

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

Organ of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, 55, Berners Street, London, W.1.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

Daughter of the ancient Eve,
We know the gifts ye gave and give;
Who knows the gifts which *you* shall give,
Daughter of the newer Eve?

—Francis Thompson.

THE ROME CONGRESS.

By L. DE ALBERTI.

By the time the great Congress opened representatives from forty-three countries had gathered in Rome to take part in it. They had come from every corner of the globe—from China, Egypt, Japan, Palestine, India, South Africa, Newfoundland, North and South America, and most of the European countries. Every creed, race, class and profession were represented at the Congress. There were women members of parliaments, doctors of medicine and of science, musicians, writers, teachers, women engaged in trade, etc.

Ten governments had sent official delegates; the Secretariat of the League of Nations was represented by Dame Rachel Crowdy, and the International Labour Office by Signor Cabrini.

The Congress was opened by Signor Cremonesi, Lord Mayor of Rome, and Signor Mussolini. In his inaugural speech, Signor Mussolini welcomed the Congress to Rome, in the name of his Government, in the warmest terms, and promised, unless anything unforeseen occurred, that the vote should be granted to women by gradual stages, beginning with the municipal vote. He begged all delegates to carry his greetings to their countries, however distant.

On the eve of the Congress, Don Sturzo, in the name of the Partito Popolare, or Catholic Party, issued a manifesto in support of woman suffrage, and sent a fraternal delegate to represent the party at the Congress.

The resolutions discussed at the Congress cover a wide field. At the Congress held in Geneva three years ago four committees were

set up to consider some of the problems with which the woman's movement has to grapple.

I. A Committee to consider the rights of wives and legitimate children, and of unmarried mothers and illegitimate children; II. A Committee to consider the question of equal pay and kindred problems. III. A Committee to consider the nationality of married women. IV. A Committee to consider moral problems.

The Congress declared its belief that married women, who were bringing up the future citizens of the world were doing work equal to that done by men and women who produce material wealth, and that, therefore, nations should enact laws which would secure a fitting economic independence to wives. Another resolution was passed, endorsing the system of pensions for necessitous widows with dependent children.

The Congress supported the principle of equal pay for equal work; freedom for married women to work if they so desired; and the opening of all posts to women on equal terms with men.

The right of married women to retain their nationality was also supported by the Congress.

The findings of the Committee on Moral questions proved more controversial. While agreeing in principle, (the I.W.S.S. stands, of course, for an equal high moral standard), the question of methods gives scope for much argument.

The Congress agreed that parents and teachers should be trained to impart the necessary knowledge of sex to adolescents in a

scientific manner and from a moral standpoint. Nevertheless the danger of indiscriminate teaching was fully realised.

On the methods of combating venereal disease opinion was divided, but the distribution of prophylactic packets was definitely condemned.

The Congress set on record its approval of the discussion by the League of Nations of the abolition of State Regulation of Vice, and declared its belief that united action on the part of women is essential to the abolition of the Regulation of Prostitution and the suppression of Traffic in Women and Children, and urged women and women's associations all over the world to work for this on national and international lines.

The proposal to establish a woman's political party met with disapproval, though the necessity for concerted action by women in cases of emergency was realised.

The Draft Scheme for co-operation between the Alliance and the International Council of Women was rejected. No doubt the proposal will come up again at next Congress.

The Congress was unanimous in its support of the League of Nations, and urged the entrance of all countries into the League.

The Italian people and the Italian Press showed the deepest interest in the Congress. Every evening when the meetings were thrown open to the public the great hall was packed with men and women, eager to hear what the world congress of women had to tell them.

Delegates were entertained by the Government at the Palatine, by the Municipality at the Capitol, and by the Lyceum Club.

All national museums and galleries were free to members of the Congress.

Many garbled versions of questions discussed at the Congress seem to have appeared in the Press. No resolution on Birth Control was ever put to the Congress, nor was the matter discussed.

Being a political assembly, it was not possible for the Holy Father to receive a deputation. It was rumoured that he had been informed that the Alliance was in favour of divorce. This was categorically denied by Mrs. Chapman Catt at the Congress. The

Alliance has never taken up the question of divorce, nor could they seek Catholic support were they to do so. Of this those in command are well aware.

But though the Holy Father was unable to receive a formal deputation, fifty tickets for general audiences were given for distribution among the members of the Congress, the galleries of the Vatican were thrown open free to all attending the Congress, and one or two Catholic delegates were received in private audience. In fact, while discountenancing the official representation of societies bearing the title Catholic, no objection was raised by the Holy Father to Catholics joining freely as individuals. Any statement to the contrary is erroneous.

On the last day of the Congress delegates walked in procession to the Home Office, where, after the Leaders had conferred with Signor Mussolini, the whole procession passed before him. One was impressed with the fact that, as far as accessibility goes, the Italian Government does realise that a government is the servant of the people.

The need for the continuation of the Alliance has been demonstrated at Rome by the admission of thirteen new countries, including India, Japan, Egypt, Palestine, Newfoundland and Roumania. India joins the Alliance as an enfranchised country, and it is scarcely creditable that the Latin countries can lag behind much longer.

The closing scenes of the Congress were saddened by the farewell of Mrs. Chapman Catt, who resigned the presidency after holding office for over twenty years. She was unanimously asked to reconsider her decision, but on her definite refusal Mrs. Corbett Ashby was elected to succeed her.

An album in Roman leather, signed by all delegates, was presented to the retiring President, a sign of the growth of the Alliance to which she has given so much care and devotion. Mrs. Chapman Catt accepted the office of Honorary President, with full voting power on the Board of Officers, so the Alliance will still have the advantage of her experience and advice in the difficult years ahead.

Her successor has our best wishes and congratulations.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

We are able to give a report of the Rome Congress from an eye-witness, as Miss de Alberti attended the Congress at the request of the Alliance, in order to edit the July number of the International Woman Suffrage News, which will contain the report of the Congress.

Miss de Alberti was amongst those who were received in audience by the Pope, and she had the privilege, with others, of attending the Mass celebrated by the Holy Father on Whit-Sunday, and of receiving Holy Communion from him.

It is with the deepest regret that we have to record the death of Lady Constance Lytton. Her great work for woman suffrage is known to all readers of this paper. None of us can forget how, to escape preferential treatment, she assumed the name of Jane Wharton, and was forcibly fed, like any other hunger-striker. One of Lady Constance Lytton's last public acts was to organise a deputation to Lord Lytton before his departure for India, to urge him to promote the cause of the enfranchisement of Indian women. The C.W.S.S. was represented at her funeral by the Chairman, Hon Secretary and other members of the Society.—R.I.P.

The following six members have been appointed to join the Select Committee of the House of Lords, to consider the Guardianship of Infants Bill.—Mr. Cairns (Lab.), Mr. Ellis (U.), Mr. Gerald Hurst (U.), Mr. Nesbit (U.), Mr. Robert Richardson (Lab.), and Mrs. Wintringham (Lib.). The Peers are the same as those who sat last year:—Lord Wemyss (Chairman), Lord Macdonald, Lord Torrington, Duke of Northumberland, Earl of Onslow, and Lord Askwith.

Miss Bondfield, writing in the "Daily News," of June 2nd, upon the new Trade Boards Bill, speaks of it as one of the last and worst betrayals of the cause of labour. She shows what the position of sweated women workers was before the Trade Boards Act; and concludes: "I cannot contemplate without shame and anger the wanton destruction of so excellent a measure as the Trade Boards Act.

The "Daily News" in 1906 and 1907 made an appeal to its readers which shook all England, and which ensured the passing of the first Trade Boards Act. We are now fighting against a measure which will place sweated workers in a far worse position than in 1908. I ask confidently for the same support and the same help." We have quoted Miss Bondfield's words, as she is peculiarly fitted to know what the result to women workers will be, if this new Bill passes.

As we go to Press the news reaches us that a third woman M.P. has been elected. Mrs. Hilton Philipson obtained a majority of 6,142 votes. We offer her our congratulations.

Our Stall at the Garden Fête.

The "Catholic Citizen" stall at the Garden Fête held at Hampstead was a great success. Supporters of the paper mustered in fine form and those who were not able to be present in person were present in spirit, as is testified by many letters received.

The day was threatening but rain kept off, and the sun shone at intervals. Lord Leverhulme's gardens were at their best and the pretty frocks and hats of the sellers and buyers enhanced the beauty of the setting.

Donors in money or in kind to our stall were Miss Barry, Dr. Birch, Mrs. and Miss Dayrell-Browning, Miss Lydia Edwards, Mrs. and Miss Fedden, Miss K. FitzGerald, Mr. H. S. L. Fry, Miss Havers, Miss M. Henderson, Miss Jeffrey, Mrs. Joseph, Mrs. Landau, Mr. Ronald Lidstone, Miss Meredith, Miss Murdoch and Miss Musson.

Among the kind helpers were Miss Barry, Mrs. Buckley, Mrs. and Miss Dayrell-Browning, Miss Fedden, Mrs. and Miss Balvaire Hewett, Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Lidstone, Miss E. McCormick and Miss Meredith. The takings amounted to £9 16s. 0d., and this will prove a welcome addition to the banking account of the "Catholic Citizen." A few choice articles were left over and can be viewed at the office, 55, Berners Street, W.1., during office hours or by appointment.

M.F.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":

55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W., 1. Tel. Museum 4181.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

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International Notes.

It is always pleasant to read of new openings for feminine activity, and in *Le Féminisme Chrétien de Belgique* Melle Van den Plas tells us that women can be members of the "fabriques d'église," committees which in Belgium are entrusted with the material care of the parish churches. The "fabriciens" are appointed partly by the Bishop and partly by the civic authorities, and not long ago, in a certain anti-clerical commune, where no male parishioner would consent to serve, the Bishop suggested that women should be appointed. The civic authorities protested that this would be contrary to Canon Law! Happily M. Vandervelde, a strong suffragist, then Ministre des Cultes, sided with the Bishop, and women were duly nominated.

In accordance with a definite pledge accepted by all parties, Belgian women were to be given the vote for the provincial councils prior to the elections of 1925. Unhappily, by a large majority, the Socialist party, at their Easter conference, in spite of the vigorous protest of Vandervelde and other leaders, decided to throw over the agreement and oppose the Bill in the Chamber on the purely opportunist ground that the woman's vote is reactionary. Belgian suffragists are righteously indignant, for though the battle is not yet lost victory is certainly imperilled.

We much regret to see in *L'Âme Populaire*, the organ of the Sillon Catholique, and a paper with which we have many sympathies, an article warmly advocating the "vote familial" as a sovereign remedy for many of the social ills from which France is suffering. And not

a word as to the woman, whether wife or widow, and her right to representation, which becomes all the stronger if the home, and not the individual, is to be the unit. It is true enough that so-called Universal Suffrage, as it exists to-day in France, is far from being universal, but it can never be substantially better as long as the women of the nation remain voteless.

La Française protests vigorously against the growing custom of using all public holidays and street decorations—clearly with official sanction—for advertising alcoholic drinks. It is bad enough when tricolor streamers advertise somebody's absinthe, but far worse when, as at the last Jeanne d'Arc fête, men rushed about the street pinning on to the processionists, both male and female, little tricolor flags recommending a certain aperitif!

The Annual Congress of the Union pour le Suffrage des Femmes was held in April in Paris and was very largely attended and particularly successful. Needless to say, it passed an emphatic resolution urging the Chamber of Deputies to discuss and pass M. Justin Godard's Suffrage Bill as quickly as possible.

The *Bulletin* of the Women's International League (April) gives evidence of continuous international work in the cause of peace in the face of overwhelming difficulties. We note that Mrs. Swanwick has resigned the chairmanship of the English section and has been succeeded by Miss K. D. Courtney.

Il Popolo, the ably edited daily organ of the Partito Popolare, has been giving very full and sympathetic reports of the Rome Congress. This was only to be expected, as the Partito Popolare not only sent a delegate to the Congress, but ever since 1919 has had Woman Suffrage and complete sex equality on its programme. When it is remembered that the Partito Popolare is entirely—though unofficially—Catholic, its adhesion to the cause is seen to be of primary importance.

A letter recently received at the office from a Lithuanian lady gives some interesting details of feminist matters in her country. She suggests that the Lithuanian women, having been given the vote without having had to fight for it, may be liable not to appreciate it at its true value. Nevertheless three women, two Christian-democrats and one Social-democrat, have already been elected to the Lithuanian Diet. It is encouraging to learn that there is a Catholic Women's Society in Lithuania with some 30,000 members and a monthly organ, *Moteris* (The Woman), which carries on much social and religious work in the country districts where education is still very defective.

The *Luxemburger Frau* gives excellent reports of the three days' Conference in Paris of the Action Sociale de la Femme, at which Miss FitzGerald was our representative. We have, however, regretfully felt compelled to send a protest against a statement which reflected unfairly on the International Woman Suffrage Alliance.

V.M.C.

French Women and the Vote.

The Annual Meetings arranged by the Action Sociale de la Femme took place in Paris this year at the end of April. This year being the 22nd of the Conference.

In view of the importance of the extension of the vote to women and the fact that this question will be discussed during June in the Chambre des Députés, the meeting on the fourth day—April 28th—was entirely given up to this subject. It was held in the Concert Hall of the rue Vaneau and was very well attended. The majority were naturally

women, but there was a fair sprinkling of men, and last, but not least, one woman was conspicuous, namely, a Sister of St. Vincent de Paul.

The meeting was presided over by Mme. Chotard, who gave a very stirring address, the next speaker being Melle. Maugeret, the President of the Société du Féminisme Chrétien. She was followed by Melle. Marie Thérèse Moreau, Avocate à la cour d'Appel, who read a paper dealing with the legal aspect of the vote.

From Belgium Melle. van den Plas gave a striking account of the effect of the vote in her own country.

The C.W.S.S. was represented by Miss Kathleen FitzGerald, who spoke of the importance of the vote at the present moment in France, and urged all present to become members of the "Union Nationale pour le vote des femmes," of which Mme. Chotard is President.

Two men were on the platform, and both of them expressed their confidence in the things which the future would bring to women, in particular the vote. One was Mr. Georges Goyau, de l'Académie Française, whose name is well known in England. The other was Mr. Georges Bonnefous, Député and Président de la Commission du Suffrage à la Chambre. This gentleman, whose presence was unexpected, brought to the meeting a feeling of helpfulness which one can well understand. His work it is to pilot the Bill through the house and one knows how much one hopes and expects from him.

It was extraordinary to notice how much unanimity there was at this meeting, a public one at which all the other suffrage societies of France were represented, none but Catholics, however, being speakers. There was no dissentient voice, all with one accord demanded votes for women. The favourite "red-herring," in the form of "le vote familial," did not make its appearance and is not, so to speak, "in the running" at this moment.

In France they have now to await the decision of the Chambre des Députés, knowing pretty well what it will be. But we know that the French woman is on the alert and ready and that the day on which the victory is won will find her quite prepared to enter into her civic rights.

K.F.G.

REVIEWS.

A CITY FULL OF BOYS AND GIRLS.
(Catholic Truth Society, 2d.)

This pamphlet, written by a Catholic woman doctor against wrong methods of birth control, is a great relief after the usual unscientific and mawkish nonsense issued by the opposite school, which one is sometimes compelled to read. Some of us who have the good fortune to be one of a numerous family can afford to laugh at the dire threats which are held out by advocates of Birth Control to frighten married couples from bringing large families into the world. Threats of ill-health for the mother, and goodness knows what horrors for the unfortunate offspring.

This does not mean that we do not realise the difficulties and problems and sacrifices which parents of large families have to face. The writer of the pamphlet, who has worked as a woman doctor among women and children, does not shirk the difficulties of the question, but writes with sympathy and understanding of the problems with which mothers in every class of society have nowadays to contend. She deals very skilfully with the spiritual and physical evils arising from unlawful methods of birth control.

L.DE.A.

THE NEW POLAND. By Charles Phillips,
M.A. (Allen and Unwin, 12/6 net.)

Many months' service in Poland as a member of the American Red Cross Commission has turned Major Phillips into an enthusiastic lover of the Polish people. His book in truth is wholly uncritical, a piece of pure propaganda, but it is full of vivid first-hand impressions of a nation just emerging victorious and united from years of war and invasion and famine. There is a long biographical sketch, well worth reading, of Paderewski, but it was naturally to the pages dealing with the women of Poland that we turned first. Throughout the war Polish women of all classes not only did their own work but a considerable share of what is usually considered men's work—many thousands, for instance, were enrolled in the women's legion for service in the field—and the author tells us how quickly they have risen to their new responsibilities in the Republic. There are already seven women

members in the Polish Diet and all of them have distinguished records as workers in the cause of education and progress.

V.M.C.

HOW TO LISTEN TO MUSIC.

Mrs. Broadley Greene, one of our C.W.S.S. members, has lately published a little book, entitled "How to listen to good Music." (Reeves.) Her intention in doing so is best explained in her own words as they appear in the preface. It is "to make clear to its readers the characteristics of musical works and the differences which lie between them. To be informed also concerning the various stages through which all musical structures have passed before attaining those forms in which they are now presented to us. . . . Pains have been taken to throw light on the Fugue, Counterpoint, and such-like musical devices, so many of which are a little obscure in their meaning to many frequenters of our concert rooms."

We feel confident that the concert goers to whom the writer refers will find in this little work all the help and useful information which it is designed to give them, and will be interested and delighted as well. Even those unfortunate persons who do not as yet appreciate good music at all may well learn to do so when they find many of its difficulties so clearly explained, and be glad to read the little details of the lives and methods of working of the great masters.

Although Mrs. Broadley Greene does full justice to the modern school of musicians, we are rejoiced to see she is not too modern to appreciate thoroughly the great ones of the past.

This handbook should be in all our Convent school libraries; not only would it be a valuable help to the pupils, but the music teachers themselves might be glad sometimes to refer to it.

I.W.

The Political Vote and English Memories.

Our member, Mrs. Gillies Campbell, sends us the following extracts from an article which appeared in the *Giornale d'Italia*, May 25th, 1923:—

"Apropos of the recent Women's Suffrage Congress, I remember some incidents of my visit to London during the last political elections which, in my opinion, show clearly and usefully how this feminine victory—let us call it so—is not, ought not to be, and cannot be applicable to Italy.

It was winter, the cold, foggy winter of London; there were multicoloured posters on the 'buses and trams, in the theatres and cinemas, in the streets and, of course, more than anywhere else, in the Women's Colleges; the latter were literally plastered with manifestoes announcing meetings and conferences of the various party leaders. Wearing their party colours the women students and women professors, for in the English Women's Colleges there are only women professors, women officials, etc., the only man being the gold-laced commissioner who enlivens his solitude by ringing the lecture bell with a flourish every hour—but we must not digress; as I was saying, the women students and professors were bustling about the College in an agitated and excited state, talking about Labour and Conservative candidates—always about male candidates, for women candidates do not command the confidence of electors of their own sex. All this commotion did not cease even during lectures, and I leave you to imagine how much study was accomplished during the week preceding the election. Arguments were going on in the corridor, the drawing-room, and in the huge refectory, where the weirdest tongues and the most widely varied human races were represented.

For a week and more, then, work was completely suspended in the Women's Colleges, but that is nothing. On the day of the election perambulators containing children were stationed before the doors of the various polling booths, the children often either screaming with cold or hunger, little unconscious victims of the desires of two generations ago. The children, left there sometimes for hours and hours, were crying with cold, but woman must fulfil her rights, and the mother must suppress her feelings.

These two little incidents that I saw and am relating are being rapidly multiplied, and, as you may well believe, the mother deserts her home not only on election day but to attend meetings, party gatherings, etc. Home

deserted! Home without that being who ought to be its tutelary deity—in a word, the destruction of the family—this is to be the element, the base, the foundation of the whole of modern social life.

You may think of having the vote in Italy, but it would be our ruin—the Italian political woman—but if there are any (and at present fortunately there are only a few) they are amphibious beings, hybrids, out of the usual.

England was the first to have the vote, and obtained it after a hard and bitter fight; she obtained this right—let us say, for so it is called—she obtained it, and what was the immediate result in actual terms of life? The increase of infant mortality, a decreasing birth rate, the increase of rickets (the latter due to artificial feeding), these are, whatever may be said of them, the immediate results."

In face of all these frightful things which have never happened, the writer, Signor Silvestre, begs that Italian women may never be given a vote.

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Will all those friends who have not yet sent in any contributions towards the expenses of the Society this year bear in mind that next quarter's rent (£14) will be due on June 24th. Any and every donation is most urgently needed to meet this heavy expense.

G. JEFFERY.

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A meeting will be held on June 27th, at 6, Lord Street, at which Miss Short, M.A., and Miss N. Parnell, B.A., will read papers on "The Equal Guardianship Bill" and "The Separation and Maintenance Orders Bill."

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