

EDUCATIONAL PIONEER, AUTHOR, AND SUFFRAGETTE.

Many members of the Women's Freedom League, and readers of THE VOTE, will join with us in sincere regret for the death, on November 6th, at Combe Down, Bath, of our gallant comrade in the Tax Resistance Fight, Miss A. E. Metcalfe. We have been fortunate enough to secure the following very interesting personal sketch by her friend, our member, Mrs. M. G. Ewen.

A daughter of the late Frank Metcalfe, of Wilsbech, and the late Mrs. Metcalfe, of Sutton Wansford, Agnes Metcalfe was born in 1870. Educated at Cheltenham Ladies' College, she early recognised teaching as her vocation, and passed direct from the position of pupil to that of a mistress in that great school. *Realising particularly the need for the higher education of women, Miss Metcalfe made a study of systems of teaching adopted elsewhere, and as a result prepared a paper dealing with the secondary education of girls in France, which was published by the British Board of Education.

The authorship of this valuable paper increased a reputation already high, and, in 1905, she was entrusted with the establishment of one of the first four County Council Secondary Schools, that at Sydenham; thus to her falls the credit due to a pioneer.

For something more than two years, Miss Metcalfe remained at Sydenham, until her appointment in December, 1907, as an Inspector of the Board of Education (Secondary Schools). In the course of her duties as H.M. Inspector, she travelled

throughout the country, and as a result of her observations and widened experience,

came to realise more fully the urgency not only of education, but also of the enfranchisement of women, and in due course she became an earnest worker for a reform, the partial accomplishment of which she was happily spared to see.

A member of the W.S.P.U., and the Tax Resistance League, Miss Metcalfe rendered valuable assistance to the cause. The writer remembers an instance of the thoughtfulness for others which made her so dear to her friends. A distraint was levied for taxes, and a lovely brooch was taken. This she knew would only fetch a trifle of its value at the public auction, and so it was arranged that some working women should be informed of the sale, in order that they might have an opportunity of securing the bargain. Our friend derived great satisfaction from the knowledge that the brooch was delighted with, and indeed referred to



AGNES EDITH METCALFE.

with a chuckle as she lay quietly awaiting the great Call.

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Miss Metcalfe's residence, 2, Hill Rise, Forest Hill, was at times used by those brave people who were at one time known as "Mice," and on a certain occasion one of them had a very narrow escape, for while the "Cats," or, in other words, the servants of law and order, were but a few paces away and hunting, the "mouse" was almost carried out of the house, wearing the well-known hat of another well-known suffragette.

As a public speaker, Miss Metcalfe possessed a clear, well-modulated voice, and a lucidity of expression to which was added considerable personal dignity and charm. It was, however, with a gifted pen, rather than upon the platform, that she rendered her greatest service. Articles bearing upon all aspects of the suffrage question were written in telling and persuasive fashion, appeal and argument happily blended, and these were followed by "Woman's Effort," a book which told the story of the great struggle so ably as to gain the support and sympathy of many erstwhile opponents. This book was circulated widely among Members of Parliament, and admittedly was a means of education to many. Following the granting of a limited franchise to her sex, appeared "At Last!" and later, "Woman a Citizen."

Reverting to her educational work, it may be mentioned that Miss Metcalfe was an Examiner for London University, of which she was a graduate—B.Sc.

A lover of animals, Agnes Metcalfe found time for, and relaxation in, the writing of a delightful little dog story, "The Memoirs of a Mongrel," the hero of which was at one time a well-known canine character about town—and Greenwich Police Court.
