

THE
WOMAN'S LEADER

IN POLITICS IN LITERATURE AND ART
 IN THE HOME IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
 IN INDUSTRY IN THE PROFESSIONS

AND

THE COMMON CAUSE

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THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND
COMMON CAUSE.

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.

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NOTES AND NEWS.

Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Bill.

It will be remembered that this Bill had been amended in Committee by the dropping of Clause 2, permitting the employment of women and young persons on the two-shift system, and was entering on the Report stage. It now appears that a deputation of Members of Parliament recently waited on the Home Secretary, and made representations to him as to the undesirability of legislative discrimination against women in respect of employment on the two-shift (day) system. Mr. Shortt seems to have been impressed with the facts put before him, and finally agreed that further and fuller consideration of the matter was most desirable. As a result the Bill will not be proceeded with until the autumn session, and meanwhile a Departmental Committee is to be set up to enquire into the merits and demerits of the two-shift system. At the time of writing the constitution of the Committee is uncertain, but if it is to consist entirely of officials it will evidently be necessary for such organisations as exist for the purpose of protecting and promoting the interest of women to take measures to lay their views before it. If, on the other hand, the Committee is to be of more general composition, place must evidently be found on it for representatives of women's and employers' interests. Meanwhile it is, to say the least of it, somewhat startling to find that the Government has had to postpone the Bill because it was realised at the eleventh hour that one of the most important features of it had not been investigated. We wonder whether such a situation could possibly have arisen in regard to measures affecting the interests of men, and are inclined to think that in those cases every effort is made to ascertain the views of all those concerned before and not after the introduction of a Bill. Finally, it is perhaps worth pointing out that this Bill is something more than a "woman's question." There are points at issue, such as increase of production and extension of employment, which are, and should be, of general concern.

The Dutch Labour Laws of 1919.

The Dutch Labour Laws of 1919 bring many changes for the working woman, both in respect of protection extended to her in her own work, and in respect of that work in its relation to man's work. It extends, in the first place, over a much wider area, for whereas former laws were chiefly confined to workers in factories and workshops, the present law embraces a wide field of women's activities. The age limit below which work is forbidden is now raised to fourteen, and Sunday work is entirely forbidden except in a few instances such as hotel work. Night work is forbidden for women, and a half holiday each week is prescribed, while the maximum hours are shortened from ten hours a day and fifty-eight per week to an eight-hour day and a forty-five hour week. An innovation is that women and young

persons may not, after working the prescribed time at any one kind of work, work in their leisure time at any other factory or office. The time during which women are prohibited from working during pregnancy is now lengthened to a total of eight weeks, of which six weeks may fall after childbirth.

Greater Equality of Protective Legislation.

The chasm between protective legislation for women and for men has been considerably narrowed by the recent laws, so that a woman need no longer fear that she will be at a disadvantage or risk dismissal, on grounds of sex inequality. The laws regulating hours of work, Sunday labour, half-holiday, and night work apply equally to men, with the only difference that exceptions are more readily made in the case of the adult male worker, providing always that he can show, to the complete satisfaction of the authorities, that his health will not suffer by the concession. Holland prides herself on being one of the most advanced countries as far as equality of payment for women is concerned, for State Commissioner Stork has recently announced that all Government departments are to accept equal pay for equal work for both sexes as their guiding principle. While women thus have cause to rejoice over the new legislation, a new danger is threatening them. Minister Ralberg has in prospect fresh legislation regulating home industries, to be followed shortly afterwards by a scheme to prohibit the work of married women in factories. Dr. J. G. Beuwer, a member of the Second Chamber, has, moreover, presented an amendment whereby the obligation of dismissing women teachers under forty years of age on their wedding day is to be laid on the Common Council. The only exception suggested was in the case of head teachers who give lessons of less than ten hours a week. Dutch suffragists are watching these Bills very carefully; and they need watching.

Manchester Magistrates.

Six women's names appear on the list of Justices of the Peace issued from the Duchy of Lancaster Office for service in Manchester. Miss Mary Brown, Mabel Lady Crossley, Miss Caroline Herford, Miss Kingsmill Jones, Mrs. Charles Montague, and Mrs. Edwin Pearson. There has been some misgiving lest women justices in London should be in an inferior position to provincial justices, especially where Children's Courts are concerned. We must therefore welcome the Lord Chancellor's statement that he would refuse to be a party to any arrangement entailing such inferiority, and that in the shaping of the Juvenile Courts (Metropolis) Bill he had been in consultation throughout with the Home Secretary, who, therefore, is presumably either of the same opinion or will sink his prejudices if he has them.

Women Jurors.

Women jurors were empanelled for the first time at Bristol last week. They were, we learn, women of the middle class, whatever that debatable phrase may now mean. The court sat all day and tried six cases. Two women asked to be excused attendance on the following day on the ground that they had children at home who needed them. Their places were taken by other women, so that the jury throughout the Quarter Sessions consisted of equal numbers of men and women.

Women Burgesses.

Mrs. Douglas, of Govan, has applied to the Town Clerk of Glasgow for "a burgess ticket at near hand," on the ground that her father, having been a burgess of the city, she has a right of inclusion in the burgess list. She bases her claim on a statute called the Letter of Gildry, approved by the Town Council in 1605, but of which no woman, so far as can be learned, has as yet taken advantage. In that year the names of two widows were added to the list of burgesses and Guild Brethren, but perhaps because the Letter was not ratified till 1672, when the matter had ceased to interest them, they do not seem to have enjoyed the privileges of the position, and they have had no successor for two and a-half centuries. It may prove that the widows of burgesses had a more assured status than their daughters, especially married daughters, but everyone will wish Mrs. Douglas success.

A Woman Candidate.

Mrs. Egerton Stewart Brown has been chosen to contest the Waterloo division of Liverpool in the Liberal interest. Mrs. Brown, whose husband is a barrister, is a member of the City Council, and was one of the delegates to the Geneva Congress. It is not too early to choose candidates for the next General Election. Many electors who desire the presence of women in Parliament have a tendency to think that the women M.P.'s might just as well represent a constituency less important than their own, and it is important for women to make themselves sufficiently well known to the voters to convince them that a woman in Parliament can efficiently represent electors of both sexes, and that she will not confine her attention exclusively to "women's subjects." Mrs. Stewart Brown was chairman of the Liverpool Women's Suffrage Society for fifteen years; since 1892 she has been on the Executive Committee of the National Women's Liberal Federation. She is also chairman of the Liverpool Women's International League.

Man's Right to Get Drunk.

A Willesden magistrate has informed an applicant for a separation order that her husband's habitual drunkenness does not entitle her to relief, but that if she were a drunkard the law would allow him a separation order on that ground. If this is the case (and magistrates may misinterpret the law even at Willesden) it is another case of one standard for men and another for women, and should be noticed by those who are agitating for reform in the marriage law. We are constantly told that the grant of a separation order gives a wife every necessary protection from a bad husband, refusing her only the privilege of re-marriage. If she cannot free herself from the companionship and her children from the control of an habitual drunkard, the protection afforded leaves much to be desired, for habitual in this connection means something more than very frequent.

Cambridge and the Coming Contest.

Resident members of Cambridge University who desire to admit women to complete University membership are beginning to find that some of their worst foes are those of their "own household." That is to say, the bitterest hostility springs from the spirit of monopoly and the unwillingness to share educational appointments and endowments with new claimants. It is probable that among non-resident members of the Senate there is much more sympathy felt with the women's claim. Many non-residents, who have been absent a long time—and possibly working in some of the younger Universities—realise with astonishment that Girton and Newnham women, though voting for the University representatives in Parliament, have not yet received even the "titular" degree. Others, such as professional men and the clergy, learn from their own daughters how real is the present grievance. So much is this the case that in Cambridge, from the ranks of the enemy the cry is going up that some of the country clergy are completely "under the

thumb" of their daughters. Such a lament betrays uneasiness as to the non-resident vote. It is also rumoured that the "Antis" are pressing old Cambridge B.A.s of their own way of thinking to take their M.A. degree in order that they may be qualified to vote on the wrong side next term. This, however, is a game at which others can play, if necessary. It is always possible, however, that women's opponents may consider the reputation of the University and may realise that for Cambridge, alone among British Universities, to refuse to share her good things with British women, would be a lamentable demonstration to the world. Meantime, everyone realises that the Royal Commission on the Universities is actively scrutinising the weak places of academic administration, will draw its own conclusions and make its own recommendations. It is understood that the Commission will be in Cambridge during the first fortnight of August to receive evidence.

The Proprietary Medicines Bill.

Faith in the efficacy of medicines, and especially of medicines with easily remembered and cheerfully prophetic names, seems to be ingrained in human nature and ineradicable by education. No one is too poor, it would seem, to buy costly mixtures in the form of draughts or pills, and most people are credulous enough to accept them at the value their proprietors claim for them. Government, hitherto, by exacting a tax for stamping proprietary medicines, has seemed to give its blessing to ingenious persons who sell a pint of water, flavoured with a halfpenny worth of drug, for several shillings. These people are merely cheats, and it is arguable that their willing victims are fair game. More dangerous is the vendor of a patent medicine which professes to cure one or more incurable diseases. Still, the believers in limiting State interference to a minimum will argue that he only fails to cure the incurable, and that if he kills a few *malades imaginaires*, he may be a public benefactor. But if all this is granted there remains the witch's brew which is sold to cure ills which are indeed curable, though not by its agency, and takes the risk of supplying the public with potent drugs of whose effects he knows little. The Select Committee of the House of Commons which enquired into the manufacture and sale of patent medicines in 1914, laid bare an immense amount of trickery, an annual waste of millions of money by persons who had none to spare, an aggravation of mental and physical suffering caused by raising false hopes and dissuading sick persons from taking measures really remedial, and the Proprietary Medicines Act, read a second time last week in the House of Lords, is designed to give an effective control of the traffic in proprietary medicines to the State, whose stamp has so long seemed to guarantee much that was hurtful or fraudulent.

A Register of Medicines.

When the Proprietary Medicines Bill becomes law it will be unlawful to sell or to advertise for sale any medicines or surgical appliance purporting to cure consumption, cancer, paralysis, or several other diseases included in a schedule to which the Ministry of Health is empowered to add. We are glad to see that "diseases peculiar to women" are specially mentioned, and the advertisement of abortifacients is made a penal offence. The penalty for such offence is imprisonment for not more than twelve months or a fine not exceeding a hundred pounds, or both. Proprietors of patent medicines are forbidden under penalty to use fictitious or misleading testimonials, to make gifts of medicines, or invite correspondence with patients. But the most important provision of the Act is that forbidding the sale of any proprietary medicine unless it is registered under the Act, and the medicine sold does, in fact, contain the ingredients declared on registration. We assume that this clause is so drafted as to prevent the addition of undeclared ingredients. The Minister of Health may remove from the Register any remedy which appears to him to be dangerous if used according to the directions issued with it. He has also power to require a statement on the container of the amount of alcohol used in the preparation of the medicine. This is a very necessary precaution in view of the findings of the Select Committee, from which it appears that several patent medicines contain a larger proportion of alcohol to the dose than is found in a wine-glass of port or sherry such as is commonly on the market. The Bill will, no doubt, find opposers in the House of Commons, where the Bill dealing with scheduled poisons has just failed to obtain a quorum, but it is long overdue and much needed as a protection to an ignorant public, and to those also who are less ignorant but quite as careless.

Housing in Scotland.

The last Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland and the first Report of the Scottish Board of Health, which has now superseded it, both deal with the year 1919. The section devoted to housing is of great interest. The shortage of houses in Scotland before the war was more acute than in England. At that time forty-seven per cent. of the population lived in houses or tenements of less than three rooms per family, and in Glasgow this percentage rose to sixty-three. It is therefore not surprising that the Board of Health reports much unwillingness on the part of local authorities to provide houses of four and five rooms. In order to avoid delay it has been necessary to agree to the erection of more than the anticipated fifty per cent. of three-roomed houses. It must be remembered, however, that the size of living and sleeping rooms in Scotland compares favourably with that usual in the South; in consequence the three-roomed house is reasonably healthy for a small family. The difficulty which arose as to housing war widows in mining villages is still unsettled; mine owners are unwilling to remove them from houses designed for miners until other accommodation is available. Local authorities provide other accommodation, but the widows cannot pay the rent of this. The Ministry of Pensions has been appealed to, but cannot help towards a solution. In the Local Government Board's review of its twenty-five years' work we note that the number of persons assisted by the Poor Law was in 1868 (under the Board of Supervision) forty-one per thousand of the population; at the end of the Board's term it had fallen to seventeen per thousand.

Food in France.

People who are taking their holidays in France are shocked at the high price of food. Uncooked food for a household of three women costs in a French watering-place thirty francs a day, though no luxury is demanded, but in comparing French and English food prices it should be remembered that the British tax-payer has not paid his food bill when he has settled the tradesmen's books. He has still to hand out to the tax collector his share, large or small, of the subsidies which the Food Controller uses to cheapen food all round, and after that he must pay another share (or ten or twenty shares) on behalf of those persons who buy cheap food but pay no direct taxation. The Frenchman has very little of this deferred dinner money to find; he furnishes about one-sixth the sum which the Englishman has to pay in respect of direct taxes. There is something to be said for the rule that he who orders food should pay for it; he then arranges his meal according to his means.

The Employment of Women in Public-Houses.

The Select Committee of the Union of German Women's Associations is endeavouring to raise the status and condition of women employed in public houses, and although the law of January, 1920, leaves the framing of regulations to the central authorities in each district, the Committee is appealing to the Ministries of the German States, urging the necessity of uniformity in such regulations and demanding insistence on the following points: that no woman under twenty-one should be directly employed in waiting on customers; that there should be a fixed rate of pay, not subject to fines, and free board, and an unbroken interval of eight hours rest, and for women not living in of ten hours, between the hours of 8 p.m. and 10 a.m., with one day off every fortnight; that each appointment should be notified to the police within twenty-four hours; that employees should be forbidden to loiter at the windows or doors, to ask for or accept food or drink from customers, to urge customers to drink, to delay longer than is necessary to take orders, or to wear showy clothing; that women inspectors should be appointed to inspect all such places where women are employed, and that this inspection should include bedrooms. The Committee draws the attention of the police authorities to the importance of these regulations for the prevention of vice, the maintenance of order, and the improvement of the status of the employee. It urges that the profession of barmaid is not, in itself, unsuited to women, that it offers them a means of livelihood sorely needed at the present time, and that its low repute is due solely to avoidable causes.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER.

BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.

Parliament has once more been completely overcast by external difficulties in Ireland, in Europe, and the Near East. It was said in this column a few weeks ago that we had to face a situation as dangerous as any which had confronted us since July, 1914; and truly the past week has seen each separate danger reach its maximum point of disturbance at the same time. The trouble in Syria, in comparison the least of the three, would in other times in itself be enough to be called a crisis. The French have entered Damascus, deposed Feisal, our ally, and their ally, and set up a Government of the Kept variety. We and the French, too, are pledged to Feisal, and now the French have ousted him. Our prestige over the whole East is shaken; that of the French has fallen still further. Except among those who see in every foreign complication further proof of the Prime Minister's ineptitude the action of France is universally condemned.

That, however, is not the chief of our troubles. The position of Poland gets worse. At the time of writing it is not known whether Russia will make peace or not, and on terms that Europe can accept. There are indications that point either way, and no one knows for certain. Poland must be saved or the peace settlement goes. So far most members, except the Labour extremists, agree with Mr. Churchill in his *Evening News* article. So far, but no further; for of his grandiose lucubration of a military league between England, France, and Germany most people find it difficult to speak temperately. What we want is peace, not war, offensive or defensive. Fortunately the Prime Minister has grasped that. He, from Prinkipo onwards, has never wavered in his convictions that peace with Russia is the key to a world settlement; and many who thought him wrong and even wicked are now admitting that he was right. The difficulties are stupendous. France is suspicious, even hostile, and the partial success of the Boulogne Conference is not the least of Mr. Lloyd George's triumphs. He has been successful so far; and it is recognised, as it never was before, that his courage and vision are the only barriers which stand against a world disaster.

Ireland was with the House the whole week, on the surface or below it. On Monday Mr. Devlin moved the adjournment in order to call attention to the failure of the Government to protect Catholics in Belfast; but as the House was extremely doubtful whether both factions were not equally blameable he made little headway. Sir Hamar Greenwood spoke again, and his speech, as a speech, was well received; but the House has still not made up its mind about the speaker. On Thursday the Duke of Northumberland's deputation, large and influential, saw the Prime Minister. With Sir Edward Carson introducing it, Mr. Jellett proposing the vote of thanks and Mr. Ronald McNeill acting as cross-examiner, the proceedings developed into a demonstration on Ireland, with India and Egypt brought in only as illustrations; and as such the Prime Minister treated it. His reply was for the most part such as Sir Edward Carson might have written, and the force of it will not be lessened by the murder of Mr. Brooke on the day following. The House is deeply disturbed; it is felt on the one hand that no Government can allow Ireland to go on as it is, and on the other that the passing of Coercion Acts starts again the weary and barren round which has always failed. Nor are the Government acquitted; for it is felt that had they changed their Home Rule Bill into a Dominions scheme as they were constantly urged to do in Committee, and thus made an unambiguous and firm offer, a settlement might have been made.

To turn to lighter matters, the fight about fares, which was to slaughter Sir Eric Geddes and to shake the Prime Minister himself, followed the course common to these much advertised alarms. The anti-Lloyd George press shouted in chorus, members were peppered with pre-arranged postcards; and at the end Sir Eric Geddes made his critics not only feel beaten but look it. The attack collapsed somewhat ridiculously, and the Minister of Transport showed once more that he possesses the valuable Parliamentary gift of being at his best when the fire is hottest.

PARENTHOOD AND POPULATION.

The question of a declining birthrate is of vital importance to each one of us, whether we view it with the anxious eyes of Empire builders or with the despairing eyes of Dean Inge, who doubtless accepts the fact as another proof of our retrogression.

After the compulsory registration of births in 1873 the birthrate, which had apparently risen during the previous thirty years, gradually declined from a level of thirty-five per thousand of the population to half that number. Long before 1914 Malthus' dismal creed had ceased to frighten us, for the economists no longer had cause to talk of the "devastating torrent of babies," and the war, with its dissolving influence upon family life, accelerated the decline. The sociologists were already recognising that even the progressive improvement in infant mortality figures failed to compensate for the fewness of the babies born. They noticed that this decline was most apparent in the classes which had education or manual skill or a habit of forethought.

In 1913 the Birthrate Commission was set up to investigate the causes of the reduction in the birthrate, and three years later, in the middle period of the war, it published its first Report. This set forth the various ascertained causes of the phenomenon, and concluded that although economic pressure and the growing tendency to defer marriage to a later age were important influences, yet they did not account for the whole of the drop in the birthrate. The cause to which the Commission chiefly drew public attention was a psychological one, and its second Report, just published, again devotes much detailed examination to the change in public opinion as to the desirability of large families, the dying out, except among persons of the Jewish or Roman Catholic faiths, of the idea that parenthood is a duty, and the growth of tolerance for the practice of limiting families by other means than the postponement of marriage and the exercise, in the married state, of self-control. What has happened is that in less than fifty years public opinion and the opinion of the philosophic minority have changed places. During the second half of last century the ordinary man and woman of all classes and all degrees of wealth believed that to have many children was to prove oneself a good citizen and a worthy human being. But something has shaken this faith, and we find the rising generation less and less disposed to sacrifice their own interests or those of their existing children to any need for maintaining the population.

The Commission, which is a voluntary body, deserves much of the community for its insistence on making us face the question of depopulation before the tide has run so far back that we must acknowledge ourselves, definitely, to be a decaying race. It is not an easy question to face. For many years it was possible to argue that all would be well if the children who were born survived. Sociologists concentrated themselves, most successfully, on reducing infant mortality. The number of children who die within the year of their birth has been halved within fifty years, and the improvement still continues, though of necessity at a slower pace. And yet another fifty years may possibly find us with a birthrate again halved, and if this continues we shall, at a not too far distant date, cease to exist as a nation. There are some who might rejoice over the break up of the Empire, but even they would repudiate passionately the idea of our disappearance as a people, or that England should be remembered only as the mother of the Dominions.

The notion seems a fantastic one, but we have only to cast our eyes across the Channel to see a great nation menaced with extinction, not on account of its recklessness, but because of its widespread caution and providence.

There is, of course, much that can be done to postpone the evil day. The fight against infant mortality is, from one point of view, only beginning, for with increasing knowledge we have become aware that ante-natal deaths are nearly four times as numerous as deaths in the first year of infancy. The reduction of these ante-natal deaths can only be achieved by maintaining the personal well-being of the mother.

There is an immense field here for the education of public opinion. Not very long ago the preventable deaths of young children were regarded as of no importance except to their parents. It was not so much that we were callous about the wastage of child life as hopeless of remedying it. We have now to attack the problem of ante-natal mortality as the peril of infant mortality was attacked, by making it possible for parents to rear their children, and by educating both parents and the rest of the community out of a cruel apathy which now hampers even individual effort.

The measures to be taken are of several kinds. The so-called "racial poisons," alcoholism, venereal disease, and lead poisoning, must be stamped out. The danger from industrial lead poisoning is already greatly diminished. Reluctant as we are to set up special restrictions for women in industry, we can hardly avoid it where the welfare of the community as a whole is at stake. There is much evidence of the deadly effect of lead on the maternal functions of women, who themselves suffer little conscious damage from the poison. There is no parallel, so far as can be ascertained, in the case of men. If they come through scatheless their children are unharmed. Until this supposition is proved false there is reason here for discrimination between the sexes.

But in the case of alcoholism and venereal disease the case is very different. Though these poisons if communicated by a mother to her offspring may be more dangerous than if they are transmitted by the father, it is at most a question of degree, and even the lesser degree is a deadly threat to child life. The results of these poisons on ante-natal life and on the reproductive powers of both men and women are less well known, but they can scarcely be overstated. If drink and vice can be reduced the effective birthrate as well as the survival rate will rise to a figure which will help us to retain our place as a great nation—not a Great Power in the military sense—but a great engine for forwarding progress, and a powerful social force in the evolution of mankind.

But this is not enough; we may be assured of the maintenance of our population, and hope for an improvement in the health and well-being of the community, but the cautious, thrifty middle and professional classes, the skilled artisans, will still continue to limit their families. These classes will dwindle, their descendants will form a smaller and ever smaller proportion of the whole. If there is anything in heredity, to lose the children of these excellent citizens is to lose much, and it is important that the burden of parenthood should be lightened for them by varying the incidence of taxation and by some form of endowment of motherhood.

Urgent too is the need for the removal of the check on the birthrate which is imposed by our antiquated laws regulating marriage, divorce, and separation. The ill-matched couples living in virtual celibacy are many, and their position, where it does not directly reduce the birthrate, materially increases illegitimacy with its accompanying high infant death-rate.

We cannot, however, be content with abating to some extent the burden of parenthood or with offering help which will be accepted by the improvident classes but rejected by the prudent. Far-sighted people are good citizens; we must bring it home to them that parenthood is also a duty of citizenship. We have emerged with labour and difficulty from a state of society where woman's only duty was held to be marriage and motherhood. We have adopted the human race as our family and the world as our province; but the primal duty still remains, and its rewards are still supreme. We may be unwilling to listen to the precepts of childless, celibate men who repeat, without realising its meaning, the admonition to "be fruitful," because we fear the demand is made by militarism, greedy for cannon fodder, or by avarice on the look-out for cheap labour. But reason, science, religion, patriotism, all make the same demand upon human beings capable of full life, awake to its responsibilities and eager for its rewards.

NOT BURNING QUESTIONS.

We call the attention of our readers to the fact that in the heading of "Burning Questions" we endeavour to present the principal views on each question held by differing groups of political thinkers. We do not ourselves express an editorial opinion, beyond this, that it is each woman's business first to be well-informed and then to come to her own opinion.

LIMITATION OF OUTPUT.

There has been such prolonged discussion of this subject that there is a very general feeling that little now remains to be said. Indeed, with so much information available everybody should be ere now in a position to make up his or her mind on the merits or demerits of the case. But perhaps there is yet room for some consideration of the problem with particular reference to concrete instances, and the building industry at the moment provides some interesting object lessons.

We are all aware—many of us indeed painfully aware—that there is a very great shortage of houses, owing to the suspension of building activity during the war. It is also regrettably but indisputably true that very considerable difficulties have been, and are still being, encountered by those responsible for seeing that some effort is made to make up the leeway. Scarcity of materials, shortage of labour, inflation of values, uncertainty as to continuance of prevailing prices (so fatal to the making of contracts)—all these and many other obstacles stand in the way of progress. Meanwhile large numbers of the community are living in incredible discomfort owing to the dearth of accommodation, and the major part of the resultant inconveniences fall, of course, to the share of the women.

It may at once be admitted that some of these difficulties are inevitable, and for the time being almost insurmountable. Others are simply the result of bad management. When we read, for instance, that "with the view of adding to the resources of local authorities engaged in building schemes the production officers in the eleven regional areas of the country have been instructed to make more use of local supplies than hitherto," we are divided between a feeling of surprise that so many months should have elapsed before this elementary necessity dawned upon our authorities, and admiration for the care they take to obtain a certain amount of *réclame* for a simple matter of procedure such as private firms would quietly adopt without laying claim to any brilliance of invention.

Other obstacles to improvement lie in the shortsighted policy of certain sections of trades unionism in regard to dilution. The present position is best described in the words of the responsible authorities as given in the following extracts:—

(1) *Manchester Guardian*, June 17th:—

"Dr. Addison, in the House of Commons yesterday, said that the Minister of Labour and himself had been in negotiation with the trade unions in regard to the employment of ex-Service men in the Joint Industrial Council of the building trade.

"Asked further whether he was satisfied that he had sufficient labour for 110,000 houses, Dr. Addison said he was quite sure, on the contrary, that the amount of labour available for the work was entirely insufficient."

(2) According to Hansard, Dr. Addison said, speaking in the House on July 15th last:—

"The main cause of the delay there is the deficiency of labour. Of course, the methods of construction also are important, but with regard to the labour supply there were on June 30th 15,000 skilled workpeople employed on building houses, or a deficiency of labour in respect of these houses at that date of 12,206. That shows that it is quite useless for people to say that there are sufficient men to go round. There are not, and therefore the case which I have so often made with the trade unions concerned is being abundantly justified by the result. It is perfectly clear, if this work is to go on at a proper speed, a great many more workmen must be brought in.

"I would also like to say a word with regard to output. There has been an encouraging improvement, but in many places it is still very much less than I think it should be, and certainly than it was before the war, and it is much less in some places than in others. For all that, the average

output has substantially improved during the last two months, but I am persuaded that we are confronted here with the necessity for a scheme which, whilst giving proper guarantees of security for work to the men employed, will agree with the trade unionists for an additional amount of labour being brought in and thereby secure the utmost possible output. . . . As an illustration, I may say that a man who is laying bricks at the rate of 400 a day will build four houses a year. If he is laying at the rate of a thousand a day he will build eight and a half a year."

Finally, the *Daily Telegraph* of July 24th in a review of the housing situation tells us that:—

"For every fifteen skilled workmen now employed on housing schemes work is available for twelve more. The total of skilled men employed is 15,100, and 12,192 more are required. The greatest deficiency is of bricklayers, of whom 7,031 are employed, and 7,101 more are needed for immediate work. The need of men is felt in all districts, but most severely in the Northern and Midland."

It will be remembered that the conference of building trades operatives held in Manchester in February last was definitely opposed to dilution, and the root of the trouble is to be found in the perpetuation of this policy and the determination to uphold the policy of "ca' canny." Lord Birkenhead has lately drawn attention in the columns of the *Weekly Dispatch* to the steadily diminishing output of the bricklayers, and is seriously concerned at the shortage of labour. He has pointed out a truth too often neglected, viz., that "the consumers of all articles are the ultimate employers of those who make them," and that, as far as the men engaged on building small houses are concerned, "the real employer is the working-man who is going to live in it when it is built, for obviously he, and only he, will provide the funds which will compensate all those who took any part in building it, for the work they did."

It is understood that the Cabinet have in hand a plan for guaranteeing the building trade unions (in return for a "no strikes" promise, increased output, and permission to introduce unskilled labour) five years' employment, and a fixed wage during bad weather. By securing relaxation of the present rules of apprenticeship it is hoped to facilitate the employment of ex-Service men. The Government is definitely anxious to come to terms with the industry, and this should be facilitated by the important scheme of amalgamation now concluded among the bricklayers, masons, and kindred sections of the building trades. The new society is a great step in the consolidation of trades unionism in the building trades, and should go far to abolish that useless inter-ecine strife concerning the line of demarcation between the various trades now included in the amalgamations. Negotiations between the Government and the building industry as a whole should be infinitely easier.

But we come back as ever to the old difficulty. If it is arranged that society gives the worker a square deal on condition that the latter gives society a square deal, how are we going to ensure the carrying out of the bargain? Employment can evidently be guaranteed for a period of years, and the payment of a minimum wage weekly would be an effective insurance against time lost through bad weather. But what measures can be taken to ensure a return in output? This difficulty was undoubtedly in the minds of those present at the recent meeting of the National Federation of Building Trade Employers at Newcastle, where it was agreed that wages in the trade had reached the utmost limit. Regret was expressed that the decision to grant a forty-four hours week had not resulted in the promised increase of output foreshadowed by the operatives. It was estimated that there was a deficit of 300,000 men in the building industry, and that it would take years to make this good.

E. H. P.

SOME THINGS THAT MATTER.

By SIR LEO CHIOZZA MONEY.

[Sir Leo Chiozza Money and Mr. Harold Cox will write alternately upon things that matter. The Editor accepts no responsibility for any of the views expressed by these two eminent economists.]

I am quite sure that no intelligent and disinterested man could further oppose Public Ownership who was acquainted with the history of nationalisation in the war. It is, however, unfortunately true that very few people know the story, and that the Press is interested neither in ascertaining the facts nor in relating them. For example, after I left the Ministry of Shipping, which, as the Prime Minister said, saved the nation hundreds of millions of pounds (and, indeed, much more than that), I was asked by an editor to write an article describing the waste at the Ministry of Shipping. I answered that I could not describe that which did not exist, but that I was quite willing to write an article telling the public how the Department helped to save the nation from the submarines. This he declined. That is how the thing is done. If I were to trump up a series of attacks upon State Ownership I could get them published in a hundred different quarters, but to get the truth told about nationalisation is like getting a camel through the eye of a needle.

SOME THINGS NOT KNOWN.

I saw it recently said that "in our own country there is no single illustration at the present time of a successful enterprise conducted by the State." The Government has done its best to make this true by shutting down the successful State enterprises which were conducted in the war. It did so at the bidding of the vested interests. Fortunately, however, the statement quoted is not wholly accurate. For example, the State is still making great profits on its Socialistic wool deals, and not making those profits at the public expense but solely through the wise and prudent buying of enterprising officials, who did things on a scale which had never been dreamed of in the trumpery operations of private enterprise. Again, I see it said, "Nowhere is the State able to conduct any enterprise successfully in competition with private enterprise." As a matter of fact it was shown recently in the House of Commons that we built warships cheaper in the Royal Dockyards than in the yards of private contractors, and that the latter had to get their best overseers from the former. In Queensland, again, the State butchers' shops compete with the private butchers' shops and beat them hollow, making considerable profits and compelling the profiteers to reduce their prices. In the war, again, we made munitions much cheaper in the national factories than the private contractors made them.

MANY FORMS OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISE.

I cannot understand why it is not perceived by some of those who write on public enterprise that Socialism is not a stereotyped thing. In the world at large there are thousands of millions of pounds' worth of capital employed by nations and municipalities in successful Socialist enterprises. Do they adopt a common form? Of course not. The forms of public ownership differ with country and race and with the particular industry dealt with. So, of course, it is with Parliamentary institutions, and, indeed, with all human affairs. Let no one therefore be misled by talk of differences between State Socialists and Guild Socialists, and so forth. The differences amongst Socialists in these matters are precisely comparable to the differences which exist between honest and sincere Parliamentarians as to the best way of giving expression to democracy in a Parliament. There is not one best way, but a number of excellent alternatives. It is also true that human institutions must necessarily change their shape as physical science advances, and affords better opportunities of achieving desirable ends. It may be added that the advocates of National Organisation by no means contend that all industries need be brought under national direction. For example, just before the war I ventured to sketch at some length a national organisation in which, the essentials of a minimum standard of existence being produced by organised effort, a very large part of the working powers of men would be set free for individual employment and craftsmanship. These

ideas were not advanced in a dogmatic vein, but in the hope that they might help, with modifications doubtless to be suggested by others, to give us a better society. What a pity it is that intelligent men should be found writing as though it lay in the power of any one man to frame a cast-iron convention for all mankind. If we are to talk usefully about these matters why not begin in a vein of common-sense, looking to the moulding of this unfortunate and poverty-stricken society of ours into something a little better.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP IN PRACTICE.

It is as well to turn from fanciful talk about "bureaucrats," and the impossibility of getting things done by private ownership, to the bright records of Socialism in action. For example, the electricity undertakings of the country are divided between municipal and private ownerships. It was shown to the Coal Commission that the municipal undertakings beat the private undertakings hollow. They employ less capital per unit; the cost of their officialdom is less per unit; the price they charge is less per unit; and so forth. The facts about these things are amusingly at variance with the philosophic conceptions of those who tell us that the thing cannot be done. Who before the war that travelled on the British and on the German railways could help seeing how much more efficiently the latter were managed? Who that knows anything of private enterprise in this country is unaware that the greater part of it is in an astounding condition of waste, extravagance, and muddle? From our racecourses to our motor establishments, from our theatres to our coalmines, and from our picture palaces to our railways we are afflicted by such appalling waste as is unknown in Government Departments anywhere. For this private muddle we had to pay in the war, and it is not surprising therefore that those who defend private industrial enterprise have not very much to say about the failure of capitalism to give us shells, or guns, or optical glass, or high explosive, or chemicals.

I propose in the further articles of this series to give instance after instance of what public enterprise accomplished after private enterprise had failed. I think this will be more useful than merely offering contradictions of statements as to what might happen if something were attempted. After all, a good deal has been actually done.

ENFRANCHISED WOMANHOOD AND INFANT WELFARE.

II.—THE WOMAN AS WIFE.

By MARY C. D. WALTERS, A.R.San.I.

Accepting that the real foundation of infant welfare is natural inheritance, the woman's dependent position is not only an injury to herself, but reaches the child through the mother, and to it alone is due, very often, the continuance of a marriage that in the best interests of the children, as well as of both partners, were best dissolved.

"Incompatibility" may include much more than is ever put into words or comes to light of day, and though a man may be faithful in the letter, he may yet subject his wife to nameless indignities and much bodily suffering, because the divorce law, as it stands at present, is unsuited to the changed opinions of to-day.

The wife who has means of her own, or is capable of returning to work and earning not only her own independence, but also of providing amply and satisfactorily for the care of her child in her absence, has the power to command a substantial amount of consideration from her husband, nor will he press his rights over wife and child under the law unduly. Far otherwise is it with the wife who has no wage-earning capacity, or who has more children than she can maintain single-handed; where an act, or acts, of unfaithfulness have been committed by the husband, or even if he has merely subjected his wife to a life of petty tyranny, but for the knowledge that she would be more helpless freed than tied, many a woman would gladly break her bonds. Given the right to a definite allowance by virtue of her motherhood, indisputably hers so long as she fulfil her duties to her

children's best interests, the wife's position would be strengthened economically and morally, to her own and their advantage. Her own children, earning their first half-crown, acquire a value in the home expressed in £ s. d. that the mother herself lacks; what wonder, then, that the mother's control over her children, at a time when they need it most, is ineffective, and that for lack of it they have fallen into dangers, the results of which are imperilling the country's safety?

Motherhood under compulsion is a wrong to all concerned, the "beauty and dignity" of motherhood is a meaningless form of words unless expressed in practical form, in the protection of the woman (apart from the mother and wife) and the child, in the sanctity of the expectant and nursing mother, and in her inalienable right to regulate the birth of her children according to her own and their health and requirements.

One of the most serious threats to woman's liberty to-day is concerned with the alarming spread of venereal disease in this country. The cost for this unsatisfactory state of things, so we gather from Dr. Addison, has leaped up from £18,000 in 1916-17 to £314,000, the estimated expenditure for the current year for "diagnosis and treatment." Whether this is met by national or local funds is of small importance, what does matter is the steadily increasing expenditure, the equally steady increase of disease which will not be misunderstood, viewed side by side with the resolution of the Society for the Prevention of Venereal Disease passed, calling upon the Ministry of Health "to instruct all qualified chemists to sell such means of self-disinfection against venereal disease as might be approved by the Ministry."* While this, like all other diseases, needs all that medical knowledge can contribute to bring about its extermination, in one point it stands alone, something over and above science is needed with which to combat it. Education on the subject has been based on the "physical necessity" lie, on moral ill-living being made possible without national ill-health resulting, if due precautions are observed. Bearing in mind the "welfare" of the man, that his "privileges" must not be infringed, nor his "natural needs" restricted, the experts have arrived at "vice with safety," and to this end have the safety and honour of the woman and the welfare of the little child been sacrificed. The nation needs children, and the venereal diseases kill and damage baby lives, so "at a London hospital a careful watch is kept in all the departments and all pregnant women who suffer from the disease are treated for it and are cured. . . . There is no danger, no pain, and no reproach in connection with this treatment. Not only is the mother saved from lifelong misery, but the helpless, innocent little victim is born in a fit condition to begin life in a wholesome natural way, and with the promise of becoming a happy and useful citizen in the years to come."† Again the controversy is revived of "should the doctor tell," and it is with these diseases more than any others that the question arises, and with it the possible serious infringement of women's liberties that the enfranchised woman must face. Leaving the physical for the moral aspect, what the nation is to depend on the quality and the training of its children. These babies, born of "treated" mothers are, some of them, of the type that for the nation's good it is least desirable to encourage; in all cases, at least one of the parents is provedly unfitted to undertake the right training of a child "to become a happy and useful citizen in the years to come." "It must be remembered that a child with a strong sexual or precocious tendency has often to thank its parents for its endowment."‡ If this be true, in every "saved" baby with a natural inheritance towards sexual precocity we are lowering the country's moral, while we can only take the expert's word for it that we are improving its physical, health.

"The race marches forward on the feet of little children," may it not also march back, and in this counting of heads only, is not the sowing time of to-day likely to bring in a harvest little short of calamitous when babies of "treated" mothers are

* *Daily News*, July 3rd, 1920.

† *Daily News*, February 26th, 1919.

‡ "Towards Racial Health," Norah March.

destined to fill the gaps made by the destruction in the war of the very flower of the nation's young manhood? Have not those who survived a duty, which under the "education" of the medical experts they are only too evidently forgetting—that of regarding themselves as the custodians of the future? Women, women doctors above all, must call upon the Ministry of Health to adopt another policy than that which is so gross a failure. By their enfranchisement women have acquired the right, they dare not refuse the duty, of protesting against the injustice that causes, and will cause, it to fail always.

PRISONERS ON REMAND.

By S. MARGERIE FRY.

One of the first duties of the newly appointed women J.P.s will be to enquire into the conditions under which prisoners, and particularly women prisoners, are confined before trial in police cells. This is, of course, more important in country districts than in the large towns, where a prisoner on remand is soon sent to the local prison, although even in London it often happens that a person arrested on Saturday has to spend the whole week-end in the police cell. In many cases the arrangements made are completely unsuitable. In a recent case a woman (afterwards acquitted) was kept in a police cell from Tuesday till the following Sunday. During the whole of this time she was obliged to sleep on a plank bed or shelf, without either mattress or pillow. There was no chair or other article of furniture in the cell beyond this plank; the only sanitary utensil provided for use at night was an ordinary bucket. In the daytime the sergeant's wife brought her meals, and when rung for took her to the lavatory. At night she was in the sole charge of the police constable, who looked at intervals into the cell through the spy-hole. Once a day she was allowed out to wash herself, but during the whole time she could not undress. She was unable to obtain the sanitary towels which she required, though the sergeant's wife in kindness gave her two old pieces of rag.

We give the details of this case, not because they are exceptional, but because it is a very recent occurrence, and because they include many of the points most frequently complained of. In this instance as it was summer time the prisoner does not seem to have suffered much of cold. In winter time the cells are often quite insufficiently warmed and far too few blankets allowed. It happens from time to time that women are admitted to prison seriously ill from chills or pneumonia as the result of passing one or two nights in the police cells. Complaints are also made that the police in charge of accused prisoners or prisoners on remand expect "tips" for getting the food, etc.

This matter of the police cells is by no means the most important of the reforms for which women J.P.s will have to work, but it is one which can be undertaken without delay. Of the more fundamental changes to be hoped for in our criminal administration perhaps the most important is the wider application of probation. Whilst we wait for a national organisation of probation, the amount of use that is made of this system depends entirely on the local Bench; its success depends on the personality of the Probation Officer whom they appoint, and upon the time he is able to spend upon his work. To place cases upon probation under an overworked or inefficient officer may mean that they get so little help or supervision that the proceeding is worse than useless; but judged by its results as a whole there is no doubt that we have in the probation system an instrument in the perfecting of which lies one of our best hopes of stopping the making of criminals. Advocates of shorter, sharper methods are not always aware that sixteen times as many boys return to the courts after flogging as after being placed on probation. It must always be remembered that the law allows the use of probation for adults as well as for children, and for subsequent as well as first offences.

Those who wish to learn about probation in England and elsewhere will do well to consult "The Probation System," by Cecil Leeson, himself a Probation Officer of wide experience. (P. S. King & Son).

WOMAN'S PLACE IS THE HOME.

The Housing Problem is one of the most serious of the domestic difficulties which face us to-day. We all know that it is difficult; we none of us know exactly what the difficulties are, or how they can be met. Money is said to be one, scarcity of labour another, scarcity of materials a third, contractors' rings a fourth, Government delays a fifth, and so on. It is high time that women looked into these difficulties to see if they are all real, and if so, to try and remedy them. "The Woman's Leader" proposes, therefore, to publish articles on various aspects of housing during the summer months, in order to suggest to its readers subjects for their own investigations. We shall have articles on policy and on plans, on facts and on failures, and we invite correspondence on any aspect of the question.

HOUSING HOPE DEFERRED.

Many people are heartsick with hope deferred, because of the houses which should by now have been ready for their inmates. Summer is passing, and the new houses which should have been finished in the dry days are still standing roofless. In some districts they have hardly got beyond their foundations. Elsewhere, they have only a shadowy existence in a builder's plan. This is not for lack of interest on the part of the general public, for there is hardly a parish in England that has not its committee of men and women considering the question of local housing in all its aspects. This development of interest and the widespread desire to see improvement will have far-reaching influences and carry a good augury for the future, but no amount of interest is by itself sufficient. Interest alone does not produce houses, and it is houses we want. What is the reason for hope being so long deferred? What is it that blocks the way?

Some say that the difficulty is lack of money. The liberal way in which hoardings and open spaces are placarded with appeals to invest in Housing Bonds, and demonstrations of the profits to be made by the investor, seem to indicate that money for this purpose is not to be extracted from people's pockets without a deal of coaxing. Yet this is hardly the case; no one doubts the excellence of a sound six per cent. investment, no one expects results to be achieved without money, and, as a matter of fact, subscriptions are steadily coming in. They would pour in, could we but see houses rising where houses are required. A tangible result is more convincing than scores of arguments and appeals, and we have little evidence that the money is being used. It is this and not lack of money that hinders progress. With visible proof that something was being accomplished the large sums still needed would be available.

All the authorities, from the Health Ministry downwards, tell us that housing plans are delayed on account of shortage of labour. The cessation of building during the war led to a transfer of the workers to other trades. These men have not returned, and of those who enlisted from the building trades death and disablement took a heavy toll.

At the present time there is a shortage of nearly fifty per cent. of the skilled labour immediately required. You cannot build houses by machinery; it must be by hand labour; and though there is some unemployment in the unskilled branches of the trade, there is none among men who know their job. There is a shortage of men who know their work and can be trusted to do it. The slow progress made in the production of houses is largely the consequence of that creeping paralysis—the system of "ca' canny"—which has been crippling all industry for years. It is many a day since labour worked its hardest and worked its longest from any motive whatsoever. Mr. G. H. Barnes, speaking at Wolverhampton Town Hall on the 7th June last, had to give Labour the biggest share of the blame for the neglect of housebuilding. A bricklayer, in a competition, he said, had been known to lay 2,238 bricks in a day; the average a man could quite easily lay was eight hundred; yet in practice the number daily laid did not exceed five hundred. Labour carries a very heavy share of the responsibility for the slowness with which houses are being built. Governments cannot build without materials, and the lack of materials and men is the reason why so many hundreds of approved plans lie in pigeon-holes waiting to be carried out.

Can the people who want houses do nothing to help themselves? In country districts little groups might combine and build one-storey houses with the new light materials such as are used in "Harbrow" constructions. In town areas the power of

co-operation can be brought to bear on getting property cleaned and improved. Now that landlords have power to raise rents, co-operation among tenants is more than ever necessary to get repairs effected. The landlord is not entitled to an increase unless he keeps the house in a habitable condition. Old houses, when carefully repaired and made sanitary, often provide quite as good homes as new buildings, and many people would prefer not to be turned out of a locality they have found convenient, where they are known. A great deal of London property is being thus treated in order to meet the housing famine. There is great need for bringing the pressure of public opinion to bear on this point, for landlords will not do more repairs than they are obliged, and that is often far too little for health. If committees of men and women can carry schemes for improving their parish in the future, they can also plan and carry out methods of improving its present condition. Let them take the powers offered them under the Committee appointed by the Ministry of Health to consider the principles to be followed in dealing with unhealthy areas.

"In view of the impossibility of carrying through reconstruction schemes in unhealthy areas on a large scale while the present shortage of houses exists, we recommend, as a temporary measure, that local authorities should be urged to adopt the procedure of Section 13 of the Housing Act of 1919, and purchase thereunder the lands and the dwelling-house property thereon . . . thereafter renovating, repairing, and improving the property and managing it on the Octavia Hill system."

If we must wait for new houses, we might at any rate do something to set in order those that are already in existence and capable of repair. And in the meantime, the more we can put into Housing Bonds the more chance there is of a speeding up.

L. H. Y.

HOUSING WITHOUT TEARS.

"Woman's place is the home." That we have always been taught as the A B C of every true woman's education. Only lately we have gone on to add the Q E D for ourselves, which is that if woman's place is the home, woman's business is to understand all the various rules and regulations which concern the home, and to see that they are as orderly and up to the mark as her own drawing-room.

To-day there is a great deal to learn about the actual building of the home itself. Housing problems and housing schemes are everywhere in the air, and we talk easily of Government subsidies as though they were the simplest things in the world to understand. Actually if you pin us down we understand next to nothing about them. We know that somebody can somehow get money out of the Government to build something. But further than that our information does not take us. And surely it is time that we became a little more definite in our knowledge.

We are quite right in supposing that there is Government money floating about somewhere, for building purposes. There is; but, in spite of the jokes commonly levelled at Government finance, the money is not wrapped neatly up in red tape and pigeon-holed, nor yet ladled out to the first comer, but is earmarked for practical schemes for the building of working-class houses.

It is obvious that before housing schemes can be financed by the Government, the Government must be assured that the schemes really are of a practical nature and in proper hands. The Ministry of Health, which is the Government as far as

housing is concerned, has therefore arranged that the only housing schemes (apart from those of local Municipal Councils) which shall receive the Government sanction and subsidy shall be those put forward by Public Utility Societies. Now "Public Utility Society" is a long and imposing and rather a depressingly formidable name. So that many ordinary men and women interested in the solution of the housing problem get just so far as the name and no further. Yet when you come to look into it, a Public Utility Society is no more than eight or more just such ordinary men and women, who appoint one of their number as secretary and band themselves together to form a Co-operative Society for building working-class houses.

Once formed the Public Utility Society must draw up rules for itself and prepare its housing scheme. Among the rules must be included one or two prescribed by the Ministry of Health, but in order that the technical difficulties of forming a Public Utility Society may not seem too formidable, certain housing organisations, such as the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association and the Welsh Town Planning and Housing Trust, have drawn up sets of model rules. From these bodies the Public Utility Society can obtain its rules ready-made. The rules must then be submitted to the Ministry of Health for approval.

A Public Utility Society must walk warily, too, before it plunges into the complexities of a housing scheme. The local authority is also engaged no doubt on a housing scheme, and the two schemes must not clash. But each locality has its Housing Commissioner, and to him the Public Utility Society should take its scheme and discuss with him how best it can be carried out.

These preliminaries over, the Society can begin to profit by the Government's housing offer. Both a loan and a subsidy can be obtained by the Society. The Government is ready to lend money up to three-quarters of the cost of the land and building. Interest must be paid on this loan, and the loan itself repaid by annual instalments. To help the Public Utility Society to bear this yearly burden the Government is further prepared to grant an annual subsidy. This takes the form at first of a sum of money equal to half the interest and repayment which the Society is paying to the Government, and decreases only gradually. The Government, in fact, repays itself, on behalf of the Society, a part of the loan which it has advanced.

Three-quarters of the cost of the Society's building scheme is in this way met through the Government loan. The rest of the money needed must be raised by the Society itself by the issue of shares in the scheme. But even here the Society can receive further help. The local authority has the power to give loans or make grants to Public Utility Societies, and can also give a great deal of assistance by taking up shares.

This Public Utility Society method of encouraging building offers a great opportunity for national service to those men or women citizens who have either some of their time or some of their money to spare. The crux of the housing problem is the provision of small houses for those who cannot afford to build their own houses. The Government's building schemes are stated to be for the provision of "working-class houses," but the term "working-class" is nowhere defined, and the Ministry of Health publicly hints that the words will be made to cover much. The Government, in fact, is in a mood to be generous. It is as anxious as are the homeless to see building begun and as impatient of delay. But Rome was not built in a day, and a nation cannot be housed in a hurry. So we must needs go slowly.

INEZ M. FERGUSON.

Readers of THE WOMAN'S LEADER who were interested in the article on the "Works and Aims of the Association of Women House Property Managers" in last week's issue should not fail to obtain a copy of the last number of "Housing" (published at His Majesty's Stationery Office, price 3d.). The leading article, entitled "The Management of Property," assures us that "little is done except by the Association of Women House Property Managers, who have rendered such admirable service in redeeming unfit property."

AFTER-WAR ACTIVITIES OF CANADIAN WOMEN.

By KENNETH M. HAIG.

The war activities of women in Canada did not so spectacularly differ from their peace activities as was the case with women across the seas. Great Britain during the war was thrown back on pioneer days, and saw a participation of women in the world of work which is, to some extent, a commonplace in Canada.

In politics the Canadian woman has come to stay; the Federal Act enfranchising women was passed in 1918. Women are enfranchised on the same terms as men, and they are also eligible for the Dominion House. Before the Federal Parliament took action several of the provinces had already enfranchised their women citizens. Quebec stands alone in still denying women the vote. Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan have elected women to their Provincial Legislatures and there is no doubt that the Federal election list will include women's names. The Agrarian Party, the strongest single force in Canadian politics to-day, has always declared for women's suffrage, and the other big parties show a tendency to court the women's vote. There is no inclination to form a woman's party. Women differ in their opinions, ideals, and policies; they do not wish to introduce sex divisions into politics, and the fact that the agitation for the suffrage was carried on by leagues containing both men and women, and that the struggle was neither prolonged nor embittered, has checked the growth of any sex antagonism in the past. But though there is no woman's party, several powerful organisations of women exercise great influence on both domestic and foreign relations. The rural districts show more consciousness of their new position, and the Agrarian or Farmers' Party, gives its women members a vote in the general organisation, whether they meet in a special women's section or not. Saskatchewan has ten thousand women in its women's section, Alberta four thousand five hundred, and Manitoba three thousand. Even in these provinces there is a strong tendency to abolish women's sections and meet in general convention; but women hang back from this movement (which was initiated by men), being afraid of trusting their special interests, such as public health work, to sections where property interests are tenderly regarded. One of the five members of the Council of Agriculture must be a woman.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTES.

The Federation of Women's Institutes is, under the presidency of Mrs. Murphy, a judge of the Juvenile Court, and Dominion President of the Canadian Women's Press Club. At its first convention, held this year, the Federation recorded a hundred thousand members. The National Council of Women takes a less conspicuous place now that the franchise is secured, but it has a comprehensive programme of social and legislative reform in the direction of equality between men and women, and equalisation of social conditions. The Imperial Order, Daughters of the Empire, has thousands of members and aims at inculcating patriotism. The Canadian Red Cross, which has many women members, is making plans for peace-time service. The Victorian Order of Nurses and the Y.W.C.A. have set themselves to their tasks with fresh energy since the war.

CANADIAN CLUBS.

Every Canadian town of any size has both a men's and a women's Canadian Club, chiefly "listening bodies," summoned from time to time to hear selected speakers. In addition

to these organisations are the newly-formed University Women's Federation and many provincial organisations giving important service. Since the war the Federal and Provincial Governments have shown a disposition to call conferences of women for consultation upon phases of national policy. The Canadian Council of Immigration of Women is an instance in point. Canadian women are anxious to encourage the immigration of British women and are determined that they shall not be exploited.

EDUCATION.

The National Council of Education, which took its rise in last autumn's Conference on Character Education, is an investigating and advisory body consisting of both men and women. Women take a large part in administrative work connected with education, and the teaching profession is largely recruited from women. Equal pay for men and women teachers has been accepted in the larger cities of Alberta and elsewhere, and the principle is growing in favour.

INDUSTRY AND PROFESSIONS.

Organisation among industrial women is in its infancy in Canada, which has hardly seven thousand women members of trade unions. Still, one of the prominent delegates to this year's Trades and Labour Congress was a woman, and the Provincial Organisation of Ontario has chosen a woman as first vice-president. Along with the question of collective bargaining comes the related questions of equal pay for equal work, and of equal opportunities as between men and women. These questions have not become acute in Canada, doubtless because competition in industry as between men and women workers is not yet at all keen. However, there is being strongly evidenced a growing feeling for recognition along this line, and interest is extensive on the part of the women and of the employers of labour as well. Replying to a query for data the Deputy Minister of Labour for the Federal Government points out that there is naturally no consensus of opinion, but states that "information reaching the department does not seem to indicate any strong feeling contrary to the principle of equal pay for equal work."

Perhaps the most reaching enactment with regard to women in industry is the establishment of minimum wage boards. These are now in existence in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec. Their *personnel* usually includes women members. Manitoba, the first province to establish this board, reports satisfaction with its workings to such an extent that the jurisdiction of the board has been extended to include women employed in offices and amusement places. This measure is supported by the weight of public opinion, especially that of the women, and efforts are being made to have such a board in operation in each province.

A feature of the last few years has been the number of University trained women who have taken places in employment agencies and in provincial labour departments. Beyond noting their individual success, it is too early to adjudge what effect this may have on the inter-relations of the industrial and of the professional women.

So far as war impetus is concerned it appears to have affected women in relation to the professions more than in relation to industry. As regards agriculture, the basic industry and profession of the Dominion, the result is not so spectacular as are the stories which reach here of the Land Army of Great Britain. But Canada also had its land army, which did noteworthy service, especially in the fruit-growing districts of Eastern Canada and of British Columbia. So far as the prairie farms are concerned there was, and is, no considerable movement on the part of women to enter this field. Women in Canada can only be said to be in the interested stage. They have asked that homestead rights be conferred upon women on the same terms as men and also that women be granted the opportunity of benefitting by

farm loan schemes on equal terms with men. But women have not seriously regarded agriculture as a profession.

The courses given at the agricultural colleges are in the generality of cases open to women students exactly as to men. These colleges usually give a degree in Home Economics, as well as in Agriculture, and now and again a woman student appears who elects to take what is usually termed the "men's" course. One notable example of these latter is Miss Margaret Newton, now employed by the research department of the Federal Government studying diseases of grains.

Women entered the banks in large numbers during the war and have made good in this profession. The returning men have not dispossessed them, the increase of business being sufficient to employ both. Banking heads generally profess themselves as satisfied with the women clerks and opportunities of advancement have not been withheld.

In all the provinces of Canada, with the exception of Quebec, women are eligible to become lawyers, and during the last two or three years a few women have entered this profession. Ontario has some women practising. Their entrance into the profession is now being taken as a matter of course.

Medicine, especially since the war, is attracting women in large numbers. In Manitoba University alone, out of a freshman class in the medical faculty of two hundred, thirty are young women. McGill University, faculty of medicine, is now open to women, and throughout Canada opportunities are extended to women on the same terms as to men. In several of the cities women doctors are the heads of the medical inspectorate of schools, and each staff includes a woman doctor. The allied professions of chemist and dentist are also receiving an influx of women members.

There is in Canada a serious shortage of nurses and also of probationers for the hospital training schools. The drain on the supply of trained nurses caused by the war, the opening up of many other professions, the insistent call of the United States for Canadian nurses, the opening up of the country, and the growing demand for trained nurses for public welfare and health services are the chief causes of the deficiency.

Several provinces have State registration of nurses. In some the University provides a course for nurses in public welfare work. British Columbia has a plan for the affiliation of the hospital training school with the University. Women have done good work as librarians, and in the Press their opportunities have been enlarged by the war and they are holding their ground.

The most unique figure among Canadian women journalists judged by class of work is Miss E. Cora Hind, Agricultural Editor of the *Manitoba Free Press*. Miss Hind is well known throughout the whole of Canada as an authority equally at stock fairs and as a crop expert. During the growing season she makes extensive journeys by rail and motor throughout the vast wheat plains, and her reports published at intervals are eagerly watched for by the business world both of Canada and the United States.

CURRENTS OF THOUGHT.

The outline so far given of the attitude towards the life of Canadian women has been chiefly such as expresses itself through organised activity. But larger even than this are the currents which affect all women citizens. There never has been any strong feeling in Canada directed towards confining women to certain lines of thinking and of service. A pioneer country does not allow for that. The community of service between men and women has, of course, been widened and deepened by the war experience. Thus it cannot be said that there are any social or political questions which are "women's questions." However, there are certain topics which retain an overwhelming interest for the Canadian woman citizen. These are education, public health, which includes child welfare and Canadianisation.

THE OPENED GATES.

By E. M. GATE.

He noticed with bewilderment that she went alternately red and white while she worked, and had a general air of a timid but plucky woman on a visit to the dentist. It gave him a distinct impression that she was engaged in some sort of experiment, but he had no notion what it might be, and in increasing perplexity he glanced at her work and exclaimed with pleasure. Miss Esther was more than good "at that sort of thing"; her work was beautiful. She had made a study of the rocks beneath with the waves meeting and interlacing in intricate patterns of foam and bubble; it was slightly conventionalised, and the line work was very fine and delicate. As he watched she framed the little picture in four thick lines, outlined a tablet immediately below and inscribed her name rapidly—"Esther Thomson"—in beautiful Gothic characters, in themselves a decoration. Then she looked at him almost with anxiety.

"You have extraordinary facility," he said admiringly.

"You think so?" she said, and immediately wrote her name again in a fresh and beautiful script.

"Almost equal to Jim the Penman, is it not?" she said.

"Jim the Penman!" he exclaimed. "You should have been born six centuries ago and spent your days illuminating missals."

"I have no doubt it would have been better for me," she said, and he looked at her worn hands and wondered what had been her life in her prison-house, and why the shadow of it lay across her now.

"But not for me," he said stoutly. "Who would have bound up my wrist and saved my Horace?" She laughed at that. "By-the-bye," she said, "do not allow Horace to lead you into a similar mishap to-morrow, for I am going into Penzance."

"I have business I want to do in Penzance myself," he said hopefully, and was disappointed when she did not offer to drive him in. It was to be a day of disappointment it seemed; Miss Esther was aloof and difficult, and reminded him of a sick bird, which, disillusioned with freedom, had voluntarily returned to its cage; from the safe entrenchments of her reserve she eyed him warily and was not to be enticed out by any art. It did not improve matters when she produced "John Inglesant" and laid it upon her lap with every appearance of wishing to be left in peace. He was not disposed, however, to be driven out without a blow.

"That is a book that wears well," he remarked. "You have doubtless read it more than once."

"No," she said composedly. "I was reading it at the time when—I had to give up all reading."

He returned to Many Waters justly aggrieved with the universe.

Next morning, however, found him where he had no business to be—seated on the St. Leven 'bus, mutinously pursuing Miss Esther into Penzance. He spent an hour in festival spirits examining the shops and deciding where to lunch, and another dismal hour deciding that he had missed her. Supposing she had not come at all! As this cold thought sank into his mind he caught sight of her in the last place in the world he would have thought to see her—coming out of the police station. She was looking sick and white, and he went forward hastily.

"This is an unfriendly act, Miss Esther," he said, "and amounts to a declaration of war. What have I done that you would not use me to spare you this visit?"

"It was nothing," she said, rather faintly. "A small loss, too significant to trouble you about."

She showed no disposition to say more about it. Alexander, however, did not take it so calmly, though he showed nothing, and he gave her his arm through the market place with a dignity which was his way of expressing an extreme longing to knock someone down for her sake. And half divining it she gratefully accepted his invitation to a superlative lunch, stepping out

bravely from the shadows which lurked behind her formal barriers, and allowing herself as much freedom of enjoyment as he had ever seen her display. So they finished the day in triumph, turning an afternoon's shopping into a festival; and two rode home in the jingle one had driven out.

Miss Esther made no more efforts to keep him at arm's length; they returned to the pleasant companionship of the cliffs, unaffectedly glad of each other. The sun was kind to them, the sea was blue and the land a Paradise; they lived in a sort of Ariel's Isle of sounds and sweet smells, and confessed it a world of enchantment.

"And wherever you go," said Alexander, "the air smells of balm and spices—bay-leaves to be exact."

"My mother used to flavour her custards with bay-leaves," said Miss Esther.

"That's the good old-fashioned way," he said. "But it seems a lost art. Myself, I would exchange a peck of little bottles full of essences for one bay-tree in my garden. But that," said he, "brings me back to a mystery; the air may be drenched with odours, but there is not a bay-tree for miles."

Miss Esther reached her hand to pluck a dingy morsel of herbage.

"There's the good herb that repays you for trampling on it."

"The despised mayweed," he said, with his pleasant, whimsical smile, and took it from her and crushed it in his fingers, snuffing contentedly at the aromatic leaves and letting his mind wander off into a daydream. He must have wandered very far or he would never have so forgotten himself, for the next thing he said was: "When we are married, Esther, we will have a bay-tree in the garden and custard for dinner every Sunday." And Miss Esther must have forgotten herself, too, for what she said was, "Oh, my God!" and then, "Never, never, never!"

She stumbled to her feet, white as paper, and fled away from him up the cliffs, and he saw pretty clearly that his Paradise was in ruins. The day was ending when at length he returned desolately to Many Waters and shut himself in his room.

The mistress of Many Waters may justly boast, as she pleases, that it was respect for herself rather than her irreproachable cookery that drew him downstairs again that night to make pretence of a meal. After supper he put his hand in his pocket for his slighted Horace and, as though retribution waited on neglect, drew out instead Miss Esther's copy of "John Inglesant." He turned it over with a curious sense of numbness and opened it idly; just inside was a book-plate, beautiful and intricate in design, in effect like a fine etching. The light being bad he held it nearer the lamp, and saw it to be a pen-and-ink drawing of her own handiwork. Suddenly the name leapt to his eye—Hester Thomason. Her very name, then, was disguised; as it dawned upon him he realised the labyrinth of mystery in which he had been living of late and became violently desirous to hew his way out. At the same moment the remembrance of Miss Esther's air of disciplined calm grew suddenly hateful; what had it screened? He repeated the damning name to himself—Hester Thomason, Hester Thomason. It was familiar beyond the mere allusiveness of her assumed names, and his brain raged up and down the galleries of memory seeking the way out. Suddenly he found it; the Thomason's Case, a *cause célèbre* of some years ago. And Hester Thomason had been a charmingly pretty young woman then, and they had sent her to penal servitude.

And then he thought of poor Miss Esther's hands, and her sad little confession: "The fact is, I have been in prison."

It was a real prison, after all.

He stopped raging, and set himself to think it out soberly. It had been a case of forgery; the nephews and nieces of a defunct merchant had fallen out among themselves with the usual

acrimony over his property. One of those nieces had kept house for her uncle, that same Hester Thomason of whose skill with pen and ink he had such good evidence before him. He remembered it had been mentioned at the trial that she was the most gifted of a family all talented, and with a start he recollected Miss Esther sitting on the cliffs with a piece of Bristol board deliberately offering him evidence against herself, and wondered how on earth the drift of that experiment had escaped him. Being honest, he confessed it was because he had believed in her and could not have imagined evil of her. Honesty drove him further; notwithstanding twelve good men and true, he still believed in her; she was a good woman. The remembrance of how she had tried to preserve her aloofness, the barriers of formality she erected between them, her pitiful attempts to enlighten him as to herself brought the tears to his eyes. No false modesty prevented his realising that he had become as precious to her as she to him, and she must have gone in perpetual fear of shamefully losing him at any chance discovery. As the true inwardness of her visit to the police station dawned upon him—the enforced pilgrimage of the ticket-of-leave woman—the blood drummed in his ears and he saw red. He forced himself to think back to the Thomason case.

A will had been propounded by Hester's brother, dividing the property between himself and his sister; though a short, informal document, it appeared duly attested and as tight as an Act of Parliament. But while a chorus of cousins chanted "Undue influence," one, more astute, brooded upon the fact that both the witnesses were dead, and looked further. When the ugly word "forgery" was once uttered they had not far to look for one to fasten it upon; there was Hester with her uncanny skill living in the house. So Hester went to prison; she had reason for her air of discipline and habit of silence.

So Alexander found himself nearing the door of his labyrinth; the wind blew fresh upon his face, but there were a few more steps to grope. It had been testified against her that for weeks previous to her uncle's death she had locked herself in her room over some work in which her pen and ink had part. What that work was she would never say; her own counsel could get no more from her than that "it had nothing to do with the matter in hand," and gave her up in a huff. Her brother escaped with a few judicial strictures and even got some sympathy from the public outside his own family; they, however, could not forget how nearly they had been defrauded.

But Hester had kept her secret, guarded it for years in her prison, a matter for locked doors to the end. Alexander, groping painfully in conjecture, had to own that she alone held the key. It was characteristic of him that he scarcely paid the tribute of contempt to the solution proffered by the twelve good men and true; instinctively he knew it to be an impossible one. There remained the question—would she give him the key? He snatched up his hat and ran out into the night, hurrying through moonlit lanes, scrambling over stiles and getting scratched with brambles, disturbing tranquil beasts chewing the cud and scandalising watch-dogs at the farms, but not for one moment did it occur to him to wait for morning. Suppose either of them should die in the night before the key could turn in the lock! He ran down the path that led to her cottage overlooking the bay, and saw her bedroom window lit up and scurrying shadows on the blind; she was packing for flight. He thought the beating of his heart must have drowned the scrunching of the gravel as he strode to her door and knocked. He heard her quick steps on the hard stairs, then she was standing before him with all her piteous restraint broken down, and the marks of tears about her eyes.

"Oh, Hester, oh, my love!" he said, and took her in his arms.

He found the key of his mystery floating miraculously, as it were, upon the face of the waters. The floods of her tears unlocked, brought at once healing and the strangest enlightenment, for poor Hester, sobbing out her griefs upon his heart, sobbed out the last and cruellest of them.

"It does seem so hard," she said, "that you were not my

first love. You should have had the first and best of my life before trouble broke and marred me."

In gasps she told him. At the time of her dreadful ordeal she was actually engaged to be married, but at the first breath of public scandal the man had shaken her off.

"I couldn't defend myself after that," she said. "I simply didn't care; it was as though something had died within me. I couldn't even feel anything very particular about him after awhile; he might just as well never have existed."

"Thank God for that," said Alexander fervently. And she told him shamefacedly what had been her occupation behind those damning locked doors. As some maids embroider sweet thoughts in their wedding garments, Hester had prepared herself a complete set of book-plates in her new name. "I burnt the lot in the first rage of grief," she said, "and afterwards I could not have told about it for a ransom."

Alexander gathered his love to him with the contentment of a man who has snatched treasure out of the pit.

"And did you ever know—?" he asked.

"Oh yes," said Hester tranquilly. "I knew almost from the first; it was my brother. I'm afraid he is a poor thing—he couldn't even have it out with me himself. He sent his wife to me to buy his safety with the parade of her weakness. And I didn't care twopence." She turned her wet ball of a handkerchief over in her hand. "You don't, you know," she said, "when all your dearest hopes fall down dead."

Then suddenly she began to laugh. "We'll have that bay-tree after all," she said, "and custard for dinner every Sunday." And what he said to that is nobody's business.

And as to what the Robinson family said when they heard of it, a volume would not contain it. Neither is it of any particular importance, because for Alexander also certain gates had opened.

THE END.

THIRTY-FIVE.

Square-shouldered, square-browed lassies of to-day,
Bobbed hair and cigarettes and motor bikes,
Strong voices to express your strong dislikes —
I watch you striding by to work or play.
I understand, I sympathise; and yet
My own roots they were set
In a strange world, incredible to you.
I've lived a century through!
Listen: I can remember that small, flat,
Tip-tilted sailor hat;
The long and sweeping skirts, tight-waisted dresses,
Curled fringes, braided tresses.
Lawn tennis, croquet; cycles were too daring
An innovation; grandma's daily airing
In a landau behind two fat, sleek horses,
Petrol and Mr. Ford being unknown forces.
Yea, I have known that summons from afar:
"Look! Quick, don't miss it! That's a motor car!"

The voice of G.B.S. had not been heard;
Our poor, mild novelists, whose strongest word
Was "d—n" (for "damn") were censored by Mama,
And newspapers were censored by Papa!
But . . . all the same, we had intelligence,
Nor lacked for common sense.
We even boasted "brains."
We travelled in slow trains
And antiquated liners, league on league;
We could endure great physical fatigue,
Long hours of study, insufficient meals,
Restrictions that no modern maiden feels.
"Woman shall always smile and never tire;
Shall not confess fear, hunger, nor desire,
Boredom nor temper, restlessness nor greed—"
That was our simple and our Spartan creed.
In short, it was less good to be alive
At fifteen than it is at thirty-five!
I am of two worlds; one is far away;
One romps and rags around me every day.
A holder world, a healthier world, and yet . . .
Lest you forget, my dears, lest you forget . . .

MADGE MEARS.

REVIEWS.

Problems of Population and Parenthood. Being the Second Report and the chief evidence taken by the National Birth-rate Commission, 1918-1920. (Chapman & Hall, 25s.)

The National Birth-rate Commission's Second Report is based on evidence taken during twenty-seven sittings in 1918 and 1919. Its terms of reference were as follows:—

- To consider:
1. The extreme and persistent fall of the legitimate birth-rate in the United Kingdom, and the causes and prevention of the illegitimate birth-rate.
 2. The influence of ante-natal disease and death in the decline of the birth-rate, and the causes of foetal death in labour or near full term.
 3. The contemporary movements of population in the Dominions, and the proportional distribution of the sexes throughout the Empire.
 4. The economic problems of parenthood in view of the rise of prices and taxation and their possible solutions.
 5. The housing problems in relation to parenthood.
 6. The present spread of venereal disease, the chief cause of sterility and degeneracy, and the further menace of these diseases during demobilisation.
 7. The increased industrial employment of women of child-bearing age.
 8. The differential or qualitative aspects of the present birth-rate.
 9. The constitution and uses of the coming Ministry of Health as an instrument of racial reconstruction.
 10. The need of a census immediately after the war, and of a permanent anthropometric department in the Ministry of Health.

The Commission as reconstituted took very little statistical evidence, but expressed the opinion that more, and more varied, statistical data were required for the solution of the problems before it, and after hearing evidence from Professor Arthur Keith and from Dr. T. H. C. Stevenson, Superintendent of National Statistics, passed unanimous resolutions in favour of a permanent Anthropometric Department under the Ministry of Health and of the establishment of a General Register, linking the National Register, Food Register, Electoral Registers, School Attendance Registers, Sickness and Unemployment Registers, and many others, and providing for the first time satisfactory data of the population which would form a kind of six-monthly census. If this source of statistical information were available many questions which at present are matters of debate among experts as among laymen and women could be definitely decided. It was also recommended that the usual decennial censuses of Great Britain and other parts of the Empire should be simultaneous, and that the data collected should be identical everywhere, and also that an enquiry should be initiated into the relation of the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish religions to the birthrate.

A great deal of evidence was taken on the voluntary restriction of the birthrate, and an agreement was come to on several points. No persons likely to transmit serious disease should have children; "prevention" must be taken in the strict meaning of the word, and not stretched to include destruction of life at however early a pre-natal stage; no preventive means harmful to potential parents and possible children should be used; parenthood should not be refused for purely selfish reasons; it should be the duty of society to remove disabilities imposed on worthy parenthood; sound instruction on the duties, responsibilities, and privileges of parenthood should be given to young persons.

Here agreement ceases. Twelve members of the Commission, among whom are Mrs. Scharlieb and Mrs. Clay, feel morally bound to reprobate the use of contraceptives, and eleven disclaim approval also of "all unnatural modifications of marital association." Four, among them Dr. Marie Stopes and Lady Willoughby de Broke, express preference of contraceptives before other methods of limitation. The remaining sixteen apparently maintain an open mind as to method if limitation should be attempted for good reason. But the closing words of this section of the Report, with their hope that the new women voters "may as a mass bring pressure to bear upon individual selfishness and ignorance," and their insistence on "the palpable truth that the greatness of an Empire . . . consists in the multitude of healthy men and women who will enable it to maintain its position and influence among the nations," indicate that a theoretic agreement that birth-control is morally justifiable

is overridden by the conviction that it is not at the present time justified unless in exceptional cases.

An important section of the Report, that on ante-natal mortality, sets forth the causes of this check on the effective birth-rate as practically identical with the known causes of infant mortality. Ante-natal mortality is nearly four times as great, according to expert opinion, as mortality in the first year after birth. Here again statistical information is insufficient and should be supplemented. Venereal disease in one or both parents is an important factor in pre-natal and early post-natal mortality; and the Commission records its opinion that chastity is the only effectual safeguard against disease, but that any citizen who has exposed himself or herself to venereal infection has the urgent duty of seeking instant disinfection. It feels that the State should make a trial of compulsory notification and treatment, "provided that there should be no return to the principle of the C.D. Acts." A good deal of evidence on the other racial poison, alcoholism as affecting the birth-rate, led the Commission to recommend strongly the continuance as a permanency of the State control of the liquor traffic.

The call for legislative and administrative reform by the Commissioners took two main lines. First, for some form of family endowment or rebate on the taxation of married persons with children, and, secondly, for a reform of the marriage laws, which should put an end to the virtual celibacy of separated couples who are refused divorce and debarred from re-marriage. The Commission states the need for reform of the marriage law, and recommends that a distinction between the religious rite and the legal contract should be recognised. It is of opinion that a child should be legitimised by the marriage of its parents, that there should be sex equality with regard to divorce, and that the Divorce Court should pay special regard to the interests of children.

Though the Commission took a good deal of evidence on schemes for family endowment as affecting the birthrate, it did not feel able to recommend any of them, looking on the matter as one which demands further enquiry. "If, however, a plan could be devised by which a reasonable provision . . . would be made for the widows of men in civil employment who are left with young children, and even for the wives in like circumstances," they would regard it with sympathy.

The Dark Ages. By Reginald Berkeley, in "To-day and To-morrow."

"The great European Desert covers practically the whole of that Continent; its trackless wastes of infertility having to this day defied the ability of agricultural chemists to neutralise the deadly chemicals with which the soil is still impregnated. This is the penalty which Europeans paid for the arrogance of their rulers and the self-seeking of their peoples." These portentous words were written by one Ming Ting, a famous Chinese archaeologist who, hundreds of years after Western civilisation had rotted away, was occupied in excavating amongst the ruins of London with the object of discovering the cause of the catastrophe which occurred in the first half of the present century. The unearthing of a rusty safe containing a mutilated manuscript afforded the information sought. This document described the failure of Governments after the "Great War" to put into practice the ideals of peace, of constitutionalism, of constructive hope afforded by the scheme of the League of Nations, and the effect of this failure on the working man who, expectant of a new world, found rampant the "same old damnable idols of imperialism and greed which had caused the war." How a class war commenced; how, aided by scientific research, it raged till it burnt itself out in the depopulation and desolation of a continent can be read in Reginald Berkeley's powerful story in the current issue of "To-day and To-morrow," which tells in vivid language of the fate of those unhappy European races "whose inventive capacity and efficiency had outgrown their moral sense."

Nor must we read this with the amused incredulity accorded to fiction. Behind the apparent impossibility there must grow a haunting fear that it is a prophecy which has every chance of coming true unless we make up our minds that we can and must prevent it. The machinery is there, it is the result of the criminal apathy of the man in the street that our representatives are not being forced into making the best possible use of it before it is too late.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE JUVENILE COURTS BILL.

MADAM,—Apparently Miss S. M. Fry and I regard the Juvenile Courts Bill from different angles. To me it appears a matter concerning children. Miss Fry regards it as affecting the position of women at least as much—a point of view the more easily to be understood by those who differ from her when it is seen that her name appears in the list of Women Justices on page 554 of your issue of July 23rd. The point at issue, however, is not the fitness of women to become magistrates or J.P.s, but the effect upon juvenile offenders, and on juvenile crime generally, of the proposed drastic alterations of a system which has worked for some years with striking success. The changes are approved by none of those immediately concerned, whose opinion, as experts in this particular branch of social work, cannot be dismissed quite without attention.

The Lord Chancellor's golden apple was skilfully thrown with the intention of distracting women from the main points at issue and thus securing their support, or, at least, their neutrality. So long as women persist in looking at every political and social issue primarily, if not entirely, from the feminist standpoint, so long will their judgment be at fault, and they will continue to be at the mercy of any plausible bait held out by male hands.

If Miss Fry will discuss the Children's Courts Bill with those who are concerned with the Children's Courts, and are therefore competent to judge, she may possibly gain some fresh light on the matter.

E. M. E.

AMRITSAR.

MADAM,—I hope you will allow me to reply to the letters about Amritsar in your issue of July 30th. I maintain still, that this question is not one which justifies your having taken a side. It has raised much heated controversy, and a very large section of opinion considers that the Government has acted wrongly, while European opinion in India, both of men and women, is evidently overwhelmingly on the side of General Dyer. Another piece of evidence of this is a cablegram sent this week from the European Association in India, as follows: "Please inform Press of European satisfaction here at result of Dyer debate in the House of Lords, and convey our congratulations to General Dyer on his conviction."

Those who are on General Dyer's side do not by any means unanimously uphold all that he did, or all that he said, but all consider that he was placed in an extraordinarily difficult position, and that the Government has refused to face the true seriousness of the situation.

Miss Picton-Turbervill says that "There was nothing even in the evidence of Government witnesses to lead to the belief that the Punjab was on the eve of an organised rebellion." The Hunter Committee were evidently not convinced of this, as they say:—

"In the situation as it presented itself day by day, there were grounds for the gravest anxiety. It was difficult, probably unsafe, for the authorities not to assume that the outbreak was the result of a definite organisation. Apart from the existence of any deeply-laid scheme to overthrow the British, a movement had started in rioting, and had become a rebellion, might have rapidly developed into a revolution."

I have heard repeatedly that the authorities in India were extremely uneasy about the state of affairs at that time, and the events which occurred were by no means unexpected.

Many of those who defended General Dyer, though they may think that his measures were too strong, take his side because they think that the Government has grossly mishandled the situation. They find cause for complaint in the constitution of the Hunter Committee, and in the fact that the Government of India did not undertake the inquiry itself.

It seems to me that the whole affair has been made worse by prejudice and misunderstanding on both sides. It is natural that we should feel indignant at any conduct which we can term "Prussianism," and no one wants unnecessary cruelty. The difficulty is, that we have been so carried away by the repellent accounts of what happened at Amritsar, that some have lost sight of other considerations.

The point raised by Miss Picton-Turbervill, *viz.*, that General Dyer did not warn the crowd that he was going to fire, seems to me to be more technical than real. The majority of the Committee say that they thought it "distinctly improbable that the crowd (in the Jellianwallah Bagh) would have dispersed upon notice being made that they should do so, and much more likely that recourse to firing would have been necessary to secure obedience to his proclamation."

We must remember also, that military officers are only human after all, and they are capable, like others, of making errors of judgment. In any future rebellion, the officer in command will be tempted to consider, not what measures he ought to take, but what measures he dare take, and unless he is lucky enough to have a perfect judgment, what will happen if he does not take strong measures enough? Let all your readers ask themselves this question. The Government is putting its military and civilian servants in India into a very difficult position, which they are feeling very keenly indeed. I have come across very much discontent among Anglo-Indian friends, and I do not consider them to be exceptionally inhuman.

We are all entitled to our own views upon the Amritsar question, but we can form them from other sources than from THE WOMAN'S LEADER, and I think that this paper should remain impartial in matters of this kind. My letter of protest of July 23rd was directed against the fact of your having taken a side. I do not wish to make a full statement of the case for General Dyer, and I do not think that THE WOMAN'S LEADER is a fit and proper place for a statement of this nature. I have merely endeavoured to answer some of the points that are raised in this week's issue, and to point out that wide difference of opinion exists upon this question.

M. LAWSON-TANCRED.

The Story of the Siren. By E. M. Forster. (Printed by L. & V. Woolf, at the Hogarth Press, Paradise Road, Richmond, 2s. 6d. net.)

"Few things have been more beautiful than my note-book on the Deist Controversy as it fell downward through the waters of the Mediterranean."

At the opening sentence of Mr. Forster's newly-published but not (we should guess) new story, we step back into the miraculously clear, living atmosphere of "The Story of a Panic" and "The Road to Colonus." And, whether because the true and the beautiful are one and the same, or whether because there is a peculiar magic in Mr. Forster's imaginative, terse, ironic prose, or whether simply because Mr. Forster is an artist, that note-book is as real to us as the most vivid moments of our own life, and not only the note-book, but the "I" who owns the note-book, and to whom the Sicilian boatman tells the story of the Siren, the boatman, and his brother Giuseppe, the hero of the story, of whom we only hear. And what is strange is that the Siren, whom no person in this story, but only the dead Giuseppe, has seen, becomes, by means of this third-hand knowledge, not less but more real to us. The force of the boatman's unquestioning belief in what happened to his brother, communicating itself to the chronicler, is passed on to us almost without comment and without being diminished. This is Mr. Forster's achievement. He knows where to stop; he knows what not to say. Everyone who, opening the covers of "The Celestial Omnibus," opened to themselves the doors of "Other Kingdom," must hasten to buy this attractive, thin, blue book.

RECENT VERSE.

Aurelia and Other Poems. By Robert Nichols. (Chatto & Windus. 5s.)

The sonnet-sequence which gives its name to this book inevitably by its manner challenges comparison with the greatest of its forerunners; and the result of the comparison is more damning to Mr. Nichols than his idylls "Seventeen" and "The Sprig of Lime" would have led one to expect. Shakespeare's density of thought and concentration of passion fill every chink and cranny of his sonnets, so that the silken net of the verse is stiff and strong with its contents. But Mr. Nichols' net hangs loose, insufficiently filled.

"Seeing your eyes I know where sorrow is,
So steadfastly they contradict your youth,
So ag'd a blue tincts their drugged irises,
So blank are the pupils fixed on deadly truth.
Who gave you these most terrible of eyes,
That never, never, never know to weep,
That have become my life's unputting spies,
Nor sleep themselves nor suffer me to sleep?"

And so, competently but unconvincingly, through "When the proud World does most my world despise," and

"Your evil heart is grained with so much good,
Or your good heart is grained with so much evil."

to the final sonnet where the poet changes his model and echoes a different masterpiece, "Modern Love."

No; for Mr. Nichols' best we must turn back to the "Idylls," or on to the simplicity of "The Consummation" and the lyrics on pp. 58, 64, 65, 68, and 94. In the "Idylls" he is a rich, varied, and masterful writer; one understands why the middle-aged have chosen him as the one modern poet whom they approve. He is "in the tradition"; his antecedents are recognisable. This involves a certain derivativeness, and seldom is there a poem quite free of echoes; but still there is a great deal that is both fine and Mr. Nichols' own. The freer forms of the Idyll and the lyric suit him; he moulds them to his content, instead of padding at his content to fill a form, as in the sonnets.

E. B. C. J.

AMRITSAR—A CORRECTION.

MADAM,—By an accident in printing the word "are" was substituted for "were" in the concluding paragraph of my letter to you last week. I should be sorry to have been guilty of such an incorrect statement as that the German people *are* not "the enfranchised citizens of a democratic State." The present German constitution is perhaps the most democratic in Europe. What I did say was that they *were* not in this state of freedom at the time when they failed to protest against the sinking of the "Lusitania" and other outrages committed by the late Imperial Government.

MARGARET CLARE.

THE PLUMAGE BILL.

MADAM,—There is little use, I am afraid, in writing articles; still less in answering those who disagree with them. To Mr. Massingham my meaning is ambiguous, and my ways untruthful; to me, his meaning is plain enough but almost, if not entirely, off the point. Let me clear up some at least of my ambiguities. Not for an instant did I accuse Mr. Massingham of bias or partiality. I am wholly against the plumage trade. At the age of ten or thereabouts I signed a pledge never to wear one of the condemned feathers, and have kept the vow so implicitly that I cannot distinguish osprey from egret. Cocks, hens, parrots, and ostriches are the only birds whose feathers I recognise or wear. The huge majority of women are as ignorant and as innocent as I am. With this in my mind, I picked up the *Nation* and read the half sentimental and wholly con- temptuous phrases about "What do women care?" and "Look at Regent Street this morning!" which I quoted in my article. I have no reason to suppose that Mr. Massingham either wrote the sentences of which I complain, or approved the tone of them. But it was against them that my article, with sufficient plainness as I thought, was directed. Had I wished to attack the plumage trade I should not have lumbered my space with the statement, in that case utterly irrelevant, that men are more to be blamed for it than women. I should have stuck simply to the fact that the trade is abominable and the cruelty repulsive. But to make such a denunciation in your columns seemed to me superfluous. To denounce as forcibly as I could the injustice of Wayfarer's remark seemed, on the contrary, an odious but obvious necessity. It was with that end in view that I endeavoured to prove that in this instance men, rather than women, are to be charged with cruelty and indifference. I did not confound a statement of fact with its moral implications. To torture birds is one thing, and to be unjust to women is another, and it was, I hope, plain to some of my readers that I was attacking the second of these crimes and not the first. Thus, when Mrs. Bradley asks "Does it matter in the least to the birds so foully slain whether the blame rests most with men or women?" I reply that I am not writing as a bird, or even a champion of birds; but as a woman. At the risk of losing such little reputation for humanity as I may still possess I hereby confess that it seems to me more necessary to resent such an insult to women as Wayfarer casually lets fall than to protect egrets from extinction. That is my way of "raising the moral currency of civilised nations." But that does not mean that I have not the highest respect for Mr. Massingham's way also.

Had you placed six columns of your paper at my disposal, instead of a thousand words, I might have given some of my reasons for attaching so great, some will say excessive, an importance to a phrase in a newspaper. On some future occasion you will, perhaps, allow me to explain why it is that such phrases, common as they are, serve not merely to produce an outburst of sex antagonism, but seem to me for the more serious harm they do to deserve trouncing and denial until either they are forced down their writers' throats or justified up to the hilt. But what the effect of them is, and why the damage is so disastrous not merely to women's relations with men but to her art and her conduct are questions far too broad and too complex to broach at the tail end of a letter.

In conclusion, as I have lost my temper, caused Mr. Massingham to waste his time, and in his opinion (though I think he overrates the power of my pen) done more harm to the cause than "a round score of Miss Yateses," I should like to make whatever reparation I can. Plainly with this example of my own ambiguity as a writer before me, it would never do to write another article solely from the birds' point of view. But I will give myself the pleasure of spending whatever sum I receive for my article, not upon an egret plume, but upon a subscription to the Plumage Bill Group. With prayers to you therefore to make it as handsome as possible.

VIRGINIA WOOLF.

PLAYGROUNDS FOR BABIES.

MADAM,—I have read the article called the "Grass Plot" in your issue of July 23rd, and also the letter on "The Need for Playgrounds." I think that I know the very plot to which reference is made, and I heartily endorse the plea for those babies, and for many others. There are many such plots in London, and possibly in other towns. Now, cannot those plots be opened every weekday afternoon, save Saturday, to mothers and their children under five years? Children over five are in school, and in the holidays are able to walk with older brothers or sisters to the nearest park or recreation ground, but the mothers and babies can only go to a ground near home, because the mothers must return to prepare tea for the older children and for father, and the babies are unable to walk far.

There may be folk in the houses overlooking the grass plot, who are living there for the sake of the quiet and comparative peace and beauty of that plot, and they must be thought about. It is for that reason that only very young children should be admitted and with their mothers; older children with their boisterous games would soon destroy the grass, and then there would no longer be the said "Grass Plot," either for the babies or the onlookers, and the older children can go further.

No expense would be incurred for caretakers, as the mothers, it is now acknowledged, are the best caretakers of their own children, and should be made responsible for the condition of the grounds—who knows but what some might improve it by planting and tending flowers! In the case of a sick mother, doubtless a neighbour would take her little ones with her own, but no mother should be allowed to take more than six little ones, so that no child should be unwatched.

The occupants of the houses I am sure would not object to such a plan, for their plot would not be spoiled. Londoners are kindly folk, and I can see many of them entering into the idea with interest. A great advantage of this plan is that it might be started at once, there being no need to wait for funds, or even for voluntary workers. There are many splendid schemes for improving the life of the children but they wait for men, women and money—this need not wait. A member of a church, a chapel, a welfare society, &c., in the neighbourhood could be found willing to mind the key, and to see that the gate was opened and closed at the stated times, and that is all.

E. C. U.

THE KITCHEN RANGE.

MADAM,—Miss Madge Mears asks in her letter in to-day's *WOMAN'S LEADER* if the coke stove I advocated in my previous letter be practicable in a small house.

The first one I saw was in an eight or ten roomed semi-detached suburban house and was the joy and delight of its owner.

At that time these medium-sized stoves cost £6 or £7, and if the pipes of the kitchen were utilised and the kitchen itself sold "to defray expenses," the whole affair was not unduly expensive.

I have recently heard from a friend who got one, however, that these stoves, like other things, have gone up in price considerably.

F. A. DOUGLAS.

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION AND UNNECESSARY OPERATIONS.

MADAM,—At the present time it is more important than ever to exercise economy in hospital beds. The best way, obviously, is to reduce the number of patients waiting for admission to our hospitals.

Dr. Addison, in the House of Commons, on the 15th instant, referred to a new method of treatment which he hoped would leave our asylums half empty. Dr. Elliott, also in Parliament, recently announced that certain researches were expected to produce valuable results in the treatment of heart troubles.

Dr. Addison and Sir George Newman are responsible for the health of over 5,000,000 children. According to the latter's report for 1915, from 20 per cent. to 30 per cent. suffer from adenoids and enlarged tonsils at some period during their school life; or, say, between 100,000 and 150,000 cases every year. Arrangements have been made in 129 school areas to deal with these cases by surgical operations requiring a large number of beds in hospitals or clinics, and the services of many surgeons and nurses. Why does Dr. Addison not insist upon the resource of medical treatment being first exhausted in these cases, instead of allowing them to be ignored?

Sir George Newman published in his Report for 1913 (Cd. 7,730) certain "Indications for Operative Treatment." He has also been good enough to inform me that he quite agrees "that operations for the removal of enlarged tonsils and adenoids should not be undertaken unless absolutely necessary." The truth is that most school medical officers, and, indeed, almost all medical practitioners, recommend the excision of tonsils and adenoids as a method of preventing subsequent disease.

It is as justifiable to pull out all the teeth to prevent rheumatism, to cut out toe-joints to prevent gout, or to insist upon inoculating every child against typhoid or plague.

JOHN KYNASTON.

26, Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square, W. 1.

REPORTS.

WIDOWS' PENSIONS.

The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society took advantage of the National Catholic Congress at Liverpool, to hold a sectional meeting on widows' pensions. A resolution was carried unanimously and sent to the local M.P.'s urging the Government to establish a system of widows' pensions. The C.W.S.S. also held a public meeting on July 31st, during the Congress, on the need for women in Parliament. A resolution urging the political parties to adopt a fair proportion of women candidates at the next election, was carried unanimously. The two prospective women candidates for Liverpool constituencies, Miss Eleanor Rathbone, Independent, Mrs. Egerton Stewart Brown, Liberal, being present in the audience, the chairman, Miss de Alberti, urged everyone present to work hard to ensure their return to Parliament.

THE REPORT OF THE PENAL REFORM LEAGUE.

The Penal Reform League have just issued their quarterly report, a document unique amongst reports for its strong, emotional appeal. Among other interesting items is the new nursing scheme for prisons, for which the Prison Commissioners have obtained the authority of the Treasury. A special training school is being formed at Holloway Prison which will give six months' training to nurses who are subsequently passed on for a further three months at the London Hospital. There are now five trained nurses at Holloway, and it is the intention of the promoters of the scheme that there shall be at least one nurse at each female prison and a reserve at Holloway, in case of a sudden emergency. While this is a beginning it falls very far short of the demands of the Commissioners, who hoped that much less of the training would be given under prison conditions, and who regret that the authorities should consider a nine months' training sufficient for the prison nurses, which is "just one-quarter of the minimum demanded for qualification of a nurse." It is still hoped that women nurses will soon be admitted to all prisons, but for the present the nursing staff in men's prisons is still to be composed of men.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION.

The strength of the League of Nations Union is now 33,164. Its growth is being steadily maintained, the weekly increase for some months past having exceeded 1,000. Last week it was 1,097. There are now 250 branches and sub-branches in England and Wales; three new branches were formed last week. During the last seven days nineteen public meetings in support of the League of Nations have been delivered, some being branch meetings, some being town meetings, and some being meetings convened by existing organisations. Since the beginning of the year over 550 propaganda meetings have been held all over the country. Arrangements have been made for a summer school at Kempsey, to commence the first week in August, the programme of work including lectures by Sir Frederick Pollock, Professor Gilbert Murray, Mr. S. F. Marvin, Professor G. Lowes Dickinson, Mr. J. M. MacTavish, Gen. Sec. of the Workers' Educational Association, Capt. Burgess, F.R.G.S., and Mr. F. Whelen. A special lecture on "Belgium and the League of Nations" will be delivered by M. Emil Cammaerts on the concluding day, Saturday, August 7th. In addition to the Kempsey Summer School, the Union has arranged to send lecturers on the League to twenty-five other summer schools which are being held by various other organisations.

In addition to the above educational activities, study circles have been arranged in some of the branches, and in addition to these the Union is supervising courses on the League of Nations which are being held in the study circles of the Y.M.C.A. and the Adult School Union. In connection with these study circles a series of text-books have been prepared by Prof. Gilbert Murray, Mr. C. Delisle Burns, Mr. Norman Angell, Mr. Leonard Woolf, Mr. Arnold Toynbee, and Prof. G. Lowes Dickinson, their respective subjects being: "The League and its Guarantee," "The League and Labour," "The Economic Functions of the League," "Mandates and Empires," "The League in the East," and "The Future of the Covenant." Copies of all these pamphlets may be obtained on application to the Union, price 1s. each. Furthermore, with the object of rendering knowledge on the subject easily accessible to the student, a special bibliography covering the whole subject has been prepared and circulated to all public libraries in the country, accompanied by an appeal to them to obtain the necessary books. This appeal has already been affirmatively responded to by more than 100 libraries.

In addition it is being arranged with the various Anglo-foreign societies to place lecturers at the disposal of the Union for the purpose of visiting branches and delivering addresses upon their various nations. Lecturers are now available on America, France, Belgium, Greece, Palestine and Africa.

For the purpose of carrying the educational activities of the Union into schools and colleges the co-operation has already been secured of the Head Masters' Conference, the Head Mistresses' Association, the National Union of Teachers, the London Teachers' Association, and the Teachers' Christian Union, whilst an essay competition for school children was recently carried out.

In addition to these national activities the Union is keeping in close touch, through its various Overseas Committees, with similar Voluntary Societies in other countries. It was largely instrumental in bringing about the recent formation of Societies for a League of Nations in Hungary, Denmark, and Australia.

The headquarters of the Union has recently been reorganised for the purpose of securing even closer co-operation with other existing societies, and also with a view to effecting certain economies without loss of efficiency. Mr. J. C. Maxwell Garnett, late Principal of the College of Technology in Manchester, has recently been offered the post of General Secretary to the Union, and this offer he has accepted. He will assume his duties early in September, immediately after the summer holidays, and will be in sole executive control, subject to the Executive Committee, of all the activities of the Union.

Lord Cowdray has recently joined the Finance Committee of the Union and is taking an active interest in the affairs of the Union.

The Englishwoman for August opens with a further article by Miss Cicely Hamilton on the recent Women's Congress at Geneva, setting forth the attitude of the Congress towards the League of Nations. The writer is frankly disappointed with what the Congress achieved in its discussions on this topic—it was vague, indefinite, "lacking" in imagination and power of vision—"a reflection of the general, the world-wide attitude; that is to say, of desire more or less vague and more or less ardent for a method of preventing warfare—and but little definite plan or idea of how to attain the end desired." The arresting article entitled, "Sikh Soldiers' Womenfolk, Amritsar District," by Eva Mary Bell (John Travers), should be widely read. Mrs. Bell describes her own experiences in India a few weeks before the Amritsar rising in 1918. As a Colonel's widow she was called upon to go from village to village to console with and reassure the mothers, wives, and widows of Sikh soldiers. In his memories of that month, Mr. Stephen Gwynn reminisces in a delightful way about Mary Kingsley. "Notes in Normandy" are Miss Loundes' somewhat naive impressions of a Continental holiday after endless years of war. Miss Florence Fidler writes on Mrs. Harold Peake's Boxford Masques. Amongst the various pre-war attempts to establish a village theatre may be numbered Mrs. Peake's scheme at Boxford, in Berkshire, where each summer she produced one of her own masques, performed by the villagers; Miss Fidler quotes largely from the masques which have distinct lyrical value, and show their author possesses a real understanding of peasant psychology.

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NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS AND FROM OUR SOCIETIES.

OBJECTS.

The object of the N.U.S.E.C. is to work for such reforms as are necessary to secure a real equality of liberties, status, and opportunities between men and women.

Any Society may be accepted by the N.U.S.E.C. that is willing to include the object of the Union within its objects, and to pay an affiliation fee, varying from five shillings to two guineas, according to membership.

The privileges of affiliated Societies include:—

1. That of helping to decide the policy of the Union, which is also that of THE WOMAN'S LEADER, at the Annual Council meeting.

2. Free use of the Information Bureau; use of the Library at reduced charges; admission of members of affiliated Societies to the Summer School at reduced charges.

3. The receipt of our monthly circular letter, including Parliamentary suggestions for the month.

Privileges 2 and 3 are extended also to individual subscribers of one guinea or more per annum to Headquarters.

LIST OF VOTERS.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the preliminary list of voters was published on July 15th, 1920. Anyone whose name is not on this list should claim before August 9th, 1920.

A woman to have a Parliamentary vote must be a British subject and be thirty years of age or over on June 15th, 1920, and

(a) The occupier as tenant or owner of any house, land, shop, or any building of any value; or

(b) A lodger in a room or rooms of any value which were let to her unfurnished; or

(c) An occupier of premises, by virtue of her service, office, or employment (caretaker, schoolmistress, gardener, etc.), in which her employer does not reside, has use of the house as part of his salary; or

(d) An occupier, as tenant or owner, of land or business premises, e.g., shop, office, warehouse, etc., of a yearly value of not less than £5; or

(e) A graduate of a University (at Cambridge), a woman who has been admitted to and has passed the final examination and kept, under the conditions required of women by the University, the period of residence necessary for a man to obtain a degree.

NOTE.—Only two women may receive votes as joint occupiers of a dwelling-house. More than two can secure votes for business premises if they are bona fide business partners and the yearly value of the premises gives £5 or more for each partner.

The wife of a man possessing any of these qualifications is also entitled to the Parliamentary vote.

NOTE.—The absence of the husband on military or naval service does not disqualify the wife.

TO GET A LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOTE

a woman must be twenty-one years of age or over on June 15th, 1920, and possess any of the above qualifications—(a), (b), (c),

(d), or (e)—except that for the Local Government franchise no value is fixed for (d) occupation or land or business premises; or

THE WIFE OF A MAN QUALIFIED TO BE REGISTERED

for the premises where they both reside, provided she is thirty years of age or over on June 15th, 1920.

LAST DAY FOR CLAIMS: August 9th, 1920 (absent voters can claim up to August 23rd, 1920.)

THE OXFORD SUMMER SCHOOL.

We hope very shortly to publish the final time-table of the Summer School, and we shall be grateful if Societies will let us know how many copies they are likely to require for distribution. Copies will, of course, be sent to all students as soon as available.

There are still vacancies for students, but it would be a great convenience to the organisers if applications could be sent in as soon as possible.

NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

The replies to the questionnaire are very encouraging. Many Societies have asked for speakers in the autumn, and we hope shortly to be able to arrange some speakers' tours. Would Societies please send in any information they have as to meetings and dates as soon as possible? The speakers' list will soon be available, but in the meantime meetings can be arranged through Headquarters.

CAMBRIDGE AND DISTRICT WOMEN CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION

A very successful rally of members of this Association was held on Tuesday evening, July 27th, in the gardens of Sidney Sussex College, kindly lent for the purpose by the Master and Fellows.

The chair was taken by Mrs. Heitland, who was supported by the officers of the Association and members of the Committee. Over two hundred women citizens were present, drawn from all wards of the town, as well as a large number of guests. Among those who took part in the meeting were Mrs. Giles, wife of the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Mrs. Weekes, wife of the Master of Sidney Sussex College, Mrs. Murray, wife of the Master of Selwyn College, Lady Darwin, Lady Glazebrook, Councillors Mrs. Alan Gray, Mrs. E. M. Clark, P.L.G., Mrs. Rackham, Mrs. Stevenson, P.L.G., and Mrs. Webber; Mrs. Bidder, Mrs. Ramsey, and Mrs. Anderson Scott (Poor Law Guardians) and many other prominent public workers.

In welcoming the gathering, the Chairman referred to the recent appointment of women justices, and her remarks were warmly received. The Cambridge group of justices includes Mrs. Keynes, P.L.G., Vice-Chairman of the Women Citizens' Association, Mrs. Bethune-Baker, P.L.G., Chairman of the local N.U.S.E.C. Standing Committee, and Councillor Mrs. Rackham, a member of the Standing Committee.

Continuing, Mrs. Heitland alluded to the Association's successful work in securing the return of qualified women to the Borough Council and other public bodies. She announced that meetings of a social character would be held during the autumn, at which matters of public importance could be treated by expert speakers and discussed by members.

Mrs. J. W. Wootton, of Girton College, then delivered an interesting and instructive address on "The Present High Prices" after which Mrs. Hartse, Hon. Secretary of the Cambridge Branch of the National Council of Women, gave a survey of recent legislation affecting women and children.

At the conclusion, hearty votes of thanks were accorded to the speakers and to the Master and Fellows of Sidney College for the use of the beautiful grounds. The remainder of the evening was spent in strolling in the gardens listening to the music of the band of the Salvation Army, till the advent of dusk warned the company that it was time to disperse. A special word of thanks is due to those members of the Committee who so ably organised the supply of refreshments during the evening.

COMING EVENTS.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION.

The following meetings on League of Nations subjects will be held:—

AUGUST 6. At Pateley Bridge. Speaker: Col. Forty.	8 p.m.
AUGUST 8. On Streatham Common. Speaker: E. Everitt Reid, Esq. In Ilkeley Church. Speaker: Canon Bickersteth Ottley.	6.30 p.m. 6.30 p.m.
AUGUST 9. At the University, Bangor. Speaker: Frederick Whelan, Esq.	8 p.m.
AUGUST 10. At Scarborough. Speaker: Frederick Whelan, Esq. In the Hope Gardens, 52, St. Martin's Lane, W.C. Speaker: Miss Curry, O.B.E.	8 p.m. 8 p.m.
AUGUST 12. In the University College, Exeter. Speaker: Frederick Whelan, Esq. At St. Anne's-on-Sea (Open-Air). Speaker: Canon Bickersteth Ottley.	8 p.m. 8.15 p.m.

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BED-SITTING-ROOM, magnificent view, west front Buckingham Palace. Terms moderate; electric light, bath, suitable tenant.—Box 4,337, WOMAN'S LEADER, 170, Fleet-street, E.C. 4.

WANTED IMMEDIATELY.—Sea-side or bracing country, furnished rooms or small house for lady and two children, with or without maid—Isle of Wight or Devonshire preferred.—Write to Miss O'Malley, 6, Steeles-road, London, N.W. 3.

SITUATIONS VACANT AND WANTED.

TWO FRIENDS as cook-general and house-parlourmaid in country. Four in family.—Apply to Miss Jones, Lewdham, Thelhurst, Berks.

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