

Catholic Citizen

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

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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.

Maternal Mortality and Morbidity.*

BY ISABEL HEATH, M.B., CH.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

(Late House Surgeon, Hospital for Women, Liverpool, and Obstetric Assistant Maternity Hospital, Liverpool, and Ethel Boyce, Fellow in Gynaecology and Obstetrics, Liverpool University.)

To the many who are interested in the health of women, the Final Report on Maternal Mortality and Morbidity of the Departmental Committee appointed by the Ministry of Health in 1928, gives much food for thought.* It is gratifying that such a Committee should have been appointed, and as the matter has been reviewed from every conceivable angle their conclusions and recommendations should prove the stepping stones to a real improvement in the maternal death rate in this country.

The Committee's interim report, which was published in August 1930, and based on 2,000 cases, did not focus its attention primarily on the immediate cause of death, but rather on the underlying causes to which death was ultimately due. It was found that there was in many cases "a Primary Avoidable Factor" responsible, either "(1) omission or inadequacy of ante-natal care of the expectant mother; (2) want of skill or sound judgment in the actual management of the case; (3) neglect by the patient or her friends to make reasonable preparation for the confinement or even deliberate refusal to follow the advice of doctor or midwife, or (4) the lack of provision of reasonable facilities for the proper treatment of a woman in childbirth, such as lack of skilled attend-

ance, careful nursing, or hospital accommodation."

On these grounds the Committee formed the considered opinion that reform was necessary in the education of the medical student and of the pupil midwife, in the supervision of pregnancy, in the standard of medical practice, and in the completion of an effective maternity service, and the education of public opinion.

The recommendations as to improved education in obstetrics of medical students received careful and prompt attention from the General Medical Council, who had already introduced reforms on this point in 1922. They recognise that still further reforms are necessary. One of the chief obstacles to the adoption of the Committee's recommendations being the difficulty of securing enough maternity cases for adequate practical instruction, and the Committee hope that this will be borne in mind when maternity hospital accommodation is being provided by the local authorities or hospital Governors.

The Committee's recommendation as to the improved maternity service have of necessity remained in abeyance owing to the financial

* H.M. Stationery Office, 1932. Pp. 156, 2s. 6d.

situation. One of the principle defects of the present service being lack of co-ordination and absence of sufficiently close associations between the general practitioner and the services provided by the Public Health Department.

The final Report dealing with a second series of 3,805 cases (making in all 5,805 cases investigated) was undertaken to check the first conclusions and to ensure a large enough data for valid deductions. As the Report states, false hopes would be raised if it were suggested that all maternal deaths are preventable, but they express the opinion that at least half the deaths which have come under review could have been prevented.

The Committee note that out of the 3,805 cases 1,111 deaths were due to sepsis, of which 550 followed normal cases, and many of their recommendations are directed to the lessening of this cause of mortality.

With regard to the subsequent health of the mother the Committee find that not infrequently "though she survives delivery she is left with disease and disabilities that have been caused or aggravated by pregnancy, or that is the result of injury or infection during labour. Her health or vitality are in consequence impaired, her usefulness diminished and the expectation of life shortened." It should be noted that for special medical reasons the Committee advises the giving of instruction in contraceptive methods, and if necessary the sterilization of those women who are suffering from organic diseases in which childbearing is likely to seriously endanger life. The Catholic would substitute for this the giving of understanding advice on a partial continence, which includes the use of the "safe" period.

With regard to the industrial employment of women in relation to maternal mortality and morbidity, the Reports states "there does not appear to the Committee to be any valid reason why a pregnant woman should not perform work of some kind up to the last week or two of pregnancy, but it should be of a suitable nature. It would be a hardship if cessation of factory work were to be made compulsory, as it would often entail a loss of wages and possible diminution in good food and exercise, both of which she needs. Moreover, industrial work is often lighter and less fatiguing than the household duties which would fall to her lot if she were to stay at home . . . the difficulty of getting to and from work in large towns in 'rush hours' must be considered."

"In a broad survey of statistics of maternal mortality two facts are at once evident: (1) that in certain European countries—Holland, Sweden and Denmark—the mortality rate is definitely less than for England and Wales, and (2) that in certain districts in this country—especially Wales, Lancashire and the West Riding—the rate is markedly higher than elsewhere. In Holland and in the Scandinavian countries the status of the midwife is definitely higher than in this country, and her training longer. The training of the medical student is also longer. In these countries named housing, habits of life, general balance of diet with due consumption of milk during puberty and adolescence, and consequently the general health and development of the population and the physique of the women are all better than the average, while in Wales and in English districts named they are below it."

An important point is "the provision of an adequate service of trained midwives to act both as midwives and as maternity nurses working with doctors. The Committee call attention to the fact that the practice of attendance at confinement by a doctor, accompanied by an untrained "handywoman," does not afford a reasonable degree of security from septic infection even in normal cases, much less when any operative procedure has to be undertaken, and urges that a trained midwife be always responsible for the maternity nursing. In regard to the training of midwives, the Committee agree that "post-examination experience should be undertaken before she be fully licensed for independent practice." In Holland the standard of knowledge and skill of the midwife is of an exceptionally high order, and this enables her in after life to occupy a position of outstanding importance in the midwifery of the country.

"Convinced as they are that the best interests of the mothers will be served by an increasing employment of well-trained midwives in normal labour, they would regret such a general demand for anaesthesia in these cases as would interfere with the attainment of this end."

"A vigorous campaign for the improvement of maternity service is handicapped by the difficulty of making statements which are sufficiently arresting to attract general attention and at the same time avoid over emphasis of the difficulty and dangers of childbearing, which might create exaggerated anxiety in future mothers."

Notes and Comments.

The International Petition of Catholic Women begging "that a woman whether married or unmarried, should have the same right as a man to retain or change her Nationality, having been presented at Geneva, by a decision of the Council of the League of Nations was circulated to the 13th Assembly.

The Signatories of the Petition, numbering 8,000, are drawn from twenty-three countries. In the short time at their disposal, the *ad hoc* Committee who organised the Petition have done wonders.

The petition was open to men, and an analysis of it shows the names of a great number of the clergy, Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Canons, members of religious orders, and a number of the secular clergy from various countries. The names of many distinguished men and women appear in this interesting petition: professors, members of Parliament, Legislatures, Municipalities, and the professions, are all represented. A comprehensive list, on which we congratulate the International Committee.

In the special document on the Petition communicated to the Assembly, the names of some of the distinguished men supporters of the women's Petition are printed, and we rejoice to see among these the names: the Rt. Rev. Archbishop of Sydney (N. S. Wales); the Rt. Rev. Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh; the Rt. Rev. Archbishop of Tokio; their Lordships the Bishops of Orleans, of Tarbes, and Lourdes; of Nice; of Utique; of Fréjus; of Monaco; of Oklahoma City and Tulsa. Among the laity we note the signatures of the Rt. Hon. J. A. Lyons, Prime Minister of Australia; of M. Jacques Maritain; of Mrs. Norton, member of the Congress, U.S.A., and Mme. Charles Frémont, Government Delegate to the 13th Assembly of the League.

We were glad to read once more the excellent memorandum of the Representation of Women in the League of Nations on the collaboration of women with the League. The Memorandum appears with those of other societies, in the Secretary-General's report on the question. The report of the C.R.W.L. (to which St. Joan's S.P.A. is affiliated) was thrashed out at a Conference early in the year. It is full of common

sense, and very practical. It faces the danger of a special Woman's Department in the League, or any permanent Women's Committee, and rejects any such proposal. In this it has the support of many societies.

We are glad to note that Canada has sent as delegate to the Assembly of the League of Nations, Mme. Charles Frémont, who is a Catholic. Mme. Frémont has subscribed to the "Catholic Citizen" for several years. She is keenly in favour of a woman's right to retain or change her nationality on marriage.

We hope that members will have an opportunity of meeting Mme. Frémont on her return from the Assembly.

Dr. Anna Dengel is to found in London next year a house of the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, of which she is foundress. The announcement was made at the Sesame Club last July at the "At Home" given by Dr. Mary Kidd, and at which St. Joan's S.P.A. was represented. Dr. Dengel, in her address, spoke of our late member, Dr. Agnes McLaren, founder of the hospital at Rawal Pindi, India, a pioneer, and a great woman. The Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries has charge of the Holy Family Hospital in Rawal Pindi, and of two maternity and child welfare centres, and a large training school for native nurses in Dacca.

The "International Democratic Movement for Peace" held a conference at Friend's House, Euston Road, from September 12-14. Some of our members had great pleasure in meeting the French and German Catholics attending the conference. Through the courtesy of Miss Pye, chairman of the conference, we were able to go to an evening reception and later to the farewell supper. Both occasions were much enjoyed, and we feel we have made some new friends.

The Maternal Mortality Committee will hold their Annual Meeting on the 15th November, at the Friends' Hall, Euston Road, at 2-30. The subject will be the Report of the Departmental Committee on Maternal Mortality, with which our leading article deals this month.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":

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

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

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The Nationality of Married Women.

By the time the "Catholic Citizen" appears the fate of the principle of equality of nationality rights between men and women will be known in the 13th Assembly of the League of Nations.

Progressive women of all countries will continue to fight for justice if they should be defeated in the first encounters.

We cannot say that the replies of certain governments are encouraging. It is astonishing how some are still obsessed by the fear of disunion in the family if husband and wife are of different nationality. In fact, they cannot visualize a wife as an individual with personal rights.

Union and harmony in family life are sacred things, which cannot be obtained by coercion. Family unity is at least as precious to women as to men, but a woman's right to her own own nationality should not in reason disturb the family peace.

Side by side with the replies from governments the Assembly will consider fresh reports from the Consultative Committee of Women's International Organisations set up by the Council of the League of Nations last year. While the two reports presented by this Committee agree on the principle of equality of rights, one (signed by the Inter-American Commission of Women and three other societies) brings in new matter, and is unacceptable to the other societies.

St. Joan's S.P.A. adheres to the Report signed by the International Council of Women; the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship (to which St. Joan's

S.P.A. is affiliated), and the "Union Mondiale de la Femme pour le Concord International."

This Report replies clearly to the suggestion that the Hague Convention, which feminists desire to see altered, is the maximum that can be obtained at the moment, and demonstrates that the arguments put forward are essentially political and not juridical. It cannot be maintained that the question is a national one, as some suggest, since a divergence in nationality laws causes difficulty, but the denial of this act of justice to a married woman brings on her grave injustice and governments realising this, and prepared to do justice to married women, should not delay in passing a law granting to women the right to retain or to change their nationality on marriage.

The British Government, for instance, made a declaration of policy at the last year's Assembly of the League of Nations, when Dame Edith Lyttelton, on their behalf, stated that: "The British Government considers that it is right that all disabilities of married women in matters of nationality should be removed, and that in so far as nationality is concerned, a married woman should be in the same position as a man—married or unmarried—or any single woman."

We call upon the government to adhere to that declaration, and to put their principles into practice, without waiting for the support of other nations. In fact, there is already so much support that our country figures among the laggards.

L. DE ALBERTI.

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN FOR SUFFRAGE AND EQUAL CITIZENSHIP

(To which St. Joan's S.P.A. is affiliated)

Concrete Proposals put forward by the Alliance for inclusion in an International Nationality Convention.

I. Retention of Nationality.

- (i) A woman shall not lose her nationality by reason
 - (a) that she marries a foreigner, or
 - (b) that during her marriage her husband loses his nationality by naturalisation in another country, or otherwise.
- (ii) Where before the coming into force of legislation based on this convention a woman has lost her nationality by reason of the fact that she married a foreigner or that her husband had lost his nationality by naturalisation or otherwise, she shall on her own application re-acquire her nationality.

2. Acquisition of Nationality.

- (i) A foreign women shall not by reason of marriage acquire the nationality of her husband.
 - (ii) Naturalisation of the husband during marriage shall not involve naturalisation of the wife.
 - (iii) A married woman shall be naturalised under the same conditions as a man.
 - (iv) Special facilities shall be given for one spouse to acquire the nationality of the other.
 - (v) Where before the coming into force of legislation based on this Convention a woman by marriage or by the naturalisation of her husband acquires his nationality, she shall retain it unless she makes a formal declaration of alienage.
3. With respect to derivation of nationality from a parent, the nationality of one parent shall be given no preference over that of the other.

1. That as regards the nationality of married persons the nationality of one spouse shall not extend to the other, against the latter's will; and more especially any change of nationality during marriage.

2. That when married persons are of different nationalities facilities shall be granted to either spouse to acquire the nationality of the other without delay.

International Notes.

The Save the Children Fund Child Protection Committee issued in July the first number of an Information Bulletin on infant and child mortality and allied questions in Africa. A resolution passed at the International Conference on African children, held in Geneva in June, 1931, asked that a permanent unofficial centre should be set up for documentary research, for exchange of information and experiences, and for linking the relations between private organisations and institutions, both national and international, of a scientific and social character. It was in response to this request that the Save the Children International Union has established in Geneva a permanent bureau for African child welfare, and in association with this bureau the Save the Children Fund in London has formed a Child-Protection Committee, of which Mrs. de Bunsen is chairman. While leaving itself free to consider the protection of children of any non-European race, the Committee is concentrating for the moment on African children, and more especially on still birth and infant mortality from the pathological, social and economic points of view, entailing the study of certain anti-moral, anti-hygiene, or superstitious practices widespread in Africa; the value of local food stuffs, the improvement of existing crops; the therapeutic value of African drugs, etc. Contributions to the pages of the "Bulletin" are invited, and should be sent to the Editor, "Information Bulletin," Save the Children Fund, 50, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

* * * *

THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW.

At the last session of the above Institute, held in Oslo last August, it was resolved to recommend to States to let their legislation on nationality be inspired by the following demands:

"The Apostolatus Maris," Amsterdam, September, has interesting and useful suggestions concerning the welfare of women seafarers, whose lives are even more monotonous than that of seamen. Many thousands of women are employed at sea, and when they go ashore their

(Continued on page 81)

Reviews.

Principles of Catholic Sex Morality. By Dr. Rudolph Geis. Translated and edited by Charles Bruehl, Ph.D., with a Preface by Dominic Pruemmer, O.P., S.T.D. (Published by J. F. Wagner, New York; and B. Herder, London, 5s. net.)

Catholics have for some time realised the necessity of putting forward the Church's teaching on questions of sex as an antidote to the noxious books which come as an avalanche from others, corrupting youth, and deluding many married people with false promises of solving the difficulties with which many are often confronted. Dr. Geis, in his "Principles of Catholic Sex Morality," does not ignore the difficulties, nor does he pretend that they are easily overcome, but he realises the power of spirit over flesh, the value of continence in marriage which gives mastery and brings peace. Perhaps the most interesting chapter in this valuable book is that on the spiritual side of sex, and the refutation of a common mistake which attributes to the Church a disregard of the spiritual side of sex love. As Dr. Pruemmer says: "here is a book that deserves the widest distribution, especially among educated young people."

L. DE A.

The Catholic Social Year Book 1932. (Catholic Social Guild, Oxford. Sixpence net.)

This year the C.S.G. has chosen for their notable Year Books—this is the twenty-third year of issue—"The Catholic Social Movement in Germany." The author is Professor T. Brauer, Ph.D., Director of the Christian Trade Union College at Königswinter; Germany has an interesting history of social work, and Catholics played a big part in it. Providence raised up great leaders to guide the movement from the first, and Professor Brauer gives us a picture of Adolf Kolping, a shoemaker and travelling journeyman, afterwards a priest, the true founder of the Catholic social movement in the early nineteenth century; and as the author tells us "one of the most venerated personalities of German Catholicism. Of all social leaders his name is the most popular," and is still, Professor Brauer tells us, the watchword of youth, longing for unity both within and beyond national boundaries. The author writes of other leaders, such as the great Bishop Ketteler, whose work is famous in many lands.

The Professor concludes his interesting book by calling on Catholics in Great Britain to unite

with their brethren across the Channel, in their efforts to conquer a new position for the working man and woman. He sees in this common action the best means of fostering peace between nations.

L. DE A.

What the Country-Women of the World are Doing. (Published by Chapman and Hall Ltd., for the Liaison Committee of Rural Women's and Homemakers' organisations, 26 Eccleston Street, London, S.W.1. Paper 2s., cloth 3s. 6d., or 2s. 4d. and 4s. post free.)

The Liaison Committee of Rural Women's and Homemakers' organisations was appointed as a result of a Conference of rural women's organisations held in London in May 1929, on the initiative of the Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, President of the International Council of Women, on the authority of a resolution passed by the I.C.W. in 1927.

Its first object was to keep in touch "with the rural women's organisations represented at the Conference." The Liaison Committee held a second Conference in Vienna in 1930, and it was then decided to link the country-women's Associations together on a contributory basis, but not to have any formal affiliations.

... "The chief efforts of the Committee have been directed towards keeping the Country Women of the world in touch with one another by maintaining a centre for country women in London with an Information Bureau, and by issuing publications, including a printed annual report." This annual report—"What the Country Women of the World are Doing"—is divided into three sections: Part I—"Introductory and the Societies' own Pages," which includes accounts of the activities of the different country-women's organisations throughout the world; Part II—"Special Features," mainly articles by well-known women in many countries, and Part III—"About the Liaison Committee, and Reference Section." There have been two former reports, but this is the first one to which the country-women have themselves contributed.

This book is of great interest in showing how local industries are fostered by the women's organisations, the monotony of country life relieved by social intercourse and study and the gradual enlightenment which can be effected in the more backward districts.

To speak of one organisation alone, the Women's Institutes, which appears again and again in these pages, those who know anything

NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN TEACHERS.

We have received the following resolutions from the N.U.W.T.:

"The National Union of Women Teachers condemns unreservedly Circular 1421 issued with the revised draft regulations for secondary schools.

It considers that this circular deals a destructive blow to the whole educational system of the country, since it will inevitably deprive a large number of children of the best educable type, whose parents are in straitened circumstances, of the benefits of secondary education slowly and laboriously achieved through years of work for social reform.

The new regulations, if enforced, must lead in some areas to the serious reduction of secondary school population and in some to the entire closure of schools.

The National Union of Women Teachers reiterates its belief that the present policy of curtailing educational facilities is false economy and asks that Circular 1421 be immediately withdrawn."

TREASURER'S NOTE

The annual Christmas sale will take place this year on November 17th and 18th at the Caxton Hall, and a private sale at the Office will be held the day before, on the 16th. We should be very grateful if every member would send a gift for the stall to the office.

We are also having a Jumble Sale on Saturday, October 22nd. Any old clothes or other articles to be sent to Mrs. Hand, 10, St. James' Terrace, N.W.8.

Please help us by sending something to either or both of these sales, as the work of the Alliance largely depends on their financial success.

P. M. BRANDT.

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A. A. B.

about them soon give up the idea that life for a woman in the country means that she merely exists in a backwater and does not take her true and rightful position in social life. Far from forfeiting her birth-right by not moving into a town, the country-woman, by associating herself with her fellow country-women, would seem to lead a rich and full existence with scope for varied and deeply interesting activities and the chance of wielding a really civilising influence. It is significant to note in this connection how the women in agricultural districts, besides being the home-makers, take their full share in the work of the farm community, and are not carefully fenced into a "Women's Sphere."

The Liaison Committee is a real effort towards friendly international relationships so much needed in our time, and it is wise of them to issue a publication of this sort full of curious and interesting matter and so likely to encourage sympathy between country-women all over the world, however diverse their nationality.

The book is well got up and profusely illustrated by photographs. Each contribution in a foreign language is accompanied by an English translation.

C. S.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES (Continued from page 79).

plight in a strange port is infinitely worse than that of the sailors, unless there is a Women's Hostel to which they can go. It is suggested that what is needed is that Catholic Women's Societies should co-operate with the "Apostolatus Maris," and this has been done in Genoa, and by the Catholic Daughters of America.

* * * *

"Egalité," Belgium (June) publishes a very useful article "L'Avenir des Travailleuses" warning women and especially working women of the dangers of "protection," and prophesying that if they do not defend themselves they will presently find themselves in economic slavery. The writer realises that the International Labour Office is a danger too, to women, since the restriction of women's work which prevails in different countries may be developed internationally through means of the International Labour Office, which, the writer says, inclines to "save" women, instead of ameliorating the position of workers of both sexes.

A. A. B.

**ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND
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Organ—"The Catholic Citizen," 2d. monthly.

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