

WOMEN'S · SERVICE

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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. XVIII, No. 11.

DECEMBER, 1932.

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.

A Canadian Adventure.

BY CHRISTINE SPENDER.

St. Ursula was the "most adventurous of nuns," as is proved by the legend which tells how she went on pilgrimage from Brittany to Rome, there to be martyred with the eleven thousand virgins who had accompanied her.

St. Angela, who founded the Order of the Ursulines in Italy during the 16th century, was both pioneer and feminist. She believed that girls should be educated in the same way as boys, and after seventeen years of struggle she managed to get her ideas put into practice. Years after her death the Order of the Ursulines was formally recognised by Pope Gregory XIII. The Order was established in France by Françoise de Bermond in 1596.

The Ursulines, following in the steps both of their patron and of their founder, have invariably proved themselves adventurous pioneers, and Mère Marie was not to be the exception. She was born in the tranquil town of Tours on October 18th, 1599. Her father was a simple silk-merchant, but her mother was of illustrious extraction.

Marie Guyard's one idea from girlhood upwards was to enter a Convent there to gain the calm and peace she felt she needed for the contemplation of God. She was called to a life of great activity, but a Martha is all the more valuable for being a Mary at heart. Forced into a marriage at a very early age she was obliged to undertake the duties and responsibilities of a large household. It was not of her nature not to do the best that was in her, and so we find her making a model wife, and later on, when her husband died, a model housekeeper to her brother-in-law.

She had a child, and for his sake she postponed her vocation until she reached the age of thirty. Her little son, then only twelve years old, solemnly gave his consent to his mother's becoming a religious, and at last, in the Convent of the Ursulines, Marie felt she was leading the life best fitted for her. But her worldly experience was to stand her in good stead. It was not long after she had been professed that a Madame de la Peltrie of Alençon, who had taken it into her head to finance the transference of a teaching Order to Quebec, chose Mère Marie from a convent full of nuns to be the superior of the new foundation.

Here begins the story which would make strange reading for those who consider that a nun's chief desire is to "escape from life"; thereby denying life. One cannot help feeling how much Quebec would have lost if Mère Marie had not been given her chance to help in the moulding of the young colony.

The savagery of the Indians, their continual warfare among themselves and with the colonists, their unmitigated cruelty and the ever-swelling band of martyred Jesuits, all contribute to make a sombre and lurid background to this quiet composed figure. But Mère Marie's stillness was not the stillness of passivity; it was rather the tranquillity of an intense and ordered activity. Through all the "roughing it" of the first years in Quebec, through the time when the newly completed convent was burned down, leaving only the shelter of Madame de la Peltrie's inadequate house to the denuded nuns, one feels that the essential needs of a religious community were never lost sight of for a second.

The life of prayer was what had attracted this serene spirit to the cloister, and it was just Mère Marie's aptitude for inner contemplation which gave strength to her response to the calls of outer life. Yet, despite her inborn love of law and order, we never find Mère Marie sinking into a groove. She had the adaptability and commonsense of the pioneer, qualities which showed themselves continually in her readiness to revise first impressions.

Throughout the book we get charming pictures of the relations between the nuns and the little Indian girls brought up at the Convent. All the tribes, save the Iroquois, considered it a great privilege to be able to leave their children in the nun's capable hands. The nuns did not succeed in taming these children permanently, as they had at first hoped, but the influence the Convent exercised through these future wives and mothers, undoubtedly made for good understanding between colonists and natives. Christianity was certainly much needed. Among their own people, the children were brought up with a complete indifference to the most hideous cruelties, and the women were treated as cattle. There is an interesting comment upon the attitude of the little Indian girls to their men-folk when they came to visit them. The little girls shrank away and refused to play with the small boys, and they were seemingly equally disgusted with the older men of the tribe. The author wisely comments that this reaction was not a false modesty fostered by the nuns . . . "Looked at less superficially it seems like a natural reaction against an age-old tyranny of which the children were becoming dimly aware . . . They were little unconscious feminists."

The Convent did much to humanise the colony. Bringing with them, as they did, the manners and customs and even the accent of Old France, the nuns played a large part in conserving these for New France. It is true that, since the Ursulines are enclosed, the religious did not go into the town. But the town came to them, and Mère Marie and her companions invariably knew all there was to be known. Mère Marie's letters to her son form one of the most valuable sources of information for the Historian of Quebec. Like herself these letters are quiet, sometimes surprisingly quiet, but none the less for that they are remarkably vivid.

Among the many living portraits that are outlined in this book, Madame de la Peltrie's stands out as supremely interesting. Her courage and her spirit of adventure led her to leave a life

of luxury and leisure for a life of unbelievable hardship. She never seems to have quailed, in fact, on the contrary, she thirsted for more and more adventure. This thirst took her to Montreal (still more primitive than Quebec) for a year and a half and—in true feminist spirit—made her seek to share the Mission life of the Jesuits. However, martyrdom on the outposts was reserved for the men, and Madame de la Peltrie finally contented herself with returning to Quebec, where she remained benefactor of the Convent and the children's friend until her death. She never became a nun, but in the author's words, "remained a free lance to the end." Indeed she had not the disciplined nature of Mère Marie, and resembled her in nothing save in courage and in a certain fundamental steadiness which gave strength to her character despite its natural impetuosity.

"Only a pioneer people knows how many things it can do for itself and how many more things it can do without," writes the author, and it is certain that there is a kind of supreme happiness in "making do." Though privations and perils are the lot of a primitive community, the life has its compensations. A continuous struggle for existence binds men close together in bonds of fellowship. In Quebec "economy and liberality went hand in hand."

The Church was undoubtedly the stabilising and civilising force of the young Colony. She arbitrated in disputes, dispensed news from home after Sunday Mass, organised the corporal works of mercy, and gave the first nucleus of recreation and diversion to her children. Every conceivable event was made the occasion of religious rejoicing and festivity. Later on when peace with the Iroquois had been secured and men no longer lived in perpetual fear of attack or invasion, internal dissensions inevitably developed. Unhappily these chiefly took the form of struggles between ecclesiastical and civil authority. Mère Marie's comments on this strife are always apt and to the point. But at least one Governor considered the Jesuits as by far the best intermediaries between French and Indians because of their knowledge and understanding of the native character.

The Jesuits were wise in their dispensation of religion. "It has been well said that the Jesuits who made the first Indian converts had a firm grasp of kindergarten methods long before the days of Froebel. Their teaching was an ingenious, strenuous, highly developed object

(Continued on p. 95).

Notes and Comments.

We have long been promised changes in the House of Lords. A joint Committee of Peers and Members of the House of Commons, under the Chairmanship of Lord Salisbury, have been considering reform, and have recently presented a unanimous report for the consideration of the Government. This report suggests that the House of Lords should be partly hereditary, and partly elected or nominated. It agrees that sex should be no disqualification to a seat when both sexes are available; that would be, at any rate, in the outside element. This leaves untouched the question of the position of Peeresses in their own right.

There is no sense at all events why Peeresses in their own right should not have a seat in the House of Lords, nor is there any reason why titles should not be bestowed on women for the same or similar reasons that they are bestowed on men. We do not think that the Order of the British Empire is always adequate to the achievements of some women. They can still conquer the air, if other spheres have been conquered; and we may suppose that women may render some great political, or other service to the Nation.

The motion of Mr. Raikes (Essex S.E.U.) on the reform of the House of Lords, which took place in the House on December 1st, was talked out. The Solicitor-General, for the Government, said he would be trifling with the House were he to give any sort of pledge which would fetter the Government in the disposal of their time.

* * * *

We wish good luck to "The Woman Teacher," organ of the National Union of Women Teachers, which appeared recently in its new green dress of hope, and is to be published henceforth fortnightly under the editorship of Edith E. Crossby, L.L.A. (3s. 6d. per ann.). St. Joan's S.P.A. has always been on the best of terms with the N.U.W.T. and ready to co-operate with them in their excellent work for equality.

DANCE.

A dance in aid of the funds of the Alliance will be held at St. Patrick's Schools (off Oxford Street), on Tuesday, January 3rd, at 8 p.m. Please send at once for Tickets (2s. 6d.) to the dance Hon. Secretary, Miss Monica O'Connor, c/o St. Joan's S.P.A., 55 Berners Street, W.1.

We are glad to receive from the A. M. S. H. the following copy of a letter from the India Office. This letter, especially the second paragraph, is the most definite and satisfactory statement of official policy concerning the British Army in India the Association of Moral and Social Hygiene has ever been able to obtain. It is a reply to the information which the Association sent to the India Office in regard to the various reports (and evidence) which were received within the last four years concerning the alleged establishment in various cities of India of brothels, under medical inspection, reserved for British soldiers. The A. M. S. H. are circulating this letter throughout all the societies in India sympathetic to their work, and asking them to report to the Association any action contrary to this official policy.

India Office,
Whitehall,
London, S.W. 1.
26th July, 1932.

Madam,

With reference to my letter of the 7th July last, I am directed to inform you that a reply has now been received from the Government of India regarding the alleged provision of brothels for British soldiers in India. I am to say, in confirmation of what was stated in my letter of the 26th April last, that the policy of the Government of India regarding prostitution and matters connected therewith remains unchanged.

I am to add, for the information of your Association, that the issue by any responsible officer of H.M.'s. Forces to any section of the Army in India of any official advertisement or recommendation of any brothel, whether for the use of the Army or otherwise, is contrary to the policy of the Government of India, as also is the periodical inspection or control of the inmates of any such brothel by any Medical Officer of H.M.'s. Forces.

(Sgd) W. D. TOMKINS,
fr. Secretary,
Military Department.

Miss Alison Neilans,
Association for Moral
and Social Hygiene,
Livingstone House,
Broadway, S.W. 1.

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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The Child Slaves of Hong Kong.

We have returned from time to time during the last few years to the subject of the Mui Tsai, or slave-children of Hong Kong, in order to bring home to our readers that in spite of fair promises from the Government, the evil still flourishes. It is a humiliating fact that this peculiarly horrible form of slavery should continue under the British flag.

We have received from Lt.-Comdr. Haslewood a great number of cuttings from the local press, which clearly demonstrate that while cases are brought against owners of unregistered mui tsai, the small fines imposed are not likely to check what is a profitable trade.

We hear of children sold in their infancy being told that their freedom can be gained by repayment of the purchase money, an impossible task; of their being sold into prostitution; of their being ill-treated and shamefully overworked.

We have long urged that 'adopted daughters' should be registered, since this so-called adoption is an evasion to obtain mui tsai.

Mrs. Cecil Chesterton has been investigating the subject on the spot, and in an article in "Pearson's Weekly," (Nov. 5th, 1932), endorses what others have said, that the Law is a farce. She estimates that there must be 20,000 female slaves, though only 4,000 are registered. The latter, as we know, are not properly safeguarded. We, and others, have asked that an adequate number of inspectors be appointed, including women.

In calling the mui tsai slaves we are not exaggerating. Sir John Simon, speaking in the House of Commons, May 11th, 1931, declared that the mui tsai were not the subject of adoption but of purchase. They were frequently the subject of a bill of sale, just as negro slaves were in the eighteenth century. Legislation

would be of little use, he said, without effective inspection and control.

We have pleasure in publishing Lt.-Comdr. Hazelwood's letter, which throws further light on the matter.

L. DE ALBERTI.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM THE COLONIAL OFFICE

dated the 18th February, 1932.

Every person who takes any part, or attempts to take any part, in any transaction, the object or one of the objects of which is to transfer or confer, wholly or partly, the possession, custody or control of any minor under the age of eighteen years for any valuable consideration shall be deemed to be guilty of an offence against this section, unless such person proves beyond reasonable doubt that the transaction was *bona fide* and solely for the purpose of a proposed marriage or adoption, in accordance with Chinese custom.

5 Sydney Buildings,
 Bath,

Nov. 17th, 1932.

Dear Secretary,

We are anxious to draw your attention to the disgraceful state of affairs still existing in Hong Kong, and enclose press cuttings of recent cases, and also an article by Mrs. Cecil Chesterton, just published. This article confirms entirely the information we receive regularly from the Colony. We saw Mrs. Chesterton before she went to Hong Kong, and put her in touch with people able to enlighten her.

We would draw your attention to the fact (bearing in mind that the Hong Kong dollar is

International Notes.

We offer our cordial congratulations to our colleague, the "Mouvment Féministe," which has completed its twentieth anniversary. It has recorded all that time the movement in Switzerland, and has kept us *au courant* as to the feminists who have valiantly fought for the emancipation of the women of Switzerland. We believe that they will soon gain victory, and offer our best wishes that Swiss politicians may come to realise that their country will benefit by the emancipation of their womanhood. The "Mouvment Féministe" is a living paper; with Mademoiselle Gourde as Editor it could not be otherwise.

* * * *

We have also to offer our congratulations to Mademoiselle Van den Plas who, in the recent municipal elections was elected Councillor for Woluwe St. Lambert. A number of other women were also successful in these elections.

* * * *

We have received from South America news that woman suffrage is gaining ground. "El Mercurio" (Santiago de Chile), prints an article which declares that the time is ripe to tackle the question of votes for women. In many countries enfranchised women have proved their worth. In democratic countries it is well nigh an imperative necessity, says the article, that women should be incorporated in the administrative and political life of the country. They are a guarantee of order and of moderation. The experience of powerful nations justifies Chilean reformers in demanding the abolition of all irritating disabilities which weigh upon woman, depriving her from taking part in work in which she could benefit the country.

* * * *

A few days later, September 2nd, "La Nación" (Santiago de Chile), gave publicity to the question of Woman Suffrage, and published an article by Sra. Labarca Huberston, Inspector of Schools, who pointed to the fact that Spanish women had now got the vote and Chile was left behind.

* * * *

"La Nación" (Buenos Ayres), September 7th, foresees victory for the "Suffrage and Eligibility Bill" which proposes to confer these blessings on Argentine women. We trust it will prove a true prophet.

(Continued on p. 97).

about 1s. 3d.) that the fines are quite inadequate as a deterrent, and slave owning in our Colony of Hong Kong is dealt with far more lightly than infringement of minor laws.

So-called "adopted daughters" have never been registered to this day, and by the law of Hong Kong it is legal to buy a girl for *bona fide* adoption.

Leading authorities are agreed that there is no *bona fide* adoption of girls, and yet no registration of this transaction is required.

We urge, therefore, that this registration should be enforced forthwith, as these transactions are merely a subterfuge for obtaining Mui Tsai as in the past, and obviously the present so-called registration of Mui Tsai is glaringly incomplete.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) H. L. HASLEWOOD.

Lt.-Comdr. (Retired).

P.S.—We trust you will be able to give full publicity to the above. In the proposed Slavery Centenary Celebrations we hope that equal emphasis will be laid on Slavery in British Possessions to that in other countries.—H.L. H.

A CANADIAN ADVENTURE—(Contd. from p. 92).

lesson." The nuns followed the example of the Jesuits, and without disestablishing the time-honoured customs of the Indians, managed to inculcate the fundamental truths of religion.

That the greater part of the Indians came to regard the French as friends is shown by the fact that, after a slight earthquake which succeeded in ravaging the country for miles around, they begged the colonists not to desert them by returning to France. The French invariably respected the claims of the native and the annals of Quebec are singularly free from the shameful acts which stain the annals of many other colonies.

Mère Marie's life was essentially a useful and fruitful one. Though never easy it must have been eminently satisfying. "She lived for thirty three years amid hard, primitive and deeply interesting conditions, and she preserved throughout a stable harmony with both man and Nature."

This is a sane and gracious study, worthy of its subject, whom it may well be hoped will one day figure on the Church's Calendar.

Mère Marie of the Ursulines. A Study in Adventure by Agnes Repplier, Litt.D.D. (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, Ltd., 1931. Price 7s. 6d.)

Maternal Mortality.

The annual conference of the Maternal Mortality Committee was held at Friends' House, Euston Road, on November 15th. Over a thousand representatives from local authorities, voluntary organisations and welfare centres, nursing associations and hospitals were present. St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, having consistently advocated the adoption of measures calculated to lower mortality, sent two representatives to the conference.

Lady Iveagh, M.P., presided. Sir Hilton Young, Minister of Health, told the delegates that the line of advance recommended by the Departmental Committee's report on Maternal Mortality could be summarised in four words: education, supervision, efficiency and co-ordination. The adoption of the recommendations enumerated in the report was the policy of the Ministry of Health.

The final report of the Departmental Committee on Maternal Mortality had seized upon the attention of all interested in the subject.

It showed that approximately one half of the deaths in the cases investigated could have been avoided. The facilities now offered are better than they were, but they have failed so far to lower the maternal mortality to any appreciable extent. Even at such time as the present the Ministry would advise local health authorities to give special consideration to the essential health services and provision for adequate maternity services should be placed in the forefront.

Miss Tuckwell asked for united effort in support of Sir Hilton Young's proposals.

Miss Sutherland, chief woman organiser of the Labour Party, spoke in favour of the recommendations of the report of the departmental committee, which supported the conference's demand for development of ante-natal care, skilled midwifery and the services of skilled obstetricians. The ill-effects of poverty and malnutrition were stressed by many speakers. Miss Richards, F.R.C.S., pointed out that ante-natal care must begin in infancy, as rickets in early childhood was responsible for the deformity of the pelvic bones which would give rise to serious difficulty during childbirth.

Members of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance will be in hearty agreement with every effort made to reduce the mortality of women during childbirth, and avoidable ill-health

caused by deficient skill or lack of care of women before, during or after labour.

A very different note was struck by a speaker advocating the teaching of contraceptive methods. As the Departmental Committee's report also recommends the teaching of contraceptive methods in special cases where further pregnancies would be likely seriously to impair the health of the mother, and goes further in suggesting sterilisation in these cases (there being "no entirely reliable appliances for the prevention of pregnancy"), the delegates of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance felt it was necessary to send up the following question to the Chairman of the Maternity Mortality Conference:

"Does voting for the resolution imply that we are in favour of advice and instruction in contraceptive methods being given at clinics set up by local authorities under the Public Health Acts?"

"If so, would it be possible to take the resolution in two parts, as we should not like to vote against the whole resolution, but would have to do so if birth control advice by public authorities were implied."

The question was duly read out and commented upon by the Chairman.

The Conference was informed from the chair that voting on the motion meant adoption of the motion as it stood, and that it did not mean voting in favour of teaching contraceptive methods. The motion was read out:

"This Conference reaffirms its belief in a comprehensive National Maternity Service, and welcomes the recommendations of the Departmental Committee's Final Report on Maternal Mortality which support this Conference's persistent demand for the development of ante-natal and post natal care, skilled midwifery and the services of skilled obstetricians.

"As no Local Authority is as yet using all its powers to safeguard mothers, and many only a very small percentage, and as in many cases reorganisation of the Maternity Services is needed to render them effective, this meeting pledges itself to unresting work till in each area these vital services are completely developed."

There remained some doubt in the minds of the representatives, even after this explanation, on the attitude taken by the Committee towards

giving advice and instruction on contraceptive methods by local authorities under the Public Health Acts, and they did not feel justified in supporting the motion and abstained from voting.

We would like a definite declaration of policy on this point before we feel that we can conscientiously support the Committee as we would wish to do, in its fight for the betterment of maternal services.

F. S.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES - (Contd. from p. 95).

In a recent number of "La Femme Polonaise," Dr. Jaduriga Zanowa had an important article on the Economic Crisis and the question of women's work in Poland. She dwells on the tendency existing in all countries to deprive women, especially married women, of their livelihood. She tells us that seeing this tendency to restrict women's liberty, the Association of University women sent up a petition to the President of the Council, Ministers, woman deputies and senators, signed by numerous feminist societies.

This Petition emphasised more especially the principle that if some workers must be sacrificed, it should be those who are the least skillful at their work; that to reduce the number of women workers only, causes profound disorganisation of family life; abstention from marriage; misery in families supported by women. All citizens, men and women, have the right to work and gain their bread. Concerted action is needed against this danger.

A. A. B.

TREASURER'S NOTE.

We are very glad to report that the proceeds from the sale of goods at the Bazaar amounted to £29. 3s. 1d. There are still a few things for sale at the office, so those who were unable to come to the Caxton Hall and have not yet bought all their Christmas presents, can help us by paying a visit to the office and making their purchases there.

We are most grateful to those who helped to sell, and to those who sent us gifts in money, and also to the following who sent gifts in kind: Misses L. de Alberti, Bain, Barry, Borton, Brady, Brandt, Mrs. Buckley, Misses Butler-Bowdon, Carroll, Mrs. Dixon Davies, Misses Dennis, Fraser Duff, Mrs. Ellingworth, Misses Fedden, E. FitzGerald, Mrs. Garrard, Misses Gerrits, C. M. Gordon, Grievson, Mrs. Hey Groves, Mrs. Harte, Mrs. Hand, Misses Hayes, Hynes, Jeffery, Keogh, Mrs. L. Mathews,

Misses Mellin, Meredith, Morson, O'Callaghan, Mrs. Hope Robson, Mother Sabina, F.C.J., Mrs. Saint George, Mrs. Shattock, Miss Sherwin, Mrs. Sowerby, Misses Stack, Spender, Messrs. Francis Tucker & Co. Ltd., Misses Verner, I. R. V. Welch, Witham.

May we beg those who have not sent their subscriptions to the Alliance or to the CATHOLIC CITIZEN for 1932, to do so at once, so that we may not have to carry them over into the next year, as this entails a great deal of trouble and unnecessary expense at the office.

P. M. BRANDT.

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LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Mrs. A. Stewart Mason, B.A., 33 Grosvenor Road, Birkenhead.

At our monthly meeting on November 21st at the Blue Coat Chambers, Mrs. Herbert Rathbone gave us a most stimulating address on the Women Police Movement. In the discussion which followed several members contributed personal experiences showing the need for women police, and it was decided to send a resolution and covering letter to the chief constable expressing the opinion of the meeting with regard to the importance of appointing some attested women police in Liverpool as soon as practicable.

OBITUARY.

We ask the prayers of our readers for the repose of the souls of Miss Sarah Burke, for more than thirty years headmistress of St. Catherine's Boys' School, Birmingham, and of Miss Marie Coleman, lately deceased.—R.I.P.

We also offer our deep sympathy to Mrs. Ellingworth on the death of her husband, and ask for prayers.—R.I.P.

**ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL ALLIANCE.**

NON-PARTY.

Office—55, Berners St., Oxford St., London, W.1.
Patron: Saint Joan of Arc. Colours: Blue, White & Gold
Organ—"The Catholic Citizen," 2d. monthly.

OBJECT.

To band together Catholics of both sexes, in order to secure the political, social and economic equality between men and women, and to further the work and usefulness of Catholic women as citizens.

MEMBERSHIP.

All Catholic women are eligible as Members, who approve the object and methods, and will pay a minimum annual subscription of 1s. Men are invited to join as Associates, on the same conditions, with the exception that they may not elect or be elected to the Executive.

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Orders now taken for Rich Christmas Cakes and Puddings, also delicious Fudge and other delightful Home Made Cakes, Jams, etc.

RESTAURANT

26 Palmer Street 26

3 Course Luncheon - 1/6

4 Course Dinner - 2/-

TEAS

HOME MADE CAKES

NO TIPS.