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THE

# Catholic Citizen

Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society), 55 Berners Street, London, W. 1.

Vol. XII, No. 8.

15th SEPTEMBER, 1926.

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.

## Feminism in South Africa.

By HELEN DOUGLAS IRVINE.

At present women who make South Africa their home, thereby making South African homes, incur a loss of status which must act as a deterrent to those of them who are of the right type to settle in a new country, that is, those who are intelligent and who have a love of freedom and a civic sense. For except in Rhodesia, no woman in South Africa may vote for Parliament or be elected to it. If she be an immigrant from Great Britain or the other British Dominions except India, she loses, as she lands on African soil, the restricted or full franchise she has hitherto enjoyed. For this reason the British Commonwealth League recently passed a resolution calling the attention of the Imperial Conference to the voteless state of South African women. Their disability certainly weakens a link of the chain which binds together the British Commonwealth of Nations.

A fight for the vote is, needless to say, going on in the country, and its progress is curiously illustrative of conditions very unlike our own. Some time ago a Bill was introduced in the South African Parliament to grant the franchise to European women on the terms on which men hold it. A member moved as an amendment the deletion of the word "European," thereby demanding, in effect, that coloured and native women in

the Cape Province should share the benefits of the proposed enfranchisement. At once the battle shifted to familiar ground. It was fought out on the field not of feminism, but of the colour war, and there it was lost. When the amendment had been rejected, the original Bill was not put to the house.

The feminist organisations returned to their work of rendering women's disabilities notorious and inconvenient, with the result that a select committee was appointed to report on the advisability of removing the qualification of sex imposed by the franchise laws. The report of this committee has now reached London.

Its conclusions fall into three parts, the colour question engrossing one of them and modifying another. It is stated that there is no proof of any direct demand for the extension of the franchise to native or coloured women, while a volume of evidence is in favour of excluding them until Parliament has determined the segregation of natives. Secondly, the committee has found that the prevalent opinion in country districts is that the franchise should not be conferred on women at all until this segregation has become law, and that if any of them do receive it, they should be only those who are of European descent. Thirdly, in the larger towns a considerable body of opinion has



revealed itself as favourable to the unqualified grant of the vote to women on the terms on which men hold it, but the committee points out that this section of opinion may have become unduly prominent through the action of the feminist organisations. The final recommendation of the committee is that, as a first step to the removal of the sex disqualification from the franchise laws, women of European descent should be enabled to vote on the same terms as European men within the Union of South Africa.

To the feminists the report is an encouragement, and it has been hailed as such. It would seem, indeed, that opposition to women's suffrage in this dominion derives mainly from the attitude to an extraneous matter, the political status of the coloured races. As for the committee's reservation regarding the extra prominence bestowed on feminism by the women's organisations, this is based on an old and disproved fallacy, that public opinion is important in proportion to the number of its supporters, not to the intensity of their convictions. No truth, not the truth of Christianity any more than others, has ever been brought to general acceptance by a large apathetic mass of opinion. It is the active, zealous minorities who, in the end, carry the rest along with them, thus becoming majorities. The South African feminists are zealous and active, and are fast growing numerous. We are glad that one of the most enterprising of their leaders is a Catholic, Miss A. L. P. Dorman, a member of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, with which the movement is in close touch. Another member, Miss Fedden, is now visiting South Africa and doing all she can to help our cause there. Her appeal is particularly addressed to the Catholic community, who are not unprepared to hear it, since the *Catholic Citizen* has a very considerable circulation in the dominion, especially in the Dominican Convents. Miss Fedden contributed a spirited article on the political disabilities of South African women to the July number of *Catholic News*, the official organ of the Catholic Young Men's Society. She has addressed many meetings in South Africa, including one which was held after Benediction on Sunday, July 27, in the Hall of the Convent of La Rochelle, and which was both numerous and enthusiastic. The meeting at La Rochelle was held by request of the parish priest.

## St. Joan a Prisoner.

I was interested in the article on St. Joan's journey as a prisoner. When in France I discovered that local traditions keep alive the memory of at least two halts for the night made between Arras and Le Crotoy.

The first, an easy day's ride from Arras, is at Lucheux, where an old Norman castle-keep (with a more recent portion of the castle still inhabited) stands in a charming village which has seen English soldiers either as enemies or allies during at least five wars at intervals over six centuries. Lucheux was a divisional rest billet for our troops at the northern end of the Somme-and-Ancre front. St. Joan stayed a night in the castle, which was then in Burgundian hands.

Another day's ride (passing presumably through Doullens, where was held the fateful allied conference which decided on unity of command in 1918) brought St. Joan to St. Riquier, a tiny town with a vast Benedictine priory church, and a street called the rue des Anglais, because St. Thomas of Canterbury came through as a royal ambassador from England, and he and his splendid retinue were lodged in that street. The battlefield of Crécy is close by, and during the late war St. Riquier was the divisional headquarters of a British rest-area. A little way out from the town is a large old stone chateau now used as a farmhouse—the Druggy Ferme; at one corner of its quadrangular farmyard is a sort of low tower, in the ground floor of which St. Joan passed a night of her journey. When I stood for a minute or two inside its thick stone walls, it was evidently in use as a casual store place, and there were heaps of turnips on the earth floor; but the people about the place were quite clear that St. Joan had spent a night of her captivity there.

Probably a whole set of stations from Compiègne to Rouen could be identified in similar fashion; for anyone who had time it would surely be a pilgrimage worth while making. For all I know it may be all set out in some book; but I thought your readers might be interested at any rate in the two places mentioned above, which I happened to come across personally.

F. H. DRINKWATER.  
763 Coventry Rd.,  
Small Heath, Birmingham.

## Notes and Comments.

The British Commonwealth League is convening a Conference on September 30 to consider certain questions in connection with the Imperial Conference. The Agenda will include:

(1) General summary of the citizen position of women in regard to Overseas settlement. Resolution and appointment of deputation to go to the Imperial Conference, if necessary, on the question of equality of opportunity in (a) administration, and (b) training. (2) Appointment of deputations to go to the Imperial Conference in regard to the Nationality of Married Women within the British Empire. Arrangement of special group deputations to go to separate Prime Ministers in order to get a definite movement forward. (3) Consideration of the Franchise question in regard to (a) disfranchisement of women voters coming from other parts of the British Empire to England; (b) the position in South Africa. (4) Consideration of measures required in regard to reciprocal affiliation orders; consideration of the appointment of deputations or other means of approach.

St. Joan's S.P.A. is very grateful to Miss Marguerite Fedden, member of the Executive, who has carried our Flag to South Africa, of which we speak in another column. A Dinner at the Rendez-Vous Tuesday, September 28, at 7-15 p.m., is being arranged to welcome her back and to hear her report. This will be the opening event of the autumn, and we hope to have a very enjoyable evening. Miss Barry will be glad to send tickets to anyone applying to her, at 55 Berners Street, W. 1.

We offer our hearty congratulations to Miss Ederle, the American girl of 19, who swam the Channel and broke all previous records by two hours. A wonderful feat, which denotes once again how impossible it is to generalise as to what women can or cannot do.

Since the above was written, Mrs. Corson, also an American, has swam the Channel, taking one hour more than Miss Ederle, but beating previous records by men. Since then, however, a German man has beaten Miss Ederle's record.

We are glad that the Joint Committee of Suffrage Societies, on which St. Joan's S.P.A. is represented, which organised the Demonstration on July 3, has decided to remain in being to concentrate on an intensive campaign throughout the country for Equal Political Rights. So far no satisfactory answer can be wrung from the Prime Minister on this question of Equal Rights.

The formation of the new Society, "The Young Suffragists," is good news. The Young Suffragists have for President, Mrs. Barbara Wootton, Principal of Morley College, who was a member of the Royal Commission on Income Tax, but who is too young to have a parliamentary vote. If the new Society intends to disband when Equal Franchise is obtained, we hope it will have but a short life; meanwhile, may it increase and multiply. We feel that the very foundation of such a Society has brought victory closer. The Hon. Secretary is Miss D. Woodman, 269 Grays Inn Road, W.C.

The Factories' Bill was introduced into the House of Commons by the Home Secretary before the recess. We are all in favour of reforms which improve the conditions for factory workers, so long as the regulations apply both to male and female workers. This Bill, and the Lead Paint Bill, which has passed its third reading, differentiate between men and women workers, restricting women's work under guise of protection. The feminist societies, including St. Joan's S.P.A., are definitely opposed to this restrictive legislation for women. However well-intentioned it may be, it prevents women from taking their proper place in industry, and handicaps them in earning their livelihood. We trust that the Bills may yet be amended and the clauses restricting women's work may be dropped.

We offer our congratulations to our member, Miss E. M. Cruttwell, on her marriage with Mr. F. C. Prister, and to our member, Dr. Delia Moclair, on her marriage to Dr. Andrew Home. We wish them every happiness.



## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,

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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## Women Under English Law.

The changes in the status of women have been so rapid in the last decade that it is hard for writers to keep pace with them. As Dame Millicent Fawcett says in her Foreword to Mrs. Croft's book, 'Women under English Law,' all other books on the subject have been completely out of date since the passing of the Representation of the People Act, 1918. Mrs. Croft, who is a Solicitor of the Supreme Court, has laid under an obligation all persons interested in the legal status of women. Speakers and writers will find her book a treasure mine.

The book is divided into five chapters: (1) Women as Citizens; (2) Women as Wives; (3) Women as Mothers; (4) Women as Workers; (5) Offences and Actions relating especially to Women. There is a supplementary chapter on Women under Scots Law, by Miss Margaret H. Kidd, a Scottish advocate. Under Women as Citizens we have a clear description of our unequal Franchise Law, which is not, as it seems necessary to repeat, merely unequal with respect to the age at which a citizen is qualified to vote. "The principal point to note with reference to a male voter is that mere residence without any property qualification is sufficient. A property qualification is only essential in the case of a non-resident male voter.

"A woman, on the other hand, has the right to be registered as a parliamentary voter for a constituency, only if and in addition to being free from any legal incapacity, she has fulfilled the following conditions:

1. She has attained the age of 30 years; and
2. She is *either*

(a) Herself entitled to be registered as a local government elector in respect of her occupation in that constituency of land or premises (other than a dwelling-house) of a yearly value of not less than £5, or of a dwelling-house; *or*

(b) Is the wife of a man entitled to be so registered as a Local Government elector, etc."

It is clause (a), as above, which disfranchises a very large number of women: women who work for their living, or daughters living at home.

The chapter on Women as Wives covers many questions on which we are particularly interested, such as nationality, the taxation of income, separation and maintenance.

The chapter on Women as Mothers includes adoption, legitimation, the guardianship of infants.

The fourth chapter on Women Workers should be well studied: it touches briefly on the Factory Laws, and special regulations

affecting women in Industry, a subject on which there is likely to be a battle royal in the near future. It also gives very clear details on pensions for widows and orphans.

But in spite of the great improvement in the position of women, much remains to be done; for instance, the legal age for girls in marriage is still only twelve, and unlike the law of most other countries, English Law leaves a man complete freedom to dispose of all his property, excluding wife and children from any share in it. On the other hand, however, the Administration of Estates Act, 1925, in case of intestacy, gives no preference to males over females, or to husbands over wives, and is a great advance.

We recommend to all our readers to procure this book for themselves. It is published by the National Council of Women for the small sum of half-a-crown.

L. DE ALBERTI.

["Women under English Law." By Maud I. Crofts, M.A., L.L.B.; published by the National Council of Women, Parliament Mansions, London, S.W. 1, with the assistance of the Stansfeld Trust.]

## Feminism in South America.

Feminism is making some progress in Spanish America. A Reuter telegram announces that the congress of Mayors at Havana has passed a resolution recommending that the Cuban congress shall extend equal rights to women. This resolution is in line with the recent statement credited to Senor Machado, the President of the Republic, that he was in favour of women's suffrage.

Simultaneously a Bolivian newspaper comments on the recent failure of the United States, as arbitrator between Peru and Chile, to secure that a plebiscite be held in Tacna-Arica to determine which of these republics shall permanently hold that territory. The Bolivian paper observes that since no women would have voted in the proposed plebiscite it would not have reflected opinion truly. Chilean women organised themselves, during the abortive negotiations, into a league for the advancement of their country's claim. The National Feminist Party of the Argentines passed a resolution protesting against the exclusion of women from the proposed plebiscite.

## The Bierville Peace Congress.

The Sixth Democratic International Peace Congress, organised by the Jeune République, at which our Chairman represented St. Joan's, proved a really remarkable success. Held in London two years ago and at Luxemburg last year, it was organised this August at the château de Bierville, a large house with charming grounds and many dependencies, some thirty miles from Paris. The appeal was made principally to the youth of all nations willing to work for the peace of the world, and the response was so enthusiastic that over 5,000 congressists collected at Bierville, some indeed only for a day or so, but many staying a full fortnight. An immense camp with military tents and kitchens had been organised for the young people, among whom there was a strong minority of women, but even so many had to find lodgings in the surrounding villages. The gathering, though interdenominational, was mainly Catholic except as far as England was concerned; there were a great many priests present, and Mgr. Julien, the eloquent Bishop of Arras, came down for the great opening meeting and spent a whole day in the camp. The charms of the spot and the warmth of the weather combined to convert the congress into something resembling a gigantic picnic; none the less, much solid work was done in the cause of peace by lectures and discussion, and perhaps more than all by the real spirit of comradeship that prevailed between the young people of France, Germany, England, Belgium, and so forth, all eager to demonstrate that the war mentality no longer existed among them.

V. M. C.

The Women's Freedom League is arranging a Public Dinner in honour of Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence on Friday, October 8, at 7-30, on the occasion of their silver wedding. Tickets, 8s. 6d., can be obtained from the W.F.L., 144 High Holborn, W.C.1.

We offer our sincere congratulations to our associate, Fr. H. Hall, who has been appointed Hon. Canon of Westminster.

We record with deep regret the death of our member Mrs. Head, who died recently.—R.I.P.



## International Notes.

The *American Woman Citizen*, closely connected with the League of Women Voters, expresses complete satisfaction with the results of the Paris Congress, not least because of the defeat of the resolution on Like Conditions of Work and the refusal to admit the National Women's Party.

\* \* \* \*

During the summer holidays our oft-quoted contemporary, *La Française*, has changed hands, but happily is to be carried on without any essential change of policy. Formerly the organ of the National Council of French Women, it is now that of the French Union for Woman Suffrage, of which Mme. Brunschvigg is President, and Mme. Malaterre-Sellier, General Secretary. The paper will, however, be the property of a registered society so as to ensure its financial independence. We wish it every success under its new management.

\* \* \* \*

The vigorous life of the Belgian democratic *oeuvres* is once more exemplified by the striking success of the annual general meeting at Antwerp in July of the Christian Women's Trade Unions, of which Melles Cappe and Baers are the very competent secretaries. Over 3,000 working women, representing a membership of some 72,000, as reported by *La Ligue des Femmes*, assembled from all parts of Belgium and carried through a long programme with much enthusiasm. We cannot but regret, however, that the League takes so strong a line against married women's work.

\* \* \* \*

The *Mouvement Féministe*, of Geneva, which can always be relied on to furnish vivid accounts of the many congresses for which Geneva is now famous, reports the doings of the I.L.O. Conference in June, and deplores—as we do also—that in spite of the special request of M. Albert Thomas to send more women delegates, there were only five women among all the thirty-nine

delegations taking part, and those five were technical advisers. It is some small satisfaction to know that two of these women, Miss Bondfield and Miss Pott, came from Great Britain. The remaining three were from Denmark, Holland and Greece. Thus thirty-five countries sent no woman delegate at all, although the main subject for discussion was that of Emigration.

V. M. C.

## Reviews.

*THE COMMUNITY AND THE CRIMINAL.* By Rev. Francis Day. (Catholic Social Year Book, 1926, Catholic Social Guild, 6d. net.)

The Catholic Social Year Book for 1926 is particularly interesting and very useful. Father Day is the Catholic Chaplain to Brixton Prison, and in giving us this account of the English Prison system, he makes a definite appeal to the Catholic social worker to help the prisoner to make a new start when released from prison, and tells them how to set about it. Father Day highly commends the modern system of seeking to reform the criminal, by educational, social and humane methods, which he shows was anticipated by the Church herself many hundreds of years ago. To give help to the prisoner is a great work of mercy, which should appeal to Catholic social workers, and this book, which can be obtained for 6d., should increase the number of workers in so good a cause.

*ROME: PAST AND PRESENT.* (The Studio, 44 Leicester Square, London, W.C. 2. 7s. 6d. wrapper; 10s. 6d. cloth.)

The text of this beautiful volume is by William Gaunt, B.A., and gives an interesting description of Ancient and Modern Rome. There are 140 illustrations, several in colours, from the works of distinguished artists, old Masters and modern Masters of their arts. This book would be a welcome present to any lover of Rome, any traveller to Rome, and a consolation to anyone who is prevented from visiting the City of the Seven Hills, which from so many points of view is rooted in the affections of man.

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## TREASURER'S NOTE.

I gratefully acknowledge the long list of subscriptions this month, which includes £13 0s. 6d. subscribed in response to Miss E.

Butler-Bowdon's appeal for the Procession expenses. These have now been met, and a special word of thanks is due to Miss Butler-Bowdon for taking the appeal in hand so energetically. Unfortunately, the remaining £15 was also required to meet the ordinary office expenses already incurred. The Alliance must, therefore, set to work to gather more funds this autumn. The Equal Suffrage campaign must be carried on with vigour, and for this money is essential. We must prepare early to have a successful Christmas Sale. Please send gifts in money or kind as soon as possible.

G. JEFFERY.

## LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Hon. Secretary: Miss N. S. Parnell, B.A.,  
45 Falkner Street, Liverpool.

Members of the Branch heard with great regret of the sudden death of Mr. P. J. Finn, and they offer their heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Finn and his family in their sad loss. Mr. Finn was always a kind and sympathetic friend to our cause.—R.I.P.

## The National Council of Women of Great Britain.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The Work of Married Women, Prevention of Maternal Mortality, the Position of Women under English Law, Women and Internationalism, are among the subjects to be discussed at the annual meeting and conference of the National Council of Women of Great Britain this year to be held in London, at the Church House, Great Smith Street, Westminster, on October 19th—22nd. Particulars can be obtained from the N.C.W. Secretary, Parliament Mansions, Victoria St., S.W. 1, and men and women interested in up-to-date information on matters affecting national life are invited to join these discussions on public questions from varied aspects of experiences and opinions. Workers, both men and women, often lose freshness when immersed in one cause only, when by sympathetic understanding of other people's causes they could both give and take to advantage. This autumn conference, coming at a convenient time in a convenient place for the majority, should not be missed by anyone who is free to listen to the Council business or to take part in the public meetings that promise interesting diversities of opinions.



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Tickets (5s.) from the Secretary, St. Joan's S.P. Alliance, 55 Berners Street, W. 1.

**Women's Freedom League.**

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