

SHORTENED DRESSES OUT.

Worn and Exhibited at the Meeting of Equal Suffragists.

The Members of the Society Will Conform to the Three Inch Rule—A Treacherous Hook and Eye Calls Forth Criticism.

That dresses which hang clear of the ground three inches are all right was demonstrated at the meeting of the Kansas City Equal Suffrage Society yesterday afternoon. The dresses were there to speak for themselves. The action of the society at its meeting last week, when it was voted that the members should not wear dresses which came nearer to the ground than three inches, created a great deal of comment all over the country, and was generally taken to mean that the last day and hour of the long dress had arrived. The matter was again taken up yesterday afternoon. There were both an exhibition and a discussion. Mrs. J. C. Marine brought the matter up. She spoke of the general interest manifest in the action of the society last week, and said that she had been told by a number of members that their husbands had approved of the action as the most sensible thing the society had ever done.

She went on to say that it had been urged that dresses which just touched the ground were the proper length, but she said that dresses which just touched the ground would drag when one was going up or down hill, and that she did not think that three inches above the ground was a bit too short. She said that she hoped that dresses of this length would not be confined to street wear alone. She said that she could see no reason why women should sweep dirt into church with their long dresses. She said that since the last meeting she had gotten the scissors to work on one of her dresses, but that while she had the lower part fixed the upper part was not, and that she regretted that she was not able to appear at the meeting with it on.

Mrs. Marine said she hoped to see a model dress exhibited at the meeting, and she had hardly taken her seat when the exhibition commenced. The little woman who first took the floor wore a skirt of some big plaid material. She called attention to the fact that at no place was it nearer the floor than three inches. "Except right here behind," interrupted a sharp-eyed member. "Then a hook or eye is broken," said the owner of the dress. "Of course," said the owner of the exhibition dress. "I am a small woman, but I saw a tall lady with a short dress on the other day, and I measured it and it was just three inches above the ground; and she looked just as well as I do." Contrary to all parliamentary rules, some one in the room then called out: "She couldn't have looked worse." This most unkind unparliamentary cut did not disconcert the speaker in the least. She said that it had been said that it was all right for women with little feet to wear short dresses, and begged leave to call attention to the fact that her feet were not small and that moreover she had on overshoes. No one was able to discover that her feet were particularly large, however.

She was followed by another lady, who exhibited a never-touch-me-said-the-earth dress, with words of praise. As soon as she had taken her seat another sweet-faced little woman took the floor. She also had on a dress which exhibited a three-inch scorn for earthly things. "I had a white dress which I sent to the dye house to have colored black," said she, "and when it came back it was just three inches short. I put it on the other evening and my husband measured it. The action of the society just gave me one more dress, for now I shall wear it all the time. This is it I have on."

A little woman then jumped up and said: "My husband read something about this matter in the papers, and he said to me: 'I understand, old woman, that all you women are going to wear your dresses up to your knees. If all the members of your society are as small as you are, I think that will be cheating the merchants.'"

"Well, I don't know but that three inches is a little short," said the woman who had first exhibited her dress, "I wanted the matter brought up again so that we could vote them up or down as we saw fit."

"We must hang together in this matter," exclaimed another member, "if we are to do anything." The other members seemed to agree on this and so the length of the dress will remain three inches above terra firma.

It was expected that Mrs. Clara Hoffman would present a protest against the passage of a social evil bill by the Missouri legislature for the approval of the society. Mrs. Hoffman, however, is in Chicago and could not be present. The matter was taken up, however, and discussed at some length. There could be no doubt about the feeling of the society on the subject. The proposed bill was denounced in unmeasured terms. The speakers could see nothing good in the measure. They thought that it would encourage as well as legalize vice, and by its provision for the registration of fallen women prevent such a thing as reformation. It was decided that should the bill be introduced the society would do everything in its power to prevent its passage.

Another meeting of the society will be held at the Coates house next Wednesday.