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Editorial.

AN INIQUITOUS LAW.

A storm of protest has been aroused in New York State by the passing of an Act known as "the Page Bill," relating to the procedures of the Lower Courts of New York City, clause 79 of which provides for the medical examination, and compulsory detention during treatment, of convicted prostitutes—a term which is interpreted as applying to women only, while the men who consort with them are left free to convey infection.

Emphatic protest against the obnoxious clause was made to the Governor before its passage, but in vain, and an influential committee has therefore been formed to lay before the citizens of the State the reasons advanced against clause 79.

A most convincing protest has been drawn up by Dr. Jane D. Berry, formerly a nurse trained at Bellevue Hospital, showing that the women are not being imprisoned until reformed, or until sufficiently punished, but until presumably well, when they are returned to the streets.

Prominent Women Suffragists in New York are fighting the law, and amongst the foremost, we may be sure, is Miss L. L. Dock.

Under the new law a Night Court, before which women can be brought, has been instituted, and serious trouble is anticipated unless the laws under which the Court sits are declared unconstitutional.

We have only to quote the evidence recently given by one woman at a public meeting of protest to show the need for the influence of women in public affairs. Miss Mary Donnelly, who three years ago was Matron of the Queen's County Jail, declared that she was discharged, and her name taken off the

civil service list, because she sought to protect the girls who were brought there from the outrages perpetrated upon them by the prison officials. She solemnly declared that reformation was impossible for any girl who had spent one night in the Queen's County Jail. "It wasn't a jail at all," she said; "it was a dive. Not only did officers of the prison degrade the women prisoners, who were absolutely in their power, but they put the poor creatures at the disposal of the male prisoners and the men of the town. One girl told me that she had been a bad girl when she was brought there, but she had never known there was so much wickedness in the world as she had seen there. And yet it is only the women who are punished under our laws. The real criminals go scot free."

At a recent election Miss L. L. Dock, Miss Winifred Leonard, and Miss Henderson watched in the polling booth in Ninth Avenue in the interests of Mr. Francis P. Coughlin, who fought Mr. J. F. Curry for Tammany leadership. The latter contended that their presence as watchers was illegal, and Inspector Jackson, Chairman of the Board of Inspectors, ordered the three watchers to move outside the rail in the polling booth. One of them complied, but Miss Dock and the other refused to budge, with the result that they were arrested and brought before Magistrate Kernochan, at the West Side Court, the first women subjected to this indignity. Miss Dock and her companion appeared in court wearing a broad yellow sash over their white gowns, inscribed "Votes for Women." The result was a triumph for the right, for the magistrate held that the defendants had a right to act as watchers, and therefore to be inside the guard-rail, and discharged them. Both ladies at once returned to the polling booth.

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