

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

Hope at Geneva.

It is not, as we go to press, possible to form a clear picture of what has been happening at Geneva, but to judge from the communiqué issued on 18th July the private conversations which have been taking place between the representatives of England and Japan have brought all three of the powers concerned very much closer to a possibility of agreement. Great Britain is apparently to be allowed to police her remoter trade routes with out-of-date vessels, adequate for this work though useless as fighting units, which are yet large, and therefore fast, enough to escape to harbour in time of war. These vessels are not to be counted as part of her quota, so that she will have the margin for larger fighting ships from which the naval experts cannot be torn. The truth is that there are two types of disarmament—that of people who want peace and wish the nations to disarm in order that it may be more difficult for them to fight one another, and the disarmament which is dictated purely by considerations of economy. The nations are to be prepared for war, but in order that those who are poorer may have some sort of equality of opportunity, the preparations are to be upon an agreed and not too ruinous scale. Between these two points of view there is the old gulf, and lovers of peace must not allow the word "disarmament" to disguise it from them. In the meantime the League of Nations Union has issued a pronouncement which points out that the only real barrier against war is treaties of arbitration. This is true, and if the difficulties through which we are now passing serve to remind us of it, and to remind our Governments that the cause of peace is not merely popular, but the issue on which in fact their peoples will judge them, then perhaps it will be better that those difficulties should have been made public and our consequent anxiety suffered.

No Equal Franchise This Autumn.

The answer given by the Prime Minister to Sir Patrick Ford, when he asked whether legislation for equalizing the franchise between men and women was to be introduced during the autumn session, was a curt: "No Sir." We regret this, but cannot fail to recognize that the Prime Minister would have been more than honouring his pledge if he had introduced Equal Franchise legislation during the autumn. Although at the time he made his statement in the House on 13th April with regard to the introduction of such legislation "next session" it was thought probable that the next session, i.e. the next parliamentary year, would start in the autumn, it has now been known for some time that, owing to the pressure of this year's work, the next parliamentary year will not start until February. As every month increases the risk of a general election, it is particularly unfortunate from the point of view of Equal Franchise that this is so. We hope the Government will recognize the duty obviously

incumbent on it to introduce legislation at the very beginning of the new year.

Women and Lead Paint in the House of Commons.

On Tuesday Mr. Harney (Liberal, S. Shields) introduced the Lead Paint (Employment of Women) Bill, which he had promised the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship to deal with under the Ten Minutes Rule. The Bill was negatived without a division. In an excellent little speech Mr. Harney put forward the case against the exclusion of women. "If it could be shown," he said, "that while the Regulations made the painting of buildings safe for men they did not suffice to protect women, then, of course, women ought to be excluded, not on the ground of their sex, but on the ground of their greater susceptibility to lead poisoning; but no one has attempted to make out such a case. . . . Distinctions will exist, arising out of the fitness of men or women for any occupation. Let public opinion, let their own tastes, let their own capacity, let the laws of economy separate them; but do not put upon the Statute Book a law to say to women, 'Thou shall not work in this or that occupation,' when, in all other respects but sex they are singularly fitted for them." Miss Bondfield took up the gauntlet thus thrown down with great spirit. She asked the House to reject the Bill on the grounds of the need for ratifying the draft convention of the International Labour Conference, which would abolish the use of white lead in paint, and argued that the exclusion of women was a half-way house to the exclusion of men. "If men prefer to go on being poisoned," she said, "that is absolutely no argument why women should go on being poisoned until we have discovered some other way of dealing with this subject. . . . Those who represent the working women are satisfied, by investigation and expert evidence, as well as by practical day-by-day experience of the workshops, that lead poisoning can be abolished, and ought to be abolished, and if we have to wait some time longer for men to get rid of this evil, then we will not wait long before women will get rid of it." We whole-heartedly agree with Miss Bondfield that, as was indeed pointed out by the Home Secretary himself, if the new regulations for protecting men do not prove effective, then most certainly the use of white lead should be prohibited altogether. Granted, however, that the regulations are not going to be sufficient, nevertheless, the exclusion of women will not safeguard a single individual from being poisoned. It will only mean that those poisoned will necessarily be men. Unless or until we have prohibition of lead, the whole question of the special exclusion of women should be determined, we feel, entirely according as to whether they are or are not more susceptible. On this point experts do not agree, and in our view those who demonstrate that there is no greater susceptibility for women are better able to document their case. Where experts disagree, what is clearly needed is a Government inquiry.

The B.M.A. and Equality.

On 18th July the British Medical Association, on the motion of Dr. Farmer, passed a resolution deprecating the action of local authorities who dismiss women doctors on their marriage, and reaffirming their policy of equality of pay and status for medical men and women. During the debate it was pointed out that in a recent case the doctor concerned had given up a post in London to go to Durham and that no warning had been given her that she would lose her appointment if she married. We are glad to welcome this resolution, as it supports our contention that the case for married women doctors is unanswerable. As Mrs. Simson, President of the Edinburgh Society for Equal Citizenship, pointed out in a letter to the *Scotsman*, much work among women and children is actually better performed by a doctor who is married and a mother, for psychological if not

purely medical reasons. Just as many parents would greatly prefer that some part of the training of their daughters were carried out by married women teachers, so many like to feel that the physician they consult is able to sympathize with them because she herself has shared their experiences. In both these cases it is time that local authorities ceased to behave like petty inquisitors with a divine mission to force upon women, because they are women, what the tribe of councillors think is good for them. We fear, however, that no such change of heart will occur until women in general take a larger part in local government, both by getting themselves elected to these bodies and by putting pressure on candidates at elections.

The Countess Markievicz.

On Friday last at midday many Londoners experienced a nasty turn on meeting newspaper posters inscribed with the startling notice: "Death of first woman M.P." Second thoughts discounted the sudden demise of Lady Astor, and the imagination made a lightening tour of the Dominions, Scandinavia, and Finland. A penny sufficed to purchase the reminder that in 1918 the Countess Markievicz of Sinn Féin fame was, in fact, the first woman to be elected to the British House of Commons, though for reasons connected with Irish patriotism she never attempted to take her seat there. It is not long since we recorded in these columns the death of a younger Gore-Booth sister: Eva Gore-Booth, mystic, pacifist, poet, and feminist. The elder Gore-Booth sister, whose death confronted us on Friday last, raises more turbulent and dubious memories. She was a woman who rode the storm not on the curb, but on the spur. Where there was trouble, there was she in the midst of it. Armed and uniformed, she fought the perverse and tenacious battle of Irish republicanism. She was once condemned to death and once reprieved. Twice she was imprisoned. During her later years she led, on and off, the life of a turbulent fugitive. Her husband, her daughter, and her mother appear to have played no part upon the stage of her fiery drama. She was the despair of serious politicians, but according to all accounts, greatly loved by the denizens of the Dublin slums. In the years before the war, she worked with her more significant younger sister in the English suffrage movement and in memory of that fleeting comradeship we salute her passing. For the rest—we stand silent before a baffling record, knowing well enough that hers was not the brand of patriotism which the world needs, or has ever needed, yet half suspecting in ourselves an irrational admiration for the amazonian courage and wild adventure of a fanatical Irishwoman.

Safeguard your Vote.

We print this week under the above title a valuable article from our local government correspondent, which requires the immediate consideration of all women's societies. As Miss Mason points out persons whose names do not appear on the preliminary list will be practically disfranchised for twelve months not only in the event of a General Election—if such should unexpectedly take place—but for all local government elections. Looking ahead it is impossible not to wonder if by this time next year the legislation required to enfranchise those women at present left out in the cold will have been secured in time to enable them to qualify. But we have the Prime Minister's promise that some special arrangement to meet the technical requirements of qualification will be made on their behalf if this is not the case.

Women and Work for Peace.

The International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship decided at the recent meeting of the Board in Prague to organize a study conference on Peace in Amsterdam from 17th to 19th November. The Alliance will invite to this gathering representatives of all women's organizations which are working for peace. The subjects for discussion will include not only the more obvious questions such as arbitration and disarmament, but also questions such as migration, international trade barriers, which, unless satisfactorily settled, may lead directly or indirectly to war.

A Geneva Headquarters for Women.

On the occasion of the Assembly of the League of Nations, the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship will, as last year, open a temporary Headquarters in Geneva from the 29th August to the 17th September, which it is hoped will form, as it also did last year, a meeting place for feminists who are passing through Geneva, and for all who are interested in the women's movement. The Headquarters

will be installed at the Foyer féminin, 11 Cours de Rive (2nd Floor—Telephone: St. 0034), barely three minutes' walk from the Salle de la Réformation in which the Assembly of the League is held, and will be open every afternoon (except Sunday) from 2 to 4: it will be possible to read the newspapers and other publications, to have tea, to make appointments for meeting people, to obtain useful information, to learn what well-known feminists are in Geneva, etc., and also members of the Alliance will be able to obtain, as far as circumstances permit, cards for the Assembly of the League. Members of the Board of the Alliance, who will be in Geneva at the time, especially the President, Mrs. Corbett Ashby (Great Britain) and the Secretary, Mlle Gourd (Geneva) will be delighted to seize the opportunity of meeting old friends and acquaintances of the Alliance, and to make new ones. Further, every Monday at 5 o'clock, the Alliance hopes for the pleasure of giving all its friends a cup of tea; during the three weeks a series of "talks" will be organized on questions of international feminist interest. A most cordial invitation is issued to all to help by their presence to make our Headquarters a real centre for the international woman's movement.

An International Bibliography of the Women's Movement.

At the meeting of the Board of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship referred to above it was also decided to establish a Central Bureau in Paris for the collection of a complete bibliography of the woman's movement under the direction of Madame Grinberg. The "woman's movement" so-called is not yet at an end. Indeed, we venture to suggest that it is passing into its most interesting stage. The vote is the outward and visible sign of equality, but much hard thinking, much ceaseless work must be carried on before the true equality of liberties, status, and opportunities which we seek can be obtained. It is an appropriate moment to found an international feminist library and students of the women's movement in this country will welcome this proposal. The Edward Wright and Cavendish Bentinck Library at the offices of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship contains a unique library both historical and modern of English books on the women's movement, and has published a bibliography. We should be interested to know if similar libraries exist elsewhere.

The Education of Girls.

At the Conference of the Association of Headmistresses held recently in Oxford an unusually interesting discussion arose as to the relative importance of various subjects in the teaching of girls. A strong resolution was passed asking that in the first School Examination, taken normally at the age of 16, subjects such as art, music, domestic economy, needlework, should rank equally with the more academic subjects for examination purposes. During the discussion it was pointed out how those girls whose chief interests have lain in these directions suffer from the point of view of examinations in comparison with their more orthodox sisters, as those subjects rank lower than others, and girls who would naturally wish to take them are discouraged from doing so.

Wesleyan Conference and Women Ministers.

At the Wesleyan Conference held in Bradford this week, a resolution in support of the eligibility of women for the Wesleyan Ministry was defeated in favour of an amendment referring the matter back with a view to there being a further development of the existing deaconate of women in the Church. We shall return to this subject next week.

A Useful Summer School.

A correspondent writes: The marked success of the recent Summer School held at High Leigh by the Temperance Council of the Christian Churches completely justified the unique lines on which the programme of lectures had been drafted. Grouped round the central motif "Temperance Reform in its relation to the coming of the Kingdom of God" were aspects of the subject as they appealed to the various workers in the cause of temperance. The difficulties of the preacher, the teacher, the Church worker, and the social welfare worker, all of whom are constantly confronted with the evil results of drink, were fully and freely discussed in the light of the common purpose which had drawn these students of varying religious thought together. The school was a fine example of intelligent research and spiritual enthusiasm which might well be followed in other departments of social welfare.

EQUALITY.

A writer in the *Observer* observed last week that the Powers at Geneva could not agree about the meaning of equality. This had a familiar ring. . . We felt driven to search among the great platitudes which express the fundamental characteristics of races and civilizations for those which deal with equality. All the best platitudes are, of course, mathematical. Ours is a mathematical age, and it is only when dealing with numerical abstractions that our thoughts can achieve the comfort of certainty. "If equals be added to unequals the results are unequal" will do as well as any of the others in the group. If you start with different things you will not make them alike by treating them alike. This is true. But outside the realms of pure science a statement, to be interesting, must be more than true, it must hold out the hope that we can make some use of it. And to feminists this particular truth has been very useful. It is the counter to the generalizations that woman's place is the home, and that love (of man's life, fortunately for him, a thing apart) is woman's whole existence. Once the fact has been established that some women are tall, untidy, and devoted to historical research; others small and deft with a knack for dog-breeding, while others again are never truly themselves unless the current fashion allows them to wear a quantity of bangles, we have broken down the age-long doctrine that all women must be treated equally, or at most divided into the simple categories of the pretty and the plain. In fact, this axiom is our defence against the human tendency to believe that things are alike when it saves us trouble to treat them as though they were. If this were all we had to struggle against the task would be easy, for there soon comes a point in every effort to avoid taking trouble when it is more trouble to continue

the effort than to desert the principle. We have, unhappily, not only to establish variety among women but also to assert a parity between women and men. This is a more difficult problem, for it is always easier to point out a difference obvious to the senses than to gain credence for a similarity discernible only to the mind. The difficulty might well seem insuperable when the parties to the judgment, since the beginning of the world, have been forced at every moment of their lives to move, dress, speak, even think and feel and worship differently. It is amazing that we should have done so much in the teeth, not only of prejudice, but of the instinct to give unto him that hath, and from him that hath not to take away even that which he hath. We have shown humanity where there was only sex: it is among the most remarkable of human achievements. But the desire to make a good job of it, finish the work, emerge completely from the chrysalis, need not lead us, as it has led some feminists, to forget that equal treatment, delightful and bracing though it be, will not achieve equality where the material is not equal. Artificial restrictions must be swept away, but when they are gone there remains the need of careful and discriminating constructive work. What gives freedom to one group in a modern community will not give freedom to another, burdened by special disadvantages whether of custom, physique, or merely place. The equality we aim at is not a legal fiction, it is an equal chance for the human beings who happen to be alive to develop their various gifts and powers in order that they may contribute, in the highest degree of which each is capable, to the welfare of the human race. To achieve this we must give to each class, group, type, the special treatment needed, and not imagine that any word or any formula will save us the trouble of hard thinking and of taking account of facts.

THE HOUSING PROBLEM: SLUM LANDLORDS.

By G. W. CURRIE.

III.

Last week we emphasized the special gratitude due to every active member of an inactive authority, while calling attention to certain extremely pointed observations coming from the Minister of Health, the Lord Chancellor, and the Principal Medical Officer, each and all of whom speak with grave responsibility and prolonged practical experience. This week we turn to the position of slum landlords, and as we cannot pretend that we have a good word to say for them we wish to lay due stress in the first place upon the fact that a good landlord is a good citizen. Further we concede—and concede willingly—that cases do exist of property owners who are placed in a difficult position: people in themselves good but whose property is certainly bad. Of such, we can only say that hard cases make bad laws. Their position may be a hard one: but it is also an unwarrantable one. From the point of view of the owner of sound property it is particularly damaging: the worst attack upon property is a defence of its abuses in any shape. Let property literally "put its house in order" and we shall hear less of "attacks upon property". The fact is that what matters is not so much who owns property as the nature and condition of the property. A slum may belong to a churchwarden: but this is no consolation to the tenant who pays the rent. It may even belong to the widow and orphan children of a churchwarden: but then the tenant may also be a widow struggling to bring up children. The general position is that slum property simply belongs to slum landlords. The term is a generic one: it represents with rough and ready justice—but with justice all the same—the type well known to medical officers of health. It says much for the ingrained desire of most of those who are the suffering tenants to respect legitimate property and to play the part of law-abiding citizens that the slum landlord's position has lasted as long as it has. It has been allowed to stand on a complete fallacy; consisting, as fallacies often do, of a simple juggle with words. Property which takes the form of a verminous house with a damp basement is not really property at all. In an accurately set-forth state of affairs prepared for the information of the public it should stand upon the liability side of the balance-sheet. Property which drives decent men into conditions of indecency and honourable women into conditions of dishonour, and which works wreck and ruin on the lives of countless children—what kind of property is this?

Is there a streak of truth on the side of the French Socialist who said, "property is theft?" We do not endorse the dictum: the embitterment on which it rests is an insufficient foundation for a philosophy of life or an outlook upon society. A hundred years ago men were sent to sea in "coffin ships"; that this was so is beyond challenge. Opinion—and law following in the wake of opinion—revolted against this trade in destruction. But a coffin house is no better than a coffin ship: is it? Both equally represent a determination to make money utterly regardless of the cost—so long as it falls upon other people. The owner of the coffin ship took uncommonly good care not to set sail in it himself. He collected the insurance money and did not even attend the funerals. So with the owner of the insanitary house—he draws the proceeds, that is all. The moral parallel is complete. Again, there is no moral difference between the butcher who makes profit out of trading in diseased meat and the dishonest landlord who makes profit out of trading in diseased houses. Motive and result are identical. When the offending leg of mutton is seized and the miserable wretch fined £5 is there an outcry against "confiscating" the condemned goods? The idea would be laughed out of court. Every argument for confiscating the leg of mutton applies with equal cogency to confiscating the property knowingly, obstinately, and continuously maintained in a dangerous condition by the slum landlord. Notwithstanding this, progress in ridding ourselves of slums is being most seriously retarded by ridiculous ideas of "compensation" due to these malefactors.

Compensation should really be exacted FROM THEM. There is a serious moral for the Government here. We respectfully commend it to Mr. Chamberlain's notice. Lord Beaconsfield's Government in the seventies made a serious effort to grapple with these evils. In large measure the effort after its first fine initial impetus died down was rendered useless and nugatory because Sir Richard Cross, the Home Secretary of the day, inserted provisions and procedure (perhaps the procedure was worse than the provisions) for compensation which we, looking back with easy wisdom should now recognize as entirely inappropriate. Are we never to learn? The Town Planning Acts showed that we had very late in the day grasped half the needful lesson: but half is not enough.

WOMEN AND THE SECOND CHAMBER.

By J. W. HILLS, M.P.

It will have been observed that the reason why Lord Astor postponed his Bill giving the peeresses in their own right seats in the House of Lords was Lord Cave's suggested reform of that Chamber. Since, however, Lord Cave's suggestions have gone the way of many reforms, and it is unlikely that much more will be heard of them, it is perhaps useful to reconsider the position of women in any reconstituted Upper House.

In the first place be it noted that Lord Cave was sympathetic, but vague about the peeresses. Secondly, so far as I know, he made no special mention of women as nominated members. And, thirdly, this was done at a time when the government were enlarging the electoral roll so as to include women of twenty-one, which is somewhat remarkable.

From this, various reflections arise. If I am right in thinking that the Cave scheme is dead, there remain only three alternative Upper Chambers—hereditary, nominated, or elected. If it be elected, it is pretty clear that women would have the right to stand for it just as they have for the House of Commons. I do not think that anybody would want to exclude them. Whether they would have much chance of being chosen is another matter: all that I can say is that it would depend on the woman. I can imagine many who would be excellent candidates, and I can imagine some who would not. Anyhow, I am perfectly certain no woman would advocate special privileges.

Somewhat different considerations arise if the Chamber were nominated: should or should not a demand be made for the inclusion of a definite number of nominated women? The argument can be put both ways, as it has been on the many previous occasions on which the same problem had to be faced. Casting my mind back, I recognize that in earlier days a demand for a minimum of women representatives was more commonly made than it has been lately. In recent years the tendency has been to ask for no sex discrimination, and, of course, the argument in favour of special treatment is robbed of the force that it possessed before 1918. On the whole, therefore, if we are to have a nominated Senate, I believe that opinion would condemn any special privileges for women. Nomination would be either by the government of the day or by all political parties, and in either case, the selection would be left to those who nominated, and their discretion would not be limited, and this would not do any harm, for it is probable that women who had made their way in the professions or in public life would have a fair field.

Remains the third and far most probable solution of the tangle that the House of Lords remains very much as it is, upon a hereditary basis. In that case, there is no answer to the peeresses' claim. The Lords have been idiotic to resist it. Their credit would have risen to a degree which would have surprised them had they taken the sensible course some years ago. Therefore, if the House remains under the present system, whereby all peers can sit and vote, would the claim of women be met by admitting the peeresses? Not entirely, I think, for why should not we see an extension allowing women to be made life peeresses, as men can be made life peers? It is quite obvious that a large number of life peers will be appointed: this will be in accordance with the temper of the times. Why not life peeresses, too? Personally, I would not have any law passed about this, but would leave it to public opinion. The only thing is that it must be made sure that the admission of women on these terms is legally possible.

If this were done, we should, by the action of the same forces which sent women into the Lower House, see them seated in the Upper. They are in the Lower House in such numbers as the electorate want, and the same impponderable movement which causes electors to vote for a woman in place of a man will move governments to appoint a woman as a life peeress. Anyhow, I have no doubt that any Upper House must contain women representatives.

QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN.—Miss Wilkinson asked the Home Secretary whether, in accordance with the recent decision of the League of Nations Council to send Part II of the Experts Committee on Traffic in Women and Children to the various Governments for their observations thereon, he has now received a copy of this document; whether he has any observations to

(Continued at foot of next column.)

EQUAL FRANCHISE.

The Trafalgar Square Demonstration.

Once again Trafalgar Square was the scene of a suffrage demonstration, when on Saturday representatives of twenty-three different organizations united in a great open-air meeting organized by the Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee for the old familiar demand "Votes for Women on the same terms as for men." The plinth of the Nelson Monument overhung with the historic flags of the movement made a brilliant patch of colour in the grey surroundings, but the sun shone on them before the proceedings were over. There were three platforms, presided over by Lady Rhondda, Miss Froud, and Miss Anna Munro. Dame Millicent Fawcett sat almost directly under the beautiful banner of the National Union of Societies for Women's Suffrage. She and Mrs. Despard were presented with flowers in the colours of their respective organizations by Miss Woodward, an officer of the "Young Suffragists." Representatives of many women's societies supported the two resolutions, one of which asked for the speedy fulfilment of the Prime Minister's promise and the other demanded the right of peeresses to sit and vote in the House of Lords. Mrs. Despard, who has just celebrated her eighty-third birthday, spoke with vigour on behalf of the voteless young women. Other speakers included Mr. Frank Briant, M.P., Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, Lady Balfour of Burleigh, Miss Elizabeth Macadam, Mrs. Helen Fraser, Miss Chrystal Macmillan, Mrs. Abbott, and Mrs. Hubback. A good-sized crowd collected and in spite of the inevitable difficulty of hearing the speeches remained solid and obviously interested until after the resolutions were voted on. The end is not yet, and we hope this demonstration will serve to stimulate the efforts that are being carried out in different parts of the country to focus the interests of the electorate on this reform and to convince Members of Parliament that the demand for it is far more extensive than they realize.

Letter from Dame Millicent Fawcett, G.B.E.

"I was very pleased with the great demonstration on Saturday in Trafalgar Square, and wish to convey my cordial congratulations to you and all your Committee—also my hearty thanks.

"I thought the songs quite delightful, well chosen, and to the point, and with just the right mixture of dead earnestness and humour.

"Yours very sincerely,
"M. G. FAWCETT."

(Continued from previous column.)

make; and whether he will publish such observations as a White Paper?

Sir William Joynson-Hicks: I have received a copy of Part II of the Report referred to. As the hon. Member was informed in reply to a question addressed to the Foreign Secretary in March last, the Report states that no evidence of the traffic on an organized scale was found in this country. This being so, I have not found it necessary to offer any observations on the Report.

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WASTE CORNER.

It is not often that a better novel than *Waste Corner*¹ comes our way, though it is, truth to say, somewhat dour. The inhibited life of the remote countryside, the brute facts of sex, and birth and death, reflected from farmyard to cottage and from cottage to farmyard are nakedly presented. Never for a moment does the beauty and quiet of the open country, though strangely present to the reader, conquer the storm or soften the lines of the human tragi-comedy which Miss Manning-Saunders has taken as her theme; and this must surely mean that she is herself an initiate of the country rather than an observant and appreciative town-dweller disproportionately pre-occupied with unfamiliar things. But in spite of its dourness and its nakedness and its pain, *Waste Corner* is devoid of crudity, and this presumably for the simple reason that it is beautifully written. We surmise that it would stand the acid test of reading aloud.

James Kneebone, shiftless, imaginative, catlike in his power of purring contentedly in a momentary oasis of sunlight when all is in confusion round about him, is its unforgettable hero; and it is upon his portrayal that Miss Manning-Saunders expends her master strokes. His daughter, Matilda May, through whose consciousness the story is told, fails perhaps to achieve the same degree of unquestionable conviction. But to all her creatures the author has given life in varying degrees of abundance, and we end as we began, with the assertion that here is an exceptionally good novel.

M. D. S.

THE NEW HOUSEKEEPING.²

The problem of household management and work is as urgent a matter in other countries as in our own, and various books on the subject are constantly being published. Frau Dr. Erna Meyer, of Munich, has recently written a guide to Economic Household Methods, which should prove a boon to her German sisters.

The main object of this book is to bring to the notice of the housewife the many ways in which she can economize health and strength and gain the necessary leisure for culture and recreation. The planning of the home and the necessary equipment of labour-saving apparatus are fully discussed, and emphasis is laid on the desirability of the right height for tables, sinks, chairs, etc., in order to avoid any unnecessary strain on the part of the worker. In referring to the cleaning of the rooms, Dr. Meyer urges the desirability of few pictures or ornaments, and suggests that those whose rooms are overcrowded with knickknacks and other useless objects which have neither beauty nor an intrinsic value for the possessor, should discard them without delay. She comments that "we do not want to make our homes museums or cemeteries, but to surround ourselves with a few beautiful things that breathe the rhythm of our time and day."

Detailed sections are devoted to each branch of domestic work and interesting illustrations are included of many labour-saving devices and of the least fatiguing ways of doing certain branches of the work.

The chapter relating to the children of the family shows clearly that the writer is largely influenced by the teaching of Pestalozzi and of Madame Montessori, and illustrations of the Montessori Children's Home in Berlin are given. Dr. Meyer is evidently in favour of training children in household crafts at an early age, not as a means of work, but in order to give them occupation and to make them realize that all members of a household must nowadays take their share in the work of the home.

MARIAN BERRY.

German title: *Der Neue Haushalt*.ENGLISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT.³

The first of the Study Courses issued by Ruskin College deals with English Local Government, and should prove useful to Women's Organizations that are arranging study circles and other educational work in local government. The book, which only costs 1s., includes sections on the powers and duties of the various local authorities and also gives a brief survey of the history of local government.

¹ *Waste Corner*, by Ruth Manning-Saunders. (Christophers, 7s. 6d.)² *The New Housekeeping: A guide to Economic Methods*, by Frau Dr. Erna Meyer. Franckh'sche Verlagshandlung, Stuttgart. Price 4 marks.³ *English Local Government*, Ruskin College, Oxford, 1s.

ORGANIZED WOMEN AND THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

The following letter which we believe will be of interest to our readers appeared in *The Times* of 14th July:—

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR.—The Prime Minister has offered the Government's proposals with regard to the reform of the House of Lords "for criticism and for ventilation . . . in the country." We wish strongly to urge that any legislation which may eventually materialize should provide for the adequate representation of women.

In the recent debate in the House of Lords Lord Cave, in expounding the Government's proposals, included the position of peeresses in their own right among the details to be submitted later. No other reference has been made by the Government in either House to the position of women. It seems to us, however, that this should no longer be regarded as an open question, as both in 1925 and 1926 other representatives of the present Government had advocated the principle that women should be included on equal terms with men. Lord Salisbury, for instance, speaking during the debate on the second reading of the Parliament (Qualification of Peeresses) Bill in May, 1925, quoted Lord Birkenhead's admission that "he, for his part, did not intend to contest it, but would yield to the argument that you could not have a Constitution in which, of all assemblies in the country, this should be the only one in which women should not be entitled to sit," and added:—

"I think he is right. I do not think the thing could be argued any longer. So far as that main principle is concerned, the matter is decided."

In 1926, during the debate on the same Bill, Lord Birkenhead stated:—

"Women in a reformed House of Lords should have the same right in equal conditions with men."

It seems, therefore, scarcely to need argument that in the Upper House, however it may be constituted, women should be accorded the same rights of electing or being elected, of nominating or being nominated, as are enjoyed by men, so that in the Upper as in the Lower House the point of view of women should be represented and their experience made available, both on general questions and on those in which they have a particular concern. Yours faithfully,

E. LOUIE ACRES, Chairman of Executive Committee, League of the Church Militant; CATHERINE BUCHANAN ALDERTON, President Elect, National Sisterhood Movement; MARGERIE CORBETT ASHBY, President, Women's National Liberal Federation, President, International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship; NANCY ASTOR; DOROTHY BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH; AMY BEDHALL, National President, Women's Co-operative Guild; ELSIE E. BOWERMAN, Honorary Secretary, Women's Guild of Empire; HELEN DOUGLAS-IRVINE, Chairman, St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance; MILlicent GARRETT FAWCETT, G.B.E., President, London and National Society for Women's Service; H. FRANKLIN, President, National Council of Women.

KATHARINE FURSE; ELEANOR D. HOOD; E. KNIGHT, Honorary Treasurer, Women's Freedom League; LUCY A. LOWE, President, Association of Headmistresses; EDITH LYTTLETON; ALICE MODEL; CHRISTINE M. MURRELL, President, Women's Election Committee; ELEANOR F. RATHBONE, President, National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship; AGNES E. STACK, President, National British Women's Total Abstinence Union; CATHARINE L. WESTMORLAND; LAURA A. WILSON, President, Women's Engineering Society; U. GORDON WILSON, Secretary, Association of Assistant Mistresses in Secondary Schools.

National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship,
15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

EVERY FRIDAY.

ONE PENNY.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS.

By BERTHA MASON.

SAFEGUARD YOUR VOTE.

The new Register of Voters for England and Wales which will come into force on 15th October next, is now being prepared. The date for the publication of the preliminary lists was 15th July and copies are now open to inspection at municipal buildings, post offices, public libraries, on church doors, and at the offices of the respective political parties.

All qualified electors, women as well as men, all who are in doubt as to whether they are qualified, all who have changed their addresses, should examine these lists, and make sure that their names and addresses are correctly entered. If these do not appear in the lists, or are incorrectly recorded, immediate steps should be taken to inform the Registration Officer and get the mistakes rectified. In case of doubt or difficulty the agent of any of the political parties will render advice and assistance in regard to the matter and the steps to be taken in respect to claims.

It is important that the preliminary lists should be inspected, for the following reasons:—

(1) In order to vote, it is essential to be on the Register ;
(2) The Register now being prepared will remain in force from 15th October, 1927, to 15th October, 1928.

(3) Persons whose names do not appear on the preliminary lists and on whose behalf claims are not made between 15th July and 7th August, will not be included in the new Register. This means that they will be practically disfranchised for twelve months, and unable to vote at any elections for Members of Parliament, County Councillors, Town Councillors, District Councillors, and Poor Law Guardians, which may take place between 15th October, 1927, and 15th October, 1928.

It is important also to remember that it is on the Register now being prepared that the *triennial elections* for County Councils and district councils which will take place in the spring of 1928 will be fought.

For the reasons set forth we earnestly recommend our readers to safeguard their votes, by carefully inspecting the preliminary lists now on view and in case of error or omission to inform the Registration Officer in the respective localities, at once, who will supply forms on which claims can be made.

There is no time to lose. The last day for sending in claims is 7th August.

Briefly, the qualifications for women electors are as follows:—

I. A woman is qualified either (a) by virtue of her own qualification, or (b) by her husband's local government qualification. In the latter case she must have attained the age of 30 years.

For the Local Government Vote.—Broadly speaking: (1) Every woman of 21 years of age who is not an alien or otherwise legally disqualified, is entitled to be registered as a local government elector, if, for the qualifying period, viz. the three months ending 1st June, she (a) has occupied or jointly occupied, as owner or tenant, land or premises, or (b) has occupied a room or rooms furnished by herself, or (c) has inhabited a dwelling-house or rooms by reason of her employment, provided the employer does not live in the house; (d) Every married woman, if she is 30 years of age, who is not disqualified as an alien, etc., and is the wife of a local government elector in respect of premises in which they both reside.

II. Parliamentary Vote.—Broadly speaking, every woman who has attained the age of 30 years, and is not an alien or otherwise disqualified, who for the qualifying period has occupied or jointly occupied land or premises in her own right, or rooms furnished by herself for the period stated, or is the wife of an occupier.

Further information if required, in regard to electoral qualifications, etc., may be obtained on application to the women's organizations or to the agents of the respective political parties.

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Parliamentary and General Secretary: Mrs. HUBBACK.

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

DAME EDITH LYTTTELTON.

Conference, Monday, 25th July.

Visitors will be welcome at the above Conference to be held in the Lounge of the Caxton Hall on Monday, 25th July. Tea (price 1s. each), 4.30 p.m. Meeting, 5 p.m.

Reception, 11th October.

We are glad to be able to announce that Dame Edith Lyttelton has accepted the invitation of the National Union to be the principal guest at a Reception to be held on Tuesday, 11th October (place to be announced later). Dame Edith will give an account of the Assembly of the League of Nations.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

I. The Annual Council Equal Franchise Demonstration.

It is hardly necessary to announce that as in previous years an Equal Franchise demonstration will be held next year in London during the Annual Council Meeting. The exact time and place have yet not been fixed, it but is expected that the gathering will have an unusual interest owing to the fact that it will take place early in the new session when legislation has been promised.

II. The Summer School, 1928.

The officers have been repeatedly asked when it is proposed to hold another Oxford Summer School. The Executive Committee next week will consider a proposal to hold a school early in September, 1928, extending over ten days or two weeks, of which one important section will be allotted to young political voters under 30—if, indeed, they have not already acquired the full status of citizenship. The decision of the Committee will be announced later.

PERSONAL.

Our members will be interested to hear that Mrs. Wintringham is shortly going on an extensive tour in America. She is specially interested in seeing agricultural America, and in the status of women in educational and political life.

THE EXCHEQUER.

Wanted two Cheques for £50 and four of £25 each!

The Treasurer writes: "I feel very much pleased at the way contributions are coming in. Refusals can be counted on the fingers of one hand. There is a steady flow of cheques which speaks well for the extent of the interest in the work for which we stand. This week I am gratified to receive donations from Rotherham and Sunderland, where the hardships of last year are still felt, and a second contribution to the guarantee fund from Newport, accompanied by a letter calculated to cheer the hearts of the officers. So far no systematic effort has been made to secure new subscribers; we have been working steadily on our old lists. I am confident that many outside our immediate circles will gladly contribute their quota to the Common Cause when asked to do so. I must, however, confess to a slight degree of disappointment that I have not yet been able to close with Mrs. Corbett's splendid offer. Four cheques (already acknowledged) of £25 and over, have been given since the offer was made, and I have a further promise of £100. This leaves £200 still to raise. Perhaps it is too much to expect this before the August slack season. But it is not wholly impossible that a miracle may happen and that some persons reading these lines will be moved to respond at once! Nevertheless, smaller sums are always very welcome.

RESPONSES TO THE GUARANTEE FUND 1927-29.

	Amount promised for one year.	
	£	s. d.
Already published up to 15th July	894	1 0
Received and Promised for one year—		
" D "	193	11 0
" D "	3	3 0
Newport and District W.C.A. (making £10 10s. for one year)	5	5 0
Sunderland W.C.A.	1	1 0
	£1,097	1 0

CORRESPONDENCE.

RECOGNIZED BROTHELS WITHIN THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

MADAM,—This Association wishes to call attention to a serious step backward which has recently been approved by His Majesty's Government. The Federated Malay States, Singapore, and Hong-Kong are all under similar laws, and in each of these Crown Colonies are large numbers of officially recognized brothels. In 1925 the Colonial Office Advisory Committee on "Social Hygiene," after examining all the facts in regard to Singapore, recommended the Government to "frame its policy now with a view to making possible, at the earliest practicable date, the suppression of all brothels, whenever their existence is discovered." We all hailed this as a victory, and it was most encouraging evidence of the change in official opinion. But what has happened? So far as my Committee can ascertain no steps have been taken to suppress brothels, and in the Federated Malay States an amendment to the existing law has recently been approved by the British Government under which prostitutes suspected of venereal disease may be compelled to submit themselves to a medical examination, or be liable to a fine of £100, or imprisonment for three months. This Act, rather strangely, is called "Women and Girls Protection Enactment!" Lady Astor asked a question for this Association on 29th June, and received this reply:—

MR. AMERY: The object of the amendment is to prevent brothel-keepers from evading the provisions of the law which prohibits their permitting a woman suffering from contagious disease to remain in the brothel. There was previously no power to order the medical examination of a prostitute. Thus the object of the law has been defeated by brothel-keepers instigating prostitutes to object to medical examination. There is no question of any general compulsory and periodical examination. The amendment has received my approval, and I do not consider it necessary to call the former Committee together again to consider it.

It is obvious that if the British Government sanctions extensions of legislation which are solely devised with the futile object of trying to ensure that women in recognized brothels are healthy there is no immediate intention of eliminating the brothels. These recognized houses are a source of traffic in Chinese young girls, and my Committee begs that all societies interested will send in resolutions to the Colonial Secretary and the Prime Minister somewhat as follows:—

"This Committee notes that the League of Nations' Report on the Traffic in Women repeatedly calls attention to the fact that the existence of licensed or officially recognized brothels is undoubtedly an incentive both to national and international traffic in women. This Committee therefore calls upon the British Government to take immediate steps for putting into operation in the Straits Settlements the recommendations of the Colonial Office Advisory Committee's Report of 1925 (CMD. 2501), so that the elimination of recognized brothels shall immediately be begun there. This Committee further urges the Government to call together again the Colonial Office Advisory Committee, and to put before it all proposals dealing with prostitution which are being or may be made in the Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States, and in Hong-Kong."

ALISON NEILANS,
Secretary Association for Moral and Social Hygiene.

LEGAL ADVICE FOR THE POOR.

DEAR MADAM.—The Fabian Women's Group has made arrangements for the attendance of Miss Gwendolen Petersen, a fully qualified woman solicitor, at their offices in 25 Tothill Street, S.W. 1, for the purpose of giving free legal advice to such poor persons as are in need of it. Miss Petersen will attend every Wednesday evening from 7-9 p.m., beginning on the evening of Wednesday, 14th September. We should be most grateful if your readers would bring the matter to the notice of any poor persons whom they know to be in need of advice. We should be glad to send posters for display to anyone able to dispose of them.

DOROTHY TAYLOR,
Secretary, Fabian Society (Women's Group).
25 Tothill Street, S.W. 1.

AN EXCELLENT BUSINESS PRECEDENT.

We have received, as is usual about this time of year, the annual publication of Cadbury Bros., Ltd., for 1927. Last year it took the form of an illustrated account of the process of manufacture and packing at the Bournville factory. This year it thrusts back and deals both historically and descriptively with the production of the raw material in the tropics of Africa. These annual publications are not only attractive in themselves, as well as useful from an educational point of view, but in so far as they focus public interest upon the remoter phases of production they may serve to stimulate a sense of international interdependence in the world-wide business of getting a living; we could wish that more firms were disposed to advertise their activities in this particular manner.

EQUAL FRANCHISE APPEAL.

	£	s.	d.
Already published up to 15th July	247	12	6
Bolton W.C.A.	3	3	0
Deneke, Miss H. C.	2	2	0
Fawcett, Dame Millicent, G.B.E.	10	0	0
Leaf, Miss E. M.	1	0	0
Rotherham, W.C.A.	2	12	6
Selborne, The Countess of	5	0	0
Speakers' returned travelling expenses	1	5	0
Strode, Miss E. Louisa C.	25	0	0
	£297	15	0

DONATION TO GENERAL FUNDS.

Coppock, Miss A.	£1	0	0
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NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

DONCASTER S.E.C.

At a meeting of the Doncaster S.E.C. held on 1st July, Mrs. Hubback gave a very interesting address on the points on the N.U.S.E.C. programme referring specially to Equal Franchise and the Employment of Married Women. The meeting was followed by a discussion on the work of the N.U.S.E.C.

THE KENSINGTON AND PADDINGTON S.E.C.

On the 9th July a successful meeting was held at Pembroke Lodge, Edwardes Square, when the principal speaker was Mrs. Elliott-Lynn, the very interesting woman aviator. She gave a comprehensive address on the wonderful strides aviation has made since flying was considered to be almost a forlorn hope. Aviation, she said, had advanced very considerably in twenty-five years, since the time when Santos Dumont was a pioneer, at the end of the nineteenth century. She did not see any reason why women should not take up this career; fifteen British women were now pilots. If asked what jobs were open to women aviators she would suggest that, having obtained the necessary certificates, women could go in for teaching, carrying passengers, and light aeroplane club work. Mrs. Corbett Ashby, M.A., was in the chair, and the meeting was held by kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Corbett. Councillor Helen Fraser and Dame Katharine Furse also spoke.

LIVERPOOL WOMEN CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION.

Week-end Conference, 8th and 9th July.

Mrs. Hubback had been asked to lecture on "Women and Factory Legislation" so that members who had not been able to attend the last N.U.S.E.C. Council meeting might hear and consider all the difficulties arising out of the application of the principle of equality to protective and restrictive legislation for women. Mrs. Hubback was splendidly clear and thorough, and it was a little disappointing that the discussion was by no means full. Even those present representing W.C.A.s in industrial areas reported that they had not sufficiently close contact with any large number of factory workers to be able to contribute in any special way to the discussion.

From what was said it was fairly evident that those present were in agreement on the whole with the resolution passed at the Council meeting, and were certainly not desirous of seeing the equality principle acted upon in any more rigid way.

The Saturday morning session was held, by Miss Rathbone's kind invitation, in the garden at Oakfield. Those present, though fewer in number, followed Mrs. Hubback with deep interest through the complications of the present schemes of social insurance. The suggestion that, sooner or later, there might be one national scheme covering not only those contingencies at present provided for by the State, but possibly also some form of Family Allowances and burial insurance, came as a welcome relief to the mind. We were, however, quickly warned that this day was far off, and that our immediate attention must be turned to trying to secure amendments to fill up some of the gaps and procure the advantages of insurance for married women. The discussion largely turned on this point, and on the question whether the domestic calls upon a married woman did not make it more difficult to decide between malingering and real inability to work.

Half an hour at the end of the morning session was reserved for the discussion of the relation of the Headquarters of the N.U.S.E.C. with its affiliated societies specially with reference to the best ways in which local societies can second in the constituencies the work of Headquarters for Equal Franchise. Mrs. Hubback certainly succeeded in setting us once more devising plans which we hope will bear fruit in the autumn.

The afternoon session was devoted to some Housing Problems. Miss Marion Fitzgerald was our speaker, and set the problem for us by giving us the main points dealt with by recent conference on Housing in Manchester. Speakers from different districts were able to give details of building schemes in their own areas. The methods of "re-conditioning" in various towns were compared and its value was weighed against that of demolition and rebuilding. In this connection the Liverpool plan for temporarily housing dispossessed tenants in large block dwellings during rebuilding was described.

The outcome of the Conference will certainly be not only a deepening of enthusiasm, but a clearer view of possible lines of advance in the subjects considered.

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