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NOTES AND NEWS.

Mr. Snowden's Roar.

During the week-end an unfamiliar sound has reverberated in the ears of the world: the roar of the British lion. It was a well-modulated roar, without tremor of hysteria, gnashing of teeth, or sharpening of claws. But it was unmistakable and sustained, and it proceeded from the throat of Mr. Snowden. A fleeting hope, on the part of his continental critics, that his might be a voice crying in the wilderness, was quickly dispelled by the sympathetic echo which it evoked from all sections of the British Press and every angle of party political opinion. The angry clamour of the French and Italian Press cannot drown that echo, for Mr. Snowden has said what each one of his countrymen and countrywomen has long felt, that the continued sacrifice of British economic interests on the altar of a very superficial political *entente* must cease—or must, at any rate, for this is Mr. Snowden's immediate contention as we go to press, be subjected to full and accurate discussion. The obstinacy of Mr. Snowden is not unfamiliar to us. We gauged its quality in the years before the war, when it was applied to the practical business of committing the Labour Party to the cause of Women's Suffrage. Nor can we refrain from according to it a meed of admiration in its present phase, for we cannot believe that plain speaking and equitable dealing will not, in the hands of a man who genuinely cares for Peace, eventually serve the cause of Peace. But one aspect of the matter inspires in us a certain trepidation; and we sincerely hope that when it comes, next autumn, to a pull between the social services and the exchequer, our formidable Chancellor may, like Thisbe's lion, "roar as gently as a sucking dove."

School Maintenance Allowances.

Beyond the assurance that some form of maintenance allowance will be given, the Government's plans with regard to the extra compulsory school year are presumably still in the melting pot. Thus a special importance attaches to the strong lead given by Mrs. E. D. Simon on this subject, at the concluding session of last week's Liberal Summer School. Mrs. Simon put up a strong plea for the payment of differential allowances adjusted to the financial needs of the family and payable only in cases of proved necessity, also for payment as far as possible in the form of kind rather than of cash. The word "kind" covers of course such forms of assistance as books, dinners, and school uniforms. Drawing upon Manchester experience in connection with existing allowances to children in secondary and central schools, Mrs. Simon made out a strong economic case for the maximization of human welfare which results when a given sum of public money is distributed according to ascertained need. Available money

would, she considered, be spent to better advantage if instead of being given to every child whatever its needs at a flat rate for one year only of its school life, it were given on a basis of need to all children from eleven up to the end of their school career. The system would then graft easily on to our existing system and allow for allowances beyond 15 to those who stayed voluntarily at secondary schools. Such was her main argument. We follow it, however, not without misgiving. Such a system might graft easily on to our existing system. It would, however, graft less easily than a flat rate cash allowance on to any future system of family allowances towards which a universal school maintenance allowance would be a definite step. If we accept the premise that under existing conditions all is well with the economic conditions of those families which are not actually in a condition to prove necessity for special assistance from education or public assistance authorities as the case may be, there is much to be said for Mrs. Simon's view. But if we challenge the whole existing economic position of the family and demand a new measure of economic redistribution on its behalf from the top to the bottom of the social scale (which is what we are disposed to do), then we are tempted to regard school maintenance allowances in relation rather to the family allowances of the future than to the special public assistance measures of the past. From this angle Mrs. Simon's scheme looks less attractive.

The New Factories Bill.

An important letter signed by many representative women which appeared in *The Times* on Friday of last week points out that now is the logical time to press for the removal of sex inequalities in the Factories Bill promised in the autumn. The Government has announced its decision to ratify the Washington Hours Convention. It is therefore legitimate to expect that the new Bill should follow the lines proposed by the Convention making the 48-hour week apply to adult men and women equally in all factories and workshops. Further, the time is now ripe to remove the unfair ban on women's night work. The letter points out that in this country it is under legislation implementing the International Labour Organization Night-work Convention that women are forbidden to work at night and that this Convention once ratified must stand for ten years. But it is now almost ten years since this legislation was adopted and advantage should therefore be taken of the new Bill to provide equal conditions as regards night work for men and women. A useful letter from a woman employer of labour appeared a few days later heartily supporting the views expressed and giving instances of the curious reactions on the employment of men of restrictions on woman's labour. Among the signatures to the first letter was that of Dame Millicent Fawcett, who discussed it fully with Mrs. Abbott a few days before the beginning of her illness. It is satisfactory that so far as the important points in this letter are concerned there is no difference of opinion in feminist societies in this country, and their work for the autumn is clearly cut out for them.

"Putting the Clock Back."

Recently we had occasion to comment regretfully on the action of the Oldham Co-operative Society in giving six months' notice to all its married women employees on the ground that their jobs were wanted by the unmarried daughters of members. We suggested at the time that the matter should receive careful attention from the Women's Co-operative Guild, and are now glad to see that the *Co-operative News*, in an editorial article on the subject, makes the same suggestion. Under the title, "Putting the Clock Back," the *Co-operative News*, makes a strong plea for the freedom of the married woman "to use for the benefit of her family and of the community, as represented by co-operative service, any trained capacity she may have acquired, or



any talent she may possess." It describes the action of the Oldham Society as "an ominous setting back of the clock for women", which "cuts at the root of the question whether women shall be dominated by economic restraint set by men or gain the liberty to regulate their own lives and fortunes". We hope, and indeed believe, that the outlook of the *Co-operative News* rather than that of the Oldham Society is representative of the movement as a whole.

#### A National Maternity Service.

Last week the British Medical Association put forward the outline of a scheme for the development of a national maternity service. Details are not yet to hand, but broadly, the scheme is designed to supplement the existing National Health Insurance, partly by bringing in classes of mothers at present uninsured, partly by substituting medical benefits for the existing lump sums paid to the wives of insured men. The cost of the scheme appears on first estimates to be surprisingly moderate. An addition of two-fifths of a penny to the joint contribution of employer and employed plus a State contribution roughly equal to the lump sum at present given to insured mothers is suggested by the B.M.A. But coupled with the scheme is the further suggestion that it might be the means of securing a substantial reduction of the maternal mortality rate through the provision of adequate midwifery attention, supplemented wherever necessary by medical assistance before, during, and after childbirth. It is frankly recognized that there is room for considerable improvement in the training both of midwives and of doctors and the suggestion is made—we feel that it is psychologically a sound one—that a national scheme backed by the necessary financial resources is likely to stimulate the required effort among the institutions concerned. It is a matter of general observation that people have a queer way of doing what is expected of them.

#### THE TOWNSWOMAN.

When we talk of women's organizations, we forget how limited their influence really is. In fact we are sometimes thankful that with politicians they are commonly supposed to be more influential than they really are. Only a small percentage of towns have groups of women voters organized on strictly non-party lines. Many of the larger towns have, it is true, branches of the National Council of Women and the remains of former Suffrage Societies which function under a new name. Others have associations, strong or weak, as the case may be, of women citizens, some confined mainly to problems of local government; others combining local work with Parliamentary activities. Women's Co-operative Guilds exist in many places, but though we must pay a high tribute to their educational value in a community, they of course exist for a specific object, which confines the limits of their membership. Associations of women teachers and other professional and industrial workers, temperance societies, branches of the Workers' Educational Association, all often centres of active citizenship, similarly attract their own special personnel. It may be said that now that women are fully enfranchised citizens, the party organization fills the need for civic and political education, and we think it is certainly true that women who join parties are less contented than men with a bill of fare composed of billiards, whist drives, and summer outings. But even the most enlightened group of party women—and we ourselves know some which are diligently studying current political problems—must necessarily be confined to those who adhere to the party programme, and the give and take and the mutual education of collaboration among women of all points of view is lost.

We have therefore only to compare the map of Great Britain with lists of existing non or all party associations of women voters to see the preponderance of towns which are wholly unprovided for. The countryside, too long neglected, has now a decided advantage in this respect. Village and rural women's institutes are to be found scattered in small towns and villages all over our island, and their number is increasing rapidly. But very wisely in order to preserve its essentially rural character, towns with a population of over 4,000 are ruled out. The country woman has the chance of meeting her neighbours, rich and poor, Church or chapel, Tory or Radical, in a friendly, non-partisan atmosphere. There is no philanthropic taint, no scheme of education imposed by superior outsiders. Each institute develops on its own lines, and the national policy is shaped at their great national annual gatherings.

The townswoman is left out in the cold. In fact, nobody cares much about the towns, unless there is a cathedral to attract

#### Ladies of the Air.

The Press has not been slow to congratulate the Duchess of Bedford on her return trip to India in her monoplane Spider—just a week, there and back, in eight hops. We venture to add our own congratulations, for apart from being a sporting effort in personal enterprise and endurance, the Duchess of Bedford's trip, by cutting down the record time between London and Karachi by nearly one-half, constituted a landmark in the history of civil aviation. How far she has set a new pace for larger mail carrying aircraft we do not know. Nevertheless, as the Duchess herself has pointed out, the real brunt of the expedition fell upon Capt. Barnard, the pilot. Thus the Duchess' feat is in a different category to that of Miss Spooner, who has held her own valiantly among the pilots of the first three leading planes in the air race round Europe which took place during the week-end.

#### Dame Millicent's last Contribution to "The Woman's Leader."

Dame Millicent never forgot *THE WOMAN'S LEADER*. She constantly sent useful cuttings or better still characteristic articles or notes. We print this week the short review of Mr. Dutt's life of his wife Saroj Nalini, which was found on Dame Millicent's desk addressed to *THE WOMAN'S LEADER* after her death. In the issue of 12th July appeared a review of the same book by Miss A. R. Caton under the title "Pioneer work of an Indian Feminist." But even if Dame Millicent had covered the same ground—which she does not—we should have been thankful for this last evidence of her kindly thought for us. The last words written by her for our paper, the quotation from Sir Rabindranath Tagore, will find an echo in the hearts of our readers to-day, as they substitute Dame Millicent's name for that of Saroj Nalini.

visitors or a convenient and comfortable hotel for touring motorists. Many of them are not even known by name by the average Member of Parliament, still less ordinary persons. How their inhabitants live and pass their time is a matter of complete indifference.

It is indeed time that this neglect of the small towns and of the new towns that are springing up around crowded centres of the population should come to end. We do not say this in any spirit of condescension. It is not that we can help them, but they can help us. The women's movement of the new period that was inaugurated by the last General Election with its complete franchise cannot afford to do without the towns, and the point of view and the co-operation of townswomen.

We cordially welcome, therefore, the proposal of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, to start Townswomen's Guilds, which, like women's institutes, will be both social and educational in character. These Guilds are intended "to serve as a common meeting ground for all women, irrespective of creed or party. They are completely autonomous, and they will formulate their own programme according to local needs. They will co-operate with all existing local efforts for the good of the town. Nothing that affects the well-being and happiness of its citizens will be beneath their notice—local features of beauty or interest, home life, and the simplification of domestic labour, the local social services, the opportunities for music, drama, and all forms of education. But the Guilds will not be narrowly local, and it is hoped that they will play their part in national movements and in questions of Imperial and International importance.

If the woman's movement in this or any country is to live, it must draw its strength from such groups of thinking women all over the country. With the vote came inevitably the necessity of a wider objective which would attract to the movement the new voter who only knew by hearsay of the struggle for freedom. But in this wider objective, it must never be forgotten that the original goal of the woman's movement has not yet been reached. A real equality of liberties, status, and opportunities between men and women is essential before women can make their best contribution to the common good. It is perhaps in man-made towns that the present inequalities are most evident—towns with no women on governing bodies, no women in responsible positions in professional life, trade, or industry. The newly-formed guilds will bring townswomen together, irrespective of creed, party, or social standing, and with the strength that is found in union will enable them with confidence and understanding to take their rightful place in the counsels of the community.

#### A WOMAN OF INDIA.<sup>1</sup>

BEING THE LIFE OF SAROJ NALINI, FOUNDER OF THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE MOVEMENT IN INDIA, by G. S. DUTT (Indian Civil Service).

At the beginning of this month I had the pleasure of an introduction to Mrs. B. Rama Rau, an Indian woman doctor. She told me that we, over here, had no conception of the extraordinary development of the women's movement in India during recent years. I, of course, remember the fine work that was done in this country by Mrs. and Miss Tata, at the time when the India Bill was before Parliament. Miss Tata is a very gifted speaker, and friends in the House of Commons were able on several occasions to arrange for her to address British M.P.s within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster. Her speeches were listened to with great attention and interest by a considerable number of M.P.s; but in the end Mrs. and Miss Tata were unsuccessful in their immediate object and they finally left this country feeling, I am afraid, that their efforts had been unavailing. But all along, though I sympathized with their disappointment, I thought that the enfranchisement of Indian women would take place in a much more favourable atmosphere if it were carried by a vote of the various representative assemblies in India and by Indians, rather than if it had been imposed by the dictum of the Imperial Government.

And so I think it has turned out. Instead of the fifty years hard labour to which we were condemned in Great Britain before we could obtain political freedom or an approach to equality before that came, the Indian woman has won all that and the happiness it connotes without violence of any kind and without even a struggle. I do not mean that our struggle over here did not help the Indian women. I believe that it did very materially and my impressions are strengthened by the little book which I am now reviewing.

Saroj Nalini spoke and wrote English as easily as her native tongue. Her husband's book about her work for India is prefaced by a foreword by the Indian poet and philosopher, Sir Rabindranath Tagore, and she was personally very much helped by Lady Bose, the wife of Sir J. C. Bose, whose scientific discoveries about the response of vegetable life to various stimuli are the wonder of the age. She was then, born an aristocrat, but an aristocrat of the type (we know it well here) that desires to give rather than to get; who holds fast that which is good and at the same time passionately desires to share it with others less fortunate than themselves. We learn from this book that those women now carrying on her work are in touch with the Women's Institute movement in this country—Lady Denman, Miss Grace Hadow, Mrs. Wintringham, and others. The book concludes with the blessing bestowed upon it by Sir Rabindranath Tagore:—

"May the deep striving for the service of her countrywomen to which the good Saroj Nalini dedicated her life, ever continue to re-act in new and deathless forms in all countries and at all times and thus make even her death itself fruitful."

MILlicent G. FAWCETT

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

##### THE CHRISTIAN AND BIRTH CONTROL.

MADAM.—The only justification for a writer of a book remonstrating with a reviewer is when the contents are so partially represented that the result is a caricature. M. D. S., acting under obviously very strong feelings of abhorrence for what I have tried to say, has adopted the familiar device of pillorying sentences divorced from their context.

There is, however, one quite legitimate question put in the earlier part of the review. I am asked on what grounds I call contraception "disgusting". I am quoting a French doctor—not as M. D. S. might suppose a narrow-minded "clerical" but an enlightened man of science: an unmarried practising contraceptionist (called in old days a fornicator) who not only practised his creed but taught it far and wide. Another who was also addicted to the practice is quoted by Dr. Gore: "Of course, the thing is beastly, but what are you to do?" Further: among boys and girls of all classes contraception is encouraging promiscuity. Evidence I have lately received is not to be gainsaid: nor could any other effect have been expected.

Let there be no mistake. Contraception if unchecked is bound to destroy monogamy, and with it civilization. Anyone who wishes to prevent this is entitled to suggest a better way. The one I have suggested is based on the New Testament. M. D. S. betrays an animus against it which seems to betray a suspicion that it is true. If anyone wishes to disprove it there is only one way: either by showing that the New Testament is wrong, or that, though right, it has no bearing on the matter in hand. I must ask your readers to read the book itself with this caution in mind.

E. LYTTTELTON.

<sup>1</sup> *A Woman of India*, by G. S. Dutt. (Hogarth Press, 4s. 6d.)

#### DAME MILLICENT FAWCETT.

On Thursday, 8th August, the funeral of Dame Millicent Fawcett took place at the Golden's Green Crematorium. The little chapel, crowded in spite of the holiday season, was beautifully decorated with flowers; through the open doors the sun shone and there were glimpses of green grass and trees. There was an absence of gloom about the service that Dame Millicent herself would have wished. The beauty of the summer flowers, sent by innumerable friends and societies, glowing in the August sunshine, and so numerous that they lined the long corridors of the chapel, seemed appropriately to symbolize the beauty of her "completed life." Among those which covered the coffin the red, green, and white colours of the organization which she had served for the greater part of her life were conspicuous. Before the service began the organ played part of the second movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony—her own choice. The two hymns selected, "Bless'd are the pure in heart" and George Herbert's rendering of the twenty-third Psalm, were also her favourites. The Master of the Temple read the beautiful words of the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians and the ninety-first Psalm, and after the committal prayer boys from the Temple choir sang Bach's Requiem "Blessed are the Dead."

In addition to a large number of members of Dame Millicent's family, a large gathering of fellow workers past and present had assembled. Among the numerous organizations represented were the following: The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, the London and National Society for Women's Service, the International Alliance for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, the Woman's Leader, the International Council of Women, the National Council of Women, the Women's Freedom League, St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, Representatives of the Women's Social and Political Union, the British Commonwealth League, the Women's Co-operative Guild, the Open Door Council and International, the Headmistresses' Association, Women's International League, Newnham College, the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, the Manchester Woman's Suffrage Society, and the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital.

Many past and present officers and committee members of the National Union of Suffrage Societies and its constituent bodies were gathered together—Mrs. Auerbach, Miss Margaret Ashton, Miss Evelyn Atkinson, Dr. Ethel Bentham, M.P., Lady Balfour of Burleigh, Miss Clough, Miss Clegg, Miss Edith Dimock, Mrs. Game, Mrs. Arnold Glover, Miss Hancock, Mrs. Heitland, Mrs. Kinnell, Miss Elizabeth Macadam, Miss Merrifield, Miss E. Leaf, Miss Catherine Marshall, Miss Edith Plowden, Miss Eleanor F. Rathbone, M.P., Mrs. Oliver Strachey, Miss Philippa Strachey, Mrs. Swanwick, Miss Rosamond Smith, Mrs. Le Sueur, Miss Frances Sterling, Miss Helen Ward. Others included Dame Ethel Smyth, Sir John Withers, M.P. for Cambridge University, Mrs. George Morgan, Mr. H. N. Brailsford, Dame Maud McCarthy, Mrs. Nevinson, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, and Dr. Jane Walker, her personal friend for many years, who with Dr. Ina Clarke had attended Dame Millicent in her last illness.

It was a sad company mourning the loss of a very dear friend and almost worshipped leader, but there was nevertheless an atmosphere of peace and thanksgiving for a long and beautiful life, unusually rich not only in completed public achievement but in personal loyalties, friendships, and affection.

#### NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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#### DAME MILLICENT FAWCETT.

The N.U.S.E.C. was represented at the funeral of our late beloved leader by Miss Rathbone, M.P., Miss Macadam, and two members of the staff. Many members also were present, as well as a number of former officers and members of the Executive Committee. Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Mrs. Ryland, Mrs. Hughes, Miss Bertha Mason, and many others were unavoidably prevented from attending. Flowers in the colours of the Union were sent from Headquarters.

We understand that there will be a service of memorial and thanksgiving for Dame Millicent's life, some time in the autumn, probably in October, so that many who were unable to be in London last week will be able to attend. Full particulars will be given as soon as possible.



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**LONDON AND NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE,** 35 Marsham Street, Westminster. Secretary, Miss P. Strachey. Members' Library, Books on Suffrage, Sociology, and Economics, Hansard, latest Government Publications, Periodicals, Newscuttings. 10-8 (except Saturdays).

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