

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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

Francis Thompson.

A Retrospect

By Mary Grace Ashton

I suppose I must have been about five years old when, one fine summer morning, I wandered into the kitchen from the garden and saw my mother busy making a cake. It must have been a Sunday morning, because she was always busy working to earn money, during the week.

"Is that," I enquired with some interest. "Is that going to be for tea?"

"No," she replied. "I am making this cake for a lady who is in prison".

In a way I was mildly surprised, but not more than mildly inquisitive, because in my short life I had so often heard of ladies going to prison. But I was feelingly glad to know that they were allowed to eat cake there.

I was, you see, a little suffragette, and so I took the fact entirely for granted that my mother's friends often went in and out of prison.

My mother was a Suffragette. My aunt was a Suffragette. My grandmother was a Suffragette. And it was the decided opinion of my mother that my father would certainly have been in active sympathy with Suffragettes if he had been well enough to be active at all. He was a kind and just man so I am sure she was right. Anyway, he always agreed with mother. Our charlady was a Suffragette. "No-one," mother would sometimes state firmly, "worth his or her salt could possibly be anything else".

I was glad to think we were all worth our salt! Even my baby sister would be beginning to be worth her salt soon when she had got beyond the stage of being interested in nothing except her feeding bottle. I, of course, already knew about *everything*. I was, indeed, far more familiar with NOTES FOR WOMEN than with "Little Bo-Peep" or the "Mouse that ran up the Clock."

Looking back after thirty-five years, it seems to me that my mother's friends were all remarkable for their intellect, their strong personalities, and their attractive appearance. I suppose all Suffragettes can hardly have been so well-favoured, but I am sure the ones who came to our house were all quite charming. I am not at this

moment thinking of the brilliant hierarchy, whose great names were so familiar to me. Mrs. Pankhurst and her daughters, Christabel and Sylvia, Mrs. Drummond, Lady Constance Lytton, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, Lady Rhondda, and so many others. I am thinking of the countless women, most of them dead now and many forgotten, who were the private soldiers and non-commissioned officers of that valorous army.

There was that "May." Delicate, slender, soft-voiced, her almost skeleton-frame consumed by the living fire of her spirit, who went in and out of Holloway Gaol under what sounded to me, as indeed it was, a night-mare system called the "Cat and Mouse Act". Then one time she hunger struck, and our household waited in silent anxiety as the days wore on. She was forcibly fed. When she was released from prison, a mere wraith of a woman, less than a skeleton, came to see us. Her face was drawn and white, and she had a scar across her mouth. It was a long time afterwards that I found out how *that* got there.

There was her sister, Winnie, who left her beloved little daughter time and again, to go to Holloway. A gallant, amusing, gay creature she was, unhappily married and not perhaps over-tender towards men in consequence, but charming, frank and free. Winnie only stood about five foot two, and yet she thought nothing of being the last of a dozen heroines to interrupt Lloyd George when he was addressing a meeting of tough Welsh miners. The handling of the other eleven would get progressively rougher as each one was hustled out and another rose to say her piece. Then it was Winnie's turn. Long trailing skirt, coils of beautiful hair piled up under an incredible hat, the light of battle in her eyes, and she certainly got a rough house. More than once she was pretty badly hurt, but how she used to laugh about it all afterwards. Especially about a not-ill-disposed burly policeman, who came to know her and like her, and who used to say, as he pulled her out struggling: "Now then, now then, out you come. If you was my old woman I'd know what to do with you. You ought to be

ashamed of yourself, a nice pretty girl like you. Such goings on!"

There was Cattie. I can so well remember hearing her discussing in matter-of-fact tones what she was going to do with her ten year old son while she served her sentence. The boy stood by, philosophic and not much interested. He knew he was going to be all right, and it was only Mummy going to prison again.

It's easy to smile now! Some of it, maybe, was wrong. Some of it was unwise, but all of it was courageous for a high and glorious purpose.

Then the first World War broke out, and there is little doubt that the Government was thankful for the excuse of women's fine work during those terrible years, to avoid a renewal of their struggle—and so the purpose was achieved. But what a splendid story it is!

My mother, although temperamentally suited for fighting anybody or anything, could not be militant. All her energy and stirring spirit were perforce engaged in another struggle. She had somehow to make enough money to keep an incurably sick husband and two young children. And what a struggle it was in a world of men! Equal pay? For a woman! What a fantastic idea! My aunt's children had been taken from her by a cruel husband and a disgraceful Law that has, thank God, been altered, since women got the vote. Does anyone think now of some of the injustices that women fought to put right?

Since those days another generation of women is getting old, and to me, who knew some of them who were just grown-up when I was a child, they seem in retrospect, just a little pathetic. They were too young to have fought in those militant times, but were overwhelmingly determined to make the utmost of the spoils of victory. Sometimes they did not quite understand what those spoils really were. They were so aggressively independent. Not for them the seat in a bus offered by a courteous male. "Thank you," they would say scathingly, "but I can stand just as well as you". If you were about twenty in 1919 you simply *had* to smoke, even if you secretly hated it, and especially, oh most especially, did you have to smoke in a restaurant. You came home alone, oh! so proudly alone in the small hours of the morning. You wore clothes that were chosen less for suitability and charm than as evidence of emancipation. You whistled and swaggered, and sometimes you were inclined to show off. It was all most understandable, but sometimes it was a little self-conscious and a trifle unconvincing. You were free at last, free of father and brother, and husband! Free of taboo and convention and pointless, infuriating restrictions! It was a heady wine and no wonder it went to some young heads. You were going to be a doctor, or a lawyer or an engineer. You were going to lead your own life. You were a Bachelor-girl and goodness, didn't you rub it well

in. Well—most of the bachelor-girls married and had babies, and grew wiser about other aspects of life, but—how I admired those girls when I was about 12 or 13.

And now—only the other evening, a beloved young relative of mine sat on the floor in my sitting-room, smoking it is true, but not at all defiantly, and she said to me thoughtfully:

"Suffragettes? Do tell me—what was it all about? I mean why was there so much fuss about women having the vote? Why did they have to go to prison? It doesn't make sense to me."

I looked at her. The true heiress of that hard-won struggle. Rather an exceptional young person, 18 years old, a fine university career before her, a well-stocked untrammelled mind, a great many opinions of her own, often forcibly expressed, but withal modest, well-mannered essentially feminine, sensibly but charmingly dressed, and I said:

"It's rather a long story, dear girl, and you did promise your mother you would be in by eleven o'clock."

She laughed. "All right, I'll go. I've got the door-key, but I hate to worry her even though she has such old-fashioned ideas." When she had gone, and the front-door banged behind her, I listened to those free young footsteps going off up the street, and I thought of a long, long procession of wonderful exhausted women, who had a vision and suffered, and who were sustained by the unconquerable faith in their great hearts. I thought of the greatest of all women and involuntarily I prayed, "Oh Mother of God, help us, intercede for us that we may not betray their noblest, highest hope."

* * *

We are indebted to our member Lady Hills for the above article. We remember with gratitude the outstanding work done by her husband, Major Hills, M.P. (as he then was), for the equality of the sexes. He was a distinguished lawyer and at one time Financial Secretary to the Treasury. He worked unremittingly for the removal of sex discriminations and helped to open the legal profession to women.

In 1920, he moved a Resolution passed without a division, in favour of equal opportunities and equal pay for women with men in the Civil Service throughout the United Kingdom and under all Local Authorities. Again in 1921, he moved a Resolution which resulted in the administrative grades of the Civil Service being opened to women. As regards equal pay, the Government of the day, pleading financial straits, promised to review the question within a period not exceeding three years. The promised review was not held.

The Catholic Citizen, lamenting his death in 1938, said that "the feminist societies almost felt he was their representative in the House".

Notes and Comments

On January 23rd, Miss Ward and Miss Burton raised the question of equal pay in the Civil Service, arising out of the deputation recently received by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Chancellor gave the reply which seems to have become automatic: "The Government accepted, some time ago, the principle of equal pay, but took the line that it must depend on the economic position as to when it could be introduced. The economic position is not very easy."

Again on January 30th, Miss Ward, stating that the British Electricity Authority, a nationalised industry, has agreed to pay the rate for the job to senior administrative and technical staff, asked if the Government would do likewise for its employees?

She further asked why the men's rate is paid to the Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning and not to the Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Pensions?

Mr. Gaitskell said: "It was decided some time ago that it would be appropriate to grant equal pay to the two most senior grades of the Civil Service. The first of these officers is in one of these grades; the second, though holding a similar title, is not. She is graded as an Under Secretary, a rank to which equal pay has not yet been applied."

* * *

In the Autumn of 1949 the Equal Pay Campaign Committee set out to raise the sum of £5,000 to pay for the production of a film to arouse general interest and support for the principle of equal pay for equal work. In some quarters doubt was expressed as to whether the subject could be portrayed on the screen, and also whether a good film could be made for such a low figure. Now the film is finished, and those who have seen it agree that Miss Jill Craigie, who was script writer, director and producer, has done a brilliant piece of work. Further, people are amazed to know that it has only cost just over £4,150.

The problem now is two-fold. In the first place we want the film shown in the commercial cinemas. Will you, therefore, please help by asking your local cinema manager to show this film, "To Be A Woman," by Jill Craigie, Outlook Films Ltd., and get your friends to approach him also. We must have from the general public a big demand for the film to be shown. Secondly we must pay for the film. The work was able to proceed as the National Union of Women Teachers guaranteed the funds. It is, however, the moral responsibility of the organisations forming the Equal Pay Campaign Committee to help raise the necessary sum. So far, members of

St. Joan's Alliance have contributed £21 8s. 6d. Are there not other members who will respond to the request for donations of 5s. or £1, or more, in support of their principles. Please send your donation at once to The Equal Pay Campaign Committee, c/o St. Joan's Alliance.

* * *

We send warm congratulations to the National Association of Women Civil Servants on the celebration of their Golden Jubilee which occurs in March. We felicitate the Association on the valuable work done for women Civil Servants since 1901 when the setting up of a women's trade union was indeed a remarkable thing. Included in the official Jubilee functions is a dinner to be held at the Connaught Rooms on 7th March.

We hope that the efforts of the National Association of Women Civil Servants will be crowned in the near future by the establishment of equal pay throughout the Civil Service.

* * *

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1950, passed its second reading on January 31st, and was committed to a Standing Committee.

* * *

Miss Florence Horsburgh, M.P., has been appointed Chairman of the Conservative Party's Education Committee. Mr. Christopher Hollis, M.P., and Mr. Angus Maude, M.P., are joint secretaries.

* * *

The B.B.C. have recently decided to appoint only seven announcers to read all news bulletins in the Home and Light programmes. No women will be chosen or men with what the B.B.C. calls "dialect voices".

There are no women news readers at present. The B.B.C. states: "Experience shows that a large number of people do not like momentous or serious events, such as war and disaster, read by the female voice".

We do not know to what "experience" the B.B.C. refers, but we have seldom heard such an absurd reason put forward to exclude women from employment.

* * *

The 40th Annual Meeting of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance will be held at St. Patrick's Club-room, Soho Square, on Saturday, March 17th, at 2.30 p.m., Miss P. C. Challoner presiding. The speakers will be Miss Noreen Carr, Miss Aline Fenwick (New South Wales), Lady Hills, Mrs. Anne Lee, Mrs. Joan Robins, Miss Marian Spaine (Sierra Leone), and Dame Vera Laughton Mathews. Resolutions on points on our Equality Programme will be put to the meeting and sent to the appropriate authorities. Tea (1s. 3d.) may be had after the meeting.

Subscriptions to the Alliance (minimum 10s. to include *The Catholic Citizen*) are now due. The Treasurer would be grateful if these could be sent without delay.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen"

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

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society

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Property Rights and Family Law

The Status of Women Committee in this country has replied to a Questionnaire on the Legal Status and Treatment of Women sent out to all countries by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

The following summary gives the present position as regards Property Rights and Family Law.

Whereas women, married or unmarried, have the same rights over their property and the same contractual capacity as men, it has been held by the courts that savings made by the wife from a housekeeping allowance are the property of the husband. The husband is, apart from exceptional cases, liable for the payment of his wife's income tax. The incomes of husband and wife are counted as one for income tax purposes. It is the husband's duty to support his wife according to his means, and if other provision is not made, she is entitled to pledge his credit for the necessities of life. A husband has no claim on his wife for maintenance, but she has a liability if she has independent means and he would otherwise become chargeable to public funds. A Court of Law has also some power to order a settlement for the benefit of her husband and children when the wife has property of a certain kind.

As regards the Law of Succession, in the case of an intestacy, the surviving spouse is entitled to receive the personal chattels and a sum of £1,000 free of death duties and expenses. Where there are no children, the surviving spouse, whether husband or wife, is also entitled to a life-interest in the whole of the residuary estate, and similarly, where there are children, to a half-share, the other half being divided between the children without distinction of sex. Remoter relations also inherit without distinction of sex. A Committee has recently been set up to consider the review of the share of the surviving spouse under an intestacy.

Entailed property passes in the male line. Since the passage of the Inheritance (Family Provision) Act in 1938, a disinherited spouse or dependent children can apply to the Courts for provision out of the estate of the deceased.

The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919, laid down that "a person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to or holding any civil or judicial office or post, or from entering or assuming or carrying on any civil profession or vocation, or for admission to any incorporated society (whether incorporated by Royal Charter or otherwise)." Women cannot, however, be members of the London Stock Exchange.

At the same time the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act expressly permits the Civil Service to frame its own regulations regarding the conditions of employment of women, and the marriage bar was, in fact, only abolished in the Civil Service in October, 1946; it still obtains, except in special circumstances, in the Foreign Service. The dismissal of a teacher on marriage was made illegal by the Education Act of 1944.

In industry the positions of men and women differ. Since 1842, women have been excluded from underground work in mines; the Factory Acts place limits on the hours they may work, but not on those worked by men, which are determined by agreements between employers and trade unions, and women, other than those in non-manual or managerial positions, are prohibited from work at night. Nor may they clean machinery in motion, or be employed in processes connected with lead manufacture or involving the use of lead compounds. In addition to these legal restrictions, the action of employers, and trades union regulations, serve to limit the fields in which women may be employed, and their opportunities for training.

Pensions of Civil Servants and Teachers are based on the salaries received, so are necessarily lower for women, while unequal pay persists. The war disability pensions for men and women civilians are equal owing to the great fight led during the war by Mrs. Mavis Tate; but in the case of women in the Forces they are unequal as they follow the rates of pay.

Under the National Insurance Act, 1946, retirement pensions of 26s. a week are paid to men at 65 and to women at 60 years of age. A married man aged 65 or over receives an additional 16s. for his wife if she has attained the age of 60, and can claim a dependant's allowance for her if she has not attained that age. Widows aged 60 or childless widows over 50 and incapable of self-support receive 26s. weekly. A widow with dependent children receives 36s. per week during the first 13 weeks of widowhood, plus 7s. 6d. in respect of the first child not covered by family allowance. Subsequently, she receives a widowed mother's allowance of 26s. a week, plus the 7s. 6d. for the first child. An employed married woman who has elected to be insured in her own right is entitled to a pension of 26s. weekly at 60, regardless of her husband's age.

In Family Law the rights of the spouses are generally equal, and the procedure for separation is the same for both sexes, but in the event of separation, the husband may have an order made against him for the maintenance of his wife, and of dependent children of which she is given the custody. The Married Women (Maintenance) Act, 1949, raised the maximum amount a husband could be directed by the Court to pay to £5 for his wife and 30s. for each child.

The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1923 entitles a wife to seek divorce on the same terms as her husband. The husband has the right to choose the matrimonial home, and a wife's unreasonable refusal to live with him there may make her guilty of the offence of desertion. A married woman's domicile is that of her husband, and she cannot acquire one of her own even in cases of desertion by the husband. A husband has a duty to maintain his wife at a standard according to his means.

The common law right of the father to the custody of his infant children was modified by the Guardianship of Infants Act, 1925, which gave the mother an equal right to the guardianship of the children. In the event of disputes between parents, it is the duty of the Court to decide the case solely in the light of what is best for the welfare of the child. Nevertheless, the father still retains a paramount, though not absolute, right to decide, notwithstanding any pre-nuptial agreement, in what religion the child shall be brought up (though the Courts have on occasion held that the child's best interests would be served

otherwise), and what education he shall receive.

The primary responsibility for the maintenance of children rests on the father, but the mother is also deemed to have some, though a lesser, responsibility.

The father, though the natural guardian, has no rights over the property of an infant child, such property being usually in the hands of trustees. The father is not debarred from being a trustee, and acting as administrator. Interest on an infant's property may be used for his benefit, but money expended has to be accounted for when he comes of age. The father is entitled to the enjoyment of the services of his infant children if they reside with him, and also to their earnings, so long as they live with and are maintained by him. Both parents have equal rights of inheritance from their children.

The mother is the legal parent of the illegitimate child, which takes her name. She has his custody and is responsible for his maintenance until he is 16 years old, unless she marries, when her husband becomes liable for the child's support during her lifetime (though not after her death). The mother, however, can take legal proceedings against the putative father to prove paternity, and may secure an affiliation order giving her a weekly sum towards the child's maintenance, and for the expenses incidental to the birth. In case of an intestacy the mother, but not the father, may inherit from an illegitimate child. The illegitimate child cannot inherit from the father, but may from the mother where she has no legitimate children.

As regards adoption a male applicant may not adopt a female infant except in special circumstances. The 1949 Adoption of Children Act gives the natural father as well as the mother the right to adopt an illegitimate child. In the case of married persons living together the consent of the spouse is required before either husband or wife can adopt an infant.

Dr. Hanna Rydh

We offer our congratulations to Dr. Hanna Rydh, President of the International Alliance of Women, on her sixtieth birthday, and wish her many happy returns of the day. Her untiring work for the women's movement is well known to our members—what perhaps they do not know is that she is an eminent archaeologist, and has published many books including *The Land of the Sun God; Troglodytes for Thousands of Years; People of the Stone Age; and Life in Pharaoh's Land*. Dr. Rydh has been a member of Parliament, and was one of the experts called in to revise legislation concerning women in public service.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

On January 2nd Miss Margaret Flynn, a Vice-President of St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance, had the privilege of a special audience with the Holy Father.

His Holiness expressed His appreciation of her having made the long journey from Australia to Rome and sent His affectionate regards and blessing to her colleagues.

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Australia. The Federal Arbitration Court has decided that the Female Basic Wage shall be raised from 54% to 75% of the male rate. This is a decided advance but still some distance from the objective of equal pay, for which our colleagues are pressing.

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Belgium. At the Brussels Town Hall last November, there was a mass demonstration of homage and affection to Baroness Pol Boël to thank her for her years of work for the emancipation of women and to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the entry of Belgian women into public life. The demonstration was organised by the National Council of Women of Belgium, of which Baroness Boël is President; the Princess Jean de Merode presided. The Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government, invested her with the Order of Leopold II and tributes were received from countless organisations of women.

The Baroness was presented with a plaque, a relief of her head by the sculptor José Souveine, the reverse side bearing one of her favourite sayings: "*les temps sont durs; vous êtes là pour les rendre meilleurs.*"—1920-1950.

In replying, Baroness Boël said: "We have won our political rights—not without a struggle—the rest of our civil and economic rights will follow. It is a question of perseverance and of work—of time and of vigilance. As a corollary we must face our responsibilities valiantly."—(*Bulletin of the N.C.W., of Belgium.*)

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Belgium. A recent visitor to this country has been our co-religionist Mademoiselle van den Heuvel, *Echevin* of the City of Brussels. She is the Registrar of Marriages and performs the civil ceremony in the Town Hall. One of her pleasantest duties, she says, is to welcome couples on the 50th anniversary of their marriage. They are received by her at the Town Hall and presented with a certificate and a cheque for 500 francs.

* * *

Transvaal. The Hon. Secretary of the Transvaal Section of St. Joan's Alliance, Mrs. Bush, reports that members are showing great interest in the Alliance, some having travelled as much as twenty miles to attend the recent meeting. They are tackling the question of equal pay as the first instalment of their programme.

REVIEWS.

The Mystery of the Charity of Joan of Arc, by Charles Péguy. Translated by Julian Green. (Hollis and Carter, 12s. 6d.)

Mr. Julian Green has done very great service in making Péguy's most significant poem available to English readers, in a style that so faithfully renders the form and content of the original. It is a strange poem, not so much narrative or dramatic as a prolonged meditation on themes that are timeless, and today are no less actual than in Péguy's own time—a world ravaged by war, fallen away from God, the mysteries of the Redemption, the missions of the Saints. Three personages figure in it; Jeannette, who is the 13-year-old Joan, Hauviette, her little companion, whose untroubled acceptance of the world about her shows the contrast between the outlook of the ordinary "every-day" Christian and the anguished vision of one called to sanctity, and the nun, Madame Gervaise, who, as the translator suggests in his Foreword, may be considered as a symbolical figure personifying the Church. In Jeannette's dialogues, first with Hauviette, then with Madame Gervaise, the grandeur and loneliness of a Saint's vocation emerge—a vocation hinted at in Jeannette's words that what the desolate world needs is "a woman who would also be a Saint . . . and who would succeed." B.B.C.

Women's Work—What is it worth? A discussion pamphlet on Equal Pay for Equal Work and related questions, by Marion V. Royce (World's Y.W.C.A.)

This pamphlet is designed to provoke discussion amongst Y.W.C.A. members, with a view to the formulation of a world policy on the subject of equal pay and related subjects. Among these are education and vocational training, legal limitations on women's work, the relationship of men and women in an industrial society and the place of women in economic life.

The pamphlet is admirably suited to its purpose. It sends its readers to sources and gives valuable summaries of the chief relevant documents. The whole reveals a truly Christian and feminist mind and in many sections the writer, Miss Marion V. Royce, puts her finger on some fundamental error of judgment which obstructs equality. For example, she suggests that the tendency to place full responsibility for home and family on the wife is one of the fundamental obstacles to equal educational opportunities for women; and that it must be the aim of a Christian women's movement to secure industrial laws based upon the dignity of women and men as *persons* and not merely as economic units. She deals faithfully with the question of the work of married women outside the home and suggests that Y.W.C.A. local associations should undertake

enquiry amongst their members before making decisions; she stresses the fact that other people besides married men have dependants; and notes that skill and dexterity are as important as physical strength in determining the equal value of work done.

Miss Royce gives fully the reasons against protective legislation while confessing that "the World's Y.W.C.A. and National Associations in a number of countries have supported efforts to secure protective legislation." She continues: "If the Association is committed to this position, however, it becomes necessary to pursue the question further, to find out whether protective legislation is widely enough applied to cover all industries in which women are employed and whether there were instances where it should be reviewed. There may be certain types of protective legislation at present applied to women only that should be extended also to men or there may be situations where, as in the case of the British Postal Service, consideration should be given to the advantage of freedom of choice for women as well as men."

May we hope that the World's Y.W.C.A. and National Associations will consider Miss Royce's arguments and come out on the side of those feminist organisations which believe that women, like men, should have freedom of choice, and that men *and* women should be "protected", where necessary, in their work.

It is perhaps not to be expected that, in a pamphlet of this nature, the Pope's approval of equal pay should be quoted—and it is perhaps a pity that the Y.W.C.A. claims it is "unique" in stressing "its Christian responsibility to work for the sovereignty of God in social and economic life"—but with this reservation we wholeheartedly welcome a most progressive and valuable contribution to the formation of a public opinion on "equal pay for equal work and related questions". P.C.C.

I was delighted to find, on dipping into Maurice Hastings' "Parliament House", that in the days of Henry III and Edward I, women sat in Parliament—they were four Lady Abbesses—the Abbesses of Barking, Shaftesbury, Wilton and of St. Mary's of Winchester. They sat as landowners, and no objection was taken to their sex. I mention this because there was a later period when the idea of women in Parliament seemed dreadful to our ancestors, and they were genuinely under the impression that nothing of the kind had ever happened. — *Viscountess Davidson in Women at Work.*

HERE AND THERE

"There is a fundamental necessity to be stressed viz: that the rights of women do not depend on their *desiring* to acquire them. *Rights* should be accorded and should not need to be asked for.

"The root evil is the total neglect of or indifference to women's rights in the first place. What is the use of legislating for liberty, if they *wish* it, when nothing is done to bring about the *raising of the standard of their desire*? Meanwhile, for that must be a process and not an instantaneous occurrence, we must provide that their rights be given them. A thief is obliged to restitution before his victim asks for restitution. One who steals from many individuals is held to restore property to them all, not only to those who ask." (*The late Archbishop Arthur Hughes, W.F.*)

* * *

People and Freedom, in congratulating Miss Barbara Ward on her marriage to Commander Jackson, goes on "to congratulate her on an achievement which has hitherto escaped the notice of the British Press: her foundation, at San Giovanni Rotondo, in one of the poorest regions of Italy, of a fine modern hospital, endowed by funds which she collected in the United States and supplemented by a generous personal donation.

"It is her gift to Padre Pio, one of the most remarkable figures of modern Italy, a Franciscan who, like the Founder of his Order, bears the stigmata, and whose divination of souls and thaumaturgic powers make him comparable to the Curé d'Ars. The penitents, thronging to his confessional in such numbers that regular bus services have been organised to carry them from the railway station nearest his remote convent, include many who are sick. Hence the need for a hospital which has now been met by Barbara Ward's generous initiative."

* * *

The thousand-year-old office of Town Reeve of Bungay, Suffolk, has been bestowed on a woman, Mrs. E. Messenger. There has been an unbroken chain of Town Reeves of Bungay since Anglo-Saxon days, and the office is unique in England, for it confers dictatorial rights over the Town Purse, and is much older than that of a Mayor. Each Town Reeve holds office for a year, and then chooses a successor, whose identity is kept a close secret from the public until the chain of office is transferred.—(*The Times.*)

SINGING LESSONS. MARGARET GORDON.

Experienced West End Teacher. Specialist in voice production, interpretation, breathing, nerve control, has a few vacancies. Write for appointment, 73, Pullman Court, London, S.W.2.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO
M. Moclair in the "Catholic Citizen,"
February 15th, 1926.

When the husband chivalrously affirmed in the marriage service, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," how he must have perjured himself, because the statement was quite contrary to fact—it was the wife who endowed the husband. If she happened to have any property, it passed to the husband, unless held for her separate use by trustees. Before the passing of the Married Women's Property Acts, the land of the wife was considered as belonging to one person consisting of the husband. In cases where the Act did not apply, the woman could convey her lands by deed if her husband consented, but she could not convey property by will even with the concurrence of her husband.

Chattels real, e.g. leaseholds vested in the husband alone, so that he could dispose of them during his life without his wife's concurrence, but on his death the ownership of the wife revived; the husband, therefore, could not dispose of his wife's leaseholds by will, in other respects he was absolute owner.

Chattels personal, e.g. furniture, motor-cars, etc. vested in the husband absolutely, and passed under his will or to his next of kin on his death.

Courts of Equity did not favour these rules of Common Law which gave the husband rights over his wife's property, but at the same time, Equity did not consider that a woman could possibly manage her own affairs.

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