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THE CASE FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

BOOKS ON THE SUFFRAGE QUESTION

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LONDON : T. FISHER UNWIN.

Shaw, Neave, John
THE CASE
FOR
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

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THE LEADERS OF THE FOUR PARTIES ON THE SUFFRAGE QUESTION.



THE RT. HON. SIR HENRY CAMPBELL- BANNERMAN, M.P.

“. . . The more I come to close quarters with the social questions which affect the great mass of the people of this country, the more am I driven to the belief that women ought to have the power of expressing their opinions on those subjects and help in their solution.”

THE RT. HON. A. J. BALFOUR, M.P.

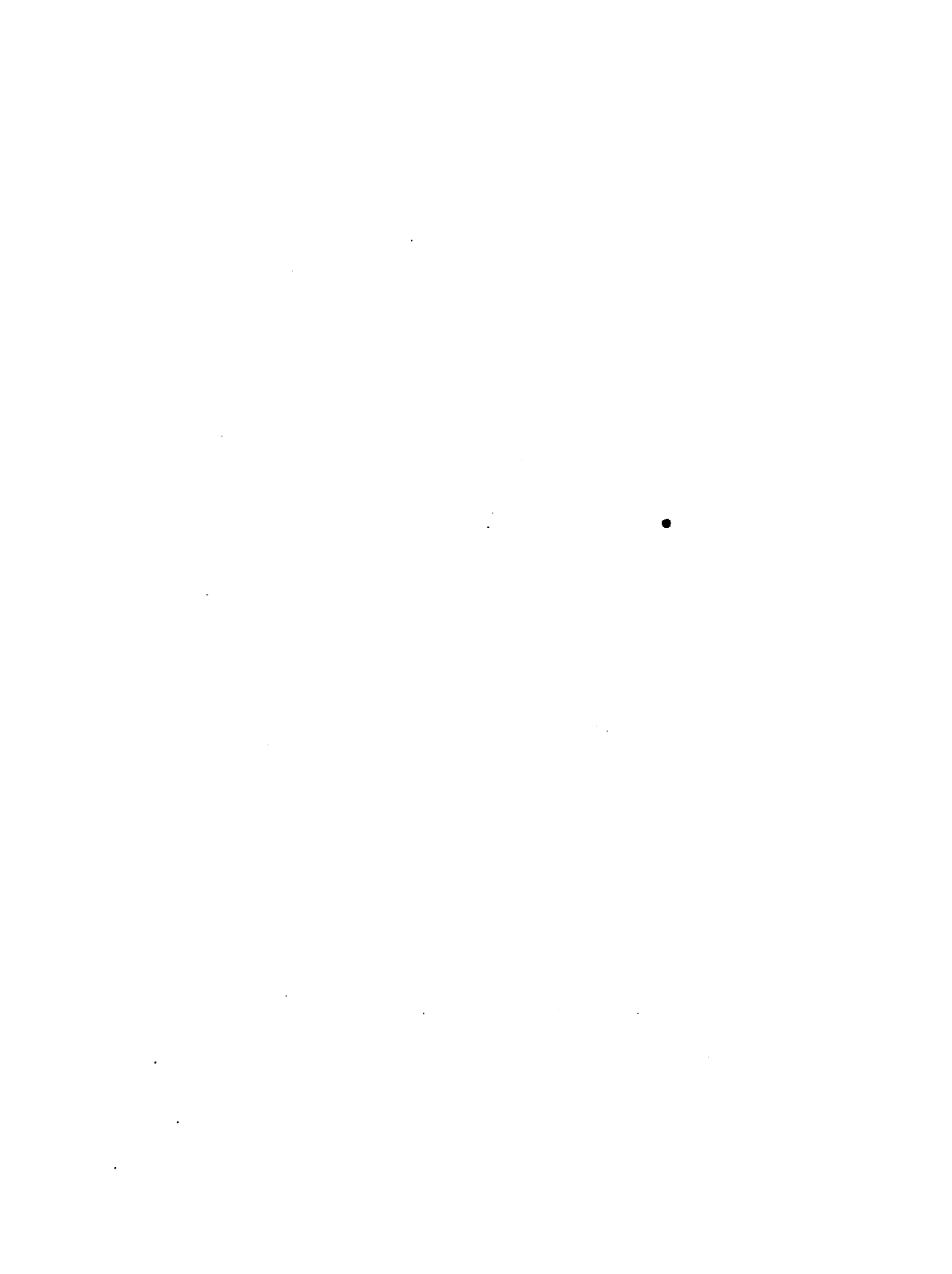
“We have been told that to encourage women to take an active part in politics is degrading to the sex, and that received the assent of an hon. friend of mine below the gangway. It has received the assent of almost every speaker to-day. I should think myself grossly inconsistent and most ungrateful if I supported that argument in this House, for I have myself taken the chair at Primrose League Meetings, and urged to the best of my ability the women of this country to take a share in politics, and to do their best in their various localities to support the principles which I believe to be sound in the interests of the country. After that, to come down to the House, and say I have asked these women to do that which degrades them, appears to me to be most absurd.”

MR. JOHN REDMOND, M.P.

“Is it not absurd to say that a woman in this country who may be left a widow, who may have the training of her children, the regulating of their education, the forming of their character, is to have no voice whatever in the laws to govern the state of the future citizens of which she has had the training?”

MR. J. KEIR HARDIE, M.P.

“I know of no argument in support of the grant of the franchise to men which does not equally apply to giving the franchise to women.”



INTRODUCTION

BY BROUGHAM VILLIERS

IT is barely three years ago since, in writing of the apathy of the nation towards the old Liberal ideals, I penned this sentence: "Until women realise more fully than, alas! most of them do, the vital importance of politics to them, there are many electoral anomalies, but no loudly asserted grievance." Even so, the expression "loudly asserted" was an afterthought for "deeply felt," due to the hope that thousands of quiet women might feel adequately the indignity of being denied the elementary rights of citizenship, while lacking means or courage to avow their discontent. No one would use either phrase now. Confined three years ago to obscure corners of the newspapers, to meetings in private rooms, to the conversation of a select few, the question of woman's emancipation has suddenly become the most insistent political problem of the day. Even the apostles of "Tariff Reform" play a less conspicuous part at bye-elections, even the politics of Labour are less discussed in the public Press than the agitation which then appeared so lifeless. In less than three years the movement

for the enfranchisement of women has made greater strides than in the century before, and the seed sown long ago by Mary Wollstonecraft seems at last likely to bear fruit.

There must indeed have been a deep, though almost inarticulate, discontent among the women of England to render so rapid a change possible. This discontent has at last found voice, and that not only through the members of the Women's Social and Political Union. This book will, it is hoped, come as a revelation to many of the wide extent to which the desire for political enfranchisement has permeated all classes of women in this country. Among the older suffragists, among the women Trades Unionists of Lancashire and Cheshire, among the thrifty housewives of the Co-operative Guilds, the influence of the same militant spirit will be seen working as in the organisation whose tactics have occasioned so much comment. Nor is it only the organised women who have felt the influence of the new movement. No book could be adequately representative of this new enthusiasm unless it found a place for the professional woman. Miss Smedley, Miss McMillan, and Miss Atkinson here give us the views of feminine culture and literature, while Mr. Zangwill and Mr. Keir Hardie voice for us the reflex effect of the movement on masculine letters and masculine politics. In the world outside we may see things no less significant. In Parliament the question is no longer discussed flippantly, but with the gravity due to a matter of practical politics. In the congresses of Labour there may be divergence of method,

but not indifference ; in the counsels of the older parties there is an angry feeling that at least this is a question that can no longer be ignored.

How welcome all this is to those who have for years striven to drive out the early-Victorian attitude towards women from politics it is needless to say. Looking out on a world pregnant with hope from east to west, the friend of democracy finds no part of the great world movement more hopeful than that which the women of England are now carrying on for their own emancipation. Even the Russian Revolution is not more widespread, certainly not more unexpected than this. In our unromantic age, our unromantic land, a great popular movement has at last arisen, a movement of revolt, not less heroic than those of more distant times and nations.

It is not yet so very long ago since the members of the Women's Liberal Associations decided no longer to work for any candidate who was not in favour of the emancipation of their sex. The views of the candidates were ascertained, and many of the most earnest women refused to work for unsatisfactory men. Here, perhaps, the more clear-sighted women may have realised the extent to which the denial of citizen rights to women has vitiated the atmosphere of British politics. In a State where women had votes it would be impossible for any party to select a candidate unacceptable to its members of either sex ; but in England, outside the ranks of the Independent Labour Party, the whole business of selecting candidates is almost entirely monopolised by men. The members of Conservative and Liberal Associations

select their candidates almost without consultation with their women comrades, and then invite the Primrose League and Women's Liberal Associations to work for them! Hence it comes about that the male supporters of either party are, for the most part, profoundly ignorant of the women's view of any question, and the women have no guarantee that, at any time, a candidate distasteful to them may not be thrust upon them. In that case they may be faced with the alternative of working for an opponent or of appearing at least to be disloyal to their party. Every authoritative party organisation should be so constructed as to be equally accessible to people of either sex. A party that desires to democratise the nation should begin by democratising itself.

The new policy of the Liberal women, then, though it has done something to advance the suffrage movement within the ranks of the party now in power, lacked the leverage to do as much as it ought; and even now Liberalism is hardly in advance of Toryism on this question. Many years of patient effort have failed to get Women's Enfranchisement recognised as a fundamental item on the Government programme. It is still perfectly possible that the largest Liberal majority for generations may do nothing for women; it is almost certain that it will do nothing unless compelled by outside pressure. Fortunately this outside pressure is now being applied, and that in a number of ways hitherto unattempted.

Our civilisation shows many pathetic figures, one of the most interesting of which is the aged lady

grown grey in the cause of justice for her sex. For over forty years the suffrage societies have pleaded for the elementary rights of citizenship before parliaments more amenable to voting pressure than to the claims of justice or chivalry. They have pleaded in vain ; but the patience of the older suffragists now shows signs of exhaustion, and the General Election of 1906 would have been a memorable one in the history of the movement, even without the new departures of the Women's Social and Political Union. Never before were candidates so persistently " heckled " ; never before were the views and pledges of every elected man so clearly recorded. The fact that 420 members of the present Parliament are definitely pledged to Women's Suffrage is largely due to the efforts of the older societies. In the congested state of public business the election promises of private members matter little, if unsupported by a vigorous agitation outside ; but, in view of the present position of the suffrage movement among women generally, this theoretically favourable attitude of Parliament is a fact of great importance. The efforts of the suffragists have secured a large majority in the House, and if this Parliament dies without conferring the franchise on women, the blame must rest entirely with the Cabinet. This is a satisfactory result of the work of the older suffrage societies, but it is due to the vast increase of vigour displayed by them for some time before the elections. In spite of the many acute issues then claiming the attention of the public, the education, fiscal, and Chinese labour

controversies, the older suffragists found time to devote much more attention than of old to their special subject. Lapsed societies were revived, new groups were founded, and the question was brought more prominently before politicians than on any previous occasion.

At the same time women were playing a conspicuous part in the organisation of the new Labour Party. Ladies like Mrs. Pankhurst, Miss Margaret McMillan, and Mrs. Glasier, the late Mrs. Enid Widdington and Miss Caroline Martin had, from the first, done great things to further the propaganda that made such a party possible. In Labour politics, then, women have been in the inner circle from the commencement. It should never be forgotten that the million Trades Unionists and others who subscribe to the funds of the party include a large proportion of women. Among the Lancashire cotton operatives, indeed, women are in a great majority; and, as pointed out by Mrs. Nash, the character of the questions recently submitted to the people has been specially calculated to increase the interest of women in politics. Even in Australia, where there is no question of food taxes, I learn from Mrs. Martel, the Australian lady, who, after aiding to win the franchise at home, is now with us battling for the emancipation of her English sisters, women form the backbone of the Free Trade Party. Victoria, where women vote only for the Federal, not for the Colonial Parliament, is the most strongly Protectionist colony; New South Wales, where they have the full franchise, is firm for Free Trade. This, by

the way, may help to account for Mr. Chamberlain's anti-suffragist opinions. Working women, who feel more severely than any one else the pressure of indirect taxation, could not be indifferent to proposals to tax without their consent the bread and meat for which they have such a struggle to pay. Mr. Chamberlain's campaign, then, had the unexpected effect of stimulating the demand for the franchise among the working women of Lancashire and Cheshire. The Labour Representation Movement was then making rapid headway, and Mr. Shackleton, the member for Clitheroe, found himself in the unique position of depending for his election and other expenses, in the main, on the subscriptions of women Trades Unionists. Naturally the women insisted on having a candidate favourable to their views, and Mr. Shackleton came to Parliament pledged to attend to the demands of the majority of his union.

Yet strong as Mr. Shackleton and others may be on the subject, the vicious atmosphere of British politics already alluded to affects even many of the Labour Party. It is next to impossible for the politician, however conscientious, to keep ever in his eye the needs of a non-voting class. No "interest" with votes behind it will ever be ignored altogether, and those who have felt deeply the falsity of one-sex politics will realise how hard a battle must sometimes be fought even among those theoretically in favour of universal suffrage. The Lancashire women are too keenly alive to the importance of the question to be entirely content with any party not wholly under

their own control. Hence the General Election of 1906 saw another novelty, but little regarded at the time. Miss Gore-Booth recalls the candidature of Mr. T. Smith for Wigan, an attempt that would probably have been successful but for the obtrusion of an official Liberal rival, whose presence served only to split the progressive vote and preserve a seat for the reaction. The figures of this election were :—

Sir F. S. Powell (C.)	3,573
T. Smith (Women's Suffrage)	...		2,205
Colonel W. Woods (L.)	...		1,900

Thus the Conservative obtained a majority of 1,368. Had Liberalism been generous, I might say just enough to allow the Women's Party a straight fight, the Lancashire women might have won their very first contest.

The practical experience of work of a semi-public character gained by the women Trades Unionists and Co-operators of the North of England has indeed had a vastly stimulating effect on their interest in the wider politics of the State. Women Co-operators are among the keenest suffragists, and it is from them we have the most insistent demand for the enfranchisement of married women, of working-men wives. There is no class whose outlook on life, and consequently on politics, is more central than that of the housekeepers; and in excluding them from direct influence over the destinies of the nation we deprive ourselves of the help of the very pick of the voters.

Whether, then, as most suffragists are agreed, the best thing to do is to destroy the sex disability first, or to start with a wider measure, the enfranchisement of all married women is a necessity, not only of just, but of stable politics, and must certainly come in the near future.

“How beggarly appear arguments before a defiant deed!” These words of Walt Whitman, the poet who has written more sanely about women than perhaps any other, must have occurred frequently during the last few months to ardent friends of the Women's Movement, watching with a fearful interest the doings of the Women's Social and Political Union. By a long course of patient effort, by the gradual increase of women's influence in politics, trade unionism, and co-operation, the ground had been prepared for a great upheaval of the disfranchised sex. But the electric spark was needed which should turn woman the suppliant into woman the rebel. That spark has been supplied by the heroism and devotion of the women of the Social and Political Union. In face of these, objections may occur to the mind, but criticism is almost silenced among those who feel deeply how great is the work the members of the Union have achieved. Society has been angry and shocked, but society, for the first time in the history of the movement, has been compelled to listen. During the recent by-election at Hexham, while “Tariff Reformers” preached to inattentive ears, and even the candidates themselves received only moderate audiences, every village eagerly gathered together

to hear what the "suffragettes" had to say. The Union has secured for the women of England the ear of the electorate, and, whatever may happen in the future, Women's Suffrage is henceforth a living question.

All this is well, for the issue raised is the greatest of modern times. On its decision depends nothing less than the character of the whole progressive movement in England. Under our eyes, the young democracy is taking shape; it is stating its peculiar problems, and formulating its answers to them. Questions of education, temperance, unemployment, housing, land, poverty, and finance, little regarded by the last generation, form the subject matter of politics in the present, and will do so still more in the immediate future. Yet, in the phrase already employed, so long as women remain without direct influence in the life of the nation these things can only come to life in a vitiated atmosphere. The removal of the sex disqualification will bring fresh air into English politics. Every advance made by constructive democracy must touch, never less, often more intimately the lives of women than of men, and the work of the age is constructive democracy. But parliaments respond only to voting pressure, rarely indeed to argument pure and simple; and thus the exclusion of women from the franchise means their exclusion from the work of the age. A grant of the suffrage to women on the same terms as men would only enfranchise a limited number of women, but it would suffice to change for the better the mental outlook of almost every

practical politician in the land, while it would have far-reaching effects on the thoughts and feelings of the most commonplace "man in the street."

There could be no easier task for the present Government with its immense majority than to pass the simple measure introduced into the last Parliament to deal with the question. For this there is a majority ready pledged to their hands, a burning agitation ready to support them in the country, and no probability of serious opposition. It may safely be predicted that the moment a strong Government takes up this measure opposition will collapse, for that will mean the coming into existence for the next election of an actual women's vote; and though novices like Mr. Belloc may imagine vain things, older hands like Mr. Evans and Mr. Cremer will probably be wise enough to abstain from offending their future constituents. The Bill is as follows:—

"In all Acts relating to the qualifications and registration of voters or persons entitled or claiming to be registered and to vote in the election of members of Parliament, wherever words occur which import the masculine gender the same shall be held to include women for all purposes connected with and having reference to the right to be registered as voters and to vote in such elections, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding."

This change in the law would suffice to create a new political atmosphere. It would serve to recast every election address and almost every speech at the next general election. Candidates of

all parties would know that there was an actual woman's vote, which might be offended and should be conciliated. We should no longer see candidates selected without consultation with the women of the party, without reference to this woman's vote. Canvassers would be sent round carefully instructed how to appeal to the needs and wishes of women; clever leader-writers would rack their brains over the unaccustomed task of finding reasons why women should support their party; ex-members of the House, who had a bad suffrage record, would either be persuaded to retire into private life or engaged in explaining away awkward votes and speeches, kindly unearthed from Hansard by their opponents. Every politician who knew his business would be "converted" by the accomplished fact; every political and social issue specially interesting to women would be galvanised into new life. In fact, politics would be cleared for ever of the spirit of sex domination and sex exclusiveness.

We can leave such difficulties, not without amusement, to the political wire-pullers of the near future; the constructive democrat has other things to consider. In the great city, says Walt Whitman again, "outside authority enters always after the precedence of inside authority." The institutions of a people are but the external and visible expression of the inner spirit of the nation and the age. The young democracy of this old nation can only build in the likeness of the spirit within it, the spirit of sex domination or of sex equality. It is this that makes many women and some men,

temperate in other questions, so vehement in this. The denial of citizen rights to women is more than a mistake in detail; it is a blasphemy against the spirit of democracy, the unpardonable sin. It is painful that the fabric of the new democracy must needs be raised up slowly; it will be intolerable if we do not build aright, according to a human, not merely a masculine conception of politics. Before we proceed further in the work of constructive democracy, it is essential we should get the foundations right, that we should supply women with the only weapon that can secure the attention of politicians. This would secure one thing at least, that whether the forward march of humanity be swift or slow, at least men and women will advance with equal steps towards their common destiny.

THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BY FLORENCE BALGARNIE

IN education, social freedom, and opportunity, most satisfactory progress has been made by women during the last century.

But our political standing is still as it was in 1790, when a learned writer explained that people unfit for the county franchise were those who "lie under natural incapacities, and therefore cannot exercise a sound discretion, or (who are) so much under the influence of others that they cannot have a will of their own in the choice of candidates. Of the former description are women, infants, idiots, lunatics; of the latter, persons receiving alms and revenue offices." Men do not now speak of women as being in the same category as "idiots and lunatics," but for political purposes they place them there. Even in the eighteenth century such sentiments were resented by some women, and outraged feelings found vent in 1792 in that classic of the suffrage movement, Mary Wollstonecraft's "Vindication of the Rights of Women."

In 1810 another champion arose, Sydney Smith,

and published his witty essay on the claims of women to a sound education.

The really practical inception of our movement is due to the philosopher Bentham, founder of modern Radicalism. His most distinguished disciple, James Mill, was invited to write an article on Government in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," in 1824. Its novel and lucid argument caused much comment. In it he contended that the safeguard of the elective franchise is necessary to protect our liberties from encroachment, but he added "all those individuals whose interests are included in those of other individuals may be struck off the electoral roll." "In this light *women* may be regarded, the interest of *almost all* of whom is involved in that of their fathers, or in that of their husbands."

Upon the publication of this article William Thompson, another disciple of Bentham, called upon Mill to amend his logical inaccuracy. This he refused to do, whereupon Thompson and Mrs. Wheeler published, in 1825, "The Appeal of Women," showing that Mill by his own argument had proved that at least "some women" should be enfranchised. The attack upon the logician was delivered in scathing terms. The controversy evidently made a deep impression upon James Mill's constant companion, his learned little son, John Stuart Mill, for thirty years later "The Subjection of Women" was published. In it he follows very much the lines laid down by his father's opponents, but does so with calmness and dignity, in pleasant contrast to the fervid rhetoric of the "Appeal."

The unanswerable arguments sown broadcast throughout the pages of "The Subjection of Women" have not yet blossomed into fruitage in Great Britain, but the harvest has been almost completely garnered in our self-governing Australian and New Zealand colonies. Enquiries made in these colonies elicited the interesting admission that early settlers were influenced by the writings of John Stuart Mill when founding their new states, and with their wives, the pioneer comrades of their years of hardship, by their side, the cold arguments of the philosopher were illuminated by living witnesses to the fact that the civilisation of new communities depends upon the presence and co-operation of women.

The Anglo-Saxons of the Southern hemisphere are doing what Tacitus tells us the Saxons did of old, for "in all grave matters they consulted their women."

During the early decades of the nineteenth century, while the Benthamites were engaged in controversy, political events were making, as is the wont of our country, a slow and laboured march.

It was not until 1832 that the Reform Act was carried which extended the right to vote from the freeholders and freeman to the middle-class male householder. This enabling law for men was a disabling law for women. In the previous statutes carried during the reigns of Henry IV., William III., and George III. the electors might have been women. No bar stayed them—in law. But the one word "male," introduced into 19 and 20 of 2 W. IV. c. 45 (1832), threw a legal barrier across the electoral path

of women. The late Miss Helen Blackburn, historian of the movement, truly observes, "The seed of the Women's Suffrage agitation lay in that one short word 'male.'" The twentieth-century woman wonders why women made no protest. Let her spend a few weeks in the British Museum Library pondering over some of the myriad volumes catalogued under the word "Women," and she will realise that years of discouragement and denial of educational privileges had as surely deprived her of the sense of civic freedom as the Oriental woman of to-day still lacks the sense of personal freedom.

Yet even in those dark days it is said that a petition from women of Yorkshire was presented to the House of Commons while the Reform Act of 1832 was under consideration, asking for the enfranchisement of their sex.

"The disabling process thus set up soon spread further; the first Parliament elected under the Reform Act showed its representative character by introducing the same restrictive word 'male' into the enfranchising clauses of the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835, by which the various local charters, with their various generic franchises, were reduced to one uniform male franchise." Two years earlier the right of English widows to a share of one-third their husbands' estates was barred, so that they only became entitled thereto if so expressed by will (Aug. 29, 1833). Sex prejudice culminated in 1840 when duly accredited women from the United States were refused as delegates at the Anti-Slavery Convention in London. This was the proverbial "darkest hour."

It ushered in the dawn by giving the impetus to the first Convention of Women's Suffrage in the United States.

Meantime, in Great Britain, the spirit of reform was in the air. Great principles of human freedom and justice were at stake. The Anti-Corn Law, as well as the Anti-Slavery agitation claimed women for their own. Richard Cobden, at the great meeting held in Covent Garden in 1845, pointed out the anomaly of women being able to confer votes upon their sons while yet unable to vote themselves. In later years the vote of the Leader of the Anti-Corn Law Bill, Mr. C. P. Villiers, was always recorded in favour of the Suffrage for Women. He had, in the turmoil of fight, tried women and not found them wanting, for the Anti-Corn Law circular of December 30, 1841, says, "The women of Manchester have set a noble example to their sisters throughout the country. They have already obtained more than 50,000 signatures to the memorial adopted at the Corn Exchange. The ladies of Bolton, Wigan, and Stockport are engaged in canvassing their respective towns."

The earliest leaflet on the Suffrage was issued in 1847 by an aged Quaker lady called Anne Knight, of Quiet House, Chelmsford. She subsequently assisted in founding the "Sheffield Female Political Association," which, at a meeting held February 26, 1851, adopted the first address on Suffrage formulated by women in England. Their petition was presented to the House of Lords by the Earl of Carlisle that same year.

Meanwhile Mrs. John Stuart Mill, Mrs. H. D. Pochin, and others kept the question alive in pamphlets and articles, and groups of women, including among them Miss Emily Davies, Miss Beale, Miss Buss, and Miss Garrett (now Dr. Garrett Anderson) were founded.

Thus officered, the scratch army grew, and its general, John Stuart Mill, boldly throwing down the gauntlet in favour of Women's Suffrage in 1865, entered Parliament. Then began the guerilla warfare which has lasted until now, reinforced year by year with ever larger battalions.

On the one side are the hosts of the mighty entrenched behind the ancient fortifications of sex domination, prejudice, and self-satisfaction; on the other is the gradually growing force of sex equality, democracy, justice, and common-sense. At its best in those early days it was but a timorous little band. Humility and subjection to man had for centuries been inculcated to such a degree upon women that the sex appeared to have lost the power of initiative. It took a second man to rouse them to sufficient energy to collect the hundred signatures which Mr. Mill said would be necessary if he were to present the first petition to the House of Commons. This man was none other than Mr. Disraeli, who on April 28, 1866, had made a powerful statement in favour of women's right to vote. The petition exceeded all expectation, 1,499 signatures were collected in a fortnight, including the names of Frances Power Cobbe, Harriet Martineau, Mary Somerville, Anna Swanwick, Josephine Butler, Priscilla Bright

McLaren, Margaret Lucas (President of the British Women's Temperance Association), Florence Davenport Hill, Mrs. P. A. Taylor, and Eliza Wigham.

Miss Blackburn gives the following account, half humorous, half pathetic, of the presentation of the epoch-making appeal to the House of Commons :

"Mrs. Bodichon asked Miss Davies to go instead. She set forth, not a little nervous at such a mission ; Miss Garrett offered to accompany her, and they took a cab with the portentous roll to Westminster Hall. There, to their relief, they met Mr. Fawcett, who went at once in search of Mr. Mill. Meantime they felt ill at ease with their big roll in that great Hall, thronged as it was in those days with many going to and fro in the old law courts. They made friends with the applewoman whose stall was near the entrance, and she hid the roll beneath her table. Presently Mr. Mill arrived. 'Where is the petition?' he asked. Then they had to confess it was hidden away beneath the applewoman's stall. But it was quickly produced thence, and Mr. Mill, on seeing it, exclaimed, 'Ah, this I can brandish with effect.'"

Thus worked the sappers and miners of the advance guard in "the brave days of old."

Two years later petitioning began in good earnest, and up to 1879 the signatures presented averaged 200,000 in each year, while in 1896 in that same Westminster Hall an appeal was presented from 257,000 women.

On May 20, 1867, Mr. Mill moved his amendment to the Representation of the People Bill (Clause 4) "to leave out the word 'men' in order to insert the

word 'person' instead thereof." Mr. Mill opened by saying that the extension he was about to propose could excite no party feeling or class feeling. He dwelt on its justice, its constitutional character. "Allow me to ask, what is the meaning of political freedom? Is it anything but the control of those who do make politics their business by those who do not? Is it not the very essence of constitutional liberty that men come from their looms and their forges to decide, and decide well, whether they are properly governed, and whom they will be governed by?" He showed that the question was in truth a development of the greater sense of mutual interest and companionship that was arising between men and women, and the evil for the character of each which an unequal level must entail.

Amongst others, Mr. Fawcett supported him. On a division there were Ayes, 73; Noes, 196. Majority against the amendment, 123. Pairs and tellers brought the total votes in favour to 81.

But a further amendment substituting the words "male persons" for men was also rejected, and Mr. Chisholm Anstey ("the champion of the Suffrage cause in law, even as Mr. Mill was in Parliament") now drew further attention to the fact that women had ancient legal rights to the franchise, and the Manchester Committee, backed by the London, Bristol, and Birmingham Societies, which had by now started into existence, resolved to take its stand on the existing law.

Fortune was in their favour, for the name of Mrs. Lily Maxwell, a small shopkeeper in Manchester,

was accidentally placed upon the register. When informed of the circumstance she expressed great delight, and on the following day polled for Mr. Jacob Bright. The returning officer had no choice in the matter, and the other voters in the room marked their approval by three hearty cheers.

In Manchester 5,347 and in Salford about 1,500 women sent in their claims as voters. Many women freeholders in the counties did the same. Most of the revising barristers threw the names out. The Manchester women consolidated their claims and appealed against the decision in the case *Charlton v. Lings*, which was heard in the Court of Common Pleas, November 7 and 10, 1867. Lord Chief Justice Bovill having conceded that in a few instances women had "been parties to the return of members to Parliament," proceeded to argue "that the non-user of the right for so long a period raised a strong presumption against its having legally existed, that the legislature in 1867 used the word 'man' in order to designate expressly the male sex, as distinct from women, and that therefore Lord Brougham's Act did not apply. The other judges concurred, and refused to hear further cases raising different points."

In 1870 Dr. Pankhurst, on behalf of the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage, drafted "The Women's Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill," which was introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Jacob Bright. Thirty-four years later, on the last day of the session, Mr. Will Crooks introduced a Bill in identical terms:—

"That in all Acts relating to the qualification and

registration of voters or persons entitled to or claiming to be registered and to vote in the election of members of Parliament, wherever words occur which import the male gender, the same shall be held to include women for all purposes connected with and having reference to the right to be registered as voters, and to vote in such election, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding." The second reading of Mr. Bright's Bill was carried on May 4, 1870, by a majority of 33, in spite of Mr. Secretary Bruce rising on behalf of the Government to ask the House to delay consideration of the matter. A week later the Bill went into Committee, and after the Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone, had made a statement expressing disappointment at the previous vote, and concluding with the words, "I for one strongly entertain—in common with all those now sitting near me—that it would be a very great mistake to carry this Bill into law," the Bill was rejected by 220 to 94.

Dr. Arnold in one of his letters speaks of his love of democracy and his hatred of the aristocratic spirit, whether evinced in an aristocracy of race, skin, wealth, priesthood, or landed interest. He might have added there is no aristocracy so all dominant as that of sex. If proof is needed it is in this attitude of so noble a mind as that of Mr. Gladstone's.

Strange that one whose golden words, "The essence of Liberalism is trust in the people, qualified by prudence; the essence of Toryism is distrust of the people, qualified by fear," should, in the question

of women's enfranchisement, have shown himself to be an ultra-Tory.

During the twenty-seven years between 1870 and 1897 twelve divisions were taken on the Women's Suffrage question, with varying adverse fortunes. When the Reform Bill of 1884 was before the "House" six or seven divisions were taken on the point whether a felon should continue his disfranchisement for a year after he had served his sentence. But only one division was taken to decide against the claims of women.

In spite of humiliations and defeats the movement grew. Amongst the many honourable names which figure during the long, weary years of struggle are those of Dean Alford, Lord Amberley, Mrs. Jacob Bright, Miss Lydia Becker, Miss Helen Blackburn, Mr. Leonard Courtney, Mrs. Fawcett, Mr. George Grote, Mr. and Mrs. Haslam (Dublin), the Misses Flora and Louisa Stevenson (Edinburgh), Miss I. Tod (Belfast), the Misses Davenport Hill, Mr. C. H. Hopwood, Q.C., Miss Emily Davies, Mrs. McLaren (Edinburgh), Dr. James Martineau, Professor Masson, Mrs. Oliver Scatcherd, Miss Florence Nightingale, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, Professor Lyon Playfair, the Misses Priestman (Bristol), Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Thomasson, Mrs. F. Pennington, Sir David Wedderburn, Dr. Agnes McLaren, Miss Jane Taylour, the Rev. Charles Kingsley, Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy, Lady Anna Gore Langton, Sir James Stansfeld, Mr. Hugh Mason, and in later years the indefatigable Parliamentary leader, Mr. William Woodall, Lady Carlisle, Lady Frances

Balfour, Lady Aberdeen, Miss J. C. Methven (Edinburgh), and Mrs. Creighton. The *Women's Suffrage Journal*, edited by Miss Becker from 1870 to the day of her death, chronicled the movement with exactness before the days of sensational journalism, and at a time when there was but small and dubious access to the general Press. In 1881 a curious side issue was won largely through the energy of the Manchester Society, when a Bill for Household Suffrage to male persons came up for discussion in the Isle of Man "House of Keys." It was, however, extended merely to "women owners," but there was much rejoicing at this concession to the principle of Women's Suffrage.

Through the awakening of women, and mainly through the energies of those identified with the Suffrage movement, other steps in the line of progress may be chronicled. Amongst them are the extension of all local franchises to some women. It has been done in the inconclusive fashion which characterises all franchise legislation in our islands. Women in Ireland and Scotland, whether married or unmarried, vote on precisely the same terms as men, but throughout England and Wales do not possess the owner, lodger, or service franchises, whilst married women may not vote for borough or county councils, unless they are fortunate enough to live within the County of London, where they are empowered to vote for the county council and the borough councils.

In 1906 a number of Scottish University women brought an action against the University Courts of

the Universities of St. Andrews and Edinburgh on the ground that their names being on the register of the University they were entitled to have been served with voting papers at the General Election. The case caused a great degree of interest in Scotland, large funds were subscribed, but the judgment of Lord Salveson was adverse to the pursuers. In 1897 Mr. Faithfull Begg's Bill was carried at its second reading by a majority of 71, but owing to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations the motion to go into Committee was adjourned until July 7th.

The Conservatives were in office, the National and other Unions of Conservative Associations had already on several occasions given enthusiastic votes in favour of extending "an ownership and occupation" vote to women, the Women's Liberal Unionist Association, backed by the Women's Liberal Federation and the Women's Co-operative Guild and the British Women's Temperance Associations petitioned in its favour, and yet the Government would not lend any facilities.

This is the more remarkable as Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour had both publicly expressed themselves in favour of the principle of the measure in 1891. Had the Party in power (with one brief interval) for twenty years done what we now demand that the Liberal Government shall do, grant special facilities for discussion of the Bill, Mr. Labouchere would not have been successful in barring our path by his eloquent flights on "The Verminous Persons" Bill.

Then followed seven years of even more dis-

heartening barrenness. Bills and resolutions were either crowded out, or days for which they had been set down were taken by a relentless Government.

It was not until towards the end of the expiring Conservative Ministry that Sir Charles McLaren on March 16, 1904 to the surprise even of the friends of the movement, carried his Women's Suffrage Resolution by a majority of 114. The debate on Sir John Bamford Slack's Bill did not reach a division. Meantime, in view of the dissolution which came with dramatic suddenness in the autumn of the following year, the Suffragist Committees and the Women's Liberal Federation, cheered by the success of Sir Charles McLaren, redoubled their efforts to influence and educate Parliamentary candidates. The result of the General Election of January, 1906, was to give us upwards of 400 avowed supporters amongst all parties within the House of Commons. It gave us, however, another divided Cabinet, and although the Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, has by speeches, the reception of deputations, and the absence of every form of coercion upon his followers proved himself personally our friend, it does not appear to be either in his will or in his power to lead us to victory. The fortunes of the ballot made the leader of the Independent Labour Party, Mr. Keir Hardie, responsible for our resolution in the first session of Parliament. It was talked out, the reason alleged being that a disturbance in the Ladies' Gallery had hardened the hearts of the more lukewarm supporters. When a similar fate befell the Bill on

March 8, 1907, after a first place on the orders of the day and a five hours' discussion with no demonstration of any kind in the Gallery, the reason given in the Lobby and by the Press was that the question having got beyond the academic stage and into the region of practical politics, the Speaker felt it to be impossible to allow the closure to be moved on such an important change in the British Constitution.

Mr. Dickenson, who was in charge of the Bill, made a profound impression upon a very full House, and it was universally admitted that the tone of the debate was higher than on any previous occasion. The scornful flippancy which had marred so many discussions was kept well in abeyance, thanks to the high standard set by the many genuine supporters whom we fully trust and who merit our deep gratitude for their untiring efforts to muster a friendly House.

But the failure to reach a division has come as a bolt from the 'blue upon veteran and novice alike. Every one had counted upon a division and a huge favourable majority. A defeat would have been preferable to no division. It would have enabled us to gauge our friends, but by this device friend and foe have alike eluded us.

After forty years in the wilderness of agitation, under many successive leaderships, after the question has been nearly a score of times discussed in the House, after two amendments on the question have been moved in Committees on Reform Bills, we are practically told that up to the present session Parliament has merely toyed with the measure.

Such a consideration may well cause "an arrest of thought" and a serious inquiry into the why and wherefore of this humiliation.

It is only fair to be as frank in discussing ourselves as in discussing our opponents.

If this brief outline of the story has revealed one point more than any other it is this—that the inception of the movement was due to the intellectuals rather than to working women.

Necessarily non-party in their basis, the committees formed in different parts of the country acted as centres for propaganda rather than for organisation of large bodies of women. They sowed the seed which others garnered. The British woman, like the British man, is keenly partisan in politics. Paradoxical although it may appear, it is undoubtedly a fact that the depth of interest in the Party amongst which she has been reared, loyalty to its principles and its leaders, her very eagerness for the solution of problems to which her forbears have given the best years of their lives, while doing much to qualify her for using the vote, have acted as a drag upon her march towards the goal of its attainment.

She has been a Primrose dame, a Unionist, or a Liberal woman first and a Suffragist second. The rank and file of Conservative women still come under this category, as well as a small seceding body of Liberal women. But the members of the Women's Liberal Federation, which has ramified into nearly every constituency in the United Kingdom, have evolved and made suffrage

a plank in their Liberal programme. A perusal of the pamphlet by Mrs. Eva McLaren entitled "The History of the Women's Suffrage Movement in the Women's Liberal Federation," furnishes an illustration of one of our most strongly-marked national characteristics, our inability to comprehend an argument until it receives practical application in our daily life.

The Federation was organised in 1887, twenty years after the first Suffrage society was founded. Thus for nearly a generation women had enjoyed opportunities for reading reports of debates in Parliament, books, pamphlets, and some of them of attending meetings on the subject. But to none save the few had it become a vital issue. Suffrage societies in great centres of population such as London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Manchester, Newcastle, Bristol, &c., had endured in spite of all reverses, but planted in smaller places they had as a rule withered away.

There was no driving force to create a great national organisation for Women's Suffrage, and not even enough to make it a fundamental in either a Conservative or a Liberal Woman's organisation. Hence in 1887, when the Women's Liberal Federation was formed, the original promoters did not intend to give any prominence to Women's Suffrage, the reason alleged being that it had always been treated as a non-party question. As soon, however, as women outside the inner Party circle were invited to join, it became evident that the legitimate demands of women for political justice could not be ignored.

The contention crystallised itself into a dispute as to what should be the "Objects" of the Federation. The Progressives, as the Women's Suffrage Party were called, only numbered five on the Executive Committee, but they obtained the alteration of "Object" II., and it was decided at the first Council meeting that it should be as follows: "To promote just legislation for women and to protect the interests of children." This was not accepted as more than a temporary compromise, and up to 1892 the contest was carried on with increasing strength on the side of the Progressives. In the year 1890 the election of Lady Carlisle to the Executive Committee gave a great accession of strength to the Progressives, and at the Council meeting of 1893 Object II. was altered to the following:—

"To promote just legislation for women (including the local and Parliamentary Franchise for all women, married, single, or widowed, who possess any of the legal qualifications which entitle men to vote), and the removal of all their legal disabilities as citizens."

This was soon found to be too vague a declaration for practical politicians confronted with the dilemma of being called upon to work and canvass for candidates who were not necessarily in favour of the enfranchisement of women. Many men are only too ready to accept, and even invite, services from women whom they treat and intend to treat as "political Uitlanders."

The Federation, therefore, whilst absolutely agreed as to the justice and necessity of Women's Suffrage, contained individual members and associations divided

in opinion as to the best method of attaining their end. The "Practical Suffragists" pointed out the inconsistency of working for Liberal candidates who were not in favour of Women's Suffrage, and they brought forward motions in the Annual Council each year to give effect to their policy. The other party of Constitutionalists, or Non-Practical Suffragists, declared that, while they were equally sincere in their desire for the Suffrage, to adopt the proposed plan would be to transform the Liberal into a Suffragist Federation. Finally, Lady Carlisle, in the name of the Cambridge Association, moved and carried a resolution which, while leaving each individual association free to act as it pleases, instructed the Executive "that the official organiser of the Federation be sent to help those candidates only who support Women's Suffrage in the House of Commons."

This policy, which has been acted upon since 1902, has already borne much fruit. It has been the means of educating many candidates prior to the General Election, and in the present Parliament, out of the 420 members who have pledged themselves to support the question, nearly 300 are Liberals. Had the Conservative and Unionist women acted as the Liberals have done, Women's Suffrage would be in a much better position than it is to-day. The Liberal women have also brought their influence to bear upon the Men's National Liberal Federation, and in considerable numbers have attended their Council meetings as delegates from men's associations. The result has been seen in the overwhelming majorities by which resolutions were carried at Crewe and

Newcastle in 1905, on the eve of the General Election, in favour of the removal of sex disabilities "in the matters of the Parliamentary Suffrage and of election to local bodies."

We have traced the movement through the more academic stage to the arena of party politicians, but in 1902 the third and most important stage was ushered in by the presentation of petitions, with more than 37,000 signatures, from women textile workers in Yorkshire and Cheshire. It is now realised that it is upon the self- and often family-supporting women workers that the fate of the movement depends. The energy and enthusiasm of the toilers is growing keener every year.

Utterances, inspired or otherwise, one hears ever and again from high quarters foreshadowing another great Reform Bill on the lines of "Manhood" Suffrage. With working women standing in solid phalanx, the word "adult" must eventually be substituted for "manhood" in any new measure for further enfranchisement.

But before that ultimate goal is reached women must attain the same measure of enfranchisement as men now enjoy. Poor and rich, employer and employed, leisured and working classes, stand together in the category of political outcasts. They realise what some wise men fail to comprehend, that to enfranchise even a fraction as a first instalment is to burst the sex barrier which has so long held us in thrall; while to postpone our question until "Manhood" Suffrage has been solved would be to erect a well-nigh unscalable wall of sex ascendancy.

THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

BY EMMELINE PANKHURST, OF THE WOMEN'S
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL UNION

WOMEN'S Suffrage has now a place among the practical political questions of the day. It has not so much agitated the public mind since 1884. In that year the Representation of the People Act was introduced. The Act applied only to men, but an amendment to include women was moved. This amendment was strongly supported in the country, but was rejected by the House of Commons in consequence of the opposition of the Liberal Government.

At the ensuing General Election the Liberal Party barely escaped defeat. Had the Women Suffragists been well advised they would have offered strenuous opposition to Liberal candidates, in order to prevent the return to power of a Party which had so recently refused to enfranchise women. The Women's Suffrage Amendment to the County Franchise Bill had been supported by the Conservative leaders, and if the Women Suffragists had brought about the defeat of the Liberals, a Conservative Government would

have found it difficult to avoid bringing in a Bill for Women's Suffrage.

Unfortunately, this great opportunity was allowed to pass, and for more than twenty years the movement has been under a cloud. Now, chiefly as the result of new methods of agitation—not only more dramatic but more political in their character than the old ones—Women's Suffrage stands in the direct line of political progress.

Because of our near approach to victory the strength of the opposition to be overcome is now more than ever apparent. I refer not to the action of certain misguided women who say that they object to the enfranchisement of their sex, but to that of male opponents who have hitherto regarded the Women's Suffrage movement as one which they could afford to ignore or even pretend to support. They now discover that this question is nearer settlement than they had thought possible. Hence, members of Parliament who object to Women's Suffrage are now sparing no pains to resist the reform.

Their opposition takes two forms. Some oppose Women's Suffrage avowedly because they object to the political equality of the sexes; others, less honest, argue against the immediate enfranchisement of women because they profess to believe that nothing short of complete womanhood suffrage ought to be granted. The Prime Minister adopts this attitude, without, however, giving the smallest indication of an intention to act upon his professed principles.

This, then, is the present position of affairs: Most

members of the Cabinet are hostile to Women's Suffrage. The rest are apathetic as regards the question. Some women clung until lately to the belief that the Prime Minister was favourable, but his speech on March 8th has destroyed their illusion. Behind the Cabinet stands the largest majority of modern times. Most of the men who compose it are pledged supporters of Women's Suffrage, but they take no steps to force the Government to deal with the question. In fact, several of these pledged supporters now openly state that their pledges meant nothing, and some are actually found in the ranks of those who opposed Mr. Dickenson's Women's Enfranchisement Bill.

Looked at superficially, the position is discouraging, but it is in truth most encouraging. This is because two other factors have to be taken into consideration. One is the growing determination and strength of women, and the other the sympathy of the electors. The largest majority ceases to suffice for and protect a Government which has lost its hold on the country, and nothing is now more dangerous to the popularity of the Government than its treatment of the Women's Suffrage cause.

The Women's Social and Political Union has been driven to adopt the only sort of methods which politicians understand and will take notice of, the sort of methods too which have enabled men in this and other countries to win their political rights. The Chartist agitations, even the breaking down of Hyde Park railings, are referred to with the greatest respect by the very Liberals who loudly condemn

similar tactics on the part of Women Suffragists. The assassination of an enemy of popular liberty in Russia seems to Liberal politicians much more innocent than what is termed a "raid" on the House of Commons, or the "heckling" of a British Cabinet Minister at a public meeting. Already 150 women have suffered imprisonment for the part they have taken in the movement.

Another way of bringing pressure to bear on the Government is by opposing and securing the defeat of their nominee at the by-elections. If it can be proved to the Government "that their refusal to grant Women's Suffrage is destroying their popularity in the country they will be obliged in self defence to deal with the question." Not even the strongest Government can afford to ignore the displeasure of the electors as evinced at by-elections. There is no more effective way of forcing the hands of the Government than that of working to defeat their candidates.

Members of the Liberal Party hotly resent this by-election policy, and that in itself is an excellent sign.

The Liberals know that already the work of the Women's Social and Political Union is injuring the Government, and they recognise that the new political force will in time become still more dangerous. Of course, the usual Liberal cries of "Tory gold," and "in league with the Tories" are heard. Liberals always make such insinuations against those who wish them to move faster than they are disposed to move.

Not very long ago the Labour Party was charged

with being financed and engineered by the Tories. Now that the Labour Party has grown strong Liberals dare not utter such slanders concerning Labour men, but they think they can afford to traduce the women's movement in their accustomed way. Quite undeterred, encouraged rather, by their attacks the Women's Social and Political Union holds firmly to its by-election policy.

The elections are fought on strictly independent lines. Naturally if the Liberal candidate has only one opponent he, whether he be Labour man or Unionist, reaps the whole benefit of the votes detached from the Liberal. If three or more candidates are in the field the Liberal is opposed, and the Union observes a neutral attitude towards the remaining candidates.

Many Liberal candidates are prepared to declare in favour of Women's Suffrage, but we nevertheless oppose such candidates. Already the House of Commons contains 420 members who before their election promised to support Women's Suffrage. Several of these gentlemen explain that they made the pledges without any intention of fulfilling them. Those who profess to be in earnest are quite inactive. Liberal members refuse to embarrass the Government, and if they were to show signs of doing so, would be restrained by the Liberal executives in their constituencies. Let those who plead for mercy to be shown to the Liberal candidates who are "in favour" of Women's Suffrage reflect that no man who really believes in that reform would consent to stand as a candidate under Liberal auspices while the policy of

the Government remains what it is to-day. If Liberal candidates and others want the women's opposition to cease, they have only to persuade the Prime Minister and his Cabinet to grant the franchise to women.

Some people, overwhelmed perhaps by the magnitude of the idea of fighting the Government, talk of basing their action at the elections entirely upon the character of the pledges given by individuals. If one candidate is in favour of Women's Suffrage and the other is opposed, they propose to work for the man who is in favour. If both individuals are in favour, they think it advisable to take no part in the contest at all. Thus, if both candidates choose to say they are in favour the Suffragists would be driven off the field. Such a policy is obviously very weak in comparison to that which seeks to bring pressure to bear upon the Government by robbing it of adherents.

The few occasions upon which this anti-Government by-election policy has been tried have brought much encouragement.

The electors begin to understand our appeal to vote against the Government, and to respond to it. As the campaign becomes more dangerous, those whom we are attacking attempt to undermine our position by means of misrepresentation as to our methods. They also make every effort to confuse the public mind by talking of their belief in womanhood suffrage, well knowing that the Government which they support has not the slightest intention of granting votes to all women.

The presence of the Women's Social and Political Union at by-elections has caused the services of Liberal women election workers to be at a premium. The Liberal Party has evidently come to the conclusion that only women can offer effectual resistance to a women's campaign. Hence the help of Liberal women is in greater demand than ever before.

This fact alone should prove to Liberal women what is their duty at the present time. If they will cease to work for the Liberal Party and begin instead to work against it until the vote is granted to women, the Government will be obliged to yield.

At first sight such course of action seems unthinkable to many Liberal women. Loyalty to Party they think forbids it. One would remind them that fidelity to principle must come before fidelity to Party. The Liberal women by their work at the last General Election have a strong claim upon the Party leaders. Moreover, they constitute a force which those leaders cannot afford to disregard. Having, therefore, the power to claim and win the enfranchisement of their sex they stand in the position of trustees for the women of the nation, and they betray their trust when they prefer Party interests to the interests of the Women's cause.

Liberal women shrink from the idea of taking part in the overthrow of the Government. They need not fear. Long before matters reach such a pass the Government will yield.

The loss of half a dozen seats owing to the opposition of women, while not destroying the power of the Government to carry the reforms to which they

are pledged, will force the Liberal leaders to grant the Suffrage. The opposition of the Women's Social and Political Union to the Government will continue until such time as Women's Suffrage is granted, whether the Liberal women join us or not, but their co-operation would hasten the day of success.

Some Liberal women are heard to say that they will work for the Suffrage from *inside* the Liberal Party. How they intend to enforce their demand supposing persuasion to fail they do not explain. To leave the Liberal Party and thenceforward to fight against it seems to an onlooker the only possible way. Other Liberal women claim to regard it as the height of unwisdom to harass the Government. Have they not learnt that a Government pressed by conflicting claims deals with those that are the source of most inconvenience?

Not to Liberal women only, but to the women of all parties one appeals that they will, until they have won the vote, forget Party politics and unite in an independent campaign, having for its object the removal of the political disability of sex.

THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT AMONG TRADE UNIONISTS

BY EVA GORE-BOOTH

THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT AMONG TRADE UNIONISTS

*Lancashire and Cheshire Women Textile and other Workers
Representation Committee.*

July, 1904.

Fellow Workers.—During the last few years the need of political power for the defence of the workers has been felt by every section of the labour world. Among the men the growing sense of the importance of this question has resulted in the formation of the Labour Representation Committee with the object of gaining direct Parliamentary Representation for the already enfranchised working men. Meanwhile the position of the unenfranchised working women, who are by their voteless condition shut out from all political influence, is becoming daily more precarious. They cannot hope to hold their own in industrial matters, where their interests may clash with those of their enfranchised fellow-workers or employers.

The one all-absorbing and vital political question for labouring women is to force an entrance into the ranks of responsible citizens, in whose hands lie the solution of the problems which are at present convulsing the industrial world.

In view of the complicated state of modern politics, and the mass of conflicting interests, the conclusion has been forced on those of the textile workers who have been working unceasingly in past years to secure the votes for women, that what is urgently needed is that they should send their own nominee to the House of Commons, pledged to work in season and out of season to secure the enfranchisement of the women workers of the country.

A committee has been formed of women in the trade from various Lancashire and Cheshire towns, whose duties are (1) to select a suitable and zealous candidate, and (2) to collect and be responsible for the spending of £500, which is the amount absolutely necessary for one candidate's election expenses. A balance sheet will be submitted to each town subscribing.

Any one who wishes to better the position of her fellow-workers, and the thousands of women outside the ranks of the skilled cotton operatives, who are being overworked and underpaid, should remember that political enfranchisement must precede industrial emancipation, and that the political disabilities of women have done incalculable harm, by cheapening their labour and lowering their position in the industrial world.

What Lancashire and Cheshire Women think to-day England will do to-morrow.

Yours fraternally,

Pro THE COMMITTEE:

SARAH DICKINSON,
SELINA COOPER,
SARAH REDDISH,
ESTHER ROPER,
EVA GORE-BOOTH.

So ran the manifesto of the Lancashire Textile Workers in 1904, when, after years of patient work on the old lines, they came to the conclusion it was time to adopt newer and more forcible methods. In 1901 and 1902, petitions signed by 67,000 textile

workers had been taken to the House of Commons by deputations of women employed in the trade, deputations of enthusiastic workers who could not believe in the indifference of the well-to-do world to the claims of unenfranchised wage-earners, and came back to Lancashire sadder and wiser women. A good deal of stir had begun inside the Cotton Unions, and, in various towns, votes were taken as to whether Women's Suffrage was to be a Trade Union question. It was felt by the women that the Cotton Unions should make a practical effort to secure the benefits of political enfranchisement for their 96,000 women members. It is noteworthy that, wherever this vote was taken (Bolton, Clitheroe, Colne, Nelson, Hyde, Haslingden), majorities of over 1,000 decided in favour of immediate action, and there were but few dissentients. The Burnley Weavers' Union specially instructed their Committee to bring the matter before the Trade Congress.

For many years, enthusiastic meetings and demonstrations had been held in all the great Northern towns and centres of industry. The matter was one very familiar to the working people. For it will easily be understood that a grievance that is hardly felt by women of money, and position, and influence, may become well nigh intolerable in its practical bearing on the lives of those who are industrially an independent force, and politically the helpless toy of the amateur philanthropist, of the exploiter of cheap labour, and of that narrow spirit of exclusion and oppression that is bred among the very workers themselves by the severity of our present industrial

competitive system. As time went on, and as the political power to which they were admitted in 1868 assumed more and more importance in the minds of working men, the question of the women's enfranchisement became more and more prominent amongst working people.

The climate of thought in England is not tropical. We are not subject to sudden cataclysms and earthquakes and cyclones. We pride ourselves on the absence of sudden and violent Revolutions, and on the slow growth and gradual fruition of our political ideas. During the last fifty years a great change has taken place in the minds of the more progressive working people, a change that was observed in the making by some of our more long-sighted politicians, notably Lord Randolph Churchill. "The Labour community is carrying on at the present day a very significant and instructive struggle. . . . It realises that it now possesses political power to such an extent as to make it independent of either party in the State; the struggle it is carrying on is one . . . for the practical utilisation in its own interest of the great political power it has acquired. The Labour interest is now seeking to do for itself what the landed interest and the manufacturing interest did for themselves. . . . We are now come, or are coming fast, to a time when Labour Laws will be made by the Labour interest for the advantage of Labour. The regulation of all the conditions of Labour by the State controlled and guided by the Labour vote appears to be the ideal aimed at."¹

¹ "Lord Randolph Churchill," by Winston S. Churchill.

Strangely enough, when the Labour Representation movement began to make itself felt in Lancashire, it was by the votes of women that it stood or fell. For there is one thing that women are usually allowed to vote, and that is their money (unless, of course, it is taken from them by the autocratic will of Parliament). Those progressive people who would deny votes to women for the statesman-like reason that they were supposed to vote Conservative in the London County Council election, would do well to place beside this hypothesis the incontestable fact that before the Cotton Unions could subscribe £900 a year to the Labour Representation Committee, and before a candidate could be run and his salary paid as Labour candidate for Clitheroe, a ballot had to be taken of the women who far outnumbered the men in the Unions. The women did not grudge their money for Labour Representation, and at the time Mr. Shackleton himself pointed out how large a part of the burden fell on the shoulders of these unrepresented workers. When Mr. Shackleton was returned unopposed for Parliament in 1902, 5,500 women trade unionists in the Clitheroe division petitioned him to bring forward and press on the Women's Franchise question so that they too might share in the benefits of Parliamentary Representation. Then came a period of apathy on the men's part to the women's claims, a period during which the unpleasant truth gradually soaked into these women's minds that those who had been their equals and comrades in industry, had passed wholly out of their sphere of influence, and were as deaf to the appeals

of the politically helpless as were the "princes" in whom the working men of old time "put their trust." Among the Lancashire working women there is a strong inherent sense of commercial honesty and personal independence, and it is no exaggeration to say that among the more progressive workers there has grown up a deep feeling of bitterness and disappointment, a feeling which culminated this year when the Labour Party, led away by a theoretic inclination for the very stale red-herring of immediate complete and entire adult suffrage, refused to fulfil their written pledge and press forward a measure for the enfranchisement of women. It is apparently a very easy matter for men to muddle the issues with high-sounding protests against the terms of their own enfranchisement, a measure by which they do not themselves refuse to profit. Their position is absolutely indefensible. They have built up the whole of the Labour Party on what they are pleased to call a property qualification, a qualification that gives votes to houses and lodgings, not to flesh and blood, a qualification that, according to their own often repeated statements, no democratic person could accept, or even compromise with as a temporary instalment of justice. If what these Labour men say is true, then it follows that the Labour Party is built in sin and founded on unrighteousness. If, on the other hand, what they say is not true, comment is surely superfluous. So far we have not observed amongst them any disinclination to use their own votes; nor do they even shrink from representing in Parliament thousands of arrogant enfranchised

houses and politically emancipated lodgings without an effort to enfranchise poor enslaved flesh and blood. In fact, they have eaten their cake, and enjoyed and digested it; it is only when a hungry beggar asks for a slice that they find out that it is poisonous.

The working women had answered to the Labour appeal; they had supported with their votes and money the new movement for what they had fondly dreamt was the representation of working people, and now they understand that those workers who are most in need of the protection of the franchise are still to be outside the pale. They do not undervalue the kind offices of individual friends, but it is a Party they supported in the time of need generously, and on a large scale, and it is to that Party that they appeal. "Be just before you are generous," is the simplest appeal in the world, and surely it is the fundamental basis of all right doing and political honesty.

It is easy to blame the Lancashire women for their reckless confidence. Certainly they scattered their bread on the waters with a princely disregard of consequences. There is a curious power in this world, the working of which we all of us feel instinctively, the force that Emerson called "The Law of Compensation." As much as you give out you draw in; what you pay the price for you earn.

Again, according to the philosopher, "There is no god dare wrong a worm"; "Power to him who power exerts." The justice inherent in things always in the end asserts itself. If you cast your bread

upon the waters, you shall most certainly find it again. But alas! that all these good hopes are only fulfilled "after many days." Surely the working women of England have paid the price of political emancipation over and over again! It is no mere insignificant statistical fact that these millions of workers live laborious days of poverty-stricken and upright independence, and produce by their labour so large a proportion of the material wealth of the country. Here is a force that must in the end be reckoned with. "Power to him who power exerts." We know of course that it is only a question of time; that there is no government in the world, however autocratic, that can in the end keep five millions of its responsible workers out of all political rights whatsoever. "Great is the truth and shall prevail," says Coventry Patmore; "when no man care if it prevail or no." This, at all events, does not seem likely, for the working women's representatives get more and more urgent in their appeal. Every month and every year that this measure of justice is denied to us, the condition of the working women becomes more and more desperately difficult. In fact, we are bound to care more, not less; and this for a very simple reason: Every year that goes by sees the slow development of the tendency to nationalise all industrial questions. Political and industrial issues can be no longer disentangled. The very trade unions that forty years ago shouted down their more progressive members with cries of "No politics," are now running candidates of their own at elections. Industrial questions are gradually shifting

their ground and becoming political questions, and, as this happens, the working women are more and more beginning to feel the disadvantage of not being able to enter the sphere where questions connected with their bread and butter and hours of labour and weekly income are fought out.

Anybody who studies with an impartial mind the industrial position of women in England must surely come to the conclusion that there is something radically wrong and unfair in that position. To begin with, wherever they are employed, with few exceptions, they are paid at lower rates than could be offered to men, and their work is restricted to the poorer and lesser paid parts of those trades. In fact, they get all the kicks and none of the halfpence. And when they have gone home with the wretched 7s. or 10s. which they are forced by hunger to accept for wages, they are bitterly reproached by men for undercutting, and for "having a lower standard of comfort than men." This low rate of wages among women is, of course, not due to original sin, or to some strange sex aberration which makes them unable to understand the usefulness of money. Neither is it due to want of organisation. There are thirty thousand women members of the National Union of Teachers, and yet, under every Education Committee in England, there is a reasoned-out scale by which every girl pupil-teacher is paid less than every boy pupil-teacher. And this principle is carried through right up to the head-masters and head-mistresses, irrespective of qualifications or training. Even in the cotton trade, which is, I suppose, the

best trade for women in England, and where there are ninety-six thousand women in the Unions, the average is quoted by Miss Collet (Board of Trade) as 14s. a week, a sum far below the wage of even an unskilled labouring man. In this connection the experiences of the men are somewhat illuminating. During the last sixty years, Mr. Sidney Webb points out, the wages of working men have increased by 50 to 100 per cent., whilst the wages of working women have remained stationary or grown less. Since their enfranchisement the agricultural labourers have been able to increase their wages largely, in spite of the fact of their Union falling to pieces.

The present tendency of Government to involve itself more and more in direct industrial enterprise has caused great enthusiasm among progressive politicians, who welcome it as a way of securing good industrial conditions for thousands of working men. Beyond this again, as Mr. Sidney Buxton pointed out last year, the Government, as the biggest employer of labour in the country, exerts a very great, if indirect, influence on the whole labour market. Thus the men workers are in the position, not only of having their biggest employers elected by public election, but one of the great forces that react on the male labour market is also at the mercy of public election. The Trade Unionist politicians were right to congratulate themselves. They are able to keep up the rate by unceasing vigilance and application of political pressure in the House of Commons, with the result that Government is a model employer for men. But not for women.

In the evidence before the Royal Commission on the Wages of Postal Servants, it is very clearly shown how the Government wages for clerks are lower than those given by other employers. Lancashire employers are able to give weavers the same rate whether they are men or women, but everywhere in Government employment wages are carefully calculated according to sex and not work. So that, in the Pimlico Clothing Factory, the skilled woman worker gets an average of 15s. a week, while no man labourer gets less than 23s. The Government mechanically gets its female labour as cheap as it can, unchecked by political considerations. The example spreads to public boards and private employers, who cannot afford to be undercut by one another, and thus their political weakness first depresses the wages of thirty thousand women, and then, through them, depresses the standard of women's remuneration all over the country.

I once heard a learned Professor assert with beautiful simplicity to a crowd of tailoresses earning about 7s. a week each, "Your low wages are due to yourselves. Perhaps, some day, if you work very well, you may be worth 14s. a week." This was, no doubt, a comforting doctrine for the Professor, whose salary could not have been less than £400 a year. But I think most people must realise nowadays that your payment is not so much for what you do, and its value to the world, but for what you are. The parlour-maid may be a better worker and a more valuable servant than the footman, but he gets higher wages for being a man.

Social barriers are growing less and less amongst men, since the working men have become the ruling political force in the nation, but still, you will find that a Foreign Office clerk, without any Trade Union at all, is able to get a higher rate of pay for his work than an engine-driver or skilled engineer, however valuable his services may be to the community, and in spite of the fact that he belongs to one of the strongest Trade Unions in England. A Government clerk may be a very valuable member of society, but the proportion of his salary to the wages of the engineer is hardly accounted for by a correspondingly lower rate of utility in the engineer's highly skilled work. If you want to increase a person's industrial value, you must increase his importance, you must make it worth somebody's while to please him. A hundred years ago the working men had no political importance, and they suffered from fining and low wages exactly in the same way that women do now. It is not one party or the other party that has improved their position, it is the pressure of the working men's votes on all parties. In practical life, these things are not doubted by working men. "My opinion should have some weight," said the Weavers' Secretary at a Lancashire Trade Council meeting, "for I represent by far the biggest Union in the town." "What's the good of your Union?" said the Engineers' Secretary, "why, it's all women; mine mayn't be large, but, at all events, they're voters." One vote more or less may be a matter of small importance, but an organised industrial Union of voters is a weapon of real political force, and the possession of this

weapon makes society very sensitive to the grievances and claims of the band of workers who are so well equipped. There are some people nowadays who still see the world in water-tight compartments. They will tell you that industrial results are due to economic causes, political results to political causes, social results to social causes. But we have seen a war a great political event that was undoubtedly the result of economic causes; we have watched every Factory Act that passes the House of Commons become more and more fraught with consequences to the industrial lives of women; we have seen indeed the gradual widening of the social chasm between the men who have emerged into political power and position, and their women comrades who are still washing dishes and cooking dinners. And we realise that all the arbitrary limits between the political and industrial world are only limits of the imagination. They do not, in fact, exist. Few people will deny that money is power; the discovery of this generation of English people, the discovery which is gradually working its way into the minds of the poor, is that power is money. Industry, society, politics, there is one magic key that opens the doors of prosperity in all the worlds, and that key is power. In the case of the working women, they have to break through a vicious circle of political disability working itself out in industrial weakness and social impotence. There are many causes given for the low rates earned by women, and doubtless many factors go to decide the vexed question of wages; but I

venture to assert that there is not one of them that you can impartially examine and not find that it is but a new form behind which masquerades the ancient and ubiquitous fact of the political subjection of women. It is unjust of people to reproach us with the fact that we are people of one idea. Because it is not we who follow the idea, but the idea that follows us. It dogs our footsteps wherever we go. In the mills and workshops, it regulates our lives and depresses our wages. It holds the constant threat of abolition and starvation over the heads of those who work in their own homes. It follows us on to the pit brow, and waits for us vindictively on all licensed premises, even showing its face in the harmless railway restaurants, and scaring the poor manageress who has attained a position of responsibility through hard work. It walks abroad among the variety artistes, and thinks nothing of proposing that ten thousand people should be turned out of their work because, contrary to human experience in that profession, they might break their legs. It arranges the education of children, and the hours of labour—the poor woman can never escape from the harassing experiences of her subjection.

As regards the more educated classes, it stands as a lion in the path between them and the higher branches of the professions, or the recognition of their abilities.

But it must never be forgotten that the sufferings of the poor are the most urgent sufferings because, though the opportunities of educated women may be stunted, and their careers spoilt and their ambitions thwarted, they can at least possess their own souls'

light, and, like Wordsworth's "forgotten taper," to the last "drive from themselves all frightful gloom," whilst the very life itself of the poor is stunted by that terrible struggle with poverty that leaves them, too often, neither leisure nor energy nor physical strength enough for self-development or education or the joy of life.

This is what the Trade Union women realised when, in 1904, the Women's Textile Committee and the Manchester and Salford Women's Trade and Labour Council laid their plans for the General Election. The need of strong and effective action had been brought home to them by recent events. They decided on a wholly new policy. They were not Party women; they would take up and use the only real political weapon that it is in the power of women to use at present. They would lead the way in a new warfare; they would choose a constituency and fight an election in the interests of the working women's franchise against all comers. They would appeal from party feeling to the industrial knowledge and sympathy of working women. People said they would not get five votes. They said then they would do with four, and always they hoped that this election would be the beginning of a new movement. They would try again and again, no matter how few votes they got, and then other women would join in the fray, and by degrees the idea would spread and Women's Suffrage candidates would be brought forward in all the bye-elections.

When they went to Wigan the expected happened, and they were repudiated by all parties and sections.

They appealed from the parties and organisations to the men at the mills and factories and workshops and mines and football fields. After a fortnight's work of twenty women and three men, unsupported by parties or organisations, a vote of 2,200 was gained by Mr. Thorley Smith, the women's candidate, and he was second at the poll in a three-cornered fight. Thus our appeal is from the Government to the nation, from the House of Commons to the electors, from the rich to the poor.

The rich may say that "women should stay at home and cook the dinner"; the poor know that if women did stay at home there would often be no dinner to cook. The Government says, "We have nothing to do with you, you can bring no pressure to bear on us"; but the nation says, "We feel the pressure of your poverty." In spite of the deafness and blindness of the political parties to human needs, working men everywhere are beginning to realise that the exclusion from all political rights of a body of 5,000,000 workers is not only a source of industrial weakness and poverty to themselves, but a danger to the whole of the world of labouring people.

CO-OPERATOR AND CITIZEN

BY ROSALIND NASH

IT is only of late that the voice of married working women has been heard in the suffrage movement. The older school of suffragists did not ask for the enfranchisement of married women. Some of the party, indeed, cared little about it ; and even now, many men who would willingly allow single women to vote abhor the notion that their own wives could possibly have independent political opinions which ought to be expressed at the poll. The pioneers appealed to a thoroughly established constitutional principle, that representation should go with taxation, but did not carry this principle to its full logical length. Married women, to be sure, seem in effect to pay taxes as well as single, and poor as well as rich. But then it has long been doubtful whether a married woman is altogether a person ; and we always think of a taxpayer as a dignified householder on whom the collector calls, and not as a mere drinker of cheap tea or eater of sultana pudding, who pays his or her too heavy share of the house tax in the rent of a single room.

The trade unionists of the north of England were

the first working women among whom an active suffrage movement began. Most of them were unmarried wage-earners, and their leaders, carrying on the traditions of the elder Suffragists, saw no reason for a change of policy. But when the new spirit touched the Women's Co-operative Guild, the demand had to take another shape. An organisation of married working women cannot so stifle its individuality as to abstain from asking the vote for its own members. A demand for liberty cannot be self-denying. Unless they want the vote themselves, co-operative housewives can only bring an academic support to the suffrage movement. Why should they stand back? Let them at least ask for what they want.

No women could be better prepared for enfranchisement than the Guild members. The co-operative movement, with two and a quarter millions of members and a yearly trade of sixty million pounds, has been called, after another select people, "a State within a State." In this State women have votes. Thousands of women hold shares in their own names, and before the passing of the Married Women's Property Act co-operators used honourably and illegally to let married women assert the right to their own investments and dividends. In some societies women outnumber men. They attend the quarterly business meeting, the legal governing body of the co-operative society, and vote there side by side with men, deciding questions of trade, employment, and the common use of funds. Women are elected occasionally as directors

of societies, and frequently as members of the "educational" committees which manage local propagandist work and lectures, and they have done some of the best work on the elective Board of the Co-operative Union, to which the societies throughout the country affiliate for spreading the co-operative idea, for promoting a good common policy, for joint action with other bodies, and for influencing Parliament.

The special work of the Guild is, in many directions, the same as that of the Co-operative Union, which subscribes £300 a year to the Women's Central Fund for England and Wales. The local work of the Guild "branch" generally is helped by its own co-operative society, but depends mainly on the yearly shilling which is all that can be expected of a married working woman, for no other human creature above compulsory school age has less pocket money. Though a society of women only, the Guild has become so closely identified with the forward policy of the co-operative movement, with all that is soundest and most courageous in the application of the co-operative idea to new and old uses, that nobody would now question its right to official recognition. Its work for co-operation comes very close to the sorest places of poverty. It initiated last year, and has been carrying out conjointly with the Co-operative Union, a scheme to enable co-operative societies to avoid giving credit. In theory ready money is the rule, but in practice most societies allow their members a dangerous latitude, and after years of resolution-passing, it has fallen to the women to begin in

earnest the establishment of practical ready-money systems closely fitted to varying local needs and customs. Out of this work the desire for the Parliamentary vote has arisen naturally. Co-operation has never been merely a plan for making a little extra money for co-operators, and if it is not now as idealist as in the hungry years, it has got to the more modest and elderly stage of knowing its own limitations and holding out hands to trades unionism and politics.

Women co-operators have naturally turned their thoughts to the Factory Acts, and amendments have repeatedly been urged in all the ways open to the voteless. The Public Health Acts, the land question, and housing are studied, and persevering attempts are made to support reform. It would amaze the educated people who are bored with almost everything to see with what eagerness hard-worked housewives of Lancashire, the West Riding, and scores of towns, great and small, will fasten on these economic and social questions, so dull and meaningless to women whose easy lives they do not touch. The "branches" take part in local elections, and co-operative women have done excellent work as guardians. In opposing Protection they have been fully as active as their husbands. They showed the effect of the sugar tax in a series of domestic budgets, and at their meeting of three thousand women in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, a resolution was passed strongly condemning Protection and regretting that without votes they could not make their protest effective.

Co-operative women did not first concern themselves about the suffrage. Their minds are not encouraged to reach out towards the vague, and abstract ideas are foreign to them. How could it be otherwise? Lady Bell says of the iron-workers' wives (who are Yorkshire women, too), that the majority have not the health and the capacity to bear successfully the immense burden laid on married working women by the conditions of their lives. Co-operative women belong to the number of wives who in thrift at least have not failed. They have worked and said nothing. Highly educated people sum up their class as having "no vocabulary." They have their own strong prepossessions, grown out of fundamental experience, and any new idea must suit itself with these, or be rejected. When such women desire the vote, it is not for nothing. The first sign of interest was in 1893, when Guild members obtained 2,200 signatures to a suffrage petition. In 1897 papers on "Why working women need the Vote" were written by four Guild members, and discussed at conferences throughout the country. One of these was written by a labourer's wife, a well-known official of the Guild, who, as she relates in the paper, "never attended a public school except for three or four months as a child," and has had to work to earn her living "ever since she was able."

In the same year the Annual Congress passed a resolution regretting that facilities were not given for the further progress of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill, which passed its second reading. Nothing further was done for some years. There was still

much prejudice against the official adoption, or even the consideration, of a subject which was thought to be outside the objects of the Guild, and as late as 1902 the Central Committee decided not to bring it forward at the Annual Congress. But a rapid change of opinion took place. Much interest was aroused by the petition of the women textile workers of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire ; several Branches, and many members working unofficially, helped to collect signatures. The Education Act, which deprived women of their right of election to education authorities, the imposition of the corn and sugar taxes, the Fiscal controversy, all helped to make women feel the effect of legislation on everyday life.

Since 1904 the agitation has been continuous. A special fund of £100 was scraped together. Many hundreds of meetings have been held, and when the Women's Enfranchisement Bill was discussed and "talked out," in 1905, 185 Guild members attended at the House of Commons, and joined in the protest made by the women.

In the same year the Guild took a useful new step in inviting Guild organisations with women members to join in asking votes for women. This was first done at a crowded demonstration at the Annual Congress at Sheffield, where the speakers represented the National British Women's Temperance Association, the Women Textile Workers' Labour Representation Committee, the Independent Labour Party, the Women's Liberal Federation, and the English and Scottish Women's Co-operative Guilds. As

soon as the General Election was announced, a united statement was issued and eventually signed by 36 societies, including 14 trade unions, among which were the Northern Counties' Weavers' Amalgamation, the Yorkshire General Union of Weavers and Textile Workers, the Irish Textile Operatives' Association, the Leicester Hosiery Union, the Bleachers', Dyers' and Finishers' Association.

After this, when the Prime Minister consented to receive a deputation, twenty-four organisations agreed to take part. One of the speakers was the President of the Guild, who pointed out that—"As married working-women we depend, more than any other class, perhaps, on good laws. Our everyday home life is touched by law at every point. Our houses are both our workshops and our homes, so that Housing and Public Health questions are specially important to us. Our incomes are affected by taxation and by laws relating to Trade Unions, Accidents, Old Age Pensions, and all industrial laws that go to secure the health of the workers. We, as a body of working women, appeal to you to do your best to give us this common right—the right of the Citizen." Many Guild members were in the procession to Downing Street.

The resolution passed at the Annual Congress of the Guild in 1904 asked for the franchise on the same terms as men, taking the same position as the old suffragists. But further discussion showed that this demand did not suit the case of Guild members, and in a statement issued in the spring of 1905 the position of the Guild was defined as

follows :—“ The membership of the Guild being composed mainly of married working-women, the Guild could only be satisfied with a measure which would enfranchise this class of women. But while womanhood (and therefore adult) suffrage is the goal, the Guild leaves itself free to support any measure which would be a step in the direction of this goal.”

Later resolutions demanded votes for women without defining the method of enfranchisement, and the united statement and the deputation to the Prime Minister both took this line. This spring the Committees of 246 Branches, with over 14,000 members, or seven-twelfths of the membership, have signed a declaration, circulated in some haste, that “ We, the undersigned, desire the right to vote in Parliamentary Elections, and are in favour of the broadest measure possible which will give the vote to married and single working-women.”

As it was believed that a Women’s Enfranchisement Bill on the old lines would probably be introduced at the earliest opportunity, the General Secretary of the Guild wrote to the newspapers to propose a compromise which would enfranchise Guild members and might be accepted by the supporters both of limited and of adult suffrage. The suggestion was to give the vote to married women whose husbands had the occupier or lodger vote, as well as to women possessing the existing men’s qualifications.¹

¹ The proposal was drafted as an amendment to Mr. Keir Hardie’s Women’s Enfranchisement Bill in the following form :—“ Provided that if husband and wife are living together

When Mr. Dickinson decided to bring in a Women's Enfranchisement Bill, it was announced that he desired to include occupiers' wives, and the Guild issued a memorandum to Members of Parliament explaining and supporting the proposal. It was pointed out that under the Women's Enfranchisement Bill of last session, single women and widows would be qualified to vote as householders and lodgers, while married women, if enfranchised, would, in practice, only obtain votes as owners or joint occupiers (under the £10 franchise), qualifications requiring some degree of wealth, and out of the reach of the great majority of married working women. The Bill would only establish sex equality in the narrowest legal sense. The position of the married working women in the home, where her work was the rearing of children and not the earning of rent, &c., was due to her sex, and if she were forbidden to vote unless she paid the rent, the result would be her exclusion in consequence of sex. A small property qualification inflicted no appreciable hardship on a man. Owing to the economic dependence of married women, it was entirely inapplicable to the majority of women on marriage.

The proposal was very favourably received in some quarters, but those who have supported it on behalf of the Guild much regret that many suffragists regard it

in the same house or lodgings, and either is qualified to vote therefor, the other also shall be deemed to be qualified to vote therefor irrespective of the annual value of such house or lodgings." By this wording the creation of non-residential plural votes would be avoided.

as an act of opposition to their movement that the married working woman's claim should be formulated. There would have been no need to put it forward if the less wealthy married women were not excluded from present hope by the formula "on the same terms as men." If the vigorous life of the new movement had at first been poured from all quarters into the wide channel of adult suffrage, there would have been no need for troublesome grubbing to make way for wandering streams. No genuine suffragist wishes to create difficulties, and the Guild deferred to the prejudice against asking for adult suffrage so far as to state the claim in a form suitable to a limited Bill. But it would be a mistake to treat the objections to limited Bills as an invention of the enemy, and at the moment of writing Mr. Levy is giving a striking illustration of the way in which women, by not making adult suffrage their own, are providing the party in power with an excellent excuse for resistance. Liberalism could not long resist a strong demand for adult suffrage. The fear of a women's majority, making common cause against men, is no more than a confused expression of the sex prejudice which prevents even the most persuasive little Bill from taking its short cut home.

Married women are a generation behind the single in this cause, and yet they need the vote at least as much. The physical deterioration scare and the high infant death rate have set going a demand for impossible and one-sided legislation concerning motherhood. In this and everything wives should assert their right to think for themselves. Parents give

little thought to their daughters' careers ; girls are less well educated than their brothers ; they are paid less ; they are shut out from trades and professions. But after youth single women have much personal independence. Married women are often, but by no means always, free from the necessity of self-support, and rich married women, for their misfortune, need do no work. But their minds and lives are not free. They are not expected to act or think independently of their husbands. Every one knows the obituary notice of a good political wife. "She entered sympathetically into every phase of her husband's work, and shared all his political aspirations. Her ready tact and brilliant social gifts were of immense service to his career." What more could be expected? But we do not describe a good husband's career in the same way.

In the working class the endless daily labour of a married woman is unrelieved even by the power of escaping into her husband's mental world. To spare an evening for a meeting often means getting up at four in the morning to wash or bake, and the idea only slowly gains ground that she has a right to dispose of any of her time or thoughts outside home. Even a co-operator has said, "My wife? What does she want with meetings? Let her stay at home and wash my moleskin trousers!" The vote will not give married women independence of mind, nor time to themselves, nor the power of self-development. But it will be something of an acknowledgment that they have a right to try for these things.

And as for fitness, it is undeniable that among

such working women as the co-operators a consciousness of their own right to political freedom has spread very fast of late years, and that a large number—all those who “count” as leaders of the rest—are already able and eager to use the vote for carrying out their own ideas of social justice.

WOMEN AND POLITICS

BY J. KEIR HARDIE, M.P.

THE only really remarkable thing about recent developments in the Women's Suffrage agitation is that they should have been so long in coming. For fifty years there has been a Women's Suffrage Party to which John Stuart Mill in his day lent his powerful and whole-hearted support. Whilst the franchise agitation which culminated in the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884 was being waged, the Women's Suffrage Movement was fairly vigorous, and for a time there seemed good prospects of its being successful; but with the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourers and the miners in 1884 the whole agitation connected with the franchise subsided, as did also the Women's Movement, which ceased to be a force in politics. The satisfying of the men's demands in 1884 left the women's claims unrecognised, and many of them foolishly deserted their own movement and became mere party politicians. The Primrose League on the one hand, and the Women's Liberal Federation on the other, absorbed many of the active women politicians and, as a consequence, their claim for enfranchisement

disappeared almost entirely from the political arena. The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies struggled as best it could against the prevailing inertia, but its methods were of the sedate and non-exciting order. A circular to candidates at election times, a formal meeting of a dispiriting kind once a year with a few Members of Parliament, a very occasional public meeting, were the beginning and ending of its efforts. Recently, however, a number of women who had received their political training in the Independent Labour Party adopted the militant tactics of that body and applied them to their own particular object. The times were ripe for such a move, and almost immediate success attended their efforts. As a consequence, Woman's Suffrage is again a leading question in practical politics. On this occasion it is not complicated by any demand for an extension of the franchise to men, but is raised as a clear and distinct issue which will have to be dealt with on its own merits. As I have frequently pointed out, the women's movement may eventuate in a demand for Adult Suffrage which would be the logical settlement of the question, but for the moment almost every woman who is active in the sphere of politics limits wisely her demand to the one question of the enfranchisement of her sex on the same terms as men.

In politics it is the strong who receive attention. To be out of sight, is to be out of mind. There are always a few politicians who are moved by a sense of justice or a feeling of pity, and with these the claims of the weak are not overlooked. As

a rule, however, such men are practically helpless in the terrific struggle which continually goes on in Parliament to obtain priority for this, that, or the other reform, or to prevent reforms being made.

Hitherto, measures affecting industrial women which have passed Parliament have classed them with children as being too helpless to look after their own interests and therefore requiring special legislation. The Factory Acts are a case in point. No one, in any way, disputes the advantage which these Acts have been to the women workers of the great textile industries, but women have all along resented the idea of being classed with children for this purpose. Recently the Trade Union movement has spread amongst the women workers with a rapidity for which I know of no recent parallel amongst men, and with the growth of trade unionism there is bound to be a growing demand for fresh protective legislation. So far as the industrial woman is concerned it is a fact that in those spheres of women's industry where legislation has had the most influence the wages and conditions generally are the best, and trade unionism the strongest. This goes to show that legislation which limits the working hours, fixes a standard of sanitation, &c., increases the self-reliance of the women affected and does not, as some affirm, sap their independence. This apart, my general contention is that since legislation or the want of it plays such an important part in the lives of the industrial women, those affected are entitled to have a voice in determining what legislation is wise and necessary

The increasing number of women who are entering the industrial as distinguished from the domestic spheres of employment, and the disabilities under which they labour, make it certain that legislation affecting women's employment will become more general. There are at present about $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions of women engaged in outside employment, only about one-third of whom are engaged in domestic service, where the number of these is practically stationary. It is in the other spheres, those spheres where woman enters into competition with man, and where she has need of more self-reliance and self-protection, where the number of women engaged is increasing. It is obvious that if legislation affecting women workers is to be decided by men voters only that there is grave danger of the law being loaded against the non-voter.

Since, then, women are more and more taking part in the world's work, it surely follows that they ought also to enjoy the chief right of citizenship. Otherwise they will suffer from sex legislation quite as much as men have hitherto suffered from class legislation.

And if the industrial woman should have this chief right conferred upon her, so also should the wife and mother. The single woman engaged in outside employment for wages has a measure of economic freedom—she is as economically free as man under the present system—but when she gets married and becomes a housewife she is equally industrious in the work of the country and gets no wages, the result being that she loses what little independence she

formerly possessed. If the single woman engaged in outside employment needs the protection of the vote, then for equally cogent reasons her married sister needs the vote. By conferring the vote upon married women their condition would be materially improved although still economically dependent upon their husbands.

It is undeniable that women need the protection given by the vote, but in how many branches of legislation is their advice not only the best to be had but absolutely essential in drafting beneficent measures? Education and all that pertains to child life is one of these. Who can say better than a mother what age a child should have attained before it is compelled to attend school? Who can read the child mind like a mother? And who can say better at what age a child is fit to enter a factory, and when a factory is fit to receive a child? I mention this merely as illustrating one particular sphere in which the woman has a special claim to be heard.

But the woman's claim to enfranchisement rests on no one particular qualification. She is a human being, subject to the laws of the State, and as such has a claim upon the State to be put upon terms of political equality with the male. In those countries where rights of citizenship have been conferred on women, there has been no great and sweeping change either in policy or legislation. Women, like men, only feel responsibility when it comes home to them, and hitherto that of citizenship has not done so. The first effect of the Reform Act of 1832 was the defeat of those Members of Parliament who were

working for the rescue of children from the terrible conditions of employment which then obtained in mills and factories. The working classes for a quarter of a century after their enfranchisement used their new-found power to return their masters to Parliament. In like manner it is probable that women would, for a time at least, vote pretty much after the fashion of their men folk. But in the end their influence would begin to assert itself in an ever-increasing degree, and that influence would be, I believe, wholly on the side of good. We witness on every hand the effect of unchallenged male dominance, arrogant armaments, harsh and unfeeling administration of law, industrial conditions which are proving fatal to the race. With the incoming of the mother element into politics this would be gradually changed. Those who confuse women's character with effeminacy are strangely blind to facts. Strength and courage are by no means synonymous terms, and no one who knows anything of woman's qualities will dispute her possession of the very highest powers of courage and endurance. Whilst her influence in politics will be humanising it will also be strengthening, and much of the chicanery and knavery of political life will go down before her direct march upon the actual.

THE LEGAL DISABILITIES OF WOMEN

BY CHRISTABEL PANKHURST, LL.B.

THE subject of the legal disabilities of women is complicated by the fact that in addition to the disabilities affecting women generally there are others affecting only married women ; for, while marriage leaves the position of men entirely unaffected, except as regards their liability to maintain their families, it means for women a distinct change of position.

The disabilities touching all women, whether married or single, must be first considered. Chief of these, then, is the inability to vote for Parliamentary representatives. Lacking the vote, women lack the power to remove existing injustices or to guard against future ones.

The sex disability in political matters is of quite recent origin. Until 1832 there was nothing to prevent women who possessed the same qualifications as men from exercising the same political rights. Even at the present day a woman may ascend the throne.

The Reform Act of 1832 was the first Act of Parliament to contain a limitation founded on sex.

The franchise conferred by that Act was confined to "male persons." In The Representation of the People Act of 1867 use was made, not of the words "male person," but of the word "man." In view of the provisions of Lord Brougham's Act, 1859, to the effect that in all Acts of Parliament, unless the contrary is expressly stated, words importing the masculine gender shall apply to women as well as to men, it was supposed that the new Reform Act, since it referred to "men," applied also to women. Consequently, over 7,000 women in Manchester, Salford, and other places got on the register, and shortly after the matter came before the Court of Common Pleas for decision, in the case of *Chorlton v. Lings*.

In defence of the women's claim to vote, it was shown that in earlier times the right of women to have the vote had existed, that such a right could not be destroyed by non-user, and that the effect of Lord Brougham's Act must necessarily be to make the word "men" apply to women. The judges decided, however, that neither by the Common Law nor by virtue of the new Franchise Act could women vote. In the later case of *Beresford Hope v. Lady Sandhurst*, Lord Esher, Master of the Rolls, summed up the judicial view of the matter by saying that women cannot exercise a public function, and that, the act of voting being a public function, women cannot vote. He said, further, that this being the common law of England, unless a statute dealing with the exercise of public functions expressly gives power to women to exercise them, it is to be taken

that the powers given are confined to men. Thus it will be seen that the exclusion of women from the Parliamentary franchise rests upon judicial decision.

A seat in the House of Commons is denied to women, although there exists no express legal prohibition of the choice by the electors of a woman as their Parliamentary representative. Miss Helen Taylor attempted on one occasion to become a Parliamentary candidate, but her nomination was refused, and there the matter was allowed to rest.

Peeresses in their own right do not take their seats in the House of Lords. Some are of opinion that they are entitled so to do, but it would seem that the principle of the decision in *Chorlton v. Lings* prevents this.

Apparently no woman is eligible for judicial office. Here, again, no Act of Parliament stands in the way; but the judicial decision above referred to and also the fact that the legal profession is closed to women render impossible the appointment of a woman as judge. This, of course, means that, in addition to being powerless to help in the making of statute law, women have no part in the making of judicial law. Every lawyer knows how largely judge-made law bulks in our legal system. The disability in question is therefore a very serious one. Further, the interpretation of laws affecting both men and women by men only gives an opening for the operation of sex prejudice, which must often result in practical injustice to women.

Not only judge but jury also are men. The old principle that accused persons must be tried by their

peers is violated every time that a woman is brought forward for trial. No law prevents the presence of women on the jury, but if the matter were raised in a court of law, it is virtually certain that the principle laid down in *Chorlton v. Lings* would be adhered to, and the right of women to trial by juries composed in part at least of women negatived.

The legal profession, which plays so large and important a part in English life, is closed to women. This means that women cannot under any circumstances be represented by members of their own sex, and there are those who believe that sex bias has so strong an operation as to tend to make the legal representatives engaged by women, consciously or unconsciously, less strenuous than they might be in defending their clients' interests. The legal profession is the avenue, not only to judicial office, but to many other important positions, and to close it to women means that these positions are unattainable by them.

Women are not prohibited by statute from becoming lawyers. The Benches of the Inns of Court are responsible for the non-existence of women barristers. They have the right to regulate admission to the Bar, and their power of rejecting applicants is virtually absolute. They have so far refused to consider the applications of women. A woman solicitor is not a legal impossibility. The statutes governing this branch of the profession refer to "persons" simply. Probably, however, the Courts would decide that the function of a solicitor, being in the nature of a public function, cannot be exer-

cised by women. In Scotland the application of a woman to become a law agent was rejected on this ground.

Women at the present time have a share in local government considerably more restricted than that enjoyed by men. In borough and county council elections they may vote as occupiers, though not as owners. Marriage is a disqualification, in consequence of the decision in *Regina v. Harrald*, 1871, and although the Married Women's Property Act of 1882 has placed married women in respect of their property and freedom of contract virtually in the same position as single women, this old decision given before the Act is still in force, no attempt having ever been made to get it overruled. The Local Government Act of 1894 empowered married women as well as single women to vote as parochial electors, subject to this restriction—that husband and wife cannot vote in respect of the same qualification. In Ireland and Scotland and in the County of London, however, married women can vote in every local election, the Acts which regulate local government in those places making provision for this, but no married woman may qualify jointly with her husband.

Seats on local authorities are denied to women, save in the case of Boards of Guardians and of Rural and Urban District Councils. School Boards and the London Vestries, to both of which women were eligible, have disappeared, and the authorities which now perform the work of these old bodies are closed to women. The new Education Act provides

that on the education authorities created by the Act shall sit co-opted women members. Since these women owe their position, not to the support of the electors, but to the good pleasure of their colleagues, their authority is necessarily weakened. In Urban Districts having a population of more than 20,000 women can be elected to the local education authority.

Before leaving the subject of local government, it should be noticed that a special disability was introduced into the Local Government Act of 1894. A chairman of a District Council shall, so the Act provides, be by virtue of his office a Justice of the Peace—unless such chairman be a woman.

The State Church is officered by men, and other denominations have in this matter taken the same course. The Unitarians alone have, in a single instance only, broken this rule of exclusion.

Into the Civil Service women are not admitted, except as regards the lower ranks. There exists, too, a handful of women inspectors of factories, of schools, and of children "boarded out" under the Poor Law.

It will be seen that the disabilities which affect women as citizens, as members of the community, are by no means altogether due to legal enactment. Custom, almost as rigid and difficult of removal as law, forms a wall confining within narrow limits the sphere of such persons as do not happen to belong to the male sex.

We come now to the consideration of sex disability in regard to rights of property.

An unmarried woman, once she has become the owner of property, whether real or personal, has precisely the same rights and liabilities in respect of it as a man. The laws of inheritance, however, draw a distinction between men and women in the case of real estate. Women cannot inherit freehold property under an intestacy, except in default of male heirs. For example, if a person dies intestate leaving two children, a son and a daughter, the children will take equal shares of his personal estate, but the son will, in addition to his share of the personal estate, take the whole of the real estate.

The effect of marriage on a woman's proprietary rights is part of the general subject of the disabilities involved by marriage. Married women are, or rather have been, in a very different position from that of their spinster sisters. The foundation of the disabilities imposed upon married women is the old legal rule that husband and wife are one. That "one" is the husband, be it understood, for the identity of the wife is, according to Common Law, entirely lost and merged in that of her husband. Modern legislation has by successive steps encroached upon this doctrine, and little by little the wives of this country have won, and are winning, legal and social recognition of their separate existence, their personal importance, and their right to freedom of action.

The husband's right of control over the personal liberty of his wife is now greatly diminished. In the famous Jackson case it was decided that a man may not imprison his wife. She is legally

bound, however, to follow him wherever he goes, if he so desire.

One consequence of a wife becoming on marriage legally one with her husband was that her property became his. He enjoyed all the rents and profits of her freehold lands during their joint lives, though if he died first she resumed the enjoyment thereof, and if she died first he had only a life interest in her lands, and they afterwards passed to her heirs. The rents and profits of his wife's leasehold lands were also enjoyed by the husband, and he could during her lifetime sell or give away such lands, even against her will. They were absolutely his if he survived her, although if he died first without having disposed of them they became her own once more. Personal property became absolutely and unconditionally the husband's.

The Married Women's Property Act, 1883, enables a married woman to acquire, hold, and dispose of property, both real and personal, as though she were unmarried. She is also empowered to enter into contracts and made liable for her debts.

Before this change in the law, the only way of safeguarding the pecuniary interests of a woman and her children against the possible avarice or improvidence of the husband was a marriage settlement. By this means the wife's property could be settled upon herself and provision made for the children to be born of the marriage. As a further protection, a restraint on anticipation was often introduced which prevented the wife from disposing of her settled property or anticipating the income thereof.

Thus, if she incurred a debt in one year she could not be compelled to pay it out of any future year's income. Marriage settlements may still be made in spite of the Married Women's Property Act, but a woman cannot now settle her own property on herself, so as to interfere with the rights of her creditors. Creditors and others are wont to complain of restraints on anticipation as giving to the married women who enjoy the benefit of them an unfair advantage. The object of these restraints is, of course, to protect wives from the result of yielding unwisely to their husband's influence in money matters. As long as it is customary to marry young and inexperienced girls to men much older and much more experienced, there is a good deal to be said in favour of the law in question. When women become, in consequence of right training, more self-reliant, they will cast aside such artificial props and protections with scorn.

In former times, as we have seen, the law compelled every woman who married to endow her husband with all her worldly goods, and so deprived her of all means of self-support. At the present day, though this law is changed, custom does its best to deny to married women all possibility of economic independence.

Girls are not given the same educational advantages as boys, because "they will get married"; many employments are closed to women for the same reason; public authorities and private employers are in the habit of dismissing women employees on marriage. Self-styled reformers are

crying out for legislation to prohibit wage-earning by married women. In view of all this, one would expect to find married women in the full enjoyment of a definite and well-secured right to maintenance by their husbands.

What are the facts of the case? I quote the unemotional words of a well-known legal text-book:¹ "The marriage . . . imposes on the husband the duty of maintaining her . . . although the direct methods assigned by law to enforce it have for their objects anything rather than the vindication of the rights of injured married women. The only legal reason why a husband should support his wife is that she may not become a burden on the parish. So long as this calamity is averted the wife has no claim on her husband, and, in fact, she has no direct claim on him in any circumstances whatever; for even in the case of positive starvation she can only come on the parish for relief, and then the parish authorities will insist that her husband shall provide for her to the extent at least of sustaining life."

There is another means whereby a wife may compel her husband to provide her with the necessaries of life: she can pledge his credit. In ordering necessaries, she is presumed to be acting as his agent, and he becomes liable to pay for them. Obviously, this protection exists only in cases where tradesmen are willing to give credit, and it will be lost if the husband forbids his wife to pledge his credit. One frequently hears men complaining that it should be

¹ "Husband and Wife," Macqueen.

possible for wives to pledge their husband's credit, because the power of doing so is abused by a few women. What is to become of the married woman in this country? thinking women ask themselves! Attempts are being made to drive her out of industry; her right to maintenance by her husband is very limited and can only be directly enforced in a way which is most humiliating to herself; she is to be restrained from acting as her husband's agent so as to obtain necessaries on credit. How does such a condition differ from slavery?

In some way or other, perhaps through some system of co-operative housekeeping, economic independence must sooner or later be made a possibility for all married women.

Let it be noticed that wives are liable for the maintenance of their husbands. They are liable also to maintain their children, if the father is unable to do so.

On the death of a married woman who leaves no will, her husband succeeds to the whole of her personal property and takes a life interest in the whole of her freehold lands. A widow's right to the property of her husband who dies intestate is much less extensive. If there are children of the marriage, the widow gets one-third of the personal property. If she is childless, she takes one-half of the personal property, the other half going to the husband's next-of-kin. The widow's rights have been somewhat increased by the Intestates Estates Act, 1890, which provides that if the property, real and personal, of her deceased husband is of no greater

value than £500, she takes the whole, and that in cases where the estate is of greater value, she has, over and above the half-share to which she is entitled, a charge on the estate of £500. This Act applies only when there are no children.

The widow's ancient right of dower entitles her to the enjoyment for her life of one-third of her husband's freehold lands; but this right has been virtually abolished by means of devices invented by the lawyers and by the Dower Act of 1830. Hence it is very seldom that widows enjoy their right of dower, though the corresponding right of a widower is still in full force.

There is a harsh provision in the Married Women's Property Act of 1882, to the effect that if a loan is made by a wife to her husband for the purposes of his trade or business, she can, in case of his bankruptcy, recover nothing until the claims of all his other creditors have been satisfied. If he dies insolvent the same rule applies. A husband lending money to his wife for the purposes of her trade or business, is not at this disadvantage, but has the same rights as any other creditor.

The divorce laws are notoriously unfair to women. A husband can secure a divorce on the sole ground of his wife's adultery, but adultery on a husband's part gives his wife no right to obtain a divorce. The fact that he is constantly and persistently immoral makes no difference. To obtain a divorce from him she must prove, in addition to adultery, bigamy, cruelty, or desertion for two years and upwards. The decision as to whether the acts

proved amount to legal cruelty, rests with a male judge who is apt to take a lenient view of a fellow-man's shortcomings.

The right to the control of the children of a marriage belongs to the father alone. He has sole authority over them and can, if he pleases, entirely disregard the wishes of the mother as to the manner of their education and training. The Guardianship of Infants Act, 1886, has increased the rights of mothers by providing that the Court, in making an order as to the custody of an infant and the right of access thereto of either parent, shall have regard to the welfare of the infants, to the conduct of the parents, and to the wishes as well of the mother as of the father.

Formerly a father could, by will, appoint a guardian for his children who had the same absolute control over them as he himself had possessed while living. The mother of the child did not occupy the position of guardian unless she had been expressly appointed by her husband's will. Since the Guardianship of Infants Act, 1886, a mother is in all cases the guardian of her children after the death of their father, and can act jointly with any other guardian whom the father may have appointed. A mother, on the other hand, can only *nominate* a guardian to act jointly with her husband after her death, and her nomination does not take effect unless the Court confirms it. This the Court does only under exceptional circumstances.

From what appears above, it will be seen that the list of women's disabilities is shorter than of

old. The Acts of Parliament dealing with married women's property and the rights of mothers in relation to the custody and control of their children, were carried at a time when reforms affecting women were easier to win than they are to-day. Had not the exertions of a devoted band of reformers secured these changes in the law about a score of years ago, it would have been found increasingly difficult to get them made. The male electorate is much larger than it used to be, and Parliament is so busy attending to the demands of enfranchised men, that it has neither time nor thought to spare for the needs of unenfranchised women. It is, however, possible that many of the specific injustices of which women have to complain to-day, will, in the course of time, be removed by a Parliament responsible only to men. The real danger is that new forms of injustice will spring up. The women of this generation are threatened by a serious interference with their industrial and social liberty. The Factory Acts as they exist to-day, contain special restrictions affecting female labour only. These restrictions were imposed with the intention of protecting women workers from the unfair exploitation of their labour. The way chosen was, many of us think, not the best way. It is more just to women, and in every way more reasonable that factory legislation should apply to men and women alike without distinction of sex. The further extension of the principle of making special regulations for women workers which do not apply to men workers must be resisted, at least until such time as women themselves are

in the enjoyment of the Parliamentary franchise. If fully enfranchised women workers choose to fetter their own industrial action, they will be entitled to do so. For the men of the nation to regulate the labour of women without women having the power to express their opinion at the ballot box, is obviously unjustifiable.

At present, then, the injustice of the future comes in the guise of unfair industrial legislation for women. That danger averted, new ones are certain to arise. So long as the root of injustice lies in the earth, it will bear leaves, flower, and fruit.

THE CIVIC RIGHTS OF THE MARRIED WOMAN

BY CONSTANCE SMEDLEY

IT is universally acknowledged that marriage and motherhood are the woman's crown. From every point of view the married woman is considered a more mature, developed, and responsible being than the spinster; she is, moreover, the most precious possession of the nation, bearing and rearing, as she does, its children. A mother's instinct is held to be unerring; her sympathies are supposed to be wider and more humanised; her altruism is proverbial.

As a citizen all men would place her value higher than the unmarried woman who exists to support herself, however cultured and useful to the community the latter's intelligence may be. They know that her experience of life is necessarily deeper, and her judgment sounder; they know also the services which a good wife and mother renders to her nation are of the most supreme importance.

And yet here comes the extraordinary inconsistency. There are many men who support the plea of the working woman for her civic rights on the basis that she is a ratepayer, who yet absolutely

dispute the justice of the clause which admits the married woman to a share of her husband's political responsibilities. They argue that the man pays the rent and taxes, and that to give his wife a vote would amount to giving him a double privilege for the sum he pays towards the nation's maintenance. This argument may be easily dismissed by the fact that representation is not granted according to the sum of money paid by the citizen. The millionaire who pays in thousands and the clerk who pays his £5 note have each one vote alike ; each has the vote simply as a citizen, quite apart from the value of his personal possessions.

The second argument is, that it is unnecessary for the woman to have a voice ; the man is the head of the household, and is quite competent of deciding for his household. He alone, therefore, has the right to an opinion on all questions of national importance, even though many of those questions peculiarly and personally affect women and children, and are therefore questions in the solving of which a woman's instinct and experience would be invaluable. When it is pointed out that the man of the household is not always the superior member of that household, morally or mentally, we are confronted with the argument that by giving the woman a vote we should give cause for terrible matrimonial dissension. Indeed, this threat of matrimonial trouble is voiced so frequently that it gives rise to a very shrewd suspicion on our part that a good many men know in their own hearts that their wives and mothers of their children would think very differently from them on

certain matters, and especially as to the vital importance and urgency of certain matters.

It can hardly be disputed that woman's intelligence and practicality is equal in the main to man's. If there were such a thing as an electoral examination women would not complain of having to pass it; nor would the voting register show an amazing preponderance of masculine names.

Given two beings of equal intelligence, the plea of withholding the right to vote from one on the ground that she lacks an economic stake in the country, is rather a feeble one when applied to the woman who has often given up lucrative employment to look after a man's house, bear his children, and make a home for him and them. If such a woman trusts her husband too completely to ask for a settlement from him upon her marriage, and consequently freely gives the myriad services of a wife and mother, nurse and housekeeper, in exchange for a home alone, I do not see that it follows that she should be disqualified from having a voice in her own and her children's destinies, or from being directly represented in the Government which she must obey. If she is one of the most valuable of the nation's citizens she should have a voice in its affairs. The argument that a woman has quite sufficient to do in looking after her house and children without worrying her head about politics strikes at the mainspring of a nation's development. The mothers of the nation are, to some extent, responsible for the world into which they bring the children; they are not mere breeding animals. They must protect and guide

their children ; they also must protect themselves. Every law that has to do with education, sanitation, food, drink, housing, social questions, sexual relations, has to do directly with the wives and mothers who must obey such laws, and they are entitled to a direct voice in such matters just as much as any man. It cannot be too much insisted upon that motherhood is the strongest force in existence that makes for altruism, and altruism is the most essential factor in the wise and beneficial ordering of the State. The mother will not be biassed in favour of laws that press unduly on the male ; for the welfare of her sons is as important to her as the welfare of her daughters ; she is naturally in favour of all conditions that help to their moral strengthening and wholesome living, and because of the gift of motherhood she will feel most poignantly on all laws that touch upon the health and happiness of the children. Men know this ; even those who jeer at women keep the saving grace of reverence for the mother who bore and nurtured them.

It may be said that I have a tendency to idealise women ; that all mothers are not wise, nor tender, nor unselfish ; that I forget, moreover, the wisdom and responsibility of the father. But I am not pleading that he should be disenfranchised, I only say that all fathers and husbands with a certain economic qualification have a vote. I would point out that the wives and mothers have an equal stake in the nation and contribute equally to its health and well-being.

But comes the cry of the frivolity of woman's interests ; and her indifference to political, and her

apathy in municipal matters, are cited as proof of her incapacity of understanding.

I admit the frivolity of her present interests ; but I would ask men to remember that it is they who push woman into the social whirlpool, by the mere fact of their eliminating all serious interests from her life as "unwomanly."

Husbands dislike their wives to meddle with politics or any other pursuit or profession which man has decided is his own peculiar affair : they prefer her to concentrate her thoughts on themselves, their home and children ; to the feeding of them ; the amusing of them. They want their wives to rest them, not to stimulate. They want to leave the sterner side of life, with its responsibilities and need of thought, behind them when they seek their fireside.

But do men ever reflect that while they consider it the woman's duty to eliminate everything from her thoughts which gives no pleasure to men, men themselves never consider it their duty to spend the whole of their time making their minds over to the pattern the woman would prefer for them to copy ?

The wife, kept all day in her home, taught to concentrate her every thought on the charming and the pleasing of her husband, desires—naturally—constant proof and profession of his love from her husband. This exigency soon bores the husband. After the first few months of married life, his passion has quietened : he is no longer dominated by it. His business and political interests come back again : he does not want to spend his days in devotion to his wife. His club calls him ; sport ; his men

friends. He resents his wife's appearance at his office to accompany him home. He insists on keeping his "man's life" wholly separate and to himself.

He has no objection, therefore, to his wife "calling" on her neighbours. Very kindly and reasonably he sees that she cannot be expected to stay at home all day long, performing the housework, so he grants her the relief of social interests: laughing, as he does, at the pettiness of the scheming, the small return of enjoyment from the expenditure, the heartburning, the jealousy, the hollowness and smallness of the social triumphs his wife is working for.

Still, it is all fit occupation for his womenfolk! No matter though social ambition often destroys the peace of the household, and leads women into extravagance which is an unwarrantable burden to lay upon the breadwinner! No man's voice is heard raised against the round of afternoon tea-parties, dinners, lunches, each more vapid than the other, as being an occupation unworthy of womanhood. No man bestows the epithet "unsexed" upon the butterfly of fashion, who spends her days climbing up the social ladder, injuring other women ruthlessly, wasting her husband's money in the satisfaction of vulgar vanity and uncloaked greed! So long as she takes care of her æsthetic possibilities, preserves an inane mind devoid of any serious sentiment or thought, and continues chaste according to the letter of the law, man merely calls her "feminine" and forgives her obvious failings with amazing indulgence.

It almost drives one to the conclusion that men not only do not expect women to be worth much, morally

or intellectually, but they do not want them to be worth much. Only then one remembers man's reverence for womanhood and his ideal of a noble, altruistic, ministering angel!

Men must admit they are almost bafflingly inconsistent. They have a habit nowadays of decrying education and the consequently intellectual woman as the cause of racial suicide. Can men not see that irresponsibility in all the nation's affairs must have a bad effect; and that now woman's gain of freedom gives her a wider scope for amusement and a consequent greater love of change and excitement, her moral development must be encouraged by a fair share of moral and social responsibilities.

When her children grow up, go to school, marry, a woman's life is apt to become empty. Better surely that she seeks to help in the bettering of the conditions of society, than to waste her days in party-giving and frittering of her time in vapid "calls" or purposeless shopping.

The modern woman has lost her sense of duty, so they say; rather has she lost the sense of blind obedience to the will of man. In the struggle to throw off the yoke, she only thought of being free. Now that she is comparatively free, her inherent sense of duty is welling up within her. So also is her sense of pity, of compassion and self-sacrifice. Wives and mothers want to help the State in its growth, in its happiness, in the opportunities it gives its citizens for their development.

Why does man seek to check the help of which the nation stands in such sore need?

WOMAN IN THE PAST AND FUTURE

BY MARGARET MCMILLAN

THERE are many lands in which the phrase "Woman's Suffrage" is unknown. The Chinese woman, the Hindoo woman, even the Japanese woman asks for no votes. For untold ages the woman of the East has been voiceless, immobile, shrouded, while sages and philosophers, not to speak of the populace, have accused her of every form of vice, imbecility, and weakness. She has been assured that in her there was no power, no stability of purpose, and has heard men thank God that they were not as she is. Shrouded in veils of silence she listened—and listens still.

This voiceless Eastern woman is the Mother of us all. It is strange to note how, as she fared Westward, woman began to slip from under the crushing weight of immemorial custom, and how, in early as in later days, every little gain was bought at a heavy price, bought, indeed, at times at a price which no "respectable" woman would pay. For from the "respectable" woman above all others was required, time out of mind, silence, modesty, and submission.

The European woman emerges first of all in Greece—the cradle of art, philosophy, and culture, and among a race of men who above all others perhaps deserved to be called “civilised.” For the Greek, Justice was the supreme virtue, but it was a virtue practised between equals, and it did not even occur to the citizen of Athens that the sexes could be regarded as deserving of equal civic rights! Incapable of brutality, he did indeed offer new rights to all inferiors, to slaves, to women, and children, but it was not the love of justice, but the spirit of gentleness that inspired this generosity. And how little the highest culture of man could supply the place of opportunity for the development of her own powers to woman was well illustrated in ancient Athens! The *gynacee* was no “home,” no theatre of choice at all for the respectable matron or girl. It was a mere shelter and hiding-place. The home of the citizen was the city. His life was lived in the public places, the courts, the groves, the public dining-places. There he discussed, and learned, and acted; there was his true home, and there too he enjoyed, among other privileges, the intellectual stimulus supplied in the company and conversation of abandoned but highly educated women. It has been said that of all modern women the French-woman supplies the most powerful intellectual stimulus, that even the dullest man becomes keen and intelligent in talking to her. In any case there is little doubt that the element in intellectual life supplied by the *hetairai* was appreciated by the greatest sages and philosophers. It is through no

mere banal tradition of the feminine power to dazzle and awaken a passing admiration that we learn this. The *hetairais'* influence was no mere Cleopatra triumph aided and made possible mainly by sensuous accessories. No. The power of the *hetairai* was witnessed in the fact that their age was more prolific in ideas than any other, and that from their presence went forth troops of thinkers, artists, politicians, philosophers. Terrible as it may appear, these abandoned women were doing more for the world, and infinitely more for their sex, than were the poor respectable ladies hidden in their darkened homes. They showed the beauty of human life expanding unhindered. It blossomed, it is true, this life, in the path of the lava stream, but it blossomed. Not on the lava-swept slope, neither is it in the dark, unwholesome languor of the *gynacée* can the Human Garden be planted. The divorce between Virtue and Power ended, as we know, very badly. The poor undeveloped woman of the home was well avenged. Neither she, nor her husband, failed in gentleness. It was in the Virtue of Equals—Justice—that they failed. The civilisation perished which supplied the elements of a noble human life, but let them fall only on stony ground or fire-swept wildernesses.

Their conquerors, the Romans, warned by the fate of the fallen, installed woman in the home, and gave her serious and important duties. The Romans probably knew nothing of the nature of that feminine influence which drew forth the glowing and delicate flower of the national genius of the neighbouring

country, but they enthroned the mother in the atrium and surrounded her with honour and marks of affection, while keeping her still a slave beyond the boundaries of home. All the world knows how Roman matrons responded—how they furnished examples of extraordinary domestic virtue, so that if mere good home-keepers could continue long to save a nation Rome need never have fallen. But good home-keepers must make progress—they must *extend* as well as perfect their empire. Their motherhood cannot always lie “among the pots,” though it may begin there. Sooner or later it must be a winged thing, that returns to its starting always after every flight, still a thing winged as well as gentle—a dove that bears the branch of peace over the dark, troubled waters of the outer world. The nation that clips its wings, and makes the ark of home a prison, always sees, sooner or later, the Avenger arise on the hearthstone. It is impossible to destroy the natural power of either sex. It is possible only to pervert it—and this has been done time and again in the case of women. It happens to-day just as it happened centuries ago. “Since we are not to expend our power in healing diseases,” says little Lyndall in the “African Farm,” “nor making laws, nor money, we will spend it on you”—that is to say not on helping and saving but on misleading and tempting men and in dissipating their higher powers. And as the lower forms of dissipation are accessory to the higher, there is a constant tendency to careless expenditure, a reckless desire for wealth. Shameless luxury in the matter

of dress, for example, and personal appointments—so that, even in England to-day, shops groan with costly objects all provided for women. In Rome the women's extravagance was such that the legislators, in dismay, made a whole series of new laws to restrain it. All this was vain. It was as though one should put up toy-mills to stem the Atlantic. Every writer notes how much more rapid was the process of corruption in woman than in man, but surely it would be folly to suppose that the descent to Avernus is EASIER for the more conservative feminine sex than for the more active masculine one. Gide puts his finger on the *real* cause of the woman's swifter decline. *She had nothing to bind her outside the walls of her own little sheltering-place.* She had no Vision of the world beyond, of which her own home was but a part. Men had the Vision, and if Rome's fate had depended alone on them Rome would not have fallen so soon.

“Even when the man's private life was corrupt he could preserve, at least for a time, his civic virtues, the morality that he had acquired as a responsible member of the body politic.” Yes, but with the woman it was otherwise. For her the whole moral code of life was narrowed down to *her* duty as a house or home keeper. She had not to think of the city, of the State, of the race. She knew nothing of the weighty considerations that bind those who have to remember the interests not of one family, but of thousands of families, in any act or at any moment. The senate house, the tribunal, did not awaken in HER any solemn or binding thought, nor had she any acquired

virtue in connection with the life of such places. In short, she was no citizen. Her motherhood was purely instinctive and domestic—that is to say, rudimentary. So, home-maker as she was, she quickly made of the city a desolation. The chapter of history which tells how this came to pass is full of interest and meaning for the modern politician, for the modern psychologist, and above all for the modern woman. It seems to indicate that not man only, but also woman must develop civic virtues, if the home is to be built on safe foundations.

In north-western Europe the woman question was settled and unsettled in rather a different way. Here was no sacred atrium, no *gynacée* hidden in the heart of a dwelling built amid surroundings of sunny, radiant peace. Only the tumult of waves, the rustling of heavy foliage, the wild voices of the storm and the forest. The fighting warrior-husband and son could not and did not frame new codes of duty for the woman, nor did they discover peculiar faults, vices, and imbecilities in her. Such sickly tasks were not for these wild men—nor did their women, from what we learn of them, lend themselves to those subtle, but unwholesome arts that suggest to men the idea that their nature is a mere puzzle in perverse words and dangerous impulses. No! Life was too simple—and also we may add too noble in its rude way for all this in the wild forests of the barbarous Northmen. The barbarian saw that the woman was not his equal in physical strength, and that she could not bear arms. She was physically the weaker, but there, for him, her

inferiority ended. He was so far from believing her to be morally below himself that the whole of his religious life was summed up in the honouring of God and of women! Side by side with a purity of life that amazed the civilised races they conquered, the barbarians developed a faith in women which made them look upon every wife and maiden and mother as a possible priestess. They had their women near them when they went into battle, and they brought them into the camp in order to gain courage from them in the hour of defeat. Moreover, women were the scholars or "clerks" of that age and race. The men, busy with the arts of war, had no time to read the runes, or to learn writing, and so in the old traditions and pictures it is nearly always a woman who teaches or reads, and it is the women who inherit legacies of books, just as the men inherit the arms and weapons of their dead ancestors. Encouraged to learn, believed to possess mysterious powers to influence men for good or evil, these women of the barbarous tribes of the North lived in an atmosphere of reverence, and possessed privileges that astounded the civilised foreigner! "Durch aller froen ère—Rret Got and diû wif"—In old German, in old Saxon the same axiom is found—the axiom that enjoins man to honour woman, not merely as wife, or mother, but simply as woman.

This simple, strong, and healthy feeling, born in the wild forest, in the pure breezes and rains of the open, was the foundation of the chivalry of later ages. A fine subsoil it was, and even to-day, after so many centuries, and after so much that is dark and

unsightly has been built on it, it seems to underlie all else in the national heart, like the clean, resisting, faithful rock. It is as little like mere gallantry as granite is like a fungus. It is so far from being a mere custom or fashion that it has outlived innumerable changes in the national customs and law! And it is difficult to see into what wildernesses and unwholesome swamps women might not have dragged themselves, and been dragged by men, if this fair under-soil had not been won for us by our ancestors in the woods!

Certainly there is no country in which feudal law struck such deep root as in England—that feudal law which takes so small account of woman as a being with rights of any order. Yet it was not against womanhood but against wifehood that feudal law reared its iron hand. It was *marriage* that stripped a woman of all her rights; handing her over with all her property to her husband to be used by him, with few restrictions, at his own will and pleasure. So completely was the wife reduced to the place of a chattel that her whole moral responsibility was lost. If she committed a fault in the presence of her husband it was *he*, not she, who was answerable before the law. The ignoble woman found in this a means of escape. The noble saw in it the degradation of wife—and motherhood. It is in the interests of the wife that the first great reforms influencing the status of women were carried out in England. For her the Act of 1857, which gives to the married woman, after sentence of judicial separation, the right to keep anything she may earn

henceforward. For *her*, the married woman, the Act of 1870 was passed, which deprives husbands of "wages and earnings of any married woman acquired or gained by her in any employment, occupation, or trade . . . and all investments of such wages, earnings, money, or property." For the married woman, too, the great reform of 1882, which makes it possible for her to have a legal estate, to possess and dispose of money and acquire separate property. Yet in spite of these reforms, that seem to give her back her personality, feudal law seems to keep its hold on the married women, neglecting the unmarried and allowing them to go forward and claim new rights. In the new franchise bills before the House the married woman was not included—or if she was remembered at last, it was as an after-thought !

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Why did the militant Suffragette ever come to the door of the House of Commons? How did she ever come into existence at all? And how is it that while thousands of women, more "intellectual" than she, have asked for the vote for years in the most lady-like and constitutional way, and have got nothing for the pains but admiring politeness?—how is it, I say, that she, the militant Suffragette, can forego the admiration, but wants a Vote, and will, if necessary, fight for it, and—yes, let us admit the truth—**DIE** for it?

When a woman **FORGETS** to desire admiration, or fear disgrace, when she looks steadily into the face of all that was erst terrible to her, and is willing to

throw her life into the scale, then, though her sister-women cry out against her, and the air shakes with contemptuous laughter, still she must be heard. When the tumult dies down—which is merely an interruption—she will be listened to again. *Why does she want the vote?*

In order to answer this we must put platitudes aside, and face the facts of woman's life as we find them in the working-class community *to-day*. It is of no use to look back a century or two, for then, perhaps, we could not understand. Swift as the mountain storm have been the industrial events which have within the last few decades changed the position and prospects of wage-earning women. If these swift happenings have changed the thoughts of only the more intelligent minority as yet, that is not to be wondered at—still less is it to be taken as a pledge of indifference on the part of the majority in the future. What hundreds see to-day, tens of thousands will see to-morrow.

It is a fashion among pretty writers to say that the Home is woman's true sphere. The pretty phrase is TRUE. Woman's whole mission will probably be found at last to consist in making a great home of the whole habitable planet. But in so far as it applies to the actual conditions of life, and pressing necessities and duties of an increasing multitude of women to-day, the phrase is like an arrow shot by a careless hand into the desert air, and with no destination but to fall perhaps at last into some aching heart. The average wage of wool-combers is about 18s. per week, and factory-workers generally hardly average

more than 25s. per week. Every new introduction of machinery displaces labour, and every improvement therefore may be said to cheapen labour—the labour of home-builders. Formerly, that is before the introduction of machinery, the wage-earner knew what to expect, but to-day he cannot know, and his wife shares his anxieties. So she goes out to work herself. In Lancashire 62 per cent. go out to work, in Manchester and Birmingham 63 per cent., and in Stockport and Dundee the number of outworking women is even greater.

It is clear, however, that all these are not married women. A great many wage-earning women—the majority indeed—are unmarried. School-teachers, journalists, domestic servants, shop-assistants, and a great army of producers in an infinite number of trades—among these are many women who support their parents, and fatherless children or orphaned children. They are out in the world, and are bread-winners, not because they chose to labour in this way, but because the conditions of modern industrial life have compelled them. Woe to them if they hesitate!

I have in my mind the sad case of a noble, *womanly* woman, skilled in all womanly arts, left to struggle alone with her young orphan children. She sewed, she cooked, she kept her home as clean as a jewel; she nursed and tended and taught her little ones. She earned money, too, by taking in washing and going out to cook sometimes, and she died of exhaustion and semi-starvation at last. Her case is not a very uncommon one. A home may be a necessity, but for many it is a luxury. "She should

have gone out to earn and taken a proper situation," said the victim's brother. It seems a brutal speech, but is it more thoughtlessly cruel than the speech of the fashionable novel-writer who says, "She should have reigned as queen in her *home?*"

Terrible is the fate of the poor woman who clings to-day to home. The worst paid of all workers are the woman home-workers. It is they who figure in the sweating industries exhibitions, and it is they who dare not ask for justice even in a whisper, and who toil on till wages reach starvation point. Out in the open things are not nearly so bad.

Out in the open women begin to combine, and what is more, they begin to look abroad over the great world of industrial life, and to perceive that its progress consists of ever-growing powers of combination, and that those who take part in its life cannot be long home-workers in the old sense. In short, they begin to see that all unknown to themselves, and almost in spite of themselves, they have to become citizens.

The burdens of citizenship have been assumed by them already. A married woman is responsible for her own acts even to the point of suffering the extreme penalty of the law for certain offences. She is a producer in the industrial markets of the world, a tax and rate payer; and in one constituency at least women trades unionists pay the salary of a representative in Parliament. There is "a disability to bear arms"—but no disability to go to the help of soldiers, as the numerous corps of army nurses who have served in battle can

testify! One by one the burdens of citizenship have been assumed, and because of this fact every thinking wage-earner was bound to get a glimpse of the outer world from which she had been so long excluded. Many begin to look forth at last. And what do they see?

They see, to begin with, that the mediæval notion of home—as a prison for mothers as well as a cradle for children—has little to recommend it. In the stately homes of England there may be room to live, room for romance and idealism. But the number of these homes is small in comparison with the number of one-tenement and two-tenement rooms! In all some 120,000 babes die every year, and not 30 per cent. of all school-going children are thoroughly healthy and well cared for. Bad as all this is, it was infinitely worse in the “good old days.” “The grace of hospitality is gone, and the art of good manners.” Perhaps, but the black plague is gone too, and a whole bevy of horrible diseases; drunkenness is declining, and the dreadful things it brings in its train. Little was heard of these in the old days of stately manners, little was heard of child labour, and of miseries that are now searched out and relieved. The thinking, wage-earning woman may see that to-day is dark, but she does not make the mistake of thinking that yesterday was brighter. Just as the condition of the worker in the great warehouse or factory is better than is that of the poor sweated home-worker, so the condition of the child in an elementary school to-day is better than was that of a child in a slum home, or even in a cottage

home yesterday, a home where an overworked mother was trying to combine the task of child-minding with cooking, washing, and housemaid's work.

The thinking, wage-earning woman does not wish then to go back, but forward. The State is not a mere *name* to her—an abstraction. Whether she willed or no, she has had to come into a new relation to it. She sees that there is a larger life, and that she has to become an active and conscious part of it. Every year, whether she will or not, this fact is forced home. She may do her duty in the old-world sense well enough, but that will not save her or her dear ones. Of what use to keep her little ones clean and sweet if they have to sit with diseased and neglected children—as they probably must to-day?

The question of wages, of public health, of education, of housing, her fate in sickness, in widowhood, in sudden calamity, in old age—the fate of all the unfortunate, the lost, the suffering, the helpless—all these can not long remain matters of indifference. They are forced daily on her attention in painful and intimate ways. But she can have little or no voice in them, save in co-operation with her fellows: that is to say, she has for larger social purposes little power save as a citizen.

These last words will raise a cry of protest, and bring me face to face with the whole army of the critics of Suffragette methods!

“The clever woman,” says a lady writer, “sits at

home and, like a meadow spider, spreads a pretty web of rose and gold, spangled with diamond dew. Flies—or men—tumble in by scores, and she holds them all prisoners at her pleasure with a silken strand as fine as a hair. But," she adds, "her weaving must not be to hold the flies solely for her own amusement—she must learn to use her powers for the betterment of the world."

The woman making webs, the man tumbling in and being inspired in a trap—is an old, old picture. It was conceived first of all in a warm climate, where unwholesome moisture rose from the teeming earth and made a dimness about the paths of men. It was developed in lands where women, become spinners indeed, were yet confined in close and shadowy chambers, and lost in unwholesome reveries the mere remembrance of the nature and source of inspiration. The very notion of an inspiring spider is alien, however, after all to the average Western—above all to the Saxon. "I will look up unto the hills from whence cometh my aid," sang even an Eastern poet, who, we were told, had nevertheless a large harem, and this desire to look not into an intriguing face, however fair, but into the light filled spaces of the Eternal, lives and will live anew in the hearts of our countrymen. This Suffragist—who is accused of having no beauty—will not, at least, prevent them. *She is* not here to make webs, but for other purposes. All the graces of the daughters of slave-women, even when shown forth, as they are to-day in the work of some of our leading women writers, and even their virtues, wholesome enough though a little confined,

like flowers in pots, have ceased to awaken her envy. In the storm and stress of workaday life she has been forced to leave such things—to leave them to the women who can cultivate and enjoy them. The rude call of Life summons her elsewhither—and she will not turn back. Perhaps one day—she will find a new charm, a new spell to win love and happiness, but in any case she will not turn back. Just as in the wild forest and its storms the barbarian Northmen conceived a new reverence for women, so in the storm of industrial life, and exposed to all its waves and buffetings, she must learn a new reverence for herself.

WOMEN AND THE REVIVAL OF INTEREST IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

BY MABEL ATKINSON, M.A.

(Author of "Local Government in Scotland.")

THE militant Suffragist agitation, if able to count on ability and enthusiasm of a kind never aroused by the older movement, has yet by its decided action and definite policy stirred up not only all the old prejudices, but is confronted by newer misunderstandings even among those who on abstract grounds are in favour of the principle of women's enfranchisement. Its policy is assailed on the one hand by people who are so advanced that they will not even temporarily accept anything less than adult suffrage. These persons who, by refusing to take a single step forward because that one step will not land them at their goal, have done us and their own principles the great injury of providing for reactionaries, who do not dare any longer openly to declare themselves opposed to Women's Suffrage, an excuse for blocking in the name of progress further movement. On the other hand, the agitation is confronted by a pathetic bewilderment among the orthodox Liberals—among

the women as well as the men. They are unable to understand why this determination to secure women's enfranchisement should appear precisely at the moment when the Liberal Party, after years of weary waiting on the opposition benches, finds itself once more in power. They ask with reiterated irritation, "Why did not the women attack the Conservatives? Why do they wait until the Liberals are in power to take up the policy of harassing any government that will not immediately deal with the question of Women's Suffrage? Why will they not be patient and trust to those who are their best friends to choose the right time for carrying through this reform?"

And so far has this bewilderment grown in some cases that a few Liberals, who ought to be better able to recognise sincerity when it is before their eyes, believe that the whole agitation has been incited by the Conservatives as an underhand means of injuring the Party in power. During the Hexham election the term "Toryette" was invented by this ignorant section, and one insulting question commonly asked of the Suffragists was: "How much are you getting from the Tories for this?"

This slander is only pardonable when uttered by totally ignorant people—and hardly that, indeed, if the framers of it have had opportunities of actually seeing and hearing the leaders of the franchise agitation, women who risk livelihood and social position and with many regrets separate themselves from their own political parties in order to concentrate all their energies on this one question. Yet

the bewilderment of the devoted Liberal is comprehensible. Why does the new movement appear just at the moment when a Government inspired by democratic ideals comes into office, and when there is a chance, so thinks the Liberal, of forwarding social reforms that have already waited too long? Why were these women, admitting that they are entirely sincere, and that their motives are deserving of the highest respect, why were they so misguided as to allow the Conservatives to remain many years in power without subjecting them to the annoyance and irritation involved in the present tactics?

To this question many answers can be given. In the first place some of the leading spirits in this agitation were not during the last Government's term of office of an age to rebel against anything save the regulations of schoolroom or college. Nothing can be more ludicrous to one acquainted with the active members of the Women's Social and Political Union than the quite extraordinary contrast between the Suffragette as she really is and the Suffragette as caricatured. The latter is a gaunt, elderly person, badly dressed and excessively plain—she is popularly supposed to want a vote because her lack of charm has failed to secure her a husband; the former is quite frequently a girl or young matron between twenty and thirty, of delicate, even dainty appearance and usually dressed, if not fashionably, at all events with considerable charm and individual taste. Few movements have in all probability so many young people among their leaders, and many of the agitators, if asked why they

personally did not oppose the late Government, can reply: "Because I was not old enough."

Yet after all this is but a superficial answer; for middle-aged women and even white-haired old ladies are now joining in the agitation, and from the beginning there were some older women acting with the ardent younger spirits. We must look deeper. If women do at the present time desire political freedom with such intensity, why did the movement not develop earlier? Why does it arise just at the time when it can embarrass the new Liberal Government? Perhaps the answer to this question can best be given in the Scottish fashion by meeting it with another. We might put to our puzzled Liberal friends the counter-queries: "Why has Liberalism so recently emerged from the slough of despond? Have the conditions, have your principles changed since the years of so-called Tory domination? Why are you, who were a short time ago weak and despairing, now strong and exultant?" In trying to answer this question the Liberals would probably refer to the recent war, and to the increase of Jingo spirit which it brought with it. Yet at the same time many would assert that it was the ebbing of Liberalism that made the war possible at all. A wise man said: "The wind bloweth where it liesth," and it is at all events true that the wind of human aspiration now dies away, now blows with freshening force. I have heard an eminent professor of history declare that nothing so impressed on his mind the conception of a

Divine Spirit urging on the movement of human destiny as the study of the ripening and decaying of the different ideals of mankind and of the institutions that embody those ideals. The desire for the amelioration of the conditions of human life comes, so to speak, in gusts, and no one who follows the course of English politics at the present time can doubt that the breeze is now blowing with strength and impelling us onward in our search for that nobler future that allures him whom the squalid present fails to content. All schools that aim at domestic reform feel this; interest is quickened; minds that were asleep are now awake and alert. All reformers—Liberals and Radicals, collectivists and communists, temperance reformers, peace advocates, what you will—are toiling now with hope, while but a short time ago the few enthusiasts seemed to be hammering hopelessly at a blank wall of opposition. A new spirit is abroad in England. We may account for it as we please—as mere weariness of the prolonged government of one party, as due to education, or, as some would say, over-education, as resulting from changed economic conditions, as an awakening of the masses, as a fresh manifestation of the Life Force, to use the latest terms of popular philosophy; but all will agree that the new life, the new spirit is here, and—let us not be afraid of bathos, when the bathos is true—that one of its fruits was the victories of the Liberals at the general election. But that new sap brings other fruits also to development. In

the women's camp, as in all others, the new inspiration makes itself felt. Women too are emerging from the weary years of the reaction, are scanning old ideals and are finding that, though they burnt dimly in the days of despondency, they are shining brightly once more and are casting a clear light on the path of the future. Women who considered their rightful claims to full citizenship with lukewarmness are now falling under the influence of the new demands and are flocking alike into the old Suffrage Societies, and into the Women's Social and Political Union. Something deeper than their own narrow personal interests has gripped many of the women of England; on all sides one sees and hears it, among those women who gather to decorous Suffrage conventions in the provincial towns, in the masses of perfectly normal and respectable middle-class wives and daughters who walked in procession from Hyde Park to Exeter Hall on the 9th of last February, but most of all on the faces and in the voices of those women who have dared—exasperated beyond the bounds of patience by the unworthy tactics of a Government that calls itself Liberal—to strive to reach the House of Commons itself that they might urge their claims to a vote—claims nominally admitted to be just by a very large majority of that House—and who have in consequence served out their sentence of imprisonment as a testimony of the faith that is in them. And therefore if the Liberals ask why these things are done *now*, and not earlier, we can only reply that in us as among them—and many of us are (or were) Liberals—inertia and

despondency ruled, and now rule now longer; and that their awakening and ours are due to a common cause, which historians in the future may account for in many ways, but which all will acknowledge to have existed, the striking re-emergence of interest in domestic politics which marked the second five years of the twentieth century. It is not mere perverseness on our part that makes the new agitation coincide with the accession to power of the Liberal Party. On the contrary, the two facts have a common cause.

Moreover, it is from a Liberal Government that claims for the extension of the franchise should meet with active support. Philosophic Liberalism depends on the ideals of political freedom; its very maxims are "No taxation without representation," and that just, though hardly inspiring expression of principle, "Each to count as one and none as more than one." The work of Liberalism is to provide fair and equal political machinery, to make the form of government democratic; that task is nearly done, and soon a new doctrine of political development, whether called by a different name or not, must replace the old views. One part, however, of the machinery still awaits completion. The rights of women must be acknowledged; their energy and devotion must be made available for the work of government. To carry out this reform is consonant with the principles and traditions of Liberalism, and yet those who urge it continue to be met with those often heard exhortations to wait, to be patient.

Now there are weighty reasons, not often clearly

understood, why we dare not be patient any longer. As has been said, there is a new desire for social reform abroad among the people. Speaking generally, the work of the nineteenth century was to break down and clear away a system of government suited to earlier economic conditions, and to bring into existence the machinery of political democracy. The question of what product the machinery was to turn out when finished was naturally enough put aside for the time. Democratic government appeared then as an end in itself. But now Englishmen are learning—some of them with bitter disillusionment—that mere political freedom is in itself a mockery; that liberty must be used for some end; that in striving for that end—the provision of happier conditions of life for the nation—the forms of society must be gradually changed and fresh institutions brought into existence to take the place of those which are no longer suitable to our altered circumstances. We stand, in short, on the threshold of an age of reconstruction, of an organic era. Now in the course of this reconstruction, there must inevitably be great modification of the most personal and domestic concerns of men and women. Indeed the process has already begun. Does not the British housewife learn from the newspapers—often with astonished disgust—that henceforth she is to be liable for compensation should her maid stumble on the stairs and break an arm or leg? Are not demands for old age pensions apparently near to reaching their fulfilment? Are not schemes for providing work for the unemployed discussed far and

wide throughout the country? But in all these questions women are personally and intimately concerned. They are servants, and the immediate employers of servants ; they live to be old in greater numbers than men ; they suffer in their own persons, and vicariously in those of their children, from lack of employment, whether they be widows thrown into the overcrowded market of women's labour, or wives of men who can find no work. These problems of social reconstruction are not alien from women's lives, but closely and immediately connected therewith. Therefore many women feel—sometimes clearly and with comprehension, but more often half-unconsciously—that now, not after some indefinite time of waiting, must political rights be granted to them, a feeling expressed in that cry of the Women's Social and Political Union : “ Rise up, women, *now*.” A thoughtful person can indeed see that the economic disabilities of women, due in the past to a considerable extent to custom and not solely to law, may, if this reconstructive legislation be undertaken before women receive their enfranchisement, put them at fresh disadvantages. At present, for instance, attempts to find work for unemployed women are made with far less energy than in the case of men. And the problems dealing with women's place in the industrial world that are bound to present themselves in the future are of such complexity that women should insist on receiving the right to vote, and on being in a position to influence Parliament directly before other legislation on their behalf is undertaken. Otherwise, in the tangle of conflicting interests, their

special needs and circumstances may easily be overlooked. Take, for example, the question of married women's labour in factories. All who know anything of modern industry are ready to admit that factory work is not suitable for young mothers, actual or expectant. But should a law be passed forbidding factory work to married women without providing an easy way of compelling their husbands to maintain them adequately, it is only too possible that their burden may be increased, not lightened, and that they may leave the factory work, often after all comparatively well paid, to undertake at lower wages casual domestic employment which involves such heavy tasks as carrying coals or scrubbing floors, or that they may be forced to turn to the far more demoralising sweated home-work. It is probable also that before many years are past the country may be discussing in earnest the institution of a minimum wage. Now to regulate men's wages alone would be impossible. But are men to say what is the minimum wage for a woman? Should they undertake to do so, a two-fold danger awaits us. The employer, in his desire for cheap and docile labour, may insist on a woman's minimum too low to yield a true living wage, while Parliament and the constituencies would acquiesce, since women can bring no immediate political influence to bear. On the other hand, many think it possible that men trade-unionists might in certain trades cause the minimum to be fixed so high that very few women would be employed at the legal wage; they might, in fact, use the minimum as a means of shutting the trade to

women altogether ; for at present we must sorrowfully admit that in the less skilled divisions of industrial life women's main advantage is often—though by no means always—her greater cheapness.

In short, whether one welcomes or deplors the fact, it is hard to doubt that the immediate future is to see attempts to regulate by legislation many things in the industrial world that have hitherto been left to chance or custom. And unless women receive enfranchisement before further advances are made on this path, it is only to be expected that their special needs may be overlooked and fresh chains not merely of usage, but of law, may bind them more firmly in that economic inferiority which is the greatest of their grievances.

But the new legislation not simply affects women as individuals, it also affects what our opponents so energetically insist is our true sphere—the home and the nursery. I do not for a moment wish to protest against society's keener interest in the well-being of children, and the healthiness of the houses of the people. It is in my view eminently desirable that education should be compulsory, that attempts should be made to ensure that the children, who must by law be educated, should not be underfed, and should all have opportunities for a healthy physical development, that over-crowding should be prohibited, that experiments in housing should be made by local authorities, that baths, wash-houses, and sometimes crèches should be provided, that health visitors should superintend the nurture of infants, &c. All this is good ; it means a wider and keener

sense of responsibility on the part of the State towards the younger generation. But in adopting these reforms the State is encroaching on the traditional sphere of women, and a Government controlled solely by men, and almost exclusively administered by them, may, when dealing with children and the peculiar problems of women's lives, make very serious blunders. For instance, every one is coming now to admit that our system of elementary education did for many years impose, and in some cases still continues to impose on children of five and six a discipline that is not merely not beneficial but in some cases actually hurtful to the little undeveloped minds and movement-craving bodies. Many declare, too, that a serious blunder has been made in dealing with the question of trained midwives, and that since after 1910 none but properly qualified midwives will be allowed to practise, while yet no attempt is being made to provide the necessary training at a fee within the means of the women who undertake this work, we shall be faced with a serious deficiency in the number of properly-trained women (a question of considerable importance, one may note in passing, in connection with the problem of infantile mortality). In all these matters there is need of the woman's standpoint as well as the man's. And we desire the right of voting not that we may cease to be women, but because we are women, and because Parliament, chosen at present by men alone, is making laws that must influence very closely our work, the training of children and the conduct of home-life. It is our very womanhood with its inborn

instinct to "childward care," and not merely the human nature which we share with men, that makes many of us eager to be politically enfranchised, in order that women also may take their proper share in controlling the future course of that legislation which must profoundly modify the daily lives of all English people—men, women, and children alike.

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

BY EDITH PALLISER

TO the National American Women's Suffrage Association belongs the honour of having initiated the International Movement for Women's Suffrage, which has for its object, "To secure the enfranchisement of women of all nations, and to unite the friends of Women's Suffrage throughout the world in organised co-operation and fraternal helpfulness."

The first step in organised effort to obtain the suffrage for women was also taken by the women of America, and that agitation dated from the World's Anti-Slavery Convention which was held in London in 1840.

In considering the many predisposing causes which led very gradually up to the demand by women for their political enfranchisement, it is interesting to note that it was from a passionate desire for a reform of the unsatisfactory and in many cases degrading social and political conditions of their country, together with a chivalrous pity for the weak and

friendless, that women first learnt to realise the special need of the franchise for themselves.

This is true not only of American and English women but of women in all countries. We have had recent examples in the women of Russia and Finland who have thrown themselves wholeheartedly into the work for political freedom, sharing with men in all the dangers and suffering equally with them in the attempt to obtain liberty for their country. The Women's Suffrage Movement was not, as has been asserted, the outcome of an agitation by a few women of ill-balanced minds, inspired by an unreasonable hatred of men. The root and mainspring of the demand was the desire to release the slave, to succour the wounded, to bring light to the prisoners, and to combat immorality.

It was, perhaps, fitting that the Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 should have been the starting-point of the work for women's enfranchisement. At all events it was the action of the men, who by an overwhelming vote refused to the women delegates from the Anti-Slavery Societies in America the right to sit and deliberate in that assembly, that gave the impetus to the Women's Suffrage agitation in America. This refusal to allow their fellow-workers recognition must have aroused in the minds of English women working at that time for social reforms serious reflections on the position women occupied in regard to the State. Among these were Mary Carpenter, who may indeed be taken as a type of the woman who, in beginning her work for the benefit of others, had no thought of the need of the franchise for her

sex, but who was slowly brought to realise that legislation would not be established on its true basis until women had the same power of voting as men.

The first meeting called to consider the formation of an International Women's Suffrage Alliance was held at Washington, D.C., in February, 1902. At this conference six National Women's Suffrage Associations were represented, viz., Canada, Germany, Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, and the United States of America. Delegates were also present from countries where no National Suffrage Associations existed at that time—Australia, Chili, and Russia. A temporary International Committee was formed. This committee met in Berlin in 1904, when the International Women's Suffrage Alliance was established. At this meeting seven countries were represented—Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United States of America. Visitors also attended from Austria, Hungary, New Zealand, and Switzerland. The third Conference was held in Copenhagen, when delegates from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Norway, the Netherlands, Russia, and Sweden were present. Besides these many fraternal delegates attended representing Councils of women of different nations—the National Council of Frenchwomen, the Finnish Women's Association, and the Georgian Women's League of Equal Rights. The chief feature of interest in this Convention was the presence of Alexandra Gripenberg, representing the newly-enfranchised women of Finland, and of Mdle. Mirovitch, the representative of the Russian

Union of Defenders of Women's Rights. There can be no doubt that the work of the International Alliance will in time prove a great help and stimulus to the cause of women's enfranchisement in every land.

The policy to be pursued in every country must of necessity vary with its political conditions, but the arguments against Women's Suffrage that have to be combated and the prejudices encountered are precisely the same. Those countries which already possess the franchise can furnish facts to prove that the prophecies of evil results following on the enfranchisement of women have been falsified. Inaccurate statements circulated by opponents in the press can be readily met and corrected by the organisations keeping each other in close touch with the actual facts of the progress of the movement. The position of the movement in different European countries offers some features of general interest. Finland has been granted the franchise by the sanction of the Czar, the representative of autocratic government, and the first European monarch to recognise the claims of his women-subjects. The countries where the cause of women has made the least progress are the republics of France and Switzerland. In Italy, where the agitation has only been started in recent years, the appeal of women has already been carried to the practical stage. In the new world the English colonies have granted full political rights to women, while America, which was the first to formulate the claim of self-government for all, still denies political rights to its women.

These facts may perhaps be taken to prove the truth of Mr. Leckey's words that "the success of a movement depends much less upon the force of its arguments or upon the ability of its advocates than the predisposition of Society to receive it."

WOMEN'S VOTES IN NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA

BY NELLIE ALMA MARTEL

VOTES for women! Votes for women! Why are we hearing so much of this subject now? Is it possible that in *free* England over 140 women have been sent to prison for only asking for votes for women? No wonder this question is the burning question of the day. Has the English House of Commons forgotten the old proverb, "Righteousness exalteth a nation?" Surely this democratic Parliament—the greatest democratic majority England has ever had—will stand by its constitution that taxation and representation must go hand-in-hand, and will put into effect its own boasted superiority over the other party which says to the people, "You trust us." The Liberal Party is supposed to "Trust the People."

Well indeed has this determination of the women to get their votes succeeded. They have looked on the younger colonies of the Empire, and have seen that where women have the vote social laws and their industrial position have greatly improved. Seeing this, a holy discontent seized the women

of Great Britain—and a great unrest which will never quieten until their demand is granted. In young countries women are in greater demand, their opinions are sought after because the country begins with the homes, and wherever the women's help has been sought, the results have proved that the natural housekeeper can become the national housekeeper, as nation-keeping is only house-keeping on a larger scale. The Isle of Man enfranchised her women in 1884, and those M.P.'s who now predict most terrible disaster to England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales if women should be enfranchised forget to look to that peaceful little island so near for an example.

New Zealand enfranchised her women, and in 1893 they used their votes for the first time. The result of the first Parliament elected by women and men was the introduction of *old age pensions*; every man over the age of sixty-five was entitled to seven shillings a week; every woman over sixty-five was entitled to seven shillings a week. That is a notable fact that where men and women are political equals they are treated equally. So well did the old age pensions work that less than two years ago they were raised to ten shillings a week the man, and ten shillings a week the woman. I have visited your workhouses, and have read about your poor rates, and have seen your starving men and women, and pinched, pale-faced children. I have seen your sweated women workers, have visited the slums in which they exist and sew and sleep; I have seen that still worse great army of

women who could not endure the misery of starving slowly, and who are selling their souls for food and clothes and shelter. I have read in the *Daily News* of 50,000 souls, men, women, and children in West Ham, starving, and I have seen the marches of the unemployed in Tottenham and Wood Green, in the North, and the terrible, never-to-be-forgotten march of East End unemployed to Hyde Park. I took part in the women's march, and I can assure my readers only a heart of stone could look on unmoved. Then I go to the other end of your wonderful city and see the signs of wealth in houses and furniture, luxuries abounding everywhere, children happy with their nurses, beauty, plenty, happiness. One is led to ask are we all children of one great Father, and members of one human family, and subjects of the same King, and legislated for by the same Parliament? If so, surely the weak and helpless should have the first care. I look with horror on your mis-named "workhouses," and see in them breeding dens of discontent, envy, malice, and hatred, and nurseries for idleness and selfishness. The cost of maintaining these iniquitous blots on twentieth century legislation would go a long way to providing old age pensions, and starting reproductive works for the able-bodied men and women to earn their livelihood. When men and women are old they are entitled to old age pensions, which really are the interest of the wealth their own labour has produced. With charity or relief, indoor or outdoor, recipients are paupers, and consequently forfeit all privileges of citizens; with old age pensions go respect, honour and rights

of citizenship. The pension is proof that the aged citizen has done his or her duty to the country, and the country acknowledges it, just as the British Parliament pensions its ex-Admirals, ex-Generals, ex-Cabinet-Ministers, and others who were supposed to have served their country well, and who were well paid during their service. Ruskin tells us "every man (or woman) who has done well to his parish or country deserves well from that parish or country," and so we say. The women's vote helped to bring about this old age pension in New Zealand.

Liquor Reform was another great work brought about by the women's vote in New Zealand; local option in many districts, and abolition in a few. The official Year Book of 1906 for New Zealand comments on the large increase in the number of votes recorded for no license or reduction of license; it also refers to "the substantial increase shown in the number of persons who went to the poll."¹

The Factories Act, 1901, of New Zealand is one of the most perfect and complete laws to be found. A maximum forty-five hours a week for women and youths is insisted on, except in woollen mills, where they *may* work 48 hours. All bakehouses and laundries, if only two persons be employed, are classed as factories to bring them under the Factories Act

¹ I make a point of quoting this from page 199 of Year Book because we are often told the women did *not want* the vote, and do *not use* it. Whereas the total of voters in 1896 were, males 151,285; females 108,663, total 259,948, and in 1905, males 221,674; females 174,743, total 396,417.

inspection. *In shops* a weekly half-holiday is compulsory, and to all young persons a minimum wage of 5s. per week must be paid, with an increase of 3s. per week until they are twenty years old. The following are a few of the Labour Laws passed since the enfranchisement of the New Zealand women:—The Alcoholic Liquor Sale Control Amendment Act, 1895 (*re* holiday on licensing election day); the Electoral Act, 1905 (*re* holiday on election day); the Factories Act, 1901; Industrial Arbitration and Conciliation Act; Trades Union Amendment Act, 1896; Wages Protection Act, 1899; Workers' Dwellings Act, 1905; the Land for Settlements Consolidation Act, 1900 (with provision for workmen's homes); Servants' Registry Offices Act, 1895; Shops and Offices Act, 1904; and many others. Those people who say the enfranchisement of women will stop all Social Reforms will be surprised to learn that the very reforms they are talking of have been brought about with the aid of the women's vote.

The education, too, of the children at the Public Schools is free and purely secular, doing away with the sectarian controversy. There are a great many other reforms of which I have written but do not wish to refer to them here, so will pass on to the first State of Australia which followed New Zealand in giving her women the vote. South Australia enfranchised her women in 1894, and the following are a few of the Social and Industrial Acts of Parliament passed since that date:—Married Women's Protection Act; Workmen's Liens Amendment; Gambling Suppression; Indecent Advertisement

Suppression; Affiliation Act; Legitimation of Children; Married Women's Property Act; Workmen's Wages; Children's Protection; Early Closing; Factories Amendments; State Children's Amendment; Workmen's Compensation; Children's Protection *re* Smoking; Opium Amendment; Police Prisons, &c.

Immediately the women of South Australia were enfranchised the age to protect girls was raised from fourteen to sixteen years, and since, I think, has been raised to eighteen. I was very much impressed by the remarks made by Mr. Horace Smith, the magistrate who was on the Bench when seventy-five women were brought before him for attempting to go to the House of Commons to present a petition praying the Government to bring in a Bill for Votes for Women under the same terms as now do, or may, in future apply to men.

There was one over sixteen but not seventeen years old, a young girl who had been working in the factory over two years and who came from Huddersfield representing her mother, who took her to Manchester to place her in the care of one of the leaders of the W.S.P.U. to bring to London for the purpose of attending the Conference and to help carry the resolution of that Conference into effect. Mr. Smith said she was a child and should be in the schoolroom; she was too young to know or understand what she was doing. Yet the law of this land—the man-made law—says in effect that a girl of sixteen and a day is quite old enough to decide on what is right or wrong as to acts of morality. A

man may ruin a young girl of sixteen and one day, and if the girl says she consented to her own ruin nothing is done to the man, although the poor "child," as Mr. Smith calls her, may have been intimidated, coerced, or bribed into saying she consented to the stealing of "the immediate jewel of the soul"—her good name. It is a great pity these kindly gentlemen, such as Mr. Horace Smith, do not look after the young girls in the right way; it is because there are such disgraceful laws on the statute-book of this country—these one-sided laws—that we are fighting for the votes for women. We should very much like to see our girls, the girls of the working classes, in the schoolroom until they are sixteen; but alas! poor souls, many of them have to be in the factories, the mills, and the shops two years before that age, and many have to earn money in other ways long before they are fourteen and before they leave school. It is a very good sympathy, Mr. Smith; carry it into effect for the poor unprotected working women's daughters who are subjected to all kinds of temptation in coming and going, aye and even in their work. Protect the poor girls' good names at least as long as you protect the rich girls' property. In the States which gave women the vote the *first* reform was to raise the age of consent; in fact, to look after the welfare of the future mothers. What could be better than that? South Australia brought in many Bills to deal with the children. It is with the children every country should help to reform itself.

Germany owes her progress not to her Protective policy but to the way she deals with her children.

Her supervision and care of illegitimate, neglected or deserted children is indeed magnificent ; her system of technical schools and municipal control could be copied for the advantage of Great Britain. South Australia is making a good second in her care of the child-life. Smoking and other habits of vice are suppressed by Acts of Parliament, and if children should break the law there are separate courts for their trial.

Another good Act is the "Suppression of Indecent Advertisement" and questionable literature. To prevent children becoming criminals is much greater than reforming them, and to keep their minds pure is of infinitely more importance to the future generations than schools of correction, reformatories, and prisons, which are all needed in later life through the lack of attention in the right direction when the mind is most susceptible. Lady Montague, in a letter to her daughter, the Countess of Bute, said : "The same characters are formed by the same lessons." If only our legislators would think of that sometimes when they are dealing with the questions relating to children and the homes of our workers ! We know what the slums and rookeries of crowded cities have turned out, and yet these same slums and rookeries exist and the same characters are being turned loose on the world ; the lessons learned in those slums, of vice, cruelty, and degradation are being repeated day after day and year after year, and we only *hear* of the "Housing Problem." If women had the votes here in Britain do you think this would continue to go on ?

What our wise (?) legislators spent in the South African war alone would have been enough to buy up all the slums and make houses and homes worthy of the name for our workers to live in, and the money saved in gaols, lunatic asylums, police and magistrates, &c., would be enormous. The people often sin because "the means to do ill-deeds make ill-deeds done." The women, having more to do with homes than men, and having to spend most of their time there, would make this a live question, and if there were a spare room in the homes where tired fathers might rest undisturbed by crying children they would not want to go to the public-house; children, too, are less peevish when they can play and not be in "mother's way." It is the right of the worker—a decent home. Was it not Moody who said: "The home was founded before the Church, and Britons stand more in need of homes than of churches"? One more reform I must refer to. The Opium Amendment Act of South Australia shows what good uses the women's votes have been put to. About a year ago there was a great cry all over England about the opium traffic; meetings of women were held, resolutions were unanimously carried praying Mr. John Morley to abolish the traffic; with what result—failure! The Government could not afford to lose the *revenue* derived from that diabolical drug. Morals of the people! what is that in comparison to money for the National Exchequer? I spoke at several of those women's meetings and foretold them if they wished the abolition of opium traffic they must fight for the women's vote, as that was the *only*

weapon which would annihilate the trade. Tasmania, which only enfranchised her women in December, 1903, in 1906 passed an Act prohibiting opium smoking. The women's vote will attack this question in England too, for women will attach more importance to the *salvation of human life* than to money for the national coffers. Since 1903 (December) Tasmania—the little island south of Australia and one of the Commonwealth States—has placed on the Statute Book the following Acts since the women exercised their votes:—Legitimation Act; Women and Children Employment Act; Education Act; Youthful Offenders, Destitute, and Neglected Children Act, in 1905; the Midwifery Nurses Act; Opium Smoking Prohibition Act; Young Persons' and Women's Detention Act, in 1906. Surely, surely these are sufficient proof that women's share in politics are not blocks to reform, but rather open the door to reform.

The State of Western Australia gave her women the vote in 1898 (the second Australian State to enfranchise women). Since then an Act to raise the age of consent from fourteen years to sixteen (now eighteen) was carried. Women were made eligible for the Bar. Arbitration (Industrial Disputes), Compensation to Families of Persons killed by Accidents, Co-operative and Provident Societies Acts, Criminal Code Consolidation Acts, Drunkards Act (1903), Early Closing (1902), Education Amendments (1899), Factories Act (1904), Gaols (1903), Health Act Amendments (1899 and 1904), Indecent Publications (1902), Marriage Law (1900), Married Women's

Judicial Separation (1896, Amendment 1902), Prohibition of Secret Commissions (1905), Seats for Shop Assistants (1899), Slander of Women (1900), Trades Unions (1902), Truck Act (1899), and many other social, industrial and domestic Acts, which I have not space to mention. New South Wales, the third State to give women the vote, began immediately on social reforms. The age of consent was raised from fourteen years to sixteen. Infant Mortality and Legitimation of Children, Juvenile Smoking Prohibition, Liquor Reform Bill (no compensation), Women Inspectors for Early Closing have been appointed, Wages Boards to abolish Sweating created, and attempts made to enforce equal wages for equal work, and several other reforms are under discussion. A Local Government Bill has been carried and a State Children's Bill, to give the poor, neglected, or orphaned child a trade to commence life on. Public-houses are closed all day on Sundays, early closing and half-holiday for shop assistants, women factory inspectors, police matrons—and many other things which make life bright and endurable for our workers. The *Wages Board* of Australia has acted so well in putting down sweating that this same Government, which sent 140 women to prison for asking for the vote to help put down this gigantic evil, has sent a Commissioner to Australia to inquire into its working, with a view of solving the evil which exists in Britain. (In New Zealand *sub-contracting* is forbidden by law, and sweating is absolutely impossible there.) Would it not be more economical to enfranchise the British women and let them help the Government to wipe

sweating entirely out, as they have done in New Zealand and Australia, than to pay a man's travelling and other expenses, besides time and delay through red-tapeism after his return, and then perhaps nothing will be done. It is nearly one year since that awful "Sweating Exhibition" was opened in London—what practical results have we? The women are still working nineteen hours for 1s. Shirts are still being made for 7½d. per dozen. The women are suffering whilst our wise (?) legislators are talking. How utterly incompetent this Democratic Government is to bring about a few democratic measures!

I think the above will clearly show there is nothing to be feared by giving women the vote. Have women not always been from the cradle to the grave the best friends men had? Then what have they to fear? Do they think women will combine in one great Party to make men suffer? I have heard it said that women being in the majority by three-quarters of a million would be able to overrule the men. I think this brilliant idea was mentioned by our bitter opponent, Mr. Cremer, in the House. The injustice done to the majority of adults by giving them no representation at all never seems to have occurred to him. It would be unjust to allow 750,000 more women than men to vote, but evidently, from his standpoint, it is no injustice to withhold the vote from *all* women! He is a member of that great Democratic Party now sitting at Westminster, and an advocate for Peace and Arbitration, but has not yet learned the golden rule laid down by the Nazarene, and the principle on which Peace with Justice

must be maintained, viz., to "Do unto others as you would have them do to you." No Party will suffer by a righteous action, and to enfranchise the women is right.

These militant tactics commenced on May 12, 1905, outside the House of Commons, when Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Robertson "talked out" the Bill, and have gone on, getting bolder and bolder, stronger and stronger. We have hit on a magnificent plan of campaign.

First, we are independent of all party politics, and we go to all by-elections to work *against* the Government nominee, until the Government will find a place on its programme for our Bill. We get the people's ears, and the justice of our cause appeals to them—we never hold a meeting without making converts. We are reaching the women as well as the men; we show plainly that every law which affects men also affects women; we prove to them we are taxed and not represented; we point out the great reforms effected in the colonies by the women's votes; we are educating fathers and mothers together. The great people, the great masses, are awakening to the bare justice of our demand; there is a sign of a great rebellion, a great revolt, for the people are beginning to stir from their long sleep of indifference, and are asking healthy questions as to our methods and reasons for them. It is coming like the mighty roar of the ocean, this great voice of the People, this one Great Almighty Power against which no King, Emperor, Czar, or Governments can stand. It has beheaded and dethroned kings. It has emptied the

House of Commons once before; it has given freedom to the slaves; it has put down the tyrants from high places. Our movement is on the *crest* of that great wave, and *no* power can stop it! We are fighting for Liberty and Freedom; we know not defeat, we may "fall to rise," strengthened every time. Our army is growing, growing daily; women are drawing nearer each other, and in so doing are getting nearer the Great Father of all; they are understanding each other better than before; classes and masses banded together in the great Women's Social and Political Union, making this great cause their religion—the religion of *Humanitarianism*.

TACTICS

BY R. F. CHOLMELEY

[Mr. Cholmeley's article contains many valuable criticisms, but it would hardly be accepted by most of the other contributors to this volume, certainly not by me. In the first place Mr. Cholmeley seems hardly aware of the extent to which the "shock tactics" of the Westminster demonstrations was deliberately planned for the end which he admits they have fulfilled. Again, we have two guides only to the opinions of the average British working man on the subject: By repeated declarations, through their Trade Unions, working men have declared, by enormous majorities, in favour of universal, not merely manhood suffrage; the recent conference of the Labour Party at Belfast, representing nearly a million Trade Unionists, while rejecting unfortunately the so-called "limited" bill, was absolutely unanimous in favour of "votes for women." Again, working men form the vast majority of the present electorate, and that electorate, only last year, returned to the House of Commons 420 men pledged to Women's Suffrage. As against these facts what is there to prove Mr. Cholmeley's assertions that "Women's Suffrage is not a democratic policy yet," and that "the working class have still got to be converted to it?" In view, too, of the above large Parliamentary majority, and the striking simplicity of the Bill drafted by the Labour Party and quoted in the introduction to this volume, what is there to justify his assertion that Women's Suffrage is "not yet a matter of practical politics?" Is nothing "practical politics" until it has been accepted by Mr. Asquith?—B. V.]

CRUSADES have almost always come to grief for want of tactics ; and this is natural, since tactics require a cool head, and a capacity for compromise, while the crusading spirit is hot and impatient. The movement in favour of Women's Suffrage is in danger now for the same reasons. Because the advocates of Women's Suffrage are stronger than ever in numbers and intelligence, because they include women and men of all shades of political opinion and of every variety of temperament, it is sometimes assumed that the cause must prevail by its own momentum. There could not be a greater mistake. It is a mistake based upon mere blindness to the essential character of political action. Politics are concerned with means, and only those who are able to agree about means can exercise an effective political force. The very greatness of the cause helps to blind us to this ; we see that it is a great cause, that no party bias is too strong for it, that social prejudices are levelled by it, and we forget that what is wanted for success is not so much to unite every kind of person in a general sympathy, but to combine the largest possible number in active support of some particular action. Otherwise we may have a million enthusiasts who will produce no more results than that Children's Crusade which nearly seven hundred years ago strewed the plains of Europe with pitiful bones.

What are the chances of such an organised force or such a combination of forces as can alone bring success ? There are already as many parties among the supporters of Women's Suffrage as would suffice

to stock a Parliament. There is the National Union party, which will take any instalment of Women's Suffrage—even a Bill for conferring the vote upon one woman, as it was put the other day—on the ground that as soon as the door has been opened ever so little, the pressure upon it must force it all the way in a very short time. But then there is the Adult Suffrage party, which denounces this state of mind as a mere shirking of the logical basis of the whole demand, and foresees that the satisfaction of it would give the wealthy and comfortable a preponderance in the State which would defer all social reform and all further extension of the franchise indefinitely.

The opponents of Women's Suffrage—the tooth-and-nail, “woman is woman” opponents—are not the enemy to be feared. They have not a leg to stand on, and they know it. The enemy is within. The enemy is the disorganisation that comes of divided counsels; and that enemy will be fatal unless it can be speedily crushed. There is plenty of the enthusiasm which will face personal inconvenience and suffering; what is wanted is more of the spirit which can subordinate personal enthusiasms to an understanding of the conditions of success. It was said of William the Third by his great opponent, that “he bore himself in all things like an old general, except that he exposed himself like a young soldier.” We have got to prove that enthusiasm is not incompatible with generalship, or the fortresses of prejudice will not go down before our arms.

It is of no use to say that all sections of Suffragists are working for the same end. That is an excellent reason for toleration, but it is not business. All political parties are working for the same end, if you only put the end far enough away from politics; for no party could exist unless most of its members believed that their aims were for the common good. Politics are concerned with means; the successful politician is the man who is quite sure of the means, and who, being quite sure, can make that means for the time being his end. Only by so doing can he collect enough force to carry him even a little way towards the realisation of his ideal, whatever it may be, and no matter how many he may share it with.

Therefore the question, What are the right tactics for the supporters of Women's Suffrage? is the most important question that they have to consider. A wrong answer, if generally accepted, may not only put off the realisation of their hopes for many years, but may even so affect the order in which political changes come about as to destroy, or greatly impair, the value of the great change upon which all our hearts are set.

The immediate objects of the tactics with which we are concerned are two—the conversion of the public and the coercion of Parliament. In order to convert the public to any given view, if that view is to find expression in action, it is necessary not only to make the public see that that particular view is right, but to demonstrate that it will be the worse for it unless it acts accordingly. Those who object

to the attempts upon the House of Commons generally fail to do justice to the utility of any kind of surprise in helping to open the eyes of the public. To borrow a military phrase, they are valuable to begin with as shock tactics. It has been said many times, but it will have to be said many times more, that John Bull will not begin to pay attention until you stand on your head to talk to him. Nobody likes doing it, but it has to be done somehow. It will disgust sober, decorous people; they will probably say that the fact that you can behave so proves that there is less in your arguments than they thought there was; you will alienate friends. It does not matter two straws. There is not the smallest doubt that thousands of people in England have now begun to consider Women's Suffrage seriously who would never have heard of it but for the militant Suffragists who deliberately faced imprisonment, and, what was worse, the pillory provided by newspapers on the look-out for sensations. As a mere matter of tactics, the women who went to Holloway scored a triumphant success.

But it would be a great mistake to attribute all or even any considerable part of the Westminster demonstrations to deliberate tactics. They were valuable to begin with because they compelled attention; but if that were all, there would be something in the attitude of the superior person who says that it is time they were abandoned, that they are now only silly and mischievous. Those who take that view simply ignore the fact which made

those demonstrations possible. They ignore the fact that it was bitter anger that prompted those defiant acts, and that anger has done queer things before now, even in other cases where superior persons thought that the franchise ought to be argued about dispassionately. It is just as important to convince the public that women are angry as it is to convince them that women are right; indeed it is more important, because it is more likely to ensure a respectful attention to their demands. If women are not really angry, or if not enough of them are angry to matter, or if, as some tell us, the knowledge that some women have lost patience is likely to make all other women more patient, there is an end of it; demonstrations are then only machinery, and must be managed accordingly; but to those who believe that these demonstrations mean anger, an anger that is becoming daily more bitter and more widely spread, it seems not only difficult to criticise them as tactics but almost impertinent to treat them as tactics at all. At any rate, the whole course of history teaches us that violence in resenting injustice has always made it more, and not less, likely that injustice will be remedied; and there is no particular reason why the injustice of withholding votes from women should be any exception.

Demonstrations, then, are valuable as tactics just so far as they mean something more than tactics; but when we come to questions of election policy we are in the region of tactics pure and simple. Here there are two main questions to be answered: First, what ought to be our immediate aim; what measure

ought we to support, or what sort of measure? second, what should be our immediate means—how are we to act at Parliamentary elections or during Parliamentary discussions?

The answer given to the first of these questions by the Adult Suffrage party is attractive from its simplicity, and because it seems to have secured a large measure of support from members of all parties. I am not here concerned with the desirability of universal adult suffrage, but as a matter of tactics I think that the Adult Suffrage party is gravely mistaken. It is playing into the hands of two sets of opponents—those who support adult suffrage merely because it is the most convenient means of opposing any smaller extension of the franchise to women, and those who are really in favour of universal adult suffrage for men only. It must be remembered that Women's Suffrage is not a democratic policy yet, and that the bulk of the men of the working class have still got to be converted to it. It is quite possible that adult suffrage for men may come soon; the latchkey decision seems to have brought us so near to it that a quite ordinarily unscrupulous Government might think it worth while to go the rest of the way. But there is not the smallest chance that adult suffrage for men and women would be worth any Government's while within the next twenty years. The Adult Suffrage policy is wrong because it will not only fail to get what women want, but will help their enemies to give them what they do not want. It will not get the vote for all women, because too many of

its professed supporters are entirely opposed to that aim ; it may help to get the vote for all men, and if it does, women may resign themselves to the exercise of great patience, for it is not the new voters who would help them to exercise anything else. It is not in the least surprising that those who know most about the lives of the working woman, particularly in the great industrial centres, should find this policy attractive. They have spent their powers in organising these women ; they feel that they know them to be capable, and they want the vote for them. But the Adult Suffrage policy, for all that, is at this moment bad tactics ; it is playing the enemy's game. In politics, as in fighting, the right game is to concentrate upon the enemy's weak point, and the weak point is the simple denial of the vote to women as such. Any measure which breaks through there gives us the battle. It may be difficult to construct such a measure ; indeed, Mr. Dickinson's bill proves that ; but if only the whole intelligence of the supporters of Women's Suffrage would grapple with the difficulty, there can be no doubt that a solution would be found, and that the forces which backed that solution would be irresistible. Those who cry "Impossible!" with the loudest voice are those who are afraid that a way may be found.

Even more important, if possible, than the choice of a measure is the choice of an election policy. There is plenty of evidence of the dangers of disunion. Hexham made a Government anxious for a few weeks, but with Suffragists working for both sides the anxiety soon faded, and the only consolation that

women could derive from the result was that the campaign was a refutation of those who profess to fear that women will vote solid against men ; for if they are so divided when their own greatest interest is concerned, they are hardly likely to unite in any lesser cause. Here, as before, the heroic policy is attractive, and has a logical basis. Private members may pledge themselves, may introduce bills till the crack of doom, but until a Government takes up the question, nothing can be done. Governments, then, are the proper object of attack, and no man shall become a member of Parliament who supports a Government which refuses to make our cause its own. This policy differs from the Adult Suffrage policy in that it would be absolutely justified by success ; but it is even less likely to succeed. It depends upon a serious exaggeration of the forces that can be brought into the field, and there are few worse errors in tactics than this. The great mass of those who want votes for women are not going to subordinate every other political conviction to that, and unless they would do so, this policy could not possibly succeed. The possibilities of such a subordination are too obvious. Suppose that the present Government could be turned out—and on the most cheerful calculation it would take some years to do it by means of by-elections fought on the Suffrage question—what would be the feelings of Liberal Suffragists when they found themselves under a Tory Government, which would be opposed to all their convictions but one, and would be no more pledged to respect that one than its predecessor ? Besides, it is preposterous to ask any

but a fanatic to vote against men who have worked for years in the cause of Women's Suffrage, simply because they have not yet managed to make the Government move, and to vote for men whose only virtue may be that they have every political vice under the sun except that of being supporters of the Government. The only reasonable aim is to get such a House of Commons as will insist upon Women's Suffrage being made a Government policy; there is plenty of work to be done before that position is won, but it can be won, and it certainly will be won if we do not waste our strength in quixotic enterprises.

This is a controversial chapter, and it was meant to be so, but at least there is one kind of tactics upon which there need be no controversy. The one advantage belonging to the fact that Women's Suffrage is not yet quite a matter of practical politics is that it is still a matter for argument. When the forces are in the field, and a decisive battle is upon us, it will be too late to make converts; it is not yet too late, and if the supporters of Women's Suffrage will only go on arguing, and arguing, and arguing—why, it is just possible that the enemy may leave the field after all without striking a blow.

A PIONEER OF THE MOVEMENT

BY MILLICENT GARRETT FAWCETT

THERE is no truer or more consolatory observation concerning the great movements of thought which change the social history of the world than that no individual is indispensable to their growth. The Reformation in England and Germany would have come and would have changed men's thoughts concerning the relations of man to God, and of the Church to society, if Wiclif and Erasmus and Luther had never lived, and if Henry VIII. had never wished to put away his first wife. The democratic movement, changing men's thoughts concerning the relations of the State to society, would have come even if the roll of famous and infamous names associated with the revolution in England and France had been a blank. And the change which nearly the whole of civilised society throughout the world is conscious of in its estimation of the duties, rights, occupations, and sphere of women in a like manner is not due to any individual or set of individuals. The vastness of the change, its appearance, almost simultaneously, in various ways in different parts of the world, indicate that it proceeds from causes too

powerful and too universal to be attributed to any particular individual. Individuals, indeed, have expressed in the most remote periods of history what we should now consider modern ideas concerning the duties and rights of women. Plato's "Republic," Solomon's description of the virtuous woman, Sir Thomas More's "Utopia," contain arguments and theories that satisfy the most modern advocate of women's rights. But these and other indications that many master minds did not placidly accept as satisfactory the relation of man and woman as master and slave, were for long ages powerless to affect the realities of life. The hour had to come as well as the man : and till the hour was favourable the most conclusive arguments, the most patent facts, fell on deaf ears and on blind eyes, and had no practical result in modifying the conduct of men and women, or in ameliorating the laws and customs concerning their relation to one another.

It was Mary Wollstonecraft's good fortune that when she spoke the ears of men had been prepared to hear and their minds to assimilate what she had to say. In one sense she was as much the product of the women's rights movement as its earliest confessor. The fermentation in men's minds which had already produced new thoughts about the rights of man, which was destined presently to overthrow the authority of unrestrained despotism wherever it existed in Western Europe, did not pass by without producing its effect on the greatest despotism of all, that of men over women. The idea that women are created simply to be ministers to the amusement,

enjoyment, and gratification of men, was closely allied to the idea that peasants and workmen exist solely for the satisfaction of the wants and pleasures of the aristocratic classes. Ideas of this kind die hard, and it is Mary Wollstonecraft's chief claim to the regard of posterity that while she proved to demonstration the falsity of the notion that makes the place of women in creation entirely dependent on their usefulness and agreeableness to men, she had a keen appreciation of the sanctity of women's domestic duties, and she never undervalued for a moment the high importance of these duties, either to the individual, the family, or the State. On the contrary, one of her chief arguments against the subjection of women was that it prevented them from performing these duties as efficiently and as conscientiously as would otherwise be the case. She wanted, as she says in her preface, to see women placed in a station where they would advance instead of retarding the progress of the human race. Her argument, she adds, is built upon the simple principle that if women be not prepared by education to become the companions of men, they will stop the progress of knowledge, and that, so far from knowledge and freedom inducing women to neglect their duties to their families, "the more understanding women acquire, the more they will be attached to their duty—comprehending it—for unless they comprehend it . . . no authority can make them discharge it in a virtuous manner." She argues with force and justice against the habit of regarding women and their duties simply from the sexual

point of view, and draws a vivid picture of the domestic miseries and the moral degradation to both men and women arising from women being trained in the idea that the one object in an unmarried woman's life is to catch a husband. In the scathing and cruel light of common sense she places in close juxtaposition two leading facts which ate like acids into the moral fibre of the whole of society in her time. The one aim and object of women was to get married; an unmarried woman was a social failure. Women who had passed the marrying and child-bearing age were treated with scant courtesy. A writer quoted by Mary Wollstonecraft had expressed this sentiment in plain language by exclaiming, "What business have women turned of forty to do in the world?" Yet while in a variety of ways it was dinned into the minds and consciences of women that husband-catching was the end of their existence, they were at the same time enjoined that this object must never be avowed. The aim must be pursued with unceasing vigilance, the whole of women's education, dress, manners, and thoughts must be subordinated to this one object, but they must never openly avow it. In Mary Wollstonecraft's time those who undertook to lead the female mind in the principles of virtue advised women never to avow their love for the man they were about to marry; it was argued that it was "indelicate in a female" to let it appear that she married from inclination; she must always strive to make it appear that her physical and mental weakness had caused her to yield to force. On the first of these two nonsensical

theories, that marriage is the one aim and object of women's existence, Mary Wollstonecraft, with her habitual reference to the religious sanction, pertinently asks how women are to exist in that state where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. "Man," she adds, "is always being told to prepare for a future state, but women are enjoined to prepare only for this." She also shows how wretchedly the sacredness of marriage and the charities of domestic life are violated by making marriage the only honourable career for women. As long as this is the case, and so far as it is the case, women are apt to marry "to better themselves," as the housemaids say, or "for a support, as men accept of places under Government," and not because they are heartily and honestly in love, or because they have any real vocation for married life. Mary Wollstonecraft had had abundant experience, in her own circle, of domestic wretchedness, brought about partly by this cause, and partly by the bestial vices of domestic tyrants invested with the irresponsible power associated with "the divine right of husbands."

On the second of these false theories, *i.e.*, that women must never openly acknowledge that they wish to marry, while secretly making marriage the one object of their existence, she has no difficulty in showing how antagonism between the real and avowed objects of life breeds dissimulation and cuts at the root of all openness and spontaneity of character. The authors she quotes as maintaining this absurd view of female delicacy seem to leave the

moral atmosphere laden with impurities and utterly destitute of the ozone necessary to healthy lungs. Dr. Gregory, for instance, whose book, "A Legacy to his Daughters," seems to have been regarded as a standard work on female propriety at the end of the eighteenth century, recommends constant dissimulation to girls to whom nature has given a robust physical constitution. A sickly delicacy was supposed to be an essential part of feminine charm. This will perhaps be believed with difficulty at the present time; one more quotation may therefore be given in support of the assertion. The Rev. Dr. James Fordyce, in his sermons addressed to women, says: "Let it be observed that in your sex manly exercises are never graceful; that in them a tone and figure, as well as an air and deportment, of the masculine kind, are always forbidding; that men of sensibility desire in every woman soft features and a flowing voice, *a form not robust*, and demeanour delicate and gentle." The lordly protector, man, was supposed to have his vanity tickled by a constant exhibition of female feebleness. A healthy girl was therefore counselled by sage Dr. Gregory "not to dance with spirit when gaiety of heart would make her feet eloquent," lest the men who beheld her might either suppose that she was not entirely dependent on their protection for her safety, or else might entertain dark suspicions as to her modesty. Well might Mary Wollstonecraft protest against such "indecent cautions," and in respect of nine-tenths of the advice proffered to girls by Dr. Gregory and other writers of the same stamp, one is inclined

to cry, "Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination."

The essence of the absurdity now under consideration was dissimulation, and dissimulation was, we find, exalted by these writers as the pole-star to the wandering bark of women's lives. As indicated by these sages, womanly prudence and virtue consist in one long series of pretences. Behaviour, appearance, decorum, the applause of Mrs. Grundy, "constant attention to keep the varnish fresh," are set before women as ends to be sedulously sought for on account of their bearing on the grand aim of women's existence, the admiration of the other sex. To this end everything else was subordinated. Even piety is recommended in one of Dr. Fordyce's sermons, not because it bends the whole power of the nature more intently on its duty to God and man, but because piety is becoming to the face and figure. He recommends holiness as a cosmetic. "Never," exclaims the preacher, "perhaps, does a fine woman *strike more deeply* than when composed into pious recollection; . . . she assumes, without knowing it, *superior dignity, and new graces*; so that the beauties of holiness seem to radiate about her." On this passage Mary Wollstonecraft exclaims that the intrusion of the idea of conquest and admiration as influencing a woman at her devotions, gives her a "sickly qualm." Profanation could hardly go lower than this; but there was much more modelled on the same pattern. Cowardice, as well as physical weakness, was regarded as part of what every woman ought to aim at. Ignorance was likewise extolled.

Female modesty was held to be outraged by the confession of strong and enduring love from a woman to a man, even when that man was her husband. Dr. Gregory advises a wife "never to let her husband know the extent of her sensibility or affection." He likewise cautions all women carefully to hide their good sense and knowledge if they happen to possess any. "Be cautious," he says, "even in displaying your good sense. It will be thought you assume a superiority over the rest of the company. But if you happen to have any learning, keep it a profound secret, especially from the men, who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts, and a cultivated understanding." Pretence, seeming, outward show were the standards by which a woman's character was measured. A man is taught to dread the eye of God ; but women were taught to dread nothing but the eye of man. Rousseau embodies the then current doctrine, that reputation in the case of women takes the place of virtue, in a passage which Mary Wollstonecraft quotes. "To women," he says, "reputation is no less indispensable than chastity: . . . what is thought of her is as important to her as what she really is. It follows hence that the system of a woman's education should in this respect be directly contrary to that of ours. Opinion is the grave of virtue among the men, but its throne among women." Right through this tangle of pretences and affectations Mary Wollstonecraft cuts with the double-edged knife of a sound heart and clear head. It is against the system of dissimulation that she

protests ; instead of telling women how they are most likely to avoid censure and win praise, to gain a reputation for decorum and propriety of behaviour, she tells them to leave appearances out of consideration : " Make the heart clean, give the head employment," and behaviour will take care of itself. Dr. Gregory's remarks relative to reputation and the applause of the world, she complains, begin at the wrong end, because he treats them as ends in themselves, and not in their proper relative position as advantages usually, but by no means universally, attendant on nobility of character and purpose. How much sounder than Dr. Gregory's petty maxims, she reminds her readers, is the scriptural injunction, " Get wisdom, get understanding ; forget it not ; . . . forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee ; love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." With a touch of humour, more common in her private letters than in her more studied works, Mary Wollstonecraft expresses her conviction that there is really no cause to counsel women to pretend to be sillier and more ignorant than they are. " When a woman has sufficient sense not to pretend to anything which she does not understand in some degree, there is no need of determining to hide her talents under a bushel. Let things take their natural course, and all will be well."

In combating false views concerning what women ought to be, and to what ends their lives should be directed, Mary Wollstonecraft did not con-

centrate herself only on the orthodox immoralities propounded by Dr. Gregory and Dr. Fordyce. She challenges the whole field, and deals with Pope, Lord Chesterfield, and Rousseau as fearlessly as with teachers more in harmony with the ordinarily received opinions of her day. In contrast with Dr. Fordyce's recommendation of the consolations of religion to women on the ground that "a fine woman never strikes more deeply" than when she is communing in spirit with her Creator, she reminds us of the opposite pole of male and female depravity expressed by Pope in the lines where, speaking on behalf of the whole male sex, he says:—

"Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create
As when she touch'd the brink of all we hate."

The appearance of wantonness, just short of its reality, if indeed it was desirable to stop short of it, is recommended to women by Pope exactly in the same spirit as that in which Dr. Fordyce recommended piety. The centre of both systems is the assumption that women have nothing better to do or think of in this world than "to make conquests," as the old phrase was. The falsity, the immorality of this assumption, and the miserable consequences of acting upon it, it was the aim of "The Vindication of the Rights of Women" to demonstrate. In combating Rousseau's views on education, especially his antagonism to teaching boys and girls together or according to the same methods, she refers to his argument that if women are educated like men, the

more they will resemble men, and the less power will they have over the other sex. "This is the very point," Mary Wollstonecraft says, "I aim at. I do not wish them to have power over men, but over themselves."

Rousseau in many respects gave a compendium of all Mary Wollstonecraft most objected to in his views relating to the position of women. Profoundly influenced by his writings as she had at one time been, she was intensely antagonistic to his professions and his practice in regard to all that touched upon the position of women and upon domestic life. There is nothing in her book to show that she was aware of the indelible stain on Rousseau as a man which has been left by his disposing of his five children immediately after their birth by placing them in the turnstile of the Foundling Hospital. The knowledge of this fact has perhaps relieved posterity from the necessity of paying any very strenuous attention to his arguments on the cultivation of the domestic virtues. Mary Wollstonecraft speaks contemptuously of Rousseau's wife as "the fool Theresa," and she probably knew what we know also, that Theresa was a kitchen wench whose state of mind closely approached absolute imbecility. "She could never," says Mr. John Morley, "be taught to read with any approach to success. She could never follow the order of the twelve months of the year, nor master a single arithmetical figure, nor count a sum of money, nor reckon the price of a thing. A month's instruction was not enough to give knowledge of the hours of the day upon a dial-

plate. The words she used were often the direct opposites of the words she meant to use" ("Life of Rousseau," p. 72).

But nearly imbecile as she was, she loved her children, and deeply resented the cruel wrong her husband did her in snatching them from her. "The fool Theresa," with almost nothing to commend her but the primitive maternal instinct, may seem to many of us a more touching and instructive spectacle than a score of philosophers maundering over the thesis that woman has been formed for the sole purpose of being pleasing to man and subject to his rule. Mary Wollstonecraft seems to have known of Theresa's mental limitations and nothing more, and this was enough to show her that what Rousseau looked for in a wife was not a companion who could share his aims and stimulate his thoughts and imagination by her sympathy, but just a creature who had the physical capacity of bearing children, and who was present without necessarily being spoken to—he sometimes passed weeks without addressing to her a single word—when complete solitude would have been distasteful to him.

There is a peculiar satisfaction on the part of those who are trying to produce a change in general feeling in regard to any subject, when one of their opponents will state boldly, in so many words, what is the real foundation of the sentiment which inspires them. The majority of their spokesmen feel that the real reason of their opposition is too little respectable for open avowal; they count upon its secret influence, but never refer to it in public. It is therefore with a

cry of delight that those on the other side seize upon an indiscreet avowal of the real principles on which their enemies rely. It was a service of this kind which Rousseau rendered to those who wished to promote the independence of women, when in a passage in "Emilius" he avowed his reason for belittling women from the cradle to the grave to be that otherwise they would be less subservient to men. The battle in which Mary Wollstonecraft took a leading part is still being waged, and it may be useful to those who are now carrying on this contest to be able to quote Rousseau's reason for keeping women in a perpetual state of tutelage and childhood. These are his words :—

"For this reason, the education of women should always be relative to that of men. To please, to be useful to US, to make US love and esteem them, to educate US when young, and take care of US when grown up, to advise, to console US, to render OUR lives easy and agreeable : these are the duties of women at all times, and what they should be taught in their infancy."

Take this and contrast it, as containing a worthy and dignified theory of human life, with the well-known first question and answer of the Scottish Shorter Catechism, of which Carlyle said, "The older I grow—and I now stand on the brink of eternity—the more comes back to me the first sentence in the catechism which I learned when a child, and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes : 'What is the chief end of man? To glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.'" Rousseau and his disciples would

disinherit women from this birthright, and to the question, "What is the chief end of woman?" would reply, "To glorify man, and to help him to enjoy himself for a little time." But Rousseau and those who follow in his footsteps do not even succeed in this poor aim. Happiness is one of those things of which it may with truth be said, "I was found of them that sought me not ; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." Poor Theresa nursing in her dull brain undying resentment against the man who had robbed her of her children, the squalor and degradation of the pair, and the miserable end of Rousseau's life, are all a terrible commentary on the rottenness of the principles on which he founded their joint existence. All the beauty of personal devotion and self-abnegation, which count for so much in the happiness of family life, disappear and wither when they are selfishly claimed by one member of the family as due to him from the others, and are entirely unreciprocated on his part. The affectionate mutual consideration and happy companionship of human beings with equal rights, but different capacities and different occupations, are exchanged by those who adopt Rousseau's doctrines for a state of things which develops the vices of tyranny on the one side and the vices of slavery on the other ; the husband becomes a harsh, exacting master, the wife and other members of the household too often become obsequious and deceitful serfs. Mary Wollstonecraft's husband wrote of her shortly after her death, "She was a worshipper of domestic life," and the truth of the expression is felt

in every line of the numerous passages in "The Vindication," where she contends that the subjection of women is inimical to domestic happiness, and appeals to men to "be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience." If this were so, "they would find us," she adds, "more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers—in a word, better citizens." The relation of Milton to his daughters may be mentioned as an object lesson in the truth of Mary Wollstonecraft's contention. He tyrannised over them, they deceived and cheated him, and the domestic life of one of the greatest of Englishmen, instead of being full of beauty and a source of strength to those who come after him, is a thing that we try not to think of, and can never remember without a sense of pain and loss.

Mary Wollstonecraft, as Mr. Kegan Paul says in his sketch of her life and work prefixed to her *Letters to Imlay*, makes, in her "Vindication of the Rights of Women," a reiterated claim that women should be treated as the friends and equals of men, and not as their toys and slaves; but she does not claim for women intellectual or physical or moral equality with men. Her argument is that being weaker than men, physically and mentally, and not superior morally, the way in which women are brought up, and their subordination throughout life, first to their fathers, then to their husbands, prevents the due natural development of their physical, mental, and moral capacities. How can the powers of the body be developed without

physical exercise? And in her day the ordinary rule for women in the upper ranks of society seems to have been to take none whatever. Their clothes and shoes rendered outdoor exercise entirely out of the question. A white muslin gown damped to cling more closely to the figure, and satin slippers, are not an equipment even for a walk on the London pavements; they would make a country ramble still more completely out of the question. Miss Edgeworth makes great fun of one of her sentimental heroines who insists on admiring the beauties of nature otherwise than from the windows of a coach. She takes a country walk, the lanes are muddy, and she leaves the satin slipper of her right foot in one of them. Mary Wollstonecraft pleaded that the lower degree of physical strength of women, and the strain upon that strength caused by maternity, ought to secure for them such conditions as regards exercise, clothing, and food as would make the most of that strength, and not reduce it to a vanishing point.

In the same spirit she argues about the mental capacity of women. Perpetual obedience, she contends, weakens the understanding; responsibility, and the necessity of thinking and deciding, strengthen it. She draws a picture of the obvious practical disadvantage of women being guided in everything by their husbands, and supposes a case in which the husband is a perfectly benevolent and perfectly intelligent despot. He manages everything, decides from the depths of his wisdom all

difficulties; his wife, to quote Mrs. Poyser, does not know which end she stands uppermost till her husband tells her. But even intelligent and benevolent despots do not live for ever. Her husband dies, and leaves his wife with a large family of young children. Her previous life has not prepared her by experience to fulfil the arduous task of being both father and mother to them. She is ignorant of the management of their property and of their education. She is utterly unfit for the weight that suddenly falls on her shoulders. What is left for her to do except transfer to some other husband the direction of her family, or in some other way shift to other shoulders the responsibility that she ought to discharge?

In Mary Wollstonecraft's remarks respecting what she considers the moral inferiority of women to men, I think we see more than anywhere else evidence of the salutary change that has already been brought about in the social position and education of women. Very few modern writers or observers consider women less sensible to the claims of duty than men. The late Rev. F. D. Maurice, writing in support of women's suffrage, and speaking of English women as he knew them, said, "In any sphere wherein women feel their responsibility, they are, as a rule, far more conscientious than men;" and I think there is a general concensus of opinion, that where large and important duties have been confided to women, they have been on the whole faithful in the discharge of them. The moral trustworthiness of the run of women is

accepted by most of us, in our every-day life, as part of the natural order of things on which we can rely as implicitly as on the continuity of the forces of nature. Mary Wollstonecraft, however, finds great fault with women in her time, and roundly accuses them of cunning, superstition, want of generosity, low sense of justice, gross mismanagement of their children and of their households, and of a domestic selfishness which, in some respects, is worse than neglect. This last subject is worth referring to, because some of those who wish to maintain the subjection of women are to be found even now who argue that if a woman is happy in her own children she has no occasion to occupy herself at all with the circumstances that make or mar the lives of other children. On this point Mary Wollstonecraft says:—

“In short, speaking of the majority of mothers, they leave their children entirely to the care of servants ; or, because they are their children, treat them as if they were little demi-gods, though I have always observed that the women who thus idolise their children seldom show common humanity to servants, or feel the least tenderness for any children but their own.”

If this were true a hundred years ago the majority of candid observers certainly would not maintain that it is true now. From the time of Mrs. Fry downwards there has been a constantly growing army of women who both idolise their own children and spend themselves with unstinting devotion to render the lives of other children happy and

healthy. Women have used the greater freedom and the better education they have received since Mary Wollstonecraft's time just as she predicted they would. They care for their own children as much, and they care for other children more. They are not content with securing favourable conditions of life for their own children, but in almost innumerable ways are making efforts to check the waste in children's lives that went on unheeded in Mary Wollstonecraft's time.

The faults of "The Vindication" as a literary work are patent upon the face of it. There is a want of order and system in it which may, perhaps, be attributed to the desultory education of the writer. As she herself points out, the want of order in women's education is answerable to a large extent for the want of order in their after-work. A more important blemish to modern ears consists in the formal and frequently stilted language in which the writer conveys her meaning. The reaction against the formalities of the Johnsonian period had begun, but had not as yet conquered; the triumph of the naturalistic school in literature led by Cowper, Burns, Wordsworth, and Joanna Baillie was yet to come. There are other faults in the book deeper than those of order and style, which are probably to be traced to a reaction against the school of ethics, which proclaimed that appearances and decorum were ends in themselves to be diligently sought for. To this reaction may also, I believe, be attributed the errors of Mary Wollstonecraft's own life, and

those of so many members of the circle in which she moved. In unravelling the curious tangle of relationships, intrigues, suicides, and attempted suicides, of the remarkable group of personalities to whom Mary Wollstonecraft belonged, one is sickened for ever, as Mr. Matthew Arnold has said, of the subject of irregular relations. Mary Wollstonecraft's great merit, however, lies in this, that with a detachment of mind from the prejudices and errors of her time, in regard to the position of women, that was quite extraordinary, she did not sanction any depreciation of the immense importance of the domestic duties of women. She constantly exalted what was truly feminine as the aim of woman's education and training; she recognised love and the attraction between the sexes as a cardinal fact in human nature, and "marriage as the foundation of almost every social virtue." Hence very largely from her initiative the women's rights movement in England has kept free from the excesses and follies that in some other countries have marred its course. Mary Wollstonecraft, in her writings as well as in her life, with its sorrows and errors, is the essentially womanly woman, with the motherly and wifely instincts strong within her, and caring for all she claims and pleads for on behalf of her sex, because she is convinced that a concession of a large measure of women's rights is essential to the highest possible conception and fulfilment of women's duties. In words that recall Mazzini's memorable saying, "the sole origin of every right is in a duty fulfilled,"

she says, "a right always includes a duty," and again, "rights and duties are inseparable."

The remarkable degree in which she was ahead of her time is shown on almost every page of "The Vindication." She claims for women the right to share in the advantages of representation in Parliament, nearly seventy years before Women's Suffrage was heard of in the House of Commons. She knows that few, if any, at that time would be found to sympathise with her, but that does not prevent her from claiming for women what she felt was simple justice. She also perceives the enormous importance of the economic independence of women, and its bearing on social health and disease. The possibility of women earning a comfortable livelihood by honest labour tends in some degree to prevent them from marrying merely for a living, and on the other hand cuts at one fruitful source of prostitution. She pointed out fifty years before any English woman had become a qualified medical practitioner that the profession of medicine was particularly well suited to women, and entirely congenial to the womanly character; and she argued that there were a number of other businesses and professions in which women might suitably and honourably engage. These opinions have now become the commonplaces of ordinary conversation; but it must not be forgotten, in estimating the originality of her mind, that she was writing only a very few years after the time when the great lion of the literary and social world of London had condemned even the harmless wield-

ing of the paint-brush and mahl-stick by a woman. Boswell records that Dr. Johnson "thought portrait painting an improper employment for a woman. Public practice of any art, he observed, and staring in men's faces, is very indelicate in a female"; and in another place Boswell tells how the great doctor thought literature as little suited to a "delicate female" as painting. Of a literary lady of his time who was reported to have become attentive to her dress and appearance, Johnson remarked that "she was better employed at her toilet than using her pen."

It need hardly be said that Mary Wollstonecraft anticipated the change that has come about in the public mind as to what is needful in the education of women. How great that change has been is forcibly illustrated by a passage quoted in "The Vindication" from a writer who propounds the view that the study of botany is inconsistent with the preservation of "female delicacy." This might well provoke another "sickly qualm" in its essential coarseness of feeling and degrading conception of the works of Nature. Mary Wollstonecraft brings this indelicate delicacy to the right touchstone when she says: "On reading similar passages, I have reverentially lifted up my eyes and heart to Him who liveth for ever and ever, and said, 'O my Father, hast Thou by the very constitution of her nature forbid Thy child to seek Thee in the fair forms of truth? And can her soul be sullied by the knowledge that awfully calls her to Thee?'"

In another all-important respect Mary Wollstonecraft was ahead of her time, and may be regarded,

though opinion has moved in the direction in which she pointed, as ahead of ours. In numerous passages she points out the inseparable connection between male and female chastity. One would have thought the fact so self-evident as to need no asseveration ; but as a matter of experience we know that even now the mass of people mete out to the two partners in the same action an entirely different degree of blame, and judge them by entirely different standards ; the one who is condemned the most severely is not the one who has had the advantage, generally speaking, in wealth, education, experience, and knowledge of the world, and on whom therefore, if any difference be made, a greater responsibility ought to rest ; " the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks " on him, and reserves all its terrors for her who stands at a disadvantage in all these respects. An action that is one and the same is regarded as in the last degree heinous in one of the actors and as quite excusable in the other. Against the essential immorality and injustice of this doctrine and practice Mary Wollstonecraft protested with her whole strength. She exposes the insincerity of those who profess zeal for virtue by pointing the finger of scorn at the woman who has transgressed, while her partner who may have tempted her by money, ease, and flattery to her doom, is received with every mark of consideration and respect. " To little respect has that woman a claim . . . who smiles on the libertine while she spurns the victims of his lawless appetites and their own folly." The injustice of this attitude of mind is as conspicuous as its hypocrisy ; and in the different

measure meted out by the world to the partners in each other's degradation Mary Wollstonecraft perceives a fruitful source of immorality. The two sexes must in this, as in nearly every other respect, rise or sink together. Unchastity in men means unchastity in women ; and the cure for the ills which unchastity brings with it is not to be found in penitentiaries and in Magdalen institutions, but in a truer measure of justice as regards the responsibilities of both sexes, in opening to women a variety of honourable means of earning a living, and in developing in men and women self-government and a sense of their responsibility to each other, themselves, their children, and the nation.

In many respects Mary Wollstonecraft's book gives us a pleasing assurance that with all the faults of our time we have made way upon the whole, and are several steps higher up on the ladder of decency and self-control than our forerunners were a hundred years ago. She speaks of the almost universal habit in her time among the wealthier classes of drinking to excess, and of what is even less familiar to her readers of the present day, "of a degree of gluttony which is so beastly" as to destroy all sense of seemliness. She also states that so far from chastity being held in honour among men, it was positively despised by them.

In all these matters the beginning of the twentieth century compares favourably with the end of the eighteenth ; and one great factor in the progress made is the far greater concession of women's rights at this time compared with that. The development

of the womanliness of women that comes with their greater freedom makes itself felt in helping to form a sounder public opinion upon all forms of physical excess, and with this a truer and nobler ideal of manly virtue.

In one other important respect Mary Wollstonecraft was ahead of her own time in regard to women, and in line with the foremost thinkers on this subject in ours. Henrik Ibsen took the lead among the moderns in teaching that women have a duty to themselves as well as to their parents, husbands, and children, and that truth and freedom are needed for the growth of true womanliness as well as of true manliness. But Mary Wollstonecraft anticipated him in teaching that self-government, self-knowledge, and self-respect, a worship of truth and not of mere outward observances, are what women's lives mainly need to make them noble. I have already quoted her saying: "I do not want them to have power over men, but over themselves," and other quotations of a similar drift may be given: "It is not empire, but equality and friendship which women want;" and again: "Speaking of women at large, *their first duty is to themselves as rational creatures*, and the next, in point of importance, as citizens, is that, which includes so many, of a mother." The words italicised foreshadow almost verbatim Nora's expression in the well-known scene in "A Doll's House," where she tells her astounded husband that she has discovered that she has duties to herself as well as to him and to their children.

The facts of Mary Wollstonecraft's life are now so

well known through the biographies of Mr. Kegan Paul and Mrs. Pennell, and her memory has been so thoroughly vindicated from the contumely that was at one time² heaped upon it, that I do not propose to dwell upon her personal history. I have here endeavoured to consider the character of the initiative which she gave to the women's rights movement in England, and I find that she stamped upon it from the outset the word Duty, and has impressed it with a character that it has never since lost. Women need education, need economic independence, need political enfranchisement, need social equality and friendship, mainly because without them they are less able to do their duty to themselves and to their neighbours. What was false and unreal in the old system of treating women she showed up in its ugliness, the native ugliness of all shams. That woman must choose between being a slave and a queen, "quickly scorn'd when not ador'd," is a theory of pinchbeck and tinsel; it is difficult to discover its relation to the realities of life. Upon this theory, and all that hangs upon it, Mary Wollstonecraft made the first systematic and concentrated attack; and the women's rights movement in England and America owes as much to her as modern Political Economy owes to her famous contemporary, Adam Smith.

² Horace Walpole called her "a hyena in petticoats."

WOMAN IN THE NEW ERA

BY C. DESPARD

THE woman's question—woman as she is, woman as she will be! That is my subject; and I want, at the outset, to get away from woman as the individual, more or less pleasing, more or less aggravating, more or less useful. I want to study woman in the abstract: the great woman-principle in life, in thought, and in action.

To go as far back as is possible in the twilight of our knowledge, we shall find the mother as well as the father in all the ancient cosmogonies. Witness the mysterious Isis of Egypt, Athene-Pallas of Greece, Juno of Rome. Catholicism also, which bears traces of the old pagan world, through conquest of which she gained her dominion, has her Virgin-Mother—her Queen of Heaven, her Divine Consolatrix; and all who know anything about the history of the Middle Ages will be aware of the effect of this aspect of religion on society. Abbesses, in those days, sat at State-Councils; ladies of high degree possessed the right of sending their chosen delegates to Parliaments, and holy women, like St. Theresa, and St. Catherine of Siena, were consulted on public matters

by kings, princes, and nobles. In India, to the present day, hosts of men and women worship the mother-father God, creator, preserver, and destroyer.

Turn now to nature interpreted by science. As I read its elementary truths, they teach the same. Here, also, we have the woman-principle brought prominently before us. Chemistry has its mysterious affinities, its rushing together of two elements with, as result, the production of a force which has qualities possessed by neither. Botany, which gives us the life-history of the plants, tells us plainly of the dual power, the mother-father, the eternal marriage of the worlds. Nay, even astronomy, perhaps the most abstruse of all the sciences, has its energy and inertia, one working with the other to produce that harmony of the suns and planets in their eternal progression, the order of whose movements was discovered and formulated by Sir Isaac Newton in his Law of Gravitation.

And when through religions which, as I conceive them, are spiritual ladders to the discovery of intellectual and spiritual truth, and through science which opens the way to the same truth on a different plane, we rise to humanity in its higher phases—human conscience, human society, human polity—we have still the two aspects—the eternal marriage; or, rather, we have the promise of a new divine and human order founded on this, which will indeed be that Kingdom of God upon earth promised by the Son of Man.

I propose, then, to take as a basis of what I have

to say about the certain outcome of the present movement amongst women the fact that religion, nature, and science are unanimous in their teaching. Everywhere we have the two principles: man, woman; mother, father. It is only, in fact, when we reach the sphere of what is called politics that the woman disappears altogether, and that the man is seen dominating and alone. I remember, as I write, one of those discussions that fill the columns of our newspapers at the dull seasons. It ran, I think, through the *Daily News*, and the question with which it started was "What is wrong?" The opener set out by asserting that our modern civilisation did not satisfy anybody. And he asked the momentous question, "Why is it? What is the secret of our discontent?" The discussion took the usual course. Floods of criticism, oceans of advice and sermonising were poured through the columns of the paper. Some said the social system was wrong. Others laid the blame on the lack of religion amongst the people. Selfishness, the drink habit, luxury, shiftlessness—all these were given as explanations. Not one of these writers seemed to see that the great wrong—the wrong at the heart of all our civilisation—is this: we are professing to be what we are not; we place before us a standard of righteousness which we do not attempt to follow.

What is our boast in England? It is that we are free. England, the official politician of to-day will tell us, for all that she has her ancient forms—the king, who is the dignified head of society; the landed and moneyed aristocracy; the lords of

commerce and manufacture—is really a Democracy. She speaks through her own chosen representatives; these make the laws that govern the realm, and in obeying those laws, she is really obeying herself.

If this were indeed so, if the whole nation—men and women—did really consent to the laws by which we are governed, we could not complain.

But is it so? We know very well that it is not.

What is wrong? the inquirer asks. Why is it that with all the wealth, refinement, and culture of our twentieth century we lack that which would be more precious to us than all the wealth of the world—happiness, peace, contentment. Why? Because our lives are a discord. Because we are living a lie. And I make bold to prophesy with the divine poet Shelley that—

“Never shall peace and human nature meet
Till, free and equal, man and woman greet
Domestic peace.”

Broadly speaking, that for which we are fighting now is the emancipation of woman; her social freedom; her intellectual freedom; her economic freedom; her political freedom; and we believe that it is through the attainment of the rights of citizenship that all these doors will be opened to us.

I wish now, briefly, to show what, as I believe, the effect would be on society generally and on woman primarily if these her demands were granted; what, in fact, woman will be in the new era.

I think first of woman as mother, the independent,

educated, well-developed woman of the future, choosing her mate freely, not because she wants protection, but because she wants to fulfil her highest function—to bring strong and capable children into the world. Surely she, even from the physical point of view, will be better than the mothers of to-day. We should have healthier children ; we should have a finer race.

Then again, the wiser women of the later day, trained by social and political freedom, will recognise that motherhood is a noble profession, to be prepared for carefully and when worthily followed to be honoured and rewarded. I think it probable that men, inspired by women, will take a higher view of their fatherhood. In these dark days the multitude of children means poverty to the mother. In that better era they will be her pride, her independence, her wealth. And this will follow naturally on the attainment by women of their economic freedom. The family is at once the unit and the symbol of the State. In the happy, well-constituted family there are the two heads—father and mother—who, having had different experience and training, bring these to the service of their children. When there is danger they combine to avert it ; when there is difficulty they enter into counsel to settle it. Some of the children may be of man's estate—strong, good-looking and clever ; some may be very young ; some may be weak of body and infirm in mind. In the well-ordered family none would be allowed to intrude upon the others ; each would have his place and would be expected to fulfil his duty ; but to the young, the

weak and the ailing the greatest tenderness would be shown. So will it be in the State of the future when men and women work together in harmony.

It is assumed by those who to-day oppose the entry of women into the larger life of citizenship that family cares and opportunities and joys are sufficient to fill up her days, and delightful pictures are drawn of women, as daughters, gladdening the home by their beauty and enriching it by their loyal service; as wives, ruling the home with dignity and wisdom; and, even in old age, giving their love and experience freely to the family. That is indeed a fair vision. Such an one, I sometimes think, must have been floating through the mind of Mr. Asquith when he made his memorable answer to the women of Fife who, hearing that he refused to support their demands for citizenship, sent a deputation to see him. He expressed his dread lest, if women entered upon the political arena, they might lose their great influence—their unique position. Mr. Asquith need not tremble about the future. Unless human nature undergoes an extraordinary change we shall still have wives and mothers. But, in the better era to which I look forward, it will be recognised that all women cannot marry, and that there are women, as there are men, who are unfit for family life. Then again, the woman who marries and has children is not occupied with husband and children during the whole of her life. It is not necessary that it should be so, and when the larger life of the future offers her opportunities of service to the great family, the State, which will be then to each of us what it was in the old Greek

democracies, mother, father, master, friend, the tragedy of the unfulfilled life—the unsatisfied aspiration—which, to-day, looks out at us pitifully from many a woman's face, will pass away.

Ruskin says somewhere in his vigorous way that there is no murder comparable in iniquity to the waste of a man's life—to the putting of him to ignoble uses. For centuries this waste of women's lives has been going on; and the momentous part of the present situation is that women themselves are beginning to see this. Women have been proving lately that they possess the gift of courage—moral and physical—in a remarkable degree. I have a theory that, mind moulding body, we shall see, in the near future, an immense improvement in the physique of our women. So far as I have been able to read the history of life on our planet, I see no reason, in the natural order of things, why women should be physically inferior to men. Free from cramping convention in dress and life-habits, educated liberally in the true, not the party sense of the word, having honourable, useful and happy careers open to them, they will be not only nobler in mind and character, but finer, stronger, healthier in body. And there are already notable signs that such a change is approaching.

It has been said of women that they cannot combine, that they are incapable of true loyalty one for the other. I think it must have been in the prophetic spirit of those who see with apprehension the passing away of their dear old world of prejudice, yes, and of sex domination, that this

fiction has been circulated. Women can combine for great causes. They are capable of ardent loyalty one for the other. Why, then, it may be asked, have they not combined in the past?

Chiefly because it was impressed upon them from their childhood that they were dependent upon men. The girl who would live a comfortable life was tacitly taught that she would have to compete with other girls for the favour of men. She had to be prettier, smarter, better dressed, more attractive than others to win a prize in the matrimonial lottery.

The atmosphere of competition is inconsistent with loyalty; it makes combination impossible. Men know this perfectly well; they know also that the maintenance of their superiority depends on the rivalry and consequent subjection of women; and yet they have constantly twitted those whom they call the weaker sex on their inability to work in loyalty with their sisters. I believe that this has been done for the last time. To me one of the most profoundly important features of the present revolutionary movement amongst women is that they are proving their power to work together. There is being developed amongst them that which is, to me, the noblest of all our social virtues—the dear love and deathless loyalty of comrades. As I look round and forward I see this spirit growing. Very soon, without doubt, we shall obtain that for which we are asking—the right to vote in Parliamentary elections: the first instalment of the old debt of man to woman; and, for my own part, I shall never regret the conflict through which we are

now passing, through which we may yet have to pass, if, as I believe will be the case, it results in the growth and consolidation of this new and entrancing sense of comradeship. We cannot but expect (for old prejudice dies hard) that, for some time, there will be women like Marie Corelli and the ignoble 21,000 anti-Suffragists who will be content still to play into the hands of decadent men. But I foresee that both the submissive women and the decadent men will become fewer in number and more impotent in action, until, at no distant time, the woman who could, in any public way, betray the interests of her sisters or play into the hands of those who desire to oppress her would be branded as a traitor, not to her own sex only but to humanity.

There grows up before me the picture of the woman of the future.

Well-developed in mind and body; capable of bearing and rearing a race that will be truly imperial; independent in thought, vigorous in action, free from those pettinesses and affectations which have been built into women's nature through generations of oppression; drinking in her own cup, be it little or large; performing the duties of a citizen, and endowed with the rights of citizenship; having a career open to her, and her livelihood assured, so that marriage will no longer be a necessity, but, when chosen, will be entered upon with a full sense of responsibility to the race; looking out calmly and courageously on the life of which she knows that she forms an integral part, and enjoying

freely earth's beauty and sweetness. So I see her—this woman of a later day. It is this vision which makes me feel, with my sisters of the Women's Social and Political Union, that life itself would be but a small price to pay for the joy of being one of the pioneers of a movement whose aim it is to prepare and reveal her.

I am reminded as I write of a passage in Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound."

Jupiter, the tyrant, had fallen ; the curse of tyranny was lifted from the earth ; Prometheus had returned to his beloved earth-children, and the radiant spirit of that happy hour relates to him what she has seen in her passage over the regenerated world. Of the free woman then she says :—

"And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind,
As the free heaven which pours forth light and dew
On the wide earth pass'd : gentle, radiant forms,
From custom's evil taint exempt and pure,
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
Looking emotions once they dared not feel,
And changed in all which once they dared not be,
Yet, being now, made earth like heav'n. Nor pride,
Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame
Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love."

APPENDIX

MR. I. ZANGWILL, THE FAMOUS NOVELIST, HAS TAKEN A PROMINENT PART IN THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT. HE HAS KINDLY CONSENTED TO THE REPRODUCTION HERE OF HIS TWO RECENT SPEECHES ON THE SUBJECT AS A TRIBUTE OF LITERATURE TO THE CAUSE OF WOMAN.

ONE AND ONE ARE TWO¹

THE proposition that we are here to maintain is so simple, so clear, that when one is called upon to justify it, one scarcely knows what to say. The fact is, it is not our business to justify it; the onus of proof lies on the other side. How do *they* justify their monstrous proposition that one half of the human race shall have no political rights?

When Wilberforce started his campaign against slavery, it was scarcely Wilberforce's business to defend the proposition that no man has the right to make a chattel of another. The burden of proof lay on the slave-holder. How dared *he* violate elemental human rights? We, too, appear here not as defendants but as plaintiffs; not to beg and protest, but to demand and denounce. We accuse! We accuse the opposition of barbarism and injustice. We call upon Parliament to redress this historic wrong.

¹ Being a verbatim report of the speech delivered at Exeter Hall, on February 9th, at the Demonstration of Women's Suffrage Societies.

Our case, I say, is so simple, that it is like having to prove that one and one are two. Indeed, this is precisely what the opposition denies. It says that one and one are not two; that in politics one man and one woman are only one, and man is that one. Savages are notoriously bad at arithmetic, but in the Colenso of civilisation it is written that one man and one woman are two persons. Like most simple truths, this axiom of spiritual arithmetic has taken the human race a long time to arrive at; but, thank Heaven, we are there at last! Woman is a separate and individual personality; a human soul, and, what is more to the point, a tax-payer. Even marriage cannot extinguish her. She is no longer a mere appendage to her lord, united and fused, like Campbell with Bannerman. The Married Woman's Property Act gives her the right to her separate property; with property goes taxation, and with taxation must and shall go representation.

What are the reasons for refusing this representation, for depriving half the qualified population of political power? Is this half, then, exactly the same as the other half, so that the other half sufficiently represents it? Quite the contrary. Woman has a peculiar relation to a number of problems; her standpoint, her interests, differ vastly from man's. How dare we then leave her out of the reckoning? Take only the last great political measure with which the male half of the population has been grappling, and which they have discussed with such masculine balance, such freedom from hysteria—I need hardly say I mean the Education Bill. If ever there was a subject on which woman had a right to a voice, it was surely this. You all know what happened to that Bill—what was the result of all those months of sane masculinity, all those torrents of temperate talk in both Houses of Parliament. Nothing; absolutely nothing. If anything could show the utter unfitness of men for public life, it

was surely this mammoth fiasco, this monumental example of male mismanagement.

Yet I have nowhere seen the suggestion that the sex should be disfranchised. On the contrary, it is felt that the masculine method of *how not to do it* is so marvellous, and the world we see around us so satisfactory, that the feminine touch might jar all this exquisite machinery, upset all this wonderfully happy world. And yet an unprejudiced observer might well conclude that our Constitution would work not only better but with a fairer balance of powers, if the House of Lords were replaced by a House of Ladies. The Commons, having settled affairs from the man's point of view, might more justly have their ideas revised by an elective Chamber of the other sex than by a mere irresponsible body with the same masculine prejudices in an even crustier form.

The Prime Minister has hinted darkly that a way will be found of dealing with the Lords. I do not know if this is what he is hinting at. It would enable him to right two wrongs at one stroke. But alas! I am afraid he will do justice neither to the Lords nor to the Ladies.

What is it that prevents his bringing in a bill for Female Suffrage at once, in this very Parliament that is opening? He is in favour of it himself, and so is the majority of the House. The bulk of the representatives of the people are pledged to it. Here, then, is a measure which both parties deem necessary. A sensible woman would think that the first thing a Parliament would do would be to pass those measures about which both parties agree. Simple female! That is not man's way. That is not politics. What is wanted in Parliament is measures about which both parties *disagree*, and which, in consequence, can never be passed at all. I declare I know nothing outside Swift or W. S. Gilbert to equal the present situation of Women's Suffrage.

In "Gulliver's Travels," in the school of political projectors

in the island of Laputa, there is a most ingenious doctor who directs that every senator in the great council of a nation, after he has delivered his opinion and argued in favour of it, shall be obliged to give his vote directly contrary. Really there is something of this spirit in the present House of Commons as regards Female Suffrage. Perhaps a little analysis will enable us to understand this paradoxical situation. The majority have promised to vote for Women's Suffrage. But *whom* have they promised? Women. And women have no votes. Therefore the M.P.'s do not take them seriously. You see the vicious circle. In order for women to get votes they must have votes already. And so the men will bemock and befool them from session to session. Who can wonder if, tired of these gay deceivers, they begin to take the law into their own hands? And public opinion—I warn the Government—public opinion is with the women.

It is true that there is still a certain opposition in the country to Female Suffrage, but how faint, how half-hearted, compared with that ancient opposition to woman's higher education or to her wider sphere of work. It is the last sullen struggle to keep her exclusively a domestic animal. But the gibes and sneers are a mere feeble echo from the past. The fact is that woman's battle is practically won. To-day, when woman has done so brilliantly in medicine, in mathematics, in science, when a woman has made the most interesting discovery of our day—radium—the stale old flouts and jeers go off like mouldy Christmas crackers. The battle is won, I say, and it is time the enemy accepted their defeat. The vote will be the legitimate reward of woman's proved capacity in almost every sphere of work.

The legitimate but, mark you, not the logical reward. Our domestic grandmothers had as much right to a vote as our scientific sisters.

To have an opinion upon politics is not incompatible

with the strictest domesticity, knitting not excluded. Nay, knitting her husband's socks gives woman the very leisure for forming wise political opinions. There is nothing essentially womanly in being ignorant and careless of the affairs of one's country. Our late Queen, who had no little to do with the affairs of her country, was a peculiarly domestic woman; indeed, quite early-Victorian. We demand this vote for woman not because of her manly capacities, but because of her womanly capacities. To mix up this question, therefore, with the question of keeping woman domestic is really a vulgar confusion. The most domestic of women may surely be allowed to leave the hearth once every four years or so, to record her vote. Her husband can even be in attendance, since he has to record his vote too. It is really less dangerous than her visits to the dentist.

But it is said this will lead to domestic quarrels. As if a couple who wish to quarrel had any need of politics. Think of the centuries in which domestic discord has got along without Female Suffrage! As a matter of fact, husband and wife are generally of the same politics, and when they are not, the possession of a vote by the wife would rather promote harmony than discord. The husband would not be left with the last word—the battle would be drawn.

But the bitterest enemy of woman is not man—it is woman, alas. A number of ladies declare they do not want the vote. Poor things! There are ladies in China who are content to have their toes crippled. There are ladies in Turkey who are satisfied with a quarter of a husband, or even an *n*th share of a husband. But this would not justify these Chinese and Turkish ladies in keeping back their sisters who had evolved higher—who wanted a natural foot or a whole husband apiece. Besides, the vote is not compulsory. Those ladies who do not

wish to exercise their right will have full liberty to stop at home, knitting, or reading *The Lady*. No band of janissaries will drag them to the polling booth ; and even if they were dragged there, the ballot is secret. There is always one last resource—they can spoil their voting papers.

The paradox is that a good many of these ladies are members of the Primrose League, a League which, for about a quarter of a century, has been petted and pampered by Prime Ministers, and whose members have been addressed as saviours of their country by all the leading lights of Toryism. These dissenting Dames tread the primrose path of politics, yet reckon not their own rede. These defenders of domesticity are found on political platforms, they pack the Albert Hall, they interfere in elections more or less illegitimately—yet they shrink from the legitimate influence of a vote. They remind me of those ladies who get their alcohol surreptitiously from grocers' shops, but would be horrified to deal with a wine merchant. But the logic of facts cannot be evaded. The first lady who wore a primrose was the first "Suffragette." The Conservative Party, which has fostered and profited by all this feminine activity, is logically bound to crown it with the suffrage.

But there is another class of ladies, who, while desiring the suffrage, object to the present methods as unwomanly. They *are* unwomanly—and therein consists the martyrdom of the pioneers. They have to lower themselves to the manners of men ; they have to be unwomanly in order to promote the cause of womanhood. They have to do the dirty work. Let those lady Suffragists who sit by their cosy firesides at least give them admiration and encouragement. *Qui veut la fin veut les moyens*. And undoubtedly the best means are not the most ladylike. Ladylike means are all very well if you are dealing with gentlemen ; but you are dealing with politicians. Hitherto I have kept

away from political platforms ; this is my maiden speech. But twenty years ago I used this very subject as the backbone of a political satire. Twenty years ago—twenty years of ladylike methods—and how much further have they brought us ? Was there the faintest progress till the other day, when a married lady went to prison to prove that she was not the same person as her husband ? In that old novel of mine, *Female Suffrage* was passed by the Conservative Party. The prophecy has not yet been fulfilled. But I warn Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman that, unless he hurries up, my words will come true. Possibly even the House of Lords will initiate the measure as a last act of spite against Sir Henry before he abolishes it.

It is true those unladylike methods are not the only new ones which might be brought into play. The fault of the old methods was not that they were ladylike but that they were unpolitical. They exercised no pressure upon the Government. In politics only force counts. But how is a discredited minority to exercise force ? The late Mr. Parnell supplied the answer. The minority must stand between the two parties, throwing its weight into either scale as opportunity offers. But does our movement possess a Parnell ? Apparently, yes. The tactics which I heard the late Miss Billington expound were those of a Parnell in petticoats. But, alas ! the task is far harder than that of the great Irish leader. He, at least, was inside the House, he and his men. The ladies are outside—with policemen in between. What possible influence can they exert on the divisions ? It would appear that we are face to face with the old dilemma. To get a vote woman must already have one. But there is a little loophole. Every now and then the party in power has to venture outside its citadel to contest a by-election. The ladies are waiting. The constituency becomes the arena of battle, and every Government candidate, whether he is for *Female Suffrage*

or not, is opposed tooth and nail. For every Government—Liberal or Conservative—that refuses to grant Female Suffrage is *ipso facto* the enemy. The cause is to be greater than mere party. Damage the Government—that is the whole secret.

Are these tactics sound? In my opinion absolutely so. They are not only ladylike, they are constitutional. They are the only legitimate way in which woman can bring direct political pressure upon the Government. Serious as may be the questions which divide the parties, woman is justified in thinking that there is none so serious as her own exclusion from a voice in any of them. And so I would venture to advise those ladies who meditate martyrdom to choose a male victim instead. Far better than to put yourself in prison is to keep a man out of Parliament. It may be said women ought to oppose only those candidates who are against Female Suffrage. But they are so difficult to find. There never was a cause with so many champions. Why, there are elections in which both candidates swear devotion, and what is poor woman to do then? No, let her remorselessly pursue the Government; there will be at least this advantage, that the candidate, having nothing to gain by declaring himself in favour of Women's Suffrage, will be reduced to telling the truth. Then we shall know where we really are. Open foes are better than false friends.

But although these tactics are sound, I trust woman will not have to fight every inch of her way. I trust that man's chivalry and justice, which have awakened in New Zealand, Finland and other outlandish places, will not much longer lie dormant in the so-called centres of civilisation, and that, hand in hand, man and woman will try to work out the problems of the social order. There is no problem upon which an intelligent woman cannot throw some new light, and in neglecting woman's help, men are not merely

blundering in what they do do, but blundering still more badly in what they do not do, in the terribly important provinces of life which they leave untouched by legislation. We men require this Reform as much for our own sakes as for women's sakes.

Ladies and gentlemen, strong as the Women's Suffrage Party is in brilliant women of our London world, its life-sap comes, I venture to think, from where so much of the energy, the wisdom and the earnestness of England reside—from the Provinces. Were it only a metropolitan exotic, a society luxury, it would soon pine away. But its roots go deep into our national soil, and draw their sustenance and vitality from all those myriads of obscure underground working women. These working women are *not* womanly, they are *not* domestic. True, they still weave and spin for man, but no longer by their own hearths. They must leave their homes and their babes to become machines in a world of machinery. And we men, we hypocrites, who prate so much of womanliness and domesticity, what care have we had for these? No vote can make them so unwomanly as not having a vote has made them. Perhaps, on the contrary, the vote may be the only means of bringing them back to womanliness. For only since the working men in these dismal towns have had a vote has their lot become at all human. What Christianity cannot do, what charity cannot do, what all the thunder of your Carlyles and your Ruskins cannot do, a simple vote does. And so to these myriads of tired women who rise in the raw dawn and troop to their cheerless factories, and who, when the twilight falls, return not to rest but to the labours of a squalid household, to these the thought of Women's Suffrage, which comes as a sneer to the man about town, comes as a hope and a prayer. Who dares leave that hope unilluminated, that prayer unanswered? Surely not the most powerful Liberal Government of our generation,

supported by the most powerful Labour Party of any generation. That would be too cruel an irony, too bitter a disillusionment.

For fifty years now woman has stood crying: "I stand for justice—answer, shall I have it?" And the answer has been a mocking "no," or a still more mocking "yes." To-day she calls upon Parliament to have done with this flabby friendliness, this policy of endless evasion. To-day she cries: "I *fight* for justice, and I answer that I *shall* have it."

TALKED OUT!*

WHEN, some weeks ago, the Women's Social and Political Union fixed a demonstration for the date of the second reading of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill, I could not help feeling that the unhappy speakers would be in the position of the coster in Mr. Sims's admirable melodrama of "The Lights of London." Some of you may remember the street-vendor in that play who sells ice-cream or hot potatoes according to the state of the weather, but who, in the deplorable uncertainty of the English climate, has frequently to go out equipped with both, so that he has constructed a barrow fitted up with a freezer at one end, and a burning stove at the other. We had to arrange our oratorical wares in complete ignorance of the political atmosphere, whether we should have to congratulate ourselves upon the second reading, or condole with you over the freezing of our hopes.

But I cannot agree with some of the speakers that these hopes have really been frozen; on the contrary, I think we have gained a great victory. Look at that poster of the *Pall Mall Gazette* suspended from our platform, and wholly devoted to the announcement that our Bill has been talked out. Look at all the papers, full of the same subject. It was only the other day that the *Times* declared that by your noisy methods you had proved your unfitness for public life. I pride myself on having been the first man to

* Being a verbatim report of the speech at Exeter Hall, March 8, 1907.

maintain that, on the contrary, only now had you proved you understood how to make British politics. And very wonderfully and rapidly you have made them. A Women's Suffrage debate is far from novel in Parliament: it has often enough held its languid course, feebly rippled by the witticisms of Mr. Labouchere. But when has a Women's Suffrage debate proceeded in a Parliament guarded by policemen? Why, we read that when the police saw half a dozen girls come out of an A.B.C. shop, they began to think of sending for reinforcements! When has a Women's Suffrage debate had the ear of Europe—nay, of the world? The Bill has been talked out. And Woman is called the talking sex. The Bill has been talked out! Very well, we are here to talk it in again. They may talk it out, but your processions can walk it in. They may arrest you, but they cannot arrest your movement.

You should be feeling victorious, I say, not defeated. Patience! Your movement dates precisely from the day on which the *Times* said you had proved your unfitness for politics. The B.P. period—the Before Prison period—doesn't count. And the A.P. period—the After Prison period—is yet young. John Bull must have time for digestion. But I cannot agree with the *Westminster "Wobbler"* as to the form this digestion must take—that Women's Suffrage must be first made a clear and definite issue at a General Election. How *can* it be? Both parties are *for* it. How can either obtain a clear, definite and exclusive mandate from the country? Balfour and Campbell-Bannerman both declare that the measure is right and just. Woman between the Conservatives and the Liberals is like the donkey who starves between two bundles of straw.

But she must cease being a donkey. She must learn to unite. She is divided against herself. (Cries of "No.") Yes; look at Mrs. Humphry Ward's letter in to-day's *Times*.

Sad as I was to see that letter, I yet was pleased to think some new arguments would be forthcoming from such an intellectual source; for the case against Women's Suffrage is so feeble that we speakers in its favour have to make our bricks without straw. The opposition is indeed in a pitiable position. Women already may vote for poor-law guardians, for municipal committees, for members of the school-board, for the county council—and all this the opposition has suffered more or less patiently—but some mysterious magic attaches to the M.P. This fearful and wonderful being is too holy for the touch of woman. But Mrs. Ward has found an argument, which the *Times* applauds as that of a female Daniel come to judgment, to which the *Pall Mall* devotes an ecstatic leader, to which even the *Westminster* draws reverential attention. It is that if women had votes they would have Power without Responsibility for action. I may be deficient in intelligence, but I am absolutely unable to understand what this wonderful argument means. I have had a vote all these years, and never have I felt this mysterious responsibility, or been called on to take the faintest action. It would seem that Mrs. Humphry Ward can only refer to War. But she explicitly denies that. She says that War is only one of the many fields of action into which women cannot enter, and on which the existence of the State depends, and that we all know what they are. As I neither know what they are nor understand what they have to do with the question, I looked into the *Times* leader for enlightenment. But it only repeats, parrot-like, that there are many kinds of action. I consulted the *Pall Mall* oracle—there are many kinds of action, it echoes oracularly.

Mrs. Ward reminds me of the little girl who cried out: "Oh, mother, there are a million cats in the garden." "Oh, my child," said the mother, "you mustn't exaggerate." "Well, there are six cats." "No, no; where do you see

six cats?" "Well, there *is* a cat." There is only one cat—War. But if there is a war, women have to pay the war-taxes. And if they do not go to war themselves, they have to see their sons go—which is worse. The joke about Mrs. Ward's great discovery is that the soldiers and sailors who do fight have no vote! And if women are to be debarred from Imperial affairs, as Mrs. Ward claims, how about the Primrose League, which is nothing if not Imperial? Does the distinguished authoress realise that the vote denied to her may be exercised by a convicted felon after he has served his sentence? Is she satisfied to be classed legally with infants, paupers, lunatics, idiots and peers? This catchword of "Power without Responsibility" is Mrs. Humphry Ward's best contribution to fiction

But if women as a whole are divided against themselves still sadder is it that there should be divisions even among the Women Suffragists. We need, above all, unity of temper and of programme. When I last had the privilege of speaking upon this platform, some of our oldest workers took umbrage at a portion of my remarks. What was my offence? Merely that in the innocence of my heart, in my ignorance that these ladies were not first and before anything else devoted to the cause of Women's Suffrage, I had said that Women's Suffrage must be run as an end in itself, quite regardless of Party lines. And it appeared that they were Liberals. They put Liberalism first and Woman only second. As if any cause could be safely left to the whim and mercy of a single Party! I am only an amateur politician, but I was very pleased to find Mr. Keir Hardie afterwards telling them the very same thing. If any Liberal is shocked at the idea of damaging a Liberal Government, she must remember that ministries are here to-day and gone to-morrow, and to-morrow it might be the Conservative Government that came in for our attacks. I am not a woman, I need scarcely observe, but I am prepared to

sacrifice my own politics to woman and womanhood, because the question seems to me far bigger than any other at present on the horizon of either party. Still more, then, should a woman say to herself, "The first political question for *me* is that I should be recognised as a political unit. If I am not worthy to be a voter, then at least I will not be made use of as a tool." Mr. Birrell has never come out boldly for Women's Suffrage, yet the other day he utilised a meeting presided over by his wife, to send a partisan message. But either woman is fitted to play a part in politics or she is not.

Of course, should either Party definitely affix the recognition of Women's Rights to its programme, I could understand our whole movement pinning itself *pro tem.* to that Party. But when has Liberalism done this? Never—not even with its present huge majority. The ladies who cling on so desperately to the Liberal Party afford a pathetic picture of unrequited affection. They will never desert Mr. Micawber, who for his part continues to assure them that something will turn up, but who takes no steps whatever to turn it up; indeed, rather, as our American friends say, turns it down. Did "Mr. Micawber," when he wrote the King's Speech, in his accustomed grand style, say a single word about Women's Suffrage? And what about the Liberal Conference at Newcastle? Was not the success of Women's Suffrage there by such a small majority almost worse than a defeat? The fact is that both Parties are glad enough to have women's work—the Tories through the Primrose League, the Liberals through the Women's Liberal Federation. But when it comes to paying them for their work—ah, that is another matter. Their labour has been taken, as woman's labour is always taken, at the cheapest possible rate. Woman has been sweated by both Parties; it is time she tried to drive a better bargain.

It is true that Campbell-Bannerman is ready to vote for

the Bill, and we must be thankful for small mercies. But it is not my notion of a leader that he should follow a follower. If Campbell-Bannerman had any true sense of the significance, the historical importance, of this measure, he would hasten to immortalise himself by fathering it. A lady said to President Roosevelt the other day, "If you can bring about Women's Suffrage you will be greater than Lincoln. He emancipated the black man, but you can emancipate the white woman." What an opportunity Campbell-Bannerman has missed! I am sure that unless he gets this reform through, the Tories will jump at it. After all, they have a much better chance of passing Liberal measures than the Liberals. They have the support of the House of Lords. That is, perhaps, why all the real Radicals are found on the Tory benches. By whom was the last great Suffrage Act passed—the Household Suffrage? Why, by Mr. Disraeli, in 1867.

When that Bill was passing through the House, John Stuart Mill moved as an amendment almost the very measure that the House has considered to-day. That great apostle of our cause demanded that in the grant of Household Suffrage the occupier should have the vote regardless of sex. You can imagine the hullabaloo it evoked, what a godsend it was to all the comic papers; you have only to read them to-day to see how well a joke wears! A woman who wanted to vote was supposed to be a sort of lower creature who chewed the quid and divided the skirt. But nevertheless there was a very grave and memorable debate, and with John Stuart Mill were found no less than 73 other righteous men who voted for this amendment. 196 voted against. Where were the other 400? As usual, neglecting their duty.

This epoch-making debate took place in 1867—exactly forty years ago. Forty years of Wandering in the Wilderness; it is high time we entered the Promised Land.

Four years later—in 1871—when the Ballot Act was passed, Mr. Gladstone said in the House of Commons that there could be no harm now in woman's voting. Mr. Gladstone meant that, now that the old rowdiness and publicity attaching to elections had been abolished, the last excuse for refusing to enfranchise woman had been equally swept away. Thirty-six years ago, then, there was not a vestige of a reason left for refusing woman the vote. Yet the logical animal, man, has gone on thirty-six years as a passive resister. Women unborn in 1871 have now got girls of their own, and if the women we see on this platform had not begun to wake things up, their granddaughters and great-granddaughters would probably be doomed to go on passing annual resolutions and awaiting the chivalry of their lords and masters. It is a strange thing that English ladies should have to go to prison to-day to bring home to Englishmen the words of the last four Prime Ministers in succession—Gladstone, Salisbury, Balfour, and Campbell-Bannerman.

But what other way is open to them? "Ah, if you had only been moderate and reasonable, we should have listened to you," lots of men will tell you to-day. Well, I have consulted the pages of history. Writing of a Women's Suffrage campaign carried on nearly twenty years ago, an impartial historian says: "The agitation for Woman's Rights was conducted with great sobriety, steadiness and moderation." And you see the result. Twenty fruitless years. Surely it was time to try insobriety, unsteadiness, and immoderation. It is true the *Times* will then seize upon your behaviour to prove the utter unfitness of woman for political life. If you act moderately no one will ever trouble to give you a vote, and if you act violently you are not fit to have it. "Them as asks shan't have, and them as don't ask don't want."

Even if you go to prison—what does that prove? *Mr. Punch* told you the other day that if any woman went to

prison, that did not prove that the women of this country wanted the suffrage. Far from it. It only proved at most that this particular woman wanted the suffrage. And, however many ladies went to gaol, it only proved that precisely this number of ladies desired the suffrage. Now this argument, like so many things in *Punch*, is no joke. It is a serious argument, and, what is more, a sound one. The only way of answering it would be that each prisoner should be elected by a constituency of "Suffragettes," to represent them in gaol. Thus, a House of Ladies would be sitting in Holloway. The only question, however, is—whether Holloway is large enough to hold all the representatives of all our feminine constituencies. The same difficulty, we know, attaches to the House of Commons, which is likewise quite inadequate to the number of its members. But then, the House of Commons relies, as we have seen, upon its members neglecting their duty. You could never rely upon that with the women.

But if, pending the establishment of this representative assembly in Holloway, we admit that every prisoned "Suffragette" represents nobody but herself, then how can any argument against women at large be drawn from her behaviour? How can the *Times* say that the behaviour of this or that individual Amazon in hurling herself upon our police proves the unfitness of all other women for public life? Either the women in gaol do represent womanhood at large or they do not. If they do, how dare you deny women the vote? If they do not, how dare you say their behaviour proves women are unfit to have it? The cause of Female Suffrage stands quite apart from the merits or demerits of the new tactics. They are merely the town crier's bell, the "Oyez, oyez," to draw your attention. But the actual matter is one of logic and justice, and those men who argue that the cause of woman has been damaged by the noisy demonstrations of our

goal-birds are merely finding a new reason for their old antagonism. The wolf in *Æsop* had always a pretext for eating the lamb. The only reasonable thing to do on this argument would be to refuse the vote to those noisy, un-womanly females who went to gaol, and give it to all the women who didn't, and I am sure there is not one of the prisoners who would not be content on these terms to have secured the vote for her sisters and for all future generations of her suffering sex.

If, however, the womanliness which these females have failed in has been displayed by the ladies of the Women's Anti-Suffrage movement, then the sooner such womanliness is emancipated away the better for all of us. The worst that you can say about our police-pummelers, after all, is that they are too manly. But these "Anti-Suffragettes," alas! are not manly enough. Their action is redolent of all that sneaking mutual hatred of woman by woman which was unhappily engendered by woman's old over-dependence upon man. These women are guilty of treason to their sex. They are trying to set back the current of Evolution. It is ridiculous to suppose that what woman once was she must always remain. Eve might as well have remained a rib. Did Evolution say its last word when woman came out of the harem, when she dropped the Oriental head-veil from her face, and looked eye to eye upon life? Who knows what further heights she has to scale? Why do we always hear of Man and Superman, and never of Woman and Superwoman?

If you want to see the weakness of the "Anti-Suffragettes" you have only to imagine one of them going to prison for *her* ideal. The thing cannot be imagined; she has no ideal, no living fire flowing in her veins, nothing but a barren negative, nothing but a sluggish satisfaction in old superstitions. That is the saddest feature of a state of slavery: the slaves actually come to prefer

their condition. It is well known that when the American slaves were emancipated, many petitioned their masters to be kept on as before—just as these women are petitioning men.

But if some of woman's worst foes are found in her own sex, some of her best friends are found in mine. This is no duel of sex, Heaven be praised. This is only a duel between prejudice and reason. And no sex has the monopoly of either the one or the other. And so I have the pleasure of informing you that some of us have established, this last week—as a counterblast to the Women's Anti-Suffrage Movement—a Men's League for Women's Suffrage. But the sympathy of this body is not meant to be merely platonic. We propose to be an active political force. For, unlike the "Anti-Suffragettes," we shall consist mainly of voters—our guns will be loaded. Our organisation will be divided into several classes—like the *Times' Library*. In Class A are those voters who put Female Suffrage before every other question; who, whatever their personal politics, will vote against, or at least refrain from voting for, the candidates of any Government that refuses to grant it. To this superior class I belong. And under the present iniquitous system of plural voting I have no less than four votes. In Class B are those who will not vote against their own party, but will support Female Suffrage in all other ways. By this means we hope to circulate our views all over the country, and to defeat the publishers of the Anti-Suffrage petition. The subscription is only one shilling—net. By this organisation our fighting strength will be increased by a new battalion—nay, by a Territorial Army spread all over England.

But I do not believe the organisation will live long. It will be swallowed up in the earthquake of its own success. But, be the fight long, or be the fight short, the issue is not for a moment in doubt. If it is dispiriting to fight a hopeless

fight, it is heartening to know that we cannot possibly be defeated, because we are in harmony with all the upward forces of human life. Woman is bound to be emancipated; even woman herself cannot prevent it. She can only delay the great moment. No country is free while a single class is governed without representation. What, then, shall we say of a country in which half the population is legislated for like dumb, driven cattle? We shall not rest till this barbarous handicap of sex is wiped out from the statute books of civilisation.

Health In a Nutshell

HEALTH is nearly always a matter of diet. Right diet for man is fruit and nuts. Some people fail to find health in Vegetarian fare because they neglect nuts or do not masticate them thoroughly.

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