

# THE WOMAN'S LEADER

## AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

#### A Happy Christmas.

We would like to take this opportunity of broadcasting a Christmas greeting to our readers. We have reason to be grateful to many of them for help given during the past year—help which has sometimes taken the form of money, sometimes articles or other contributions to our columns, sometimes new subscriptions or useful suggestions, and, not least, sometimes kind and encouraging letters.

#### Direct Action.

The Prime Minister seems to have produced a sensation in the House by his announcement that the Government intended to shame the Local Housing Authorities of Scotland to a greater activity by itself building two thousand houses of various experimental types, including one thousand of the much-discussed "Weir" type. The move seems an ingenious one, which will put the Clydeside members in somewhat of a dilemma. As clamorous advocates of energetic housing, and also of direct action, they can scarcely denounce the Government's intention. On the other hand, the "Weir" model is the object of their special detestation, which would possibly be extended to any type of house which aimed at circumventing the building trades by employing more labour. At any rate it will be difficult to accuse the Government of apathy.

#### A Victory for Equality in the Irish Free State.

Readers of the WOMAN'S LEADER will be aware of the attempt made by the Government of the Irish Free State to introduce the principle of sex discrimination into the Civil Service. As already recorded, the Bill only passed its second reading in the Dail by a majority of five. The Minister of Finance, who was in charge of the Bill, did his best to defend the measure. He described as baseless the suggestion that the Bill was meant to exclude women from the Civil Service, but claimed that the Commissioners must have power to say that women should not receive jobs for which they were not physically fit. All efforts to induce the Minister to schedule such jobs were fruitless. The Irish Women Citizens' Association therefore was forced to continue the agitation. Members of the Senate were circularized, and a large number of personal letters were sent. The result of all this work—backed by the power of the vote—was seen in the division on the second reading of the Bill in the Senate on Thursday night last. To quote the *Irish Times*: "Yesterday, for the first time since the establishment of the Free State, a Government Bill was rejected by the Senate. Under the Constitution, the Senate is empowered to hold up a Bill for nine months. No further

steps can therefore be taken till this time has elapsed. At the end of that time, the Bill will pass automatically into law, but the Senate will have the power to demand a referendum and to suspend the operation of the measure for another period of ninety days, while the popular verdict is being sought. We are convinced public opinion will endorse the action of the Senate. The right of persons of both sexes to compete for examinations in the Civil Service is a natural corollary of the sex equality which is enshrined in the Constitution. . . . It is to be hoped that during the interval which must elapse the Government will recognize that the Bill is open to objection, and will make the necessary amendments." One speaker in the Senate put his finger on the right spot when he declared he would vote against the Bill because it embodied the principle of sex discrimination. After the experience in the Dail, where the one woman member who has taken her seat voted for the Bill, it was satisfactory to find that of the four women Senators, two spoke and voted against the Bill, one was absent, and only the fourth voted in favour of the measure. There seems to be safety in numbers. Meanwhile the Irish Women Citizens' Association is preparing for whatever may be the outcome of this very interesting situation.

#### Miners and Family Allowances.

The Coal Commission last week heard evidence from Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Miss Eleanor Rathbone, as representatives of the Family Endowment Society. Lord Balfour explained that the Society, as a body representing all shades of opinion, had no collective view as to the share of the product of the industry which should go to the wage-earners. Their aim was only to show that whatever that share might be it would produce more well-being if part of it was spent on Family Allowances. This contention was borne out by Miss Rathbone's evidence, which, taking the 1925 miners' wage bill as the basis of discussion, showed that its present distribution must have had the effect of leaving 32.9 of miners' households, covering 66.5 of the children, below the standard of life shown by Mr. Rowntree as necessary for the satisfaction of "human needs"; 4.6 per cent. of the households, including 17.7 per cent. of the children, below even his "poverty level", and 12 per cent. of the households, including 37.9 of the children, below a standard mid-way between the two others which she called "mean" level. If, however, a "children's fund" were formed by cutting 5s. 10d. off the wages of every male worker over sixteen, and an allowance of 5s. 7d. were paid for each child, the result would be to place every miner, miner's wife, and miner's child in the industry above "mean" level, while 66.1 per cent. of the households and of the children would be above human needs level. She further showed that, so far from the redistribution interfering with the principle that those performing skilled or dangerous work should be able to enjoy a higher standard of life than others, it actually facilitated that principle. Every grade of labour would receive exactly the sum in excess of the grade below it as at present. But whereas those skilled men who have family responsibilities are now often actually worse off than single unskilled men, under the new arrangement such men would enjoy the full value of their higher skill. She suggested, however, that the difficulty of introducing a scheme which involved a wage cut might be considerably reduced if the Government—(following the precedent set in the case of unemployment insurance, when a beginning was made with a few trades specially needing help)—would meet part of the cost by a subsidy.

#### "Ears have they but . . ."

Unfortunately the miners' representatives seemed to be in no mood to consider any remedy for their present discontents



other than their own chosen remedy of nationalization. One might almost suppose from their attitude that they dreaded anything which by alleviating the sufferings of miners' families might weaken the zeal of their members for militant trade unionism. There is reason, however, to doubt whether in this they truly represent the opinion either of the rank and file or of some of their leaders. Mr. Frank Hodges' own evidence before the Commission admitted the satisfactory working of the Family Allowance system abroad and showed at least an open mind as to its application in this country. Mr. William Straker, the much respected secretary of the Northumberland Miners' Federation, has written favourably of the system and commended it to the study of his fellow workers. Thanks perhaps partly to their dangerous calling and need for self-reliance, many miners are not only hard-headed thinkers but have a touch of idealism and imagination about them which makes them responsive to ideas which appeal to those qualities. The interest and even enthusiasm with which speakers on Family Endowment have been received by many audiences of miners gives reason to believe that they are not fairly represented in this respect by the two truculent gentlemen who are their chief spokesmen at the Coal Commission.

#### Women and the Poor Law.

A correspondent writes that at the recent Parish Council election in Glasgow the number of women returned was increased from five to eight, which out of a Council of thirty-one is distinctly promising. We are pleased to hear this. As we have already pointed out, one of the most anxious features of the proposals for Poor Law reform is the danger of losing the services of women who are better represented throughout the country on Poor Law authorities than on other local governing bodies.

#### Teachers in Council.

The annual conference of the National Union of Teachers meets this year in Bristol. The agenda promises an interesting bill of fare. Resolutions on more definitely educational subjects include teaching of domestic subjects, training of teachers, size of classes, the school leaving age, continued education, curricula, central schools, physical training for girls equally with boys, continued education, refresher courses. But the women teachers do not confine themselves to educational subjects in the narrow sense of the term. The conference will call on the Government to take immediate steps to extend the franchise to women on the same terms as men and such subjects as equal pay and married women teachers will be dealt with in addition to many matters which concern the delegates as teachers and as citizens. We shall probably hear a good deal about the offending circular at this and at other educational Christmas conferences.

#### Sexual Offences and Young Persons.

As we go to press we learn that the eagerly awaited Report of the Departmental Committee on Sexual Offences Against Young Persons has been issued. It will be remembered that this Committee was appointed in July, 1924, to take evidence and to collect information as to the prevalence of sexual offences against young persons. Among the members of the Committee were Mrs. Rackham, Miss Martineau, and Miss E. H. Kelly. The recommendations are summed up under the headings: Prevalence of Offences; Alterations in the Law and in the Jurisdiction of the Courts; the Offender; Provisions for Child Welfare, and Preventive Measures. We have no time to make a close examination of the Report, but our first impression is that the recommendations are valuable and far-reaching. That which will be considered most contentious in some quarters is the raising of the age of consent to 17 for girls, and certain members of the Commission have published a memorandum dissenting from it. We understand that the evidence on which the Committee based its Report is not to be published. We much deplore this withholding of important information from the public, and recognize that such star-chamber methods detract considerably from the usefulness of a Departmental Committee.

#### The Humane Killer.

Even those who are not convinced vegetarians must wish to turn their thoughts away from the thought of the amount of slaughtering that is necessary to cover our tables at this holiday

season. In a leading article in *The Times* last week, disquieting figures quoted by the Duchess of Hamilton from the Corporation of London's report on methods of slaughter are given which should be carefully studied. We are unwilling to quote them in all their horror in a Christmas Day number, but they are horribly convincing with regard to the cruelty of the present method of killing and to the success of the humane killer. The foundation stone of a model abattoir was laid this week at Letchworth by the Duchess. The building will belong to the Animal Defence Society, and will be used to demonstrate methods of humane slaughter. It will be on an extensive scale, but it is hoped that it will be finished in about nine months. During the ceremony Miss Lind-Af-Hageby read a warm letter of approval from the Archbishop of Canterbury, and announced the receipt of a letter containing a cheque for £1,000. This experiment will be followed with interest by all housekeepers in the interests of greater cleanliness in the treatment of meat, as well as the greater humanity to dumb beasts.

#### A Christmas Present to Ourselves.

We have on previous occasions asked our friends and subscribers to remember us at Christmas by sending us at least one new subscriber for 1926. If every one who believes in our efforts did this we should indeed have lighter hearts at this season. We suggest if it is not easy at once to secure a new subscriber, that two copies of the paper only cost 2½d. post free, and that you might pass on your copy each week to a young social worker or young teacher of your acquaintance, or send it abroad to a friend who will welcome news of women's work at home. Begin with the special number for the 1st of January. We are naturally biased, but we mean what we say when we suggest that no woman voter who is really interested in the affairs of the day can afford to be without this abstract of the year's events.

#### Inquiries.

*Widows' Pensions.*—A. M. asks: "Can you tell me if the following woman is eligible for a widow's pension? Age 62. For ten years she has paid into the Oddfellows. She has been a widow for twenty years and struggles to support herself. She has no children living at home." Answer: No woman now a widow is eligible for a pension unless she has a child under the age of 14½. For details as to eligibility of widows see leaflet issued by the Post Office.

#### Questions in Parliament.

TEMPORARY WOMEN EMPLOYÉES IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.—Mr. Briant asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (1) whether he would be prepared to allocate future vacancies in the Service to existing temporary women staff, as well as to young girls from outside the Service; and whether he is aware that at the moment the women who have been temporarily employed for more than a decade have no opportunities whatever of becoming permanent employées, and are liable to dismissal by young girls at any moment. (2) Whether he will endeavour to mitigate the unemployment among Government staffs by arranging that young girls are not brought into the Service on to work now being satisfactorily performed by adult women? M. R. McNeill: The Hon. Member would appear to be imperfectly informed as to the facts of the case. Liberal opportunities have been given since 1920 to women temporarily employed in the Civil Service to qualify for permanent appointment to women's posts and a large number of such appointments have been and are being made from their ranks. I do not consider that it would be in the public interest that recruitment by open competition should be suspended. I may add that, as stated, in my reply on the 15th December to the Hon. Member for Bow and Bromley (Mr. Lansbury) I am now considering representations which have been made to me on the general question of providing a greater measure of permanent employment for women temporarily employed.

*POLICY.*—The sole policy of THE WOMAN'S LEADER is to advocate a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women. So far as space permits, however, it will offer an impartial platform for topics not directly included in the objects of the women's movement but of special interest to women. Articles on these subjects will always be signed, at least by initials or a pseudonym, and for the opinions expressed in them the Editor accepts no responsibility.

## PEACE AND GOODWILL.

We constantly hear that Christmas is the children's festival. For many people it is too often a time of extra work and saddened by associations of the past. And yet there is something about Christmas even for those who do not observe it as a sacred and joyous anniversary that winds itself around one's heart. The most careworn, the saddest, the least sentimental and most magic-proof of mortals can hardly fail to yield to its spell. We heard an unconscious tribute to the Christmas spirit in a remote Lancashire mining town the other day: we were told that the public-houses became emptier as Christmas approached. Money is wanted for Christmas fare and gifts; the children must have their good time.

Most of us will never forget the dark Christmas seasons during the war. The glamour and joy seemed to have departed; it was difficult to hold fast to the sacred associations of the day. However bravely we tried, it seemed to savour of hypocrisy to sing "Peace on earth, good will to men" when the nations of the world were at death grips. But to-day the words ring out with something of their former music. The successful negotiations at Locarno, culminating in the celebrations at the Foreign Office early this month when representatives of the five nations affected signed the treaties, will in themselves make 1925 a "happy Christmas" for those who long for war to cease. The withdrawal of the troops from the occupied areas in Germany ends a dark chapter of history and inaugurates a new and more hopeful prospect of brotherhood and unity among the great European States than anything we have experienced since we were forced to realize that the Peace of Versailles meant "Peace with a vengeance." What 1925 has begun we look to 1926 to carry on. Germany will enter the League of Nations. The next step will be the Disarmament Conference in which the United States will take a cordial part—a conference that will not end in talk. The reasons that have led to past abortive conferences have been swept away, and there

are good hopes that the coming year will show some practical realization.

But even the spell of Christmas must not carry us too far from human realities. In writing of Locarno a few weeks ago we pointed out that in time to come the spirit of Locarno may be obscured by new rivalries and fears and frictions. But, as we said, we must not underrate the importance of the "letter" nor the dependence in this life of man's spirit on his hand and brain. "The complex tangle of legal checks and balances embodied in these treaties gives us a body of bone and brawn in which the spirit of confidence and good will may dwell, and to which it may return after the incursions into nothingness to which the individual and collective spirit is at all times liable."

If we come nearer home, we find another concrete expression of peace and goodwill in the conclusion of the Irish agreement. If the long drawn-out tragedy of the Anglo-Irish relations be brought to an end, this in itself gives cause for Christmas thanksgiving. We can hold our heads higher in the peace councils of the world when at last we have settled our own dissensions.

When we turn to internal affairs the prospect is less cheerful; it almost looks as if we will reach peace abroad before we are in sight of it at home. War and rumours of wars seem to be receding, but strikes and rumours of strikes beset us as thickly as ever. Shall we get through 1926 without a serious dispute in coal mining and possibly other industries? We do not despair, but we wonder. But once again "If hopes be dupes, fears may be liars"; we believe that both hope and fear have certain creative qualities, one for good and the other for evil. In some way they mysteriously affect the objects of our desire. From peace and good will springs the spirit of hope, and hope is the best soil for the growth of better relations between man and man. Whatever else Christmas may bring to us this year in the way of personal happiness or the reverse, it must at least bring some hope that the "Locarno spirit" may find its way into the industrial difficulties which looms so large at the present time.

## EDUCATION IN THE LIMELIGHT.

The now famous Circular 1,371 has at least had the result that educational methods and problems in this country have suddenly emerged from an obscure background to the front of the stage in the drama of public affairs. Last week the President of the Board of Education was literally besieged by questions in the House and expressions of protestation poured like a flood into Whitehall. The discussion of the subject introduced as a motion by Earl de la Warr in the House of Lords was disappointing as a debate. The best speeches against the offending document came from Lord Astor and Lord Gainsford, who as a former Minister of Education, has inside knowledge, and were closely reasoned and, in our opinion, convincing, while the defence put up by Lord Somers was singularly weak. In the House of Commons the circular was riddled by speeches on both sides of the House, and though we think they failed to prove their case, its defendants, especially the Minister himself and his able colleague, the Duchess of Atholl, at least put up a vigorous fight. Lady Astor, Sir Robert Newman, and Mr. Duff Gordon opposed from the Government benches, and a torrent of speeches poured from the opposite side of the House, of which that of Mr. Fisher also a former Minister of Education, was the most interesting. In both Houses the debate turned largely on the technical question of the substitution of the fixed grant for the present system of percentage grants based on expenditure. Those of our readers who, like ourselves, are not experts in public education, may not fully understand what this change involves. Briefly, it means that at present Local Education Authorities receive back from the National Exchequer a sum equal to that which they themselves expend. We do not feel competent to discuss the arguments for and against the percentage system, and we propose to deal with both sides of this subject on its merits in a forthcoming issue as a "burning question." We propose, however, to endeavour to help ourselves and our readers to follow the controversy better by extracting a few facts from the clamour of many voices raised in a protest which to our thinking have sometimes been obscured by exaggeration and sentimentality. In the first place we are told that the Government believes the abandonment of the percentage system to be in the best interests of administrative policy, quite apart from the

question of economy. Nevertheless the damaging fact remains that the proposals would reduce the Education grant to an amount considerably lower than that paid on the percentage system last year. This would have the immediate effect of holding up important and, in some cases, overdue schemes of development, to which local authorities are committed all over the country. Already, in fact, we hear of projected improvements initiated at the request of the Board of Education which have come to a standstill. If the abandonment of the percentage system puts the brake on the necessary growth of Education services, surely it stands condemned?

Secondly, the important point emerges that a Committee which has never reported, with Lord Meston as chairman, was set up in 1922, on the recommendation of the Geddes Committee "to inquire into the financial relations between the central Government and the local authorities." Lord Eustace Percy recently informed the House of Commons that evidence given before this Committee included an expression of opinion from the Board of Education against any change in the system of grants. The percentage system was introduced in 1917, devised, we are told, by the late Sir Robert Morant, one of the wisest and ablest officials who have ever taken part in the administration of education, and in view of the strong feeling existing in educational circles with regard to its efficiency it is surely unthinkable that any reversal should take place before Lord Meston's Committee presents its report for the guidance of Parliament.

The opposition to the circular may be summed up under three headings: (a) the inevitable check to educational development, (b) the results on the welfare of children under five and on teachers in training, (c) the disturbing effect of a change in policy. It is hardly necessary here to enlarge on these, except to remind our readers that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education both before and since the last General Election promised a policy of continuity, without which no progress is possible.

Since the debates in the House of Commons last week, Lord Eustace has met representatives of the County Councils' Association, the Association of Education Committees, and of Municipal Corporations, and something in the nature of a truce has been



gained, though not without regrettable conditions. These bodies have agreed to recommend to their respective associations the careful revision of estimates in view of the need for economy if the Board will continue to pay grants on the present basis for the year 1926-7. On such terms, they will co-operate with the Board in an investigation into the grant system. The President has undertaken to consider the proposal for a year's grace, but holds out for a system of fixed grants for the period 1927-30.

Clearly women voters as the national custodians of the welfare of children, must bestir themselves on this matter, not for the purpose of passing rhetorical and sentimental resolutions, but in order to understand the principles that are at stake. It is not necessary to apply to London for speakers from Headquarter Societies. Every town can provide experts in education who will explain the technicalities of the proposals with lucidity and fair play. We believe that Lord Eustace cannot hold out against the practically unanimous condemnation entirely irrespective of party politics, of those who give their lives to the work of education. If this be endorsed by the equally unanimous condemnation of women voters of all parties, Circular 1,371 will soon be withdrawn and remembered only as a bad dream.

LINES TRANSLATED FROM "NAIRDAD," A MIRACLE PLAY,  
BY GREGORIO AND MARIA MARTINEZ SIERRA.

Bernarda, a rag-picker, speaks as if in a trance or ecstasy:—

"To-day we sing glad tidings,  
All know the lay,  
But none heeds the message  
Of Christmas Day.

Mary walked among us  
(None could see),  
Bearing little Jesus,  
(None knew it was He).

She called to us to open,  
(None replied).  
The Child, that wintry midnight,  
Wailed and cried.

"Mother, how cold I am!"  
—'Tis the snow and frost.  
"Tis that they heed Me not  
When I seek the lost."

"My child, they are all sleeping."  
"Nay, sinning," said Jesus, weeping.

A Voice came floating downward,  
Heard from far away,  
All in the night so frosty,  
Clear rang the lay.

"To-day we sing glad tidings"  
The rhyme was known of old,  
And all had ears to hearken,  
Yet none the meaning told.

"Bernarda! Bernarda!"  
"Love, what is Thy will?"  
"I stand upon thy threshold  
Trembling in the chill."

"Lord, I have no firing,  
Neither wood nor coal."  
"Kindle but the furnace  
Of thy heart and soul."

"Only that I ask for."  
"Lord, that hast Thou—all—  
Till now I never kindled it  
Waiting for Thy call."

F. DE G. M.

WHAT THE PUBLIC WANTS.

A "best seller," however worthless it may appear to outward view, is always deserving of attention, because the mere fact that it "best sells" is indicative of some significant (though not necessarily praiseworthy) content. And here before us, lie two recently published and undisputed "best sellers": *One Increasing Purpose*, by A. S. M. Hutchinson (Hodder and Stoughton, 7s. 6d.), and *A Man Under Authority*, by Ethel M. Dell (Cassell, 7s. 6d.). These two books do not, it may interest our readers to learn, "best sell" over precisely the same area. They appeal to different, though doubtless overlapping, publics. An acquaintance of ours, who is behind the scenes in these matters (he enjoys a position of responsibility in the firm of W. H. Smith), assured us that the purchasers of *One Increasing Purpose* are, on the whole, a more—well, a more *sober* lot than those who patronize Ethel M. Dell. We suggested to him that the word he was feeling after was not "sober," but rather "high-brow." He acquiesced and admitted the correction.

And so to our problem: the essential conditions of best selling. In Ethel M. Dell's recent work they are not far to seek. First and foremost there is its immense pre-occupation with the human affection called Love. In this last, as in all her books, Miss Dell describes in glowing and highly abstracted terms, an experience which very large numbers of her readers have at one time or another shared, but which each individual one of them is inclined to consider as peculiar in its intensity to himself or herself in intimate company with Miss Dell's characters. But this is not enough of course for "best selling." Were it so, then how fortunate would be the lot of those of us who can, howsoever clumsily, wield a pen. Miss Dell, in addition to having an understanding human heart, is a very fine technician. She is a crafts-woman of the calibre of Miss Vesta Tilley, who having—so to speak—standardized her art at a given level, proceeds without deviating from that level to attain on it the highest possible pitch of mastery and facility, engendering at the same time a self-confidence which evokes instant response in her watching, listening or (in the present case) reading public. All these qualities emerge in *A Man Under Authority* with a clarity which its author has not, since the publication of *The Way of an Eagle* surpassed. The story is exciting, the emotions poignant, and the characterization . . . well, well, doubtless there are those who will say that her characters are not like real characters. To which we reply that no more are the characters in the Russian Ballet or the "Beggar's Opera." Realism is not the only form of artistic expression.

But when we turn from Ethel M. Dell to Mr. A. S. M. Hutchinson our bewilderment thickens. What is the magic of it? Its story is not particularly exciting: the story of a man who remakes his life in response to an unfolding spiritual vision. The thing has been far better done by the late Monsignor R. H. Benson. Its English, moreover, is so villainous, so self-consciously affected, so topsy-turvy constructed, as to baffle the ingenuity of the seeker after sense. Why do hundreds of thousands of British citizens, usually unappreciative of mental exercise, torture the muscles of their brains in the attempt to unravel, through 380 pages of tangled phraseology, the things that Mr. A. S. M. Hutchinson is trying to tell them? It is possible, of course, that this very obscurity has a charm of its own. We have always held for instance that the mental sway which Karl Marx exerts over a section of the world's proletariat is intensified by the incomprehensibility of his semi-mathematical terminology, accompanied by the belief that anything so difficult to understand must be frightfully clever. But no—the real reason is not far to seek. Having successfully exploited anti-feminism, our author has turned to plough a wider and a deeper furrow. He is exploiting religion. And because mankind, for all its scepticism and waywardness, is incurably religious (is not this indeed "the sign of the Prophet Jonah?"), Mr. A. S. M. Hutchinson's exploitation, with a certain psychological aptitude undereath its shoddy crudity, hits the mark. Men who are deterred by mental lassitude, conventional prejudice, and a very natural distaste for seventeenth century English from reading the New Testament, are enabled by Mr. A. S. M. Hutchinson to quench their thirst at the sugary fount of contemporary fiction. It is as well, perhaps, that such a fount should be available. For truth and beauty are not the only media of spiritual apprehension.

But there is one feature of Mr. Hutchinson's latest "best seller" which we cannot forbear to castigate. Into his story he introduces himself in the thin disguise of Mr. B. C. D. Ash, the

famous, yet modest, novelist, beloved of the "common people," and enviously hated (doubtless with good cause) by the reviewers. Ash is a man of simple tastes for all his greatness, and of retiring habits. He longs for peace and privacy and personal obscurity while the world relentlessly pursues him. Sometimes in search of such obscurity he wanders off into the country, and yet by some freak of chance (or is it by some inevitable sublimation of a subconscious wish?) his wanderings end in a countryside which is at the same time the holiday resort of—let us say, Lord Leverhulme and Mr. Gordon Selfridge, with both of whom Mr. Ash is unfortunately on calling terms. Now could a man who was really desirous of obscurity choose a worse method of obtaining it. Indeed, we are inclined to suspect that Mr. Ash "doth protest too much," and that his intense desire to escape the ministrations of an admiring public is only one among many personal affectations. At any rate, if he really does desire privacy we can offer him the sure means of obtaining it: Let him consult his more eminent contemporary, Miss E. M. Dell. She knows how to keep herself to herself; never was a great novelist less accessible to the public gaze. And being a woman of deep feeling and quick sympathy (or so her works proclaim her), she will doubtless tell him how to be inaccessible though eminent.

Our readers may have surmised from the foregoing, that we ourselves adhere to that section of the reading public—less sober, or lower-browed, however they may please to distinguish it—which vastly prefers the literature of Miss Ethel M. Dell to that of Mr. A. S. M. Hutchinson. Such is indeed the case.

M. D. S.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC.<sup>1</sup>

By A. M. HENDERSON, Organist to the University of Glasgow.

The simplicity, beauty and humility of the circumstances surrounding the Nativity have produced numberless masterpieces in verse and song, from the simplest carol to Handel's "Messiah" and the "Christmas Oratorio" of Bach. The glorious outburst, "Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in Terra Pax," inspired Bach and Handel to their highest achievement, leaving us with works of imperishable beauty and splendour. It is remarkable how these two wonderful men, born in the same year, 1685, and inspired by the same theme, should in these two masterpieces have produced works so different in nature and style.

Bach, the genius of complexity, delighting in adding part to part, in polyphonic style, weaving a pattern of compelling beauty, while Handel, the genius of simplicity, with his broad diatonic effects, commands our attention and homage by the sheer boldness, directness and sublimity of his strokes.

Handel's directness and simplicity, combined with his great power, procured him ready appreciation, while Bach's complexity and polyphony has had to wait a century and a half for general acceptance, and even now can hardly be said to have fully attained it. Their paths in life were also very different. Handel moved in Court circles, and was known in all the great art centres of Europe, while Bach lived a quiet domestic life, and rarely moved outside a little part of Thuringia and Saxony.

So far, I have mentioned only two works, masterpieces though they be, inspired by the theme of the Nativity. But think of the hundreds of carols, from the thirteenth century to our own time, of the many choral masterpieces of "a cappella" type in the sixteenth century, from the pens of masters like Palestrina in Italy, Vittoria in Spain, Orlando di Lasso in the Netherlands, and the great Elizabethans in this country: Tallis, Byrd, Farrant, Orlando Gibbons, Weelkes and others. Henry Purcell bridges the time between the Elizabethans and the commanding figures of Bach and Handel while in our own time and country some of the most personal and characteristic work of men like Holst, Vaughan Williams, Somervell, Stanford, Bax, Francis George Scott and others is inspired by the Christmas ideal. The pastoral of the shepherds abiding in the fields has found new expression not only in well-known examples like the beautiful and pictorial Pastoral Symphony of Handel and the Pastoral in Bach's "Christmas Oratorio," but in a still wider and fuller artistic form in such tone poems as the Pastoral Sonata and Pastoral Symphony of Beethoven. The two great choral classics of Christmas are, of course, Handel's "Messiah" and Bach's "Christmas Oratorio."

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from an article in the *British Weekly*, 10th Dec., by kind permission of the Editor.

The "Messiah" was written when the composer had reached the age of fifty-six, and while he was striving with poor health, but with splendid courage (like Sir Walter Scott) to overcome the financial difficulties caused by a series of unfortunate operatic enterprises.

The work was undertaken, in the first case, in view of a visit to Dublin, by invitation of the Viceroy, and in order, as Handel states in one of his letters, "to offer to the Irish, that generous and polite nation, something new." We find in the autograph score, of which I have a facsimile before me as I write, that it was commenced on August 22, 1741. The first part was finished on the 28th, the second part on September 6th, and the whole on the 14th, twenty-four days in all. Surely an amazing record!

Handel left London in November and proceeded as far as Chester, where it was customary to wait until favourable weather would permit a safe departure by packet-boat from Parkgate. After considerable delay, Handel arrived in Dublin on November 18th, 1741, and the "Messiah" was heard for the first time on April 13th, 1742, announced as "Mr. Handel's new grand sacred oratorio." So great was the demand for tickets that ladies and gentlemen were invited to come "without hoops and swords" to increase the seating accommodation. The circumstance that the "Messiah" was the last work Handel conducted also invests it with special interest. It was at Covent Garden on April 6th, 1759, and after returning home "he was seized with a mortal exhaustion" from which he never recovered.

Of Bach's "Christmas Oratorio" there is much less of incident to relate. This work, composed in 1734, is really a series of six Church Cantatas, or extended anthems, to be sung during the service on six successive days at Christmas-time. The second part opens with a beautiful pastoral, not unlike the Pastoral Symphony in the "Messiah," but longer and more fully developed and orchestrated.

Of other Christmas music I must write very briefly. The three following short choral works, while excellent, are graded from easy to difficult, and represent entirely contrasted schools of composition. "Christmas Eve," by the Danish composer Gade (Novello), "The New-born King," by Hugh Blair (Bayley and Ferguson), and the delightful but difficult "Fantasia on Christmas Carols," by Vaughan Williams (Stainer and Bell).

Of the many beautiful old carols, none is more delightful and characteristic than those of "modal" quality. All of the following, at least, should be in the repertoire of every choir:—"God rest ye, merry gentlemen"; "The First Nowell"; "A Virgin Unspotted"; "Good Christian men rejoice"; "The Holly and the Ivy". Of modern carols, I know of none more beautiful and original than the "Four Carols" by Gustav Holst (Bayley and Ferguson). These have the quality of genius, and deserve to be known by every choir in the land.

WOMEN IN 1925.

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## A CHRISTMAS APPEAL.

We saw recently an appeal to children to make other less fortunately placed children happy at Christmas by laying aside for their use clothes and toys they did not want any longer. We confess that this suggestion does not appeal to us. It suggests, perhaps unfairly, piles of untidy books with missing pages, more than "slightly soiled" toys that have lost some of their component parts, garments somewhat faded, shrunken, and ill-shaped. It is too late to make counter suggestions and we imagine that most of those who read our all too serious pages even on Christmas Day have not forgotten generous offerings to those for whom Christmas may, by force of circumstances, be shorn of its outward symbols of comfort and gladness. But it is not too late to think of those whose need is not confined to Christmas. In another column we speak of our own hopes at this season of the year for a new spirit of peace and unity in post-war Europe. But the after-effects of the war are still to be found in cold, hunger, and disease. We hope that in every happy home on Christmas Day, 1925, a thank-offering will be offered for the renewed hopes which the year has brought us. In this connexion we call the very special attention of our readers to the letters we print below from Lord Cecil and the Duke of Atholl on behalf of the work of love and pity which is being carried on in different parts of Greece, Budapest, Belgrade, and in other distressed areas.

Subscriptions sent to the office of this paper will be forwarded, or they may be sent direct to *His Grace the Duke of Atholl, 84 Ealon Place, London, S.W. 1.* Gifts of clothing must be sent direct to the warehouse of the *Save the Children Fund, c/o Messrs. Davies, Turner & Co., Short's Gardens, Drury Lane, London, W.C. 2.*

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, in commending the Appeal of the Save the Children Fund to former subscribers to the Imperial War Relief Fund (of which he was President), writes:—

"The Imperial War Relief Fund has now brought its labours to a conclusion, not because the need for international relief has come to an end, but because the Council feels that the period of great emergency is over, and that relief work in Europe and Asia should now be accomplished by Societies of a more permanent nature.

"I venture to ask you, therefore, as a subscriber to the Imperial War Relief Fund, to consider very seriously the Christmas appeal of the Save the Children Fund, who now, in Greece especially, are carrying on the work in which, during its later existence, it was the privilege of the Imperial War Relief Fund to help them.

"The generosity of Imperial War Relief Fund subscribers during the past five years has been so large and unflinching that I should not like to think that their flow of charity should be stopped through any lack of outlet when the Fund, with whom we have worked so successfully during the last few years, is in existence and in need of all possible help."

The Duke of Atholl writes:—

"I venture once more to address you on behalf of the work of the Save the Children Fund.

"I do not think anyone can read, unmoved, the appeal of Sir Philip Gibbs which I enclose.<sup>1</sup> It is based on an almost unrivalled knowledge of conditions in post-war Europe, and it brings home only too poignantly the still desperate plight of many thousands of refugee children in Greece and elsewhere, whom League of Nations Commissions are powerless to relieve, and who, even as I write, are perishing of cold and hunger. His appeal is reinforced by the testimony of our devoted workers on the spot, who in various ways and with all too small resources, are striving their utmost to alleviate their sufferings.

"There are other activities of the S.C.F. for which I would also beg your sympathy and support. There are the work-schools in Budapest, Dr. Macphail's children's hospital in Belgrade, the Armenian orphans in Greece and Erivan, the children of Russian refugees in several countries, and various children's institutions elsewhere, which still urgently need our help.

"Last, but not least, there are the claims of our own country, such as feeding centres in distressed areas, artificial light clinics, and other efforts for British children. For these, I would put in a special plea. Therefore, with confidence, I ask you whether for this or that country, or for the general work of the Fund, to send me, at this season, whatever help you can afford."

<sup>1</sup> Copies of the appeal may be had on application at the office of the Save the Children Fund, 26 Gordon Street, W.C. 1.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT MATTERS.

BY BERTHA MASON.

## POSTPONEMENT OF POOR LAW REFORM.

Since we last wrote a material change has taken place in the situation.

On 9th December Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Minister of Health, in an address to the members of the Conservative Agricultural Committee, announced that the Bill which will embody the Government proposals for Poor Law reform is *not* to be passed into law next year. The most, he stated, that could be done is to present a Bill which might be formally read a first time next Session with a view to its being perhaps proceeded with in 1927. An official announcement issued after the meeting stated that "Mr. Chamberlain made a very full survey of the question of Poor Law reform as affecting rural areas and how it might be correlated with unemployment insurance. He also intimated that the feeling which had got abroad that a Bill was to be passed next Session to deal with Poor Law reform was erroneous. At present *all* he was seeking was the opinion of those interested in the subject with a view, possibly, of embodying the results in a tentative Bill which, although it might be formally introduced late next year, would only serve as a basis for further discussion between then and the succeeding Session."

The original intention of the Ministry of Health was, of course, to get the Bill through all its stages next year, and draft proposals, of which we gave a summary in our article of 11th December, were circulated to the Association of Municipal Corporations and the County Councils' Association, who were asked to give their views thereon. The proposals were subjected to much criticism, and the County Councils' Association decided that the proposals must be submitted to the individual councils who were asked to forward their views to the Association by the middle of next February. For this reason all hope vanished of framing a Bill for introduction early next Session, and it was decided that any measure must be deferred until the following year "in view of the criticism which it is bound to evoke." Personally, we are of opinion that the decision to postpone is a wise decision. It is admitted on all hands that reform of some kind is essential. The *machinery* of the Poor Law, like every other machinery, needs to be altered and amended in accordance with the times, but it is a question whether the proposals of Mr. Chamberlain will achieve that object. At all events they require most careful and searching consideration and until there has been time for this, legislation should not be rushed. Another advantage in postponement is that the Government will shortly have before them the reports of the five Commissions and Committees now inquiring into various aspects of Local Government and Public Assistance. The reports of these bodies must have important bearings upon questions of Poor Law reform and should be of material assistance to the Government in considering proposals on the wider question.

## WHAT IS A COUNTY BOROUGH?

Mr. Neville Chamberlain (Minister of Health), in reply to a question in the House of Commons on 26th November, stated that he proposed to introduce legislation to give effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Local Government (Constitution and Extension of county boroughs).

Hence the question, what is a county borough?

A county borough differs from a non-county borough in that there are certain services which a non-county borough does not provide for itself but which are under the control of the county council in which the borough is situated. For instance, a non-county borough is responsible for its own elementary education, but higher education, maintenance of main roads and bridges, provision for lunatics and the mentally deficient, and for persons suffering from tubercular and other diseases, are controlled by the county council. Put briefly, a *county* borough is a borough practically independent of the county council of the county in which it is situated. It is the most complete local government unit in the county in that it possesses almost all the powers of a county council in addition to those of a sanitary authority. At present, a non-county borough with a population of not less than 50,000 may apply to the Ministry of Health to be created a county borough.

One of the problems before the Royal Commission was whether the figures of 50,000 should be retained. The recommendation is that, as since 1888 (when county boroughs were created) there has been an increase of population and many more services have

been imposed on county boroughs, the figures of 50,000 shall be increased to 75,000.

This recommendation has a special interest for many boroughs, notably Nottingham, Mansfield, and Doncaster, especially for the last-named city, whose promotion to the status of a county borough had already been confirmed by the House of Commons but was hung up by the Lords pending the decision on this point of the Commission.

## NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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## ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING, 24th to 27th FEBRUARY.

Reserved seats for the mass meeting on Equal Franchise, which is to be held in the Central Hall, Westminster, on 26th February, may be had from the office, 15 Dean's Yard, S.W. 1, price 2s. 6d., 1s., and 6d. Blocks of seats in the body of the hall will be reserved for Societies sending over six members, at 1s. each. We hope that Societies will take advantage of this offer.

## COUNCIL MEETING: VISITOR'S TICKETS

Visitor's tickets for the Council Meeting may be had on application to Headquarters, price 2s. 6d. for the whole time, or 6d. per single session.

## ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE.

An interesting experiment, which might profitably be repeated by others of our Societies, took the form of a "Round Table Conference," organized by the Reigate and Redhill S.E.C. on Tuesday, 8th December.

The three subjects to be considered were Equal Franchise, Widows' Pensions, and Family Allowances. Group leaders were appointed, and the audience divided itself into three sections, each grouped around the leader, who opened the discussion. Members of the groups then joined in, asking questions and contributing their opinions. After these discussions, Miss Beaumont gave a short speech dealing with the three subjects and answered various questions put to her, both in writing and verbally, from members of the audience. This appears to be a good method of inducing members to give their views and put their difficulties in a less formal way than by the ordinary meeting procedure. Many people who are alarmed at the prospect of raising their voices in a meeting will talk freely and ask questions when an informal "group" is arranged. We commend the idea to our Societies and congratulate the Committee of the Reigate and Redhill W.C.A. on their initiative and originality. Books and pamphlets on subjects on our programme can, of course, be supplied by the office for preliminary study by the leaders and members of the groups.

## NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

## EDINBURGH W.C.A.

"Family allowances and the need for a living wage," was the subject of an address which Miss Eleanor F. Rathbone delivered at a drawing-room meeting held at the house of Mrs. R. K. Hannay. Professor F. G. Baily presided. Miss Rathbone discussed in detail what a living wage really meant, and the difficulties raised by fixing it in relation to the size of families.

## KENSINGTON S.E.C.

The ex-Mayor, Alderman Archibald J. Allen, presided at a public meeting held at the Kensington Town Hall on Tuesday afternoon to consider the Pact of Locarno. It was organized by the Kensington W.C.A. and the Kensington and Paddington S.E.C., and largely attended.

Professor Gilbert Murray was the speaker, and gave a lucid explanation of the Treaty and of the various efforts that have been made to bring about an understanding between the European nations that were in conflict in the Great War.

## EAST LEWISHAM W.C.A.

Mrs. White presided at the monthly meeting of the East Lewisham Women Citizens' Association at Court Hill Hall on Friday, when Mrs. Corbett Ashby, President, International Women's Suffrage Alliance, gave an address on "Women's World-wide Work."

## OXFORD S.E.C.

The annual meeting of the Oxford Society for Equal Citizenship was held at Barnett House on Friday evening. Miss Hadow presided, and said the Society at headquarters was doing very valuable work in setting the woman's case before Parliament.

Mrs. Soddy was elected president, and Mrs. Dixon secretary and treasurer. The following were appointed a committee: Mrs. Brabant, Mr. Arthur Gillett, Mrs. Sanderson Furniss, Miss Hadow, Mrs. Soddy, Mrs. Frank Gray, and Councillor Miss Quick.

## PRESTON W.C.A.

"Married Women and Employment" was the subject of an address given by Dr. Mary Lowry at a meeting under the auspices of the Preston Women Citizens' Association, held under the chairmanship of Miss Tipper, at the Orient Café, Friargate, on 9th December.

## REPTON W.C.A.

Miss Rathbone gave an address at Repton to the members of the W.C.A. and others on "A living Wage and Family Allowances," on 24th November. Mrs. Gibson was in the chair. Miss Rathbone drew attention to the position at the present time, when a large part of the community are not receiving enough wages to enable them to live, and explained the various methods by which a scheme of Family Allowances might be administered. After Miss Rathbone's address she answered questions, and it was agreed that the only way to ensure that children are treated, as they should be, to be AI men and women of the future is by "Family Endowment."

We were most grateful to Miss Rathbone for coming and very interested in her address. Many of us had read her book and were all the more interested to hear her.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## DEPUTATION ON WOMEN POLICE.

MADAM,—None of us wish to ignore the work which the National Council of Women and Mrs. Johnson herself have contributed towards the movement for women police, and their opinion on the question of tactics is entitled to every respect. But it seems most unfortunate that by expressing their dissent in the public Press on what is, after all, only a question of method and tactics, they should have given rise to the quite misleading impression that women are divided among themselves on the question of women police, and thus have done something to do away with the excellent effect produced by the deputation recently organized by the N.U.S.E.C. to the Home Secretary.

The issue between the National Council of Women and the Societies which supported the Deputation, seems to be purely one of method. Practically all women's organizations, social and political, party and non-party, are agreed as to the necessity for trained and attested women as part of the police force. The women's organizations are also agreed as to the need of in some way making it obligatory on Local Authorities to appoint them. The N.C.W. thinks that this can best be attained by Statutory Regulations to be made by the Home Office under the Police Act, 1919. But there seems no reason to believe that a reactionary or sluggish Local Authority would yield more willingly to Statutory Regulations issued by the Home Secretary than to the Authority of Parliament. In any case, the main object of the Deputation was to demonstrate to the Home Secretary the immense body of public opinion dissatisfied with the present rate of progress and anxious for stronger measures. In this we believe the Deputation was completely successful, bringing with it, as it did, assurances of the hearty support of the organized women of the Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Parties, as well as of a great number of other National Organizations, many of them affiliated to the N.C.W. itself. The Home Secretary's own opinion in favour of women police is known and if he will be willing to enforce it through statutory regulations so much the better, but every Minister is helped and not hindered in the exercise of his powers by knowing that he has public opinion behind him.

ELEANOR F. RATHBONE,  
President of the National Union of  
Societies for Equal Citizenship.

## CHILD ASSAULT.

MADAM,—Surely it rests with every person who feels the outrage of the Wokingham sentence to make public opinion felt by those responsible. Personally, I am obtaining a list of the magistrates of the division. A copy of the WOMAN'S LEADER will be sent to each, addressed to them and to their wives. A private letter will also be sent, asking: If this were a case that affected their own little daughters, would they feel that justice had been met, and had they considered the effect in the lowering of public standards of morality such a sentence would have?

Similarly, if M. Smith will give particulars, either in your columns, or privately, of the case referred to in the letter in the LEADER of 18th December, others might also do what seems possible in the same direction, as my hope is they may in both cases. It should be worth while to ask the clergy and ministers of the places to take what action they may deem appropriate to make decent feeling take shape.

If in every such case Magistrates would make recommendation that the offenders should be medically examined to see if they are certifiable as "mentally defective," it would serve to stamp the man as of that grade of mind, in itself likely to have a wholesome effect on the public opinion of his class; contempt is a useful weapon sometimes.

The inadequate sentence, deplored by the Judge, in the Morriss case shows the need of women's work in amending the law, and so public opinion.

In conclusion, a quotation seems appropriate: "In order that evil should prevail, it is only necessary that good citizens should do nothing."

(Mrs.) L. GILCHRIST THOMPSON,

Hayes, Kent.

## WHEN CRIMES ARE NOT CRIMES.

MADAM,—A man called Hayley Morriss was sent to prison last week for criminally assaulting young girls in his house. Had he criminally assaulted them in a house of ill-fame he would never have been arrested.

And yet houses of ill-fame exist, by obtaining by any and every means young girls and women for immoral purposes; and the slave traffic in women and children, which goes on all over the world, is solely due to them.

Therefore why are these houses, of all houses, the very places where these crimes can be committed with impunity? And if these things are not crimes in a brothel, how can they be crimes in the world outside?

(Miss) F. K. POWELL.



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