred of course to the practical result of his theories, not to any recognised intention on his part. Indeed, it is rarely of use to ask any reactionary if his intentions are honourable, for he rarely knows what his intentions are. He has no solution for the social evils confronting him. Mr. Chesterton, having no reply to make to my indictment, made no reply. And the exploitation of women—oddly enough!—goes on. I have said that the alternative is starvation or degradation: but too often these are not alternatives; they are additions. The contrast between

the starvation wage of honest industry and the apparent luxury of vice is, indeed, a constant temptation; but it is the mere impossibility of keeping body and soul together on the 'honest' wage that drives to destruction thousands of naturally virtuous women, whose virtue we, as a community, sneer at when we have ruined it. This is the new and the old law of supply and demand: economic wickedness supplies the market which sensual wickedness demands. We talk of chivalry, of protection, of guarding the weaker sex—and there are on the streets of London alone more than eighty thousand women beggared of health and hope, of honour and self-respect, by the protection and the chivalry of men!

And even the more fortunate, the really 'protected,' women are protected only so long as they are acquiescent. Chivalry, like ignorance, is of two kinds—one's own and other people's; but I have long suspected that the whole chivalrous assumption is, or ought to be, regarded as an insult by women. For it is the assumption that man's business is control and woman's mission is submission. Man puts woman on a pedestal, and cuts the ground from under her feet. He makes so little of her, and says it is because he thinks so much of her. He limits her in every direction, and assures her that limitation is the sincerest form of flattery. He keeps her as a hot-house plant, under glass, and then tells her that people who live in glass-houses shouldn't throw stones. Let her do anything which he chooses to call unwomanly, and her sex, so far from protecting her, exposes her to special insult. Obscenity was the weapon employed to prevent Florence Nightingale from helping the wounded soldiers in the Crimea: obscene revilings accompanied the stones which chivalrous men threw at Josephine Butler, and at the women who struggled as pioneers to equip themselves with medical knowledge for the service of their fellow-creatures. Nor are the days of chivalry over. The suffrage movement provides us with a continuous supply of 'unwomanly' women who may be assailed and insulted. Do not fail to do this, men of England: for so did your fathers to the prophets before you.

Chivalry, then, is neither real or ideal. Even if women were really immune, immunity from wrongs is no substitute for community of rights. If men had bound women with chains of gold, instead of letting the iron enter their

souls, still those chains would have to be broken. The loftiest position, when imposed from without, is an imposition.

In our country in the twentieth century we can show only a small proportion of families in, so to speak, stable financial equilibrium, while millions drag on either with incomes insufficient for mere bodily decency or else with incomes so barely sufficient that the spectres of misfortune, ill-health, lack of employment and starvation are for ever leering at the door. In our country, the men of the working-class are armed with payment for their work (often grossly and shamefully inadequate, but still twice as liberal as what women get), and out of this payment the wiser of them accumulate a fighting-fund; they are armed also with the vote: thus they can bring both direct Trade Union action and political pressure to bear on the ruling class—and even so they do not quite find it possible to force up their wages in proportion to the rise in the cost of living. In our country most of the women are employed either in 'sweated' industry or in the work of house-keeping and child-rearing, which is not paid at all: they are at the same time debarred from exercising the franchise: thus they can neither directly or indirectly exert effective pressure for the general amelioration of their lot. In our country it is possible for an Insurance Act to pass which removes so many pennyworths daily from the food of every semi-starving family—almost necessarily, that is, from the food of the wife and children, for 'the man's strength must be kept up': it is possible for an Act to pass which does this, and which yet provides no insurance benefit for the children, and none for the wife (except maternity benefit), unless, quite apart from the work of the house, she is an 'employed person' on her own account. In our country women are not consulted as to whether such laws shall or shall not be: if they break this or any other man-made law, they are arrested by men, tried before men, and sentenced by men: they are, in short, in a state of complete subjection, such that, if English *men* found themselves in a similar state of subjection to women, or to any set of people in this world, they would fight against it by every device of violence, and would be acclaimed by each other as heroes for so doing. And yet in our country there is surprise, there is actually blame, forthcoming to greet even the spiritual and intellectual impulse of unrest among women

Three answers to this indictment are commonly attempted. The first is the insult of declaring women an inferior race, unfit for freedom or citizenship, incapable of knowing what they want or need. This is so open and brutal an incitement to rebellion that it is now almost never advanced: sometimes, indeed, it still presents itself under the disguise of flattery, and declares women too sacred for anything but to be cherished and protected, but even so the mockery of such a pretence when contrasted with the conditions of our streets and factories has made most decent men ashamed of advancing it. Moreover, even if it did correspond at all to the facts, it would continue to be an insult; it would continue to be a polite way of telling women that they were unfit to decide for themselves, that they were, in short, inferiors. The second answer (which begs the whole democratic question, the whole right of any human beings to repudiate their own subjection) is merely that the connection of votes with wages is not proved: that perhaps women would be no better off if enfranchised: that men, even with their votes, have frequently to strike for better wages. Several retorts leap to the eye of the mind. In the first place, the question begged is the essential: to prove the vote useless is not to detract from the injustice, though it is certainly to accentuate the folly, of refusing it to those who demand it. In the second place, because men use 'direct' action as well as indirect, it does not follow that the indirect is no use at all. Many a time has the voting capacity of the workers strengthened their hand in the fight, whether for better wages or for better conditions. Just now there is undoubtedly a movement in favour of concentrating on 'direct action' (largely because of the apathy of Labour members in Parliament)—but even so, does anyone seriously suppose that these men workers would allow their votes to be taken away from them without a militant protest from end to end of the kingdom? It is true (to choose one striking instance out of many arising from the recent Trade Union Act) that a large number of miners have voted in their Federation against a political fund, and a still larger number have not troubled to vote in the matter at all: but they have not given up, and would not if they could give up, their parliamentary franchise! Let us leave aside the fact that many who do not want a miners' political fund

are actuated merely by preference for Liberal or Conservative over so-called Labour representation: let us assume that nearly 600,000 miners definitely and deliberately prefer not to spend money on political representation for the sole reason that they think it better spent elsewhere—does anybody think that the refusal to subscribe money towards a parliamentary representation with which one is at the time dissatisfied is the same thing as acquiescence in the denial of the *right to vote*? If anybody does, let him get up and suggest the disfranchisement of Trade Unionists! Indeed, the pretence that the vote is useless is not only opposed to history: it is opposed to elementary common-sense. The Government always can, and sometimes does intervene to end a strike. Is it less or more likely to do so, and to do so in favour of the workers, if it knows that the workers' votes control the return of supporters or opponents of the Government? It may be that you who read this would prefer the workers to be without such a power: but then you must in honesty admit, if you are an anti-suffragist, that your opposition to enfranchisement is not based upon the uselessness of the vote, but on its usefulness: that you do definitely want to deny equality of power and opportunity to your fellow-creatures, to control them, to keep them in subjection. I hope you hold no such dangerous doctrine: for remember that to admit your intention of keeping others in subjection if you can is to admit their right to rebel. Few, indeed, can be found to take up this cynical attitude of conscious tyranny now: more popular is the argument for the insignificance of the vote. I have seen it urged by anti-suffragists that votes cannot influence *wages*—they can only influence *conditions*. Well? Are the conditions of women's work so immaterial, so much less important to the future of the race, than those of men's? And is it so unreasonable that women themselves should be consulted as to their conditions, instead of being (as, in spite of some really beneficent legislation, they have too often been) either shamefully neglected or else hampered and harried by ignorant restrictions, which, in many cases, tend to stop their employment under the pretence of improving their status? Why, even Mrs. Humphry Ward cannot put pen to paper on this subject without demonstrating the need for the vote. Women, she urges, have

a right to their local government franchise because it concerns things *which really matter to them*—‘the proper working of innumerable acts for which the County and Borough Councils are responsible, under which they make by-laws, and which affect the life of the poor municipal voter at every turn.’ Surely no one but Mrs. Ward would be so ingenuous as to suppose that this argument stops short at the need for the *local government* franchise: it will occur to most people that if these laws really affect the life of the poor municipal voter at every turn, the poor municipal voter might not unnaturally be allowed a hand in *making* them. The ‘proper working’ of a bad act will not turn it into a good one, any more than the proper working of a guillotine will turn it into an automatic plough. (And all this apart from the truly amazing assumption that great national questions are not things which *really matter* to women!) But there is nothing so inconsistent as your anti-suffragist. Take Mr. Frederic Harrison, who wrote in 1867:—

Nothing will force the governing classes to recognise (the workmen’s) claims and judge them fairly, until they find them wresting into their own hands real political power. Unionists who, till now, have been content with their unions and have shrunk from political action, may see the pass to which this abstinence from political movements has brought them.

If the vote was to be so useful for men in 1867, why is it to be so useless for women in 1913? In point of fact, there is a growing realisation of the fact that, though the mere power of voting may be rendered futile by other disabilities, that is so *only as long as the voters fail to use their power to remove these disabilities by their votes*. This is no argument against the franchise: it is but an argument (if argument were needed) against misuse of the franchise. Women are unenfranchised: most men are still only half-enfranchised, for economic disabilities, lack of proper education, lack of the opportunity of idealistic vision, often break the power of the vote in their hands, baffle their attempt to learn how best it may be used, and prevent the results at which their voting aims. For that very reason the battle of the politically disabled woman is one with that of the economically crippled man: sex is exploited by sex and class by class: and the exploited sex and the exploited class are drawing

together. The economic emancipation of men, unless women are meanwhile granted the vote which men already have, will but substitute pure sex-domination for that mixture of class-domination and sex-domination which now corrupts us, and the taint of slavery will still poison the nation’s blood. More and more is this being realised.

It is true that there are unfortunate cross-currents—stupidities of people who are democrats as far as one sex only is concerned; people who in childish ignorance of economics suppose it can pay men, as a sex, to underpay women, and so force them into the condition of perpetual blacklegs: people whose sex-tyrannies and sex-jealousies prevent them from seeing any problem as a merely human problem, or any being as a merely human being. But more and more steadily emerges the realisation that all the oppressed and exploited stand or fall together. We are surrounded by gross and ghastly inequalities, injustices, impurities, and corruptions. Not the blindest of us can refuse to see them, not the most self-centred of us refuse to consider them. The question we are to ask ourselves is simply this—Granted the inevitable struggle for justice and equality, on which side shall we be found? I wish I could hope—indeed, perhaps I may hope—to have among the readers of this pamphlet some of those to whom life has hitherto seemed a matter of merely carelessly pleasantly living from day to day: I wish I could hope for the power of bringing home to such readers the weight and splendour of their responsibilities. The poverty and vice, starvation and degradation of others are often accepted as inevitable, or as indifferent to our individual lives. Yet the whole measure of the worth of our lives is just this—how far are we prepared to labour at understanding, and at altering? We are all of us far too ready to dismiss any movement of protest or revolt as foolish: we acquiesce with the best of grace in the strivings and the sufferings of others. And this brings me to the third objection urged against the unrest of women. It is difficult to put it in a single shape, because it is rather an attitude of mind than an assertion; and it occurs in many different ways and many different places. It may perhaps be called the ‘all-in-good-time’ objection. It does not understand vehemence or haste. It has no sympathy with the passionate need some natures feel,

having realised an injustice, to rectify it. It exalts the form of justice, the established code, above the spirit. It concentrates on the cleanliness of the outside of the cup and the platter. Now I am not concerned in this tract to commend, to deprecate, or in any way at all to discuss any particular manifestation of the movement for woman suffrage. But I am concerned to plead for an understanding of the spirit which is, in fact, manifested in that movement. It is, in the first place, an unselfish spirit: it asks to be allowed to serve the world. It is, in the second place, an impatient spirit: it is lacking in reverence for our fine old traditional English methods of making believe and muddling through. It may even be called obtuse and uncharitable: for it interprets a press boycott of certain truths as an organised attempt to suppress the truth, and the breaking of a politician's promise as a dishonourable act. While we rightly condemn these harsh and unthinking strictures on the established procedure of our public life, we ought perhaps at the same time to make allowances for an enthusiasm purer than our own. We ought to attempt some realisation of what, to the distorted vision of a really unselfish and self-sacrificing idealist, our venerable methods appear. We ought to recollect the parliamentary history of this question of suffrage with some reference to the hardships daily undergone by women and children through the length and breadth of our country—with some reference to the laws of parenthood and divorce, of insurance, of education and of labour. If I feel (as I do) that I must not conclude this tract without recalling briefly a succession of political facts which are not only well within the memory of all, but outside the possibility of denial, I shall for that very reason not dally with controversial topics: the incontrovertible will suffice. I would only, by way of preface, point out once more what is so often lost sight of—that this question of enfranchisement stands outside the general give-and-take of politics, and involves its opponents in the practical equivalent of a logical circle. For men, who are enfranchised, any delay or unfair or evasive treatment with which they are faced in the pursuit of their demands resolves itself into a matter of transferring their votes from one side to the other. If Governments disappoint the electors, they do so at their peril. The enfranchisement of the unenfranchised is the *one* matter in

which the Government can go on disappointing expectation: those who support it in so doing are driven to defend the fact that you cannot get a vote because you cannot exercise one, and you cannot exercise one because you cannot get one. The circle is complete—and the non-electors are for ever left outside: not only he or she who happens here and now to be unenfranchised, but any class or sect or sex who is ever unenfranchised at any stage of society or civilisation whatever. So clear is this that it is incredible it should be for one moment overlooked: yet great and wise statesmen use the term 'electors' as convertible with the term 'people,' and Liberal politicians write to the papers to say that the only democratic solution of the Votes-for-Women problem must lie in the decision of the electors. By precisely the same argument which is now used against the urgency of the women's need—that the 'people's' accredited representatives in Parliament must be left to settle it in their own good time—it is not only possible but necessary to maintain that, given an oligarchy in which ten men were enfranchised and ten thousand were not, the only course open to any of the ten thousand who desired votes would be to wait until a majority of the ten decided to extend the franchise: for, if 'electors' and 'people' are convertible terms, *those ten would be the people.*

Bearing this in mind, let us recall the recent parliamentary history of woman suffrage. It began to *have* a parliamentary history worth speaking of in 1906. Before then it had never been taken seriously: in that year it began to be taken seriously. What was it that woke the British public from dogmatic slumber, and brought the woman suffrage question from the Egyptian night of absolute indifference, through the wilderness of calumny and derision, to within sight of the promised land? Mr. F. E. Smith and Mr. Lloyd-George, who presumably agree on no other point in the world, agree in attributing the quickening of public interest to the beginning of what are usually called militant tactics: but I cannot here diverge so far into controversial matter as to endorse or to contradict their view.

In 1908 a woman's suffrage bill passed its second reading in the House of Commons: so did another in 1909: so did another in 1910: so did another in 1911. On each occasion the Government (which we are constantly told

is an impartial, a divided, not a hostile Government) killed the bill by refusing time for its further progress. After the last and most flagrant case of this (the Conciliation Bill of 1911 having secured its second reading by 167, a far larger majority than the Government could secure for any of its own measures), Mr. Asquith promised that opportunity should be given in 1912 for the Conciliation Bill to go through all its stages. He especially affirmed that this promise would be adhered to *in letter and in spirit*. In November, 1911, he 'torpedoed' the Conciliation Bill by announcing that the Government proposed to introduce a Manhood Suffrage Bill, and thus altering the whole electoral situation. There is no need to argue the political issue of whether Mr. Asquith's announcement did or did not do this: the boast of its having done so is notoriously Mr. Lloyd-George's own. Mr. Asquith then made some more promises: the Manhood Suffrage Bill was to be so drafted as to admit of amendments by which women might be enfranchised, and such amendments were, if passed, to become an integral part of the Bill, and to be pushed through by the Government as such. When it was suggested to Mr. Lloyd-George that the Bill would not in fact be drafted so as to admit of a woman suffrage amendment, he replied that the suggestion was 'an imputation of deep dishonour,' which he refused to discuss. 'No Government,' he said, 'could commit such an outrage on public faith without forfeiting the respect of every honest man and woman in the land.' Yet when the Speaker ruled that the Bill *had* been drafted so as to exclude the promised chance of amendment, Mr. Lloyd-George did not take any steps to make up to women for the withdrawal of what had been so definitely promised them. Now, either the Speaker's ruling was right or it was wrong. If, as we are asked to believe, the Cabinet acted in perfect good faith throughout, and were as much astonished as anyone by the Speaker's decision, then surely that decision must have been wrong: for it is scarcely credible that so large a body of such skilled and distinguished parliamentarians, whose honour was so deeply and so specifically pledged on this particular point, can have failed to make sure that no loophole was left by which their power of living up to their promises could escape. If they did so fail by ignorance or carelessness, it is a grave reflection on their capacity, and a special

grievance to women who are forced to pay taxes and so contribute to the salaries of incompetent servants whom they are not allowed to help in choosing or dismissing. Anyway, either right or wrong the ruling was: if it was right, the Government was under a very deep and obvious obligation to make full amends to suffragists for its own ignorance and folly and the lost chance of enfranchisement: if wrong, it ought to have been resisted. If the Government was for some mysterious reason unable to take either of these courses (courses one of which would without question have been taken by honourable people similarly placed in private life), it ought to have acknowledged its inability by resigning. It chose to do none of these things, but contemptuously to fling women the promise of facilities for another Private Member's Bill in the next session. Almost all suffragists recognised at once that they were being played with, for the very politicians and journalists who, after the destruction of the Conciliation Bill, had declared that far the best chance for suffrage lay in amendment to a Government measure, now declared, after the destruction of the Government measure, that far the best chance lay in a Private Member's Bill. They condemned the Conciliation Bill as useless, and offered a re-Conciliation Bill as useful. In point of fact, however, all the projects for a non-party Bill immediately fell through, and what was actually introduced in 1913 was the Dickinson Bill—that mere anomaly, a party measure without party support. With few exceptions, and those of small scope, legislation proceeds in England not in accordance with its moral urgency, but in accordance with partisan advantage. A measure of woman's suffrage, therefore, though the present House of Commons has assented to the principle by vast majorities, depends for its passage on whether the party in power expects to gain by it. To the number of members who will oppose it in any given form or on any given occasion, because they think the form or occasion inexpedient from the narrowest partisan point of view, must be added the members who will oppose it in all forms and on all occasions, because it recognises the human equality of a sex hitherto regarded as inferior and exploited on the basis of inferiority. To illustrate the working of the party system, I may point out that only two suffrage bills have in recent years been

defeated: the Conciliation Bill of 1912—the one which the Government had previously ‘torpedoed’ by confusing the issue with the Manhood Suffrage Bill—and the Dickinson Bill, which was framed so that it would (as was supposed) have benefited Liberals as against Unionists by its passage, and which yet lacked the support of Liberals *as a party*. A measure of this kind has in opposition to it, roughly speaking, the whole of the Unionist party, as well as all those Liberals who dislike the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity—of democracy—of ‘no taxation without representation’—of ‘government without the consent of the governed is tyranny’—of everything, in short, for which Liberalism pretends to stand. This is the unanswerable case for the necessity of a Government measure—which is now demanded by all serious suffragists.

My tract has fallen naturally into two parts—a statement of the *need* for the vote, as that need is conceived by those who are voteless, and a record of the way in which the *demand* for the vote has been treated. It may well be that I have failed to prove, up to the fullness of conviction, either the urgency of the need or the inevitability of the demand. I am profoundly sure that, if I have so failed, it is because of my inadequacy as an advocate and not in the least because of any flaw in my case. Naturally, I do not expect others to accept my case as flawless on the strength of my own faith in it. But I do believe that I have succeeded in proving one thing, beyond the power of any honest and impartial mind to doubt it—and that thing is this: Even if *you*, the individual reader, are not convinced of the need for the vote, there is so strong an argument for it that you cannot deny the reasonableness of other people who *are* convinced: even if *you* do not believe that the demand was bound to arise, has been wrongly trifled with, and is yet bound to triumph, there is so strong an argument here, too, that you cannot deny the reasonableness of other people who *do* believe this. The need is *felt*, widely and deeply: the demand is *made*, determinedly and unselfishly. Whenever in the history of the world that has been the case, sooner or later the need has been satisfied, the demand admitted. Sometimes the change has come easily, with frank recognition of goodwill and generosity on both sides, and has left the memory of justice as a

heritage to the race. Sometimes the change has been delayed by flat denial and harsh frustration, and has come only after the kindling of infinite bitterness, the overthrowing of innumerable ideals—after rebellion and coercion, after the division of society against itself, after the indelible shame (which no after-virtues can remove from any nation which incurs it) of repressive torture inflicted as the only alternative to doing justice. For my part, as a man, I am ashamed of the social and economic conditions of the country which by my vote I help to govern: I am ashamed to be refusing to my fellow-creatures the self-government which I claim for myself: I am most deeply ashamed of much that inevitably follows from that refusal, and I appeal to all who hate cruelty, who hate injustice, who hate violence as I do, to give their service and their support to the enfranchisement of women.

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“Heads I win, tails you lose.”

(A political forecast addressed to those suffragists who flatter themselves that adult suffrage is possible before the principle of Woman Suffrage has been admitted in practise by first granting the Vote to Women “on the same terms as it is, or may be, granted to men”).

Extract from a Daily Paper referring to the Prime Minister's Speech on Woman Suffrage towards the end of 1916 or 1917.

PERHAPS no Prime Minister has ever met with more respectful sympathy than did Mr. Asquith when he rose to give his views on this important question before an expectant House; and it may safely be said that never before has any Prime Minister so completely set aside his own personal opinions in order to deal with a momentous question solely and entirely from the progressive and democratic point of view. The very genius of the nation seemed to animate him as he reviewed the entire history of the franchise from its commencement, pointing out how, in recent times, majorities were obtained for a measure granting the suffrage to women, only when such a measure was based on class inequality, and a property qualification. In a masterly exposition he demonstrated how members had voted in favour of “Votes for Women” from time to time, less from a desire to see a limited franchise conferred upon women, than from a desire to embarrass the Government; and there was not a single member who did not cheer him as a sincere spokesman of true democracy, when he concluded one of the most convincing speeches the House had ever been privileged to listen to, with the following statesman-like utterance:

“I will now leave this question to the decision, and the tried experience and judgment, of this the most truly representative assembly in the whole civilised world. Is it our intention to assume an autocratic and arrogant attitude and force political power on to the women of this nation, although they have proved of what immense achievements they are capable *without* this additional responsibility being laid on their already over-burdened shoulders? Do we wish to flout the chivalrous sentiments of English *men*, and the dignified reserve of English *women*, by passing this law without any sort of reference to the considered opinion of the nation as a whole, and without obtaining any expression of the peoples' will?”

Or should we not rather first ascertain what that will may be, by constructing a real democracy and ridding it of the last vestige of a mediæval class domination by instituting the principle of one man, one vote, irrespective of property qualifications, and then trusting this great-hearted nation to decide so momentous an issue for itself? Are we afraid that England's manhood will forget all its women have done? Never. (A voice: 'I don't think.') Then let the men of England confer with their own womenkind, and *then* say whether they believe that it is worth complicating our present electoral machinery by the inclusion of women or not. Surely this is a proposal the elementary justice of which must commend itself to members on both sides in this House. The men of every class and strata of society, of every trade and profession, will be able to interpret the wishes of every woman in the land, and if it is the people's will that every woman shall have a vote, as well as every man, then I shall be the first to acclaim any expression of that will with enthusiasm. For if there is one lesson which has been brought home to us during these tragic times of stress and sorrow, it is an unshakable faith in the heart and head and the dogged determination of the people of this our great unconquerable Empire." (Loud and prolonged cheers.)

(A Bill was then drafted giving a vote to every adult man. The women worked like beavers to be included somehow in this Bill. Their friends told them that all depended on whether the magic word "person" could legally be made to apply to a female individual. If it could, then they would obtain adult suffrage; but if "person" signified only a male, then the Bill would have to pass as a manhood suffrage one. Therefore the women worked themselves stiff. They formed deputations and processions, and drew up petitions, and visited Town Councils. They canvassed by day and wrote by night; they heckled at meetings; they addressed millions of envelopes, and wore out millions of shoe soles; they spoke in out-of-the-way districts, and bicycled thousands of miles, and toiled as only the English can toil: and then they had their reward in reading two or three speeches made in the House on the comparatively unimportant detail of whether the word "person" should or should not include women.)

* * * * *

It will be sufficient if we again quote a portion of the Prime Minister's peroration on this occasion. It was pretty well as follows:

"I have a perfectly open mind on this question, and would only remind the House that in view of the fact that their decision may have most unheard of and far-reaching consequences, it becomes our duty to review this matter in all its bearings. There is one fact which has perhaps not yet been realised as thoroughly as it might be under present circumstances. It is this. I have figures here showing the preponderance of women which, already

very considerable before the war, has, I regret to say, increased enormously since 1914, and for reasons which recall the losses we have all sustained so vividly that I hardly like to dwell upon them. (The Prime Minister paused, struggling with difficulty to master his emotion). "Now this tremendous preponderance of females over males has to be taken into account when dealing with the question of Women's Enfranchisement. (Hear, hear.)

For one thing surely when any class or section of a nation forms a larger part of that nation it becomes automatically impossible for any legislation to be passed which they may consider prejudicial to their interests. Their very numerical superiority renders such a contingency highly improbable if not impossible; on the other hand if enfranchised women are going to feel their interests are *not* identical with men's then they will be passing legislation which may be detrimental to men's interests, and I am convinced no one can contemplate such a possibility with equanimity at this juncture when the great work of reconstructing our social order on a solid foundation of justice and equity has but just begun. Are we to sow the seeds of resentment and suspicion that the next generation may have the trouble of tearing their roots from the soil again? The mistakes we make to-day may have far-reaching consequences, and I believe that the women themselves who have stood by us so magnificently during the terrible ordeal we have just emerged from, would draw back shudderingly if they apprehended such evil results would attend the granting of their demand, but I have too great a faith in the Hearts and Heads of the women of this country not to be convinced that every one of them—be she mother, wife, or sister—feels that her interests are identical with those of her mankind. (Hear, hear.)

But then if this be so—why political representation? Every class is represented by the men of that class. To deny this entails an admission that sex antagonism is a reality! A Sex War! As if we had not had enough of War and all that War stands for! Perish the thought!

There is yet another factor to which I must reluctantly draw the attention of this House. Unrest exists in our Eastern dominions, and any great changes made at the present time might be fraught with dire consequences. Our Indian troops are only too well aware of the many losses we sustained, for alas! they beheld these losses with their own eyes. No juggling of figures can delude these stalwart warriors. They bled for England and died for England, yet they elect no representative to sit in this House. But they will hear that women do! That it is the hosts of women here who, indirectly and through representatives they help to elect, pass the legislation under which our brothers in arms have to live. Surely such a notion is one calculated to rouse dangerous

resentment in the minds of men brought up with oriental ideas. During the suffragists' recent campaign all over the country, I am told that one of the most frequent questions the British workman put to any of the speakers concerned this numerical preponderance of women; and if the working man here, with all his well-known reverence for, and deference to, womanhood, nevertheless seems to have misgivings about what is known as *petticoat government*, what must be the feelings of an Indian Sikh? (Laughter.)

"I would humbly submit that this is *not* an opportune moment for the enfranchisement of women. Let us rather 'wait and see.' That the men who gave up their lives for home and hearth have earned the franchise for their sex, irrespective of any property qualification, is beyond dispute; but women have not given up their lives. Women, though now forming the majority of the population do not form the fighting part of it. An army of women is unthinkable. Our minds turn from such a notion with loathing as being altogether against nature. Women are non-combatants and the word 'nation' implies men with strength and power. Let us then first pay our debt to the men who have saved us from a serfdom worse than death, let us give them their due and leave it to them subsequently to decide the women's question on its own merits. It is, therefore, not on account of any personal prejudice on my part, but solely having regard to these weighty considerations that I would urge this House to retain the old legal interpretation of the word 'Person' for the purposes of this Bill."

* * * * *

So the Bill became a **MANHOOD SUFFRAGE Bill** and passed into law in due course, and women were never thought of again save as amiable and over-worked beasts of burden.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE
AND
PARLIAMENTARY MORALS.

"MANIFESTO"

BY
NORTHERN MEN'S FEDERATION
FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

(With Postscript and Appendix.)

Written by Mrs. ARNCLIFFE SENNETT,
President of the N.M.F.,
And Signed by the General Committee of the N.M.F.,
and Sixteen Magistrates of the City of Glasgow.

PRICE 1d.

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Woman's Political Disability in its relation to the Morals of a Nation at large.

In his speech at the Mansion House on the subject of Venereal Disease, the Home Secretary, Mr. Herbert Samuel, spoke of the inability to limit prostitution because "the action of the *police* was hampered in no small degree by legal restrictions."

Concerning the compulsory notification of diseased persons he said "the objection, of course, was that in the conviction of many persons well qualified to speak such a measure would not have the desired effect, because it was thought that if a person when *he* presented himself for treatment knew that *he* was to be put on a list and be subjected to control until cured the result would not be to induce but to deter them from coming forward for treatment." (the italics are ours.)

Later on in his speech he said "Another question was whether persons convicted of certain offences (soliciting) if found in prison suffering from this disease ought to be detained in some institution not necessarily in prison, until cured. He would be glad to receive the opinion of the Nation at large, before expressing his opinion."

The inference to be drawn from this speech is, that the Home Office desires greater liberty of action for the Police over women prostitutes, and fuller control and detention of them when in prison: but that persons, well qualified to speak, deprecate a similar control of diseased men out of prison. And this, in spite of the fact that the Royal Commission which has just been held upon the subject reports the disease

to be if anything more prevalent among the upper and middle classes.

The speech, though tentative, and subject to National approval, appears to be heading for the re-introduction in disguise of certain provisions of the loathsome C.D. Acts, and as the Home Secretary has publicly asked for the opinion of the Nation at large, we desire, as a body of enfranchised men and an integral part of the Nation to be allowed to publicly express our determination to fight to a man and use our votes against the "deep damnation" of the re-introduction of those Acts, or any of their provisions involving an inquisition of the sex of woman, and we wish to give our well considered reasons for this line of action, which are as follows:—

We hold this to be an ethical question rather for the conscience of the people than one to be commanded by the Police:

We believe that Prostitution is caused mainly through the accepted double code of morals:

We think that women are often led into prostitution through ignorance and innocence; forced into it by economic exhaustion; exasperated into it by the neglect of men who prefer to seduce women rather than to marry them:

We think that vicious Landlordism is a great factor in maintaining the system:

And that it is caused by a state of society which involves the presence of ordinary working women in the factories and elsewhere, and makes it impossible for them to remain with their children in their own homes to guide and educate them in a manner making for morality:

Above all, we hold the political disability of woman and her forced subjection to laws unfitted to her status as a self-respecting human being and the counterpart of man, to be responsible for prostitution:

We think that man should heal himself before he starts to persecute by legislation the victims of his double code of morals:

And we deplore attempts to reconstruct the Race upon a degraded basis of the State persecution of politically disabled woman and the State protection for the wild oats of politically emancipated man.

And we think the time is ripe for the fathers of the Nation to instruct their sons upon the value of clean living and respect for the Potential Motherhood of the Nation if the Race is to continue great.

An exhaustive study of the Commissions, Parliamentary, C.D. Acts, and Criminal Law Amendment Acts of the latter part of the last century reveal a condition of mind often to be found in Parliament which is incompatible with the State education of a healthy civilization. But, when a woman, Josephine Butler, courageously fought her way into public opinion and commenced to lead upon the subject, the hands of Parliament were forced, and a Royal Commission held in 1871 and 1872. Commissions are generally held to hang up legislation and silence Social Reformers, but the evidence attested on this Commission revealed such an awful state of life and morals under the Acts, that the public set to work at once to work for their repeal which was subsequently accomplished.* And we suggest that the republication by the Government of the Royal Commission of 1871-1872 is due to the Nation at large in order that it may become fully acquainted with the subject before it sanctions any action on the part of Parliament in this matter. It is inexpedient to refer here to the evidence of witnesses in this history of crime, but in view of the sinister suggestions reappearing in this connection we quote the answers of a doctor who was called as a witness by the Commission, one, who was opposed to the Acts:

Question (19,364) "Do you think that the law (the C.D. Act) sanctioned the grossest violation of the liberty of the subject that has ever been proposed to a British Parliament? —Yes, I agree to that.

Question (19,365). "You think that a woman, a common prostitute, who hires out her body for money, in a state of disease is entitled to the same liberty to which any harmless subjects of these realms is entitled?—She is entitled to the same amount of liberty as any man in the same condition.

Question (19,366). "Do men hire out their bodies for prostitution?—There can be no trade without a buyer and a seller, and I consider the man as much a trader as the woman, and also as likely to spread the disease.

Question (19,409). "The examination of prostitutes is altogether of such a character that you believe that it must

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necessarily have a degrading and demoralising effect upon them?—Unquestionably; my opinion of it is this, that it is an outrage which nothing human ought to submit to.”

This was the opinion of Dr. Charles Bell Taylor, who had, in the pursuit of his profession, seen the working of the Acts and the “detention” and “control” of women not necessarily in prison and was therefore a man “well qualified to speak.”

It may be said that to mention Votes for Women here, is to confuse the issue. In our opinion the political emancipation of women is part of the issue, for it is inconceivable that if women had had the same hold over Parliament as had the men of that day they would have allowed their sex to be subjected to an outrage which, in the opinion of that doctor, nothing human ought to submit to. The Women's Suffrage Movement has been, and is, mainly a moral movement, a desire on the part of women to obtain their share of authority in the State in order to cleanse it, and from our personal acquaintance with its advocates, we believe that women would, if enfranchised, accomplish this task without degrading proposals for either sex.

John Stuart Mill said in his speech on the People's Representation Act of 1867: “The time is now come when unless women are raised to the level of men, men will be pulled down to theirs.” Women were not raised to the political level of men and in direct ratio to the increased enfranchisement and status of men, their status has declined to that degree that the events of 1864 are again casting their shadows before us. Unable to perceive the relation between cause and effect a panic stricken minority now seeks to deal in a spirit of fear and cruelty with the effect of vice instead of courageously striking the axe at the root and cutting out the core.

Let us here give a time table of events, and call attention to the close connection between Parliamentary lack of morals and women's disenfranchisement.

In 1859. Lord Herbert's Commission was held and the inspection of men in the Army abolished.

In 1864. The first C.D. Act was passed and the inspection of women by men introduced. In this year the agitation by women for their enfranchisement commenced.

In 1866. The second C.D. Act was passed. The vice of the law was tightening round the unhappy women and the agitation for Women's Suffrage increased.

In 1867. Disraeli's People's Representation Act threw out the women, and enfranchised some extra millions of men.

In 1869. The third and most awful C.D. Act was passed; morals were going from bad to worse; men were sinking to the level of the women they had created; Government action was demanded and

In 1871 and 72 The Royal Commission on the C.D. Acts was held. The evidence showed that venereal disease was on the increase: that the orgies in connection with the Acts became a scandal wherever the Acts were in operation, and worst of all, that whereas the age of consent on the Continent was (and is) 21, the age of consent in England was 12 years, a fact which rendered England the most open market in the world for the White Slave Traffic and made hers the happy hunting ground and Clearing House for the Souteneurs of Europe. But no Parliamentary action was taken until Josephine Butler's continued investigations and agitation forced, once more, its hands and

In 1882. The Lords held a Commission of enquiry for better protection of girls and infants and the Infants' Bill was passed. Mothers were thrown out of the Bill as joint legal guardians of their children (*see Postscript*).

In 1883. The first Criminal Law Amendment Bill for the protection of girls and the raising the age of consent to 17 was passed by the Lords and rejected by the Commons responsible only to a *male electorate*.

In 1884. The second Criminal Law Amendment Bill was passed by the Lords and again rejected by the Commons *after* women had been thrown out of Gladstone's “People's Representation Act” of 1884.

In 1885. The third Criminal Law Amendment Bill, fixing the age of consent at 15 to meet the views of the Commons was passed by the Lords but the Commons rejected it for the third time, one Honourable Member stating that in his opinion, the age of consent (12) "should be lowered instead of raised," and spoke of "prostitutes of 9 tempting men" (see Hansard on the Debates). The callousness of Parliament and the infamous opposition of Hon. Members to the Bill drew forth Steads' agitation which threw such a light upon the appalling condition of morals in high life and its responsibility for the traffic in vice, that a storm of indignation swept over the Nation, the Criminal Law Amendment Bill was hurriedly brought back to silence the scandal, and rendered futile and feeble by amendments framed to suit its opponents, it passed into law at last, the age of consent, being raised to 16, at which it remains to-day, in glaring contrast to the 21 years on the Continent.*

This then, is a brief history, suppressing all the horrors of the under currents, but showing the close connection between Women's Political disability and the morals of the land, and we hold it to be retrogressive and injurious to the coming generation, that history should attempt to repeat its mistakes and Parliament allowed to re-introduce immoral and despotic laws framed against the sex it has so cruelly neglected. We cannot separate Women's enfranchisement from this great issue and we shall fight as determinedly for the one, as we shall resist any encroachment on their liberty in the other until such time as women themselves are free as men with an equal opportunity with men to keep themselves honourably alive by a self-respecting wage, which a raised political status alone can give them, for in very truth it is the daughters of the poor who go to feed the system.

In conclusion we wish to remind the public that the C.D. Acts never got north of Colchester, they were inaugurated chiefly (as the Doctor's Commission of 1864 stated in its title) for the benefit and better protection of Her Majesty's Forces. They were confined chiefly to the Military and Naval seaports in the South and the South-East of England. They were fiercely fought against in the North of England, and Scotland repudiated them altogether without deterioration

* See Time Table of Administrations, Appendix.

to her people. But Scotland is an integral part of the United Kingdom, fighting side by side with England for the preservation of her National honour, and, speaking as Scotsmen, and an integral part of the Kingdom we do not deem it an honour to subscribe to laws we hold in abhorrence, or to sanction the violation to the liberty of her women subjects who, by their patriotism, self abnegation, and the assistance they have rendered to the Nation in the darkest hour of its peril, have earned for the Sex an immortal glory which we shall always reverence and respect.

HAMILTON BROWN, Magistrate, Glasgow.
(General Executive N.M.F.)

WM. DAVIDSON,	do.	do.
G. D. MORTON	do.	do.
JOHN B. DRUMMOND,	do.	do.
JAMES STEWART,	do.	do.
WM. MACLURE,	do.	do.
ROBERT SADLER,	do.	do.
JOHN M. BRYCE,	do.	do.
JOHN STEWART,	do.	do.
ROBT. HUNTER,	do.	do.
JAS. STEWART,	do.	do.
THOMAS KELLY,	do.	do.
JOHN MUIR,	do.	do.
A. OLIVER EARLY,	do.	do.
ROBERT MITCHELL,	do.	do.
HENRY MACNAUGHTON,	do.	do.

R. FERGUSON,
Hon. Sec. Glasgow Centre, N.M.F.

JOHN McMICHAEL, J.P.,
Councillor Edinburgh Town Council, General Executive N.M.F.

J. WILSON McLAREN,
General Executive N.M.F.

ALEXANDER ORR,
Hon. Treasurer and General Executive N.M.F.

ROBERT K. GAUL,
Hon. Sec. Berwick-on-Tweed and N.M.F. General Executive.

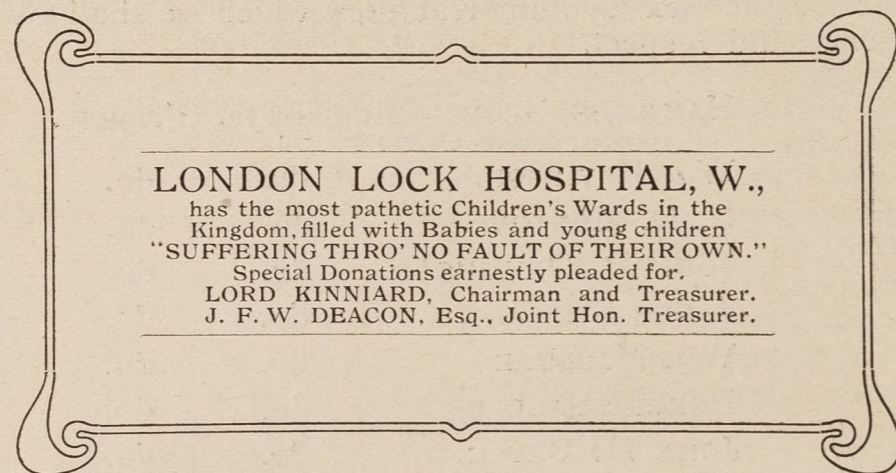
JAMES BRUNTON,
Trustee Edinburgh Trades Council, Edinburgh Executive N.M.F.

Councillor HENRY DRUMMOND,
Edinburgh Executive N.M.F.

POSTSCRIPT.

“The law of Nature, the law of God,” and the law of man.

The following is a copy of a frequent Advertisement which has appeared for some years on the front page of the *Times* :



“The law of England has not been unwise in throwing upon the father the entire responsibility of bringing up his children.”—LORD BEAUCHAMP on the “Infants’ Bill,” House of Lords, April 21st, 1885. (*Hansard of Date.*)

“I am old-fashioned enough to believe that by the law of Nature and the law of God, the father is the person who ought to have the care of his child.”—MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, on the “Infants’ Bill, House of Lords, April 30th, 1885. (*Hansard of date.*)

The mother was thrown out of the “Infants’ Bill for the better protection of Children,” and is not the legal parent of her child.

“Parliament, I venture to say has shown itself to the full as regardful of the special conditions and special interests of women and of children—(cheers)—neither of whom are directly represented, as it has of adult men who are represented in this House. (Cheers).”—Mr. ASQUITH on the Conciliation (Women’s Suffrage) Bill, House of Commons, March 28th, 1912. (*See Hansard of Date.*)

And the women were thrown out of the Suffrage Bill.

APPENDIX.

**Time Table of Administrations in their connection with
the Nation’s Morals and Women’s Disability.**

**Contageous Diseases Acts “For the better protection of
Her Majesty’s Forces.”**

- 1864. 1st C.D. Act passed. Premier: Lord Palmerston.
- 1866. 2nd C.D. Act passed. Premier: Lord John Russell.
- 1869. 3rd C.D. Act passed. Premier: Mr. Gladstone.

**Criminal Law Amendment Bills “For the better protection of
young girls and children.”**

- 1883. 1st Criminal Law Amendment Bill. Passed by Lords, rejected by Commons. Premier: Mr. Gladstone.
- 1884. 2nd Criminal Law Amendment Bill. Passed by Lords, rejected by Commons. Premier: Mr. Gladstone.
- 1885. 3rd Criminal Law Amendment Bill. Passed by Lords, rejected by Commons. Premier: Mr. Gladstone.

The Gladstone Administration was beaten on a Vote of Censure over the EXCISE, June 8th, 1885; Lord Salisbury took over the provisional Government pending the General Election of November, 1885; the Stead agitation and National outcry forced its hands; the Criminal Law Amendment Bill was hurriedly brought back to the Commons and amidst a *storm of opposition in the Commons* passed into law and became the Act of 1885.

Women's Suffrage Bills "For the better protection of Women and Children."

1867. **People's Representation Act** (Disraeli's) passed. Premier: Lord Derby. (Women thrown out.)
1884. **People's Representation Act** (Gladstone's) passed. Premier: Mr. Gladstone. (Women thrown out.)
(Women travel for over 20 years in the Desert.)
1906. **Women's Suffrage Bill** (Mr. Keir Hardie's). Talked out. Premier: Mr. Campbell-Bannerman.
1907. **Women's Suffrage Bill** (Mr. Dickenson's). Talked out. Premier: Mr. Campbell-Bannerman.
1908. **Women's Suffrage Bill** (Mr. Stanger's) **PASSED**. Majority 172. Blocked in Parliament. Premier: Mr. Asquith.
1910. **Women's Suffrage Bill** (1st Conciliation—Mr. Shackleton) **PASSED**. Majority 110. Blocked in Parliament. Premier: Mr. Asquith.
1911. **Women's Suffrage Bill** (2nd Conciliation—Sir G. Kemp) **PASSED**. Majority 168. Blocked in Parliament. Premier: Mr. Asquith.
1912. **Women's Suffrage Bill** (3rd Conciliation—Mr. Agg-Gardiner). Lost by narrow margin of 14 votes. Premier: Mr. Asquith.
1913. **Mr. Asquith's Reform Bill** (People's Representation) Sir Edward Grey's Women's Suffrage Amendment, ruled by the Speaker "**OUT OF ORDER**." Women thrown out and Bill dropped. January 24th.
-
1913. "**CAT AND MOUSE BILL**" (Mr. McKenna's). Passed in the House of Commons, April 23rd.
" " House of Lords, April 24th.
Premier: Mr. Asquith.

Lord Curzon on the Turkish Constitution.

"They found in Parliamentary Government the sole guarantee against tyranny and oppression, and the best existing vindication of those personal rights and liberties and that sense of self respect which was as dear to the eastern as to the western and which, indeed, was a portion of the imperishable heritage of the human race."—*Times*, July 21st, 1909.

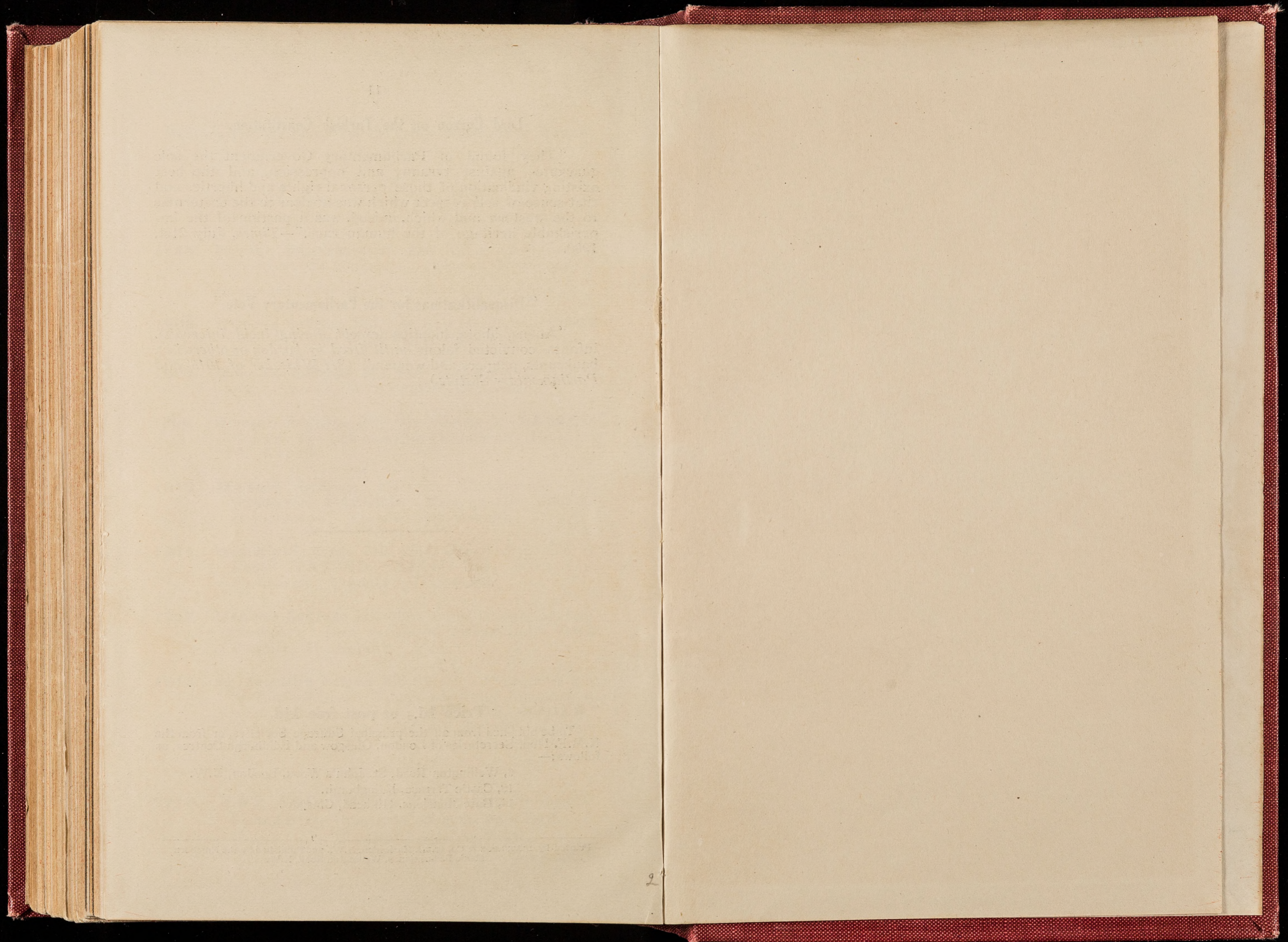
"Disqualifications for the Parliamentary Vote."

"Aliens, idiots, lunatics (*except during lucid intervals*), infants, convicted felons (*until freed by pardon or otherwise*), bankrupts, paupers and women." (*See Whitaker of 1915 and Parliamentary Statute.*)

Price 1d.; or post free 1½d.

To be obtained from all the principal Suffrage Societies, or from the N.M.F. Hon. Secretaries of London, Glasgow and Edinburgh Centres, as follows:—

6, Wellington Road, St. John's Wood, London, N.W.
13, Castle Terrace, Edingburgh.
14, Bute Mansions, Hillhead, Glasgow.



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