

THE  
CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST



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FORMERLY

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY

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Organ—"The Catholic Citizen," 2d. monthly.

**OBJECT.**

To band together Catholics of both sexes, in order to secure the political, social and economic equality between men and women, and to further the work and usefulness of Catholic women as citizens.

**MEMBERSHIP.**

All Catholic women are eligible as Members, who approve the object and methods, and will pay a minimum annual subscription of 1s. Men are invited to join as Associates, on the same conditions, with the exception that they may not elect or be elected to the Executive.

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# THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST

*Organ of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, 55, Berners Street, London.*

Vol. I., No. 1.

January 15th, 1915.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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.

## THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST.

By ALICE MEYNELL.

The production in war time of a new paper dedicated to the cause of Votes for Women should remind us that though thousands are suffering acutely, splendidly, and conspicuously, millions are suffering chronically, inconspicuously, and with little hope, evils against which the whole Suffrage movement has set its face. Crime has been lessened by the War, we hear; but we cannot hope that sin has been lessened. And the difficult and arduous work of the women reformers is essentially and fundamentally a moral work. A Catholic suffragist woman is a suffragist on graver grounds and with weightier reasons than any other suffragist in England.

In a time of war ours is a cause of peace. It cannot ultimately be otherwise, inasmuch as we come to ask for what we cannot seize, and have to beg law-makers to make another law. Our appeal is to law and to the reason that dictates law: "Come, let us reason together"; and that is an act of peace, of quiet thinking, and deliberate speech. Moreover, the demand of judicious women for full citizenship is a proffer of help. The world is generally difficult to govern, and especially are matters of law affecting questions between men and women most intricate. It would be useful, we think, to hear one side (not necessarily in a quarrel, but oftener in concurrence) as well as the other; to hear the contention of women immediately, and not any longer mediately by means of their "influence." Influence without responsibility does not make for good and careful judgment; it encourages, at the least, haste and impulse, and a confidence in

that illusion, feminine "intuition" (I wish I might never hear that word again, denoting, as it does, vanity, rashness, unreason, and presumption); at the worst it makes light of the stringent duties of conscience.

The function of full citizenship will arouse all that is now inactive, or rather ignorant, in the collective conscience of women. And a collective conscience is needed. Women have too long been content to be good individually. They will now, sister for sister, acknowledge such a responsibility as no brother can own strictly towards a brother; they will be the "keepers" of one another. For no class, no caste, nor race has the obligation of such mutual duty as sex imposes upon women. That duty has been for centuries fulfilled in one way—let us call it a theoretic or academic way: that is, women have asserted a high standard of morality and have made that standard a social rule, and have enforced it by social sanctions. These sanctions have now passed out of fashion, and perhaps are not greatly to be regretted, in so much as they were not precisely charitable; they worked chiefly by social exclusions; the erring, or even the suspected, woman was not "received." We may hope now to keep up the same standard by wisdom, sympathy and all methods purely religious. We shall moreover have reason on our side, because our standard will be, as Christianity would have it, equal for women and men. No, considering the old inequality, we need not greatly mourn the passing of the old severity.

That men need the special knowledge, help,

experience and opportunities of women, as women, in the work of legislation and of administration of the law, the majority of our legislators—and all those who have given our social conditions close attention—have already admitted. It is only necessary to name the Criminal Law Amendment which lagged so long (and is yet incomplete), not because law was reluctant but because it baffled and perplexed. Women of right age, right character, and right principles are now at last prepared, at last willing, and at last able to consult and also to act with men in the making and the administering of a difficult law. As to administration, a mere allusion is possible here to the necessity of women police. In this grave matter, Germany, foremost in the social reform that begins below, has made the experiment. A member of the Criminal Law Amendment Committee went to Germany in order to study its working and gauge its success in a number of large towns. America has appointed women constables in fifteen towns (fifteen last year—perhaps the number has now increased) for the supervision of dancing halls, music halls and cinematograph exhibitions. I quote from the Committee's leaflet: "In Los Angeles the first woman police-officer had her own office. . . . A mother's trouble about her children in bad company, cases of moral injury to children, advice as to the reliability of newspaper advertisements offering posts to young girls" were among the cases brought to her. In New York, patrol women are, or are to be, employed. It may be asked whether unofficial help would not be equally efficient. The experience of the cities of South Germany reports that women employed by the State and officially responsible to the public have known how to use the best arm—responsible authority. Who else, in like degree with women, with mothers, are on the watch, in fear of the world for their daughters, of the flesh for their sons?

Here in England something has lately been gained, owing to the urgency of women against some evils too long existing. The cruel insufficiency of the laws concerning affiliation has been in a measure corrected; but we have still the strange conditions in which a girl, or child, has to make her depositions in all their details to two men—no woman pre-

sent; and under like conditions to give her evidence in the police court. Boys can be present there when matrons are excluded. Surely England has endured too long what is not only immodest but profoundly immoral. Women, however sheltered, can no longer plead ignorance—in itself disgraceful. But such ignorance was till yesterday a convention throughout the world. Let us acknowledge with due thanks that some of these indecent anomalies have been due to the wish of men to keep women out of touch with certain corruptions. Did I say to keep women out of touch with these things? No—to keep a certain few women. It happened to the present writer to hear early one dark morning under her windows the outcries of a woman in the street. At the police station she enquired what had happened—had any woman been brought in hurt or in distress? "No," said the policeman, "but it was probably a female. You ladies don't know anything about females."

Upon all these matters I can only touch. But in the large question—the question whether women should not urge their help, their ability, their wisdom, and their compassion upon the acceptance of man in the making and the execution of the laws under which men and women live—in this question who can be so vitally and mortally and immortally interested as Catholic women? Great work, great devotion, great power, great ability are spent by those reforming women who have temporal evils to correct and temporal good to try for. Is it not then a wonder that all Christian women and therefore all Catholic women are not in the forefront of such a movement? For their aim, their pain, their compassion, their hope, are for things material and temporal, but also for things spiritual and eternal.

We are very grateful to Mrs. Meynell for so beautifully expressing the aims of the Suffrage movement in general, and of Christian and Catholic Suffragists in particular.

Miss Christopher St. John has kindly promised us an article for next month.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Some of our members, though anxious for our paper to appear, may question the wisdom of publishing it at this moment. We confess that if our motives were commercial, selfish, or sordid, we should have waited a more favourable opportunity, but after much thought and discussion, the Committee came to the decision that every organised body of women should have the means of expressing their views at this crisis, when the honour and liberties of women are threatened on every side. The written word has more power and can reach further than the spoken, and it must not be said that Catholic women stood aside while their sisters were in danger. We know our members will not fail us, and in another column they will see how each one can help.

\* \* \* \*

The *Catholic Times* did well in pointing out that the notorious circular placing the wives of soldiers under police surveillance supplied suffragists with a powerful argument. Fortunately the public outcry has for the moment brought the War Office to its senses, but we cannot be too vigilant.

\* \* \* \*

The root of all the trouble, both as regards soldiers' wives and the agitation concerning the *alleged* increase of drunkenness among women, is that the authorities, and others not in authority, cannot get rid of the idea that the money paid to the dependents of soldiers is given in charity. It is no more charity than the salaries paid to members of Parliament, though the latter might more easily come under the heading of charity.

\* \* \* \*

At the General Council of the Licensed Victuallers' Defence, held at Leeds to protest against the War Restrictions, Mr. Major, of Plymouth, is reported to have said that the military authorities would welcome no suggestions placing soldiers on a different footing to civilians. A general said to him upon being told that licensed holders were refusing to serve soldiers after nine: "I consider that

is the most base insult you could throw at the British soldier."

We hope every British woman will take the general's words to heart. We are no friends to drunkenness, either in men or women, but special restrictions are intolerable, and particularly so when applied to the temperate sex.

\* \* \* \*

We are glad to see that the excellent scheme for organising women patrols in the neighbourhood of camps is gaining ground. The movement was started by the National Union of Women Workers, under the presidency of Mrs. Creighton. We hope that it may be as successful in Scotland and Ireland as it is in England.

\* \* \* \*

The Institute of Archæology, University of Liverpool, have established a Fellowship in the Archæology of music, which they have invited Miss Kathleen Schlesinger to accept. Miss Schlesinger is at present engaged on an independent investigation of the music of ancient Greece, and of its influence on the musical system of the west. This is the first academic recognition and support accorded to the Archæology of music. Suffragists will rejoice that the honour goes to a woman.

\* \* \* \*

The following extract from the Encyclical of Our Holy Father the Pope, will surely find an echo in the hearts of all women. After speaking of the horrors of this war, and of His appeal to kings and rulers to restore peace, the Holy Father says: "We implore those in whose hands are placed the fortunes of nations to hearken to our voice. Surely there are other ways and means whereby violated rights can be rectified. Let them be tried honestly and with good will, and let arms meanwhile be laid aside. It is impelled with love of them and of all mankind, without any personal interest whatever, that we utter these words. Let them not allow these words of a friend and of a father to be uttered in vain."

(Official translation published by Burns and Oates).

## THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY,

Office: 55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON.

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## THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST.

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

## CRY HAVOC!

The student of old archives gets strange glimpses into the past; much food for thought and many a salutary lesson lie hidden in musty documents of a bygone age.

It fell to my lot not long since to run through a number of volumes of Admiralty records of a hundred years ago, when, as now, England and the continent were overflowing with prisoners of war. Among these most depressing records, depressing because shorn as they are of rhetoric and glamour there is nothing to disguise the horrors of war, there is one volume which haunts my memory. It is entitled: "Requests for information respecting British Prisoners."\*

Here are a few typical entries which might be multiplied indefinitely:—

Richd. Bosson cannot yet be traced (tell his mother); to call again in a month. And a later entry: Died at Quimper, death certificate sent to mother.

John Malony not yet traced—did not die in hospital (Quimper). Answer his wife.

James Ellis. Supposed to have died in French prison. Not found on dead list. Answer his mother.

Corns. Shaw, 14 years of age, taken prisoner, not known where to.

William Davies, supposed to have died in France. 3 persons of same name dead, but no rank or vessel named.

John Burke. Is not found on the lists of British prisoners dead in France, but it is to be observed that the returns for that period are very defective.

Ellison of Swiftsure . . . an Allins of Swiftsure died. From the erroneous way the French frequently spell English names it is probable he may be the person enquired for.

\*Public Record Office, Adm. Med. Dep. Miss. 57.

A whole history of human suffering and sorrow is contained in these few bald official words. And so it goes on in the same dreary strain right through a closely-written large-sized volume, till the reader loses all sense of time and place, and the great dingy building rings with the wailing of women clamouring for their dead. The wail of the mother presented with her son's death certificate after months of anguish; the weeping of countless wives; the sighs of young lads, languishing in prison because their respective countries thought fit to go to war. For some of our prisoners were mere children. An order from the Admiralty Board, dated 27th Nov., 1810, directs that all boys under twelve at Dartmoor are to be sent to France, but none of a greater age.

But for those of us who read and studied there was always the consolation that it was long past; the world had grown more humane; the prosperity of nations depended upon their mutual goodwill, a European war was unthinkable. And so we believed until shaken from our dreams by the tramp of armed men.

We have learnt once more that Sovereigns can invoke blessing on peace conferences while planning to invade their neighbour's territory; that men have found no better way of settling international quarrels than by flying at each other's throats, just as some can find no better outlet for God-given talents than the invention of devilish machines for blowing each other to bits.

We have heard much, and we shall hear

more, concerning the balance of power. We dare to say that if the balance of power had been more equal between men and women the world over, we should not still be settling international disputes by swamping a continent with blood and turning Europe into a shambles.

We might have been spared the spectacle of the Christian nations at each other's throats, two thousand years after the coming of the Prince of Peace. A spectacle which brought the Head of Christendom with sorrow to the grave. The spirit of militarism, whether at home or abroad, cannot flourish side by side with a free womanhood. The immediate result of the ascendancy of the military spirit in England has been a tyrannous persecution of women.

We are told that this is a war to end war; not if the counsels of women are still rejected. Only together will men and women find some means of substituting the sanity of arbitration for the immeasurable imbecility, or—as Mrs. Fawcett has said—the insensate devilry of war.

But since war is still with us, a special tribute is due from all non-combatants to the brave men who are so gallantly, and so gloriously, upholding and defending the honour of our country. For them we have the deepest gratitude and admiration, and of them we can ungrudgingly say: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

L. de ALBERTI.

## ANNUAL MEETING.

We were glad to welcome so many of our members at the Annual Meeting held at the Suffrage Club, on December 12th. Mrs. Walter Roch took the chair in the absence of Miss Gadsby whose time is entirely taken up with work for the Belgian refugees. Miss Whately read the annual report, the adoption of which was moved by Mrs. Merivale Mayer, and seconded by Miss Christopher St. John. Mrs. Crawford moved the adoption of the financial report, which in the absence of Mrs. Worlock through illness, was seconded by Miss Abadam, who kindly came to the rescue. Miss Anton Laing and Miss Fennell proposed and seconded a vote of thanks to the Executive, which was carried with

applause. In spite of the terrible times through which we are passing, a note of hope and confidence in the future ran through all the speeches.

## THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST.

In bringing out our paper at the present moment, much as it is needed, we are making a great act of faith in the righteousness of our cause, and also an act of faith in the loyalty of our members. We are in the happy position of having among us distinguished writers, who have all most generously promised to give us literary help. We cannot be grateful enough to Mrs. Meynell for starting us on our way. But we expect help of some kind from every member of the society. In the first place, if each one will take an annual subscription (1/6 post free), we shall be secure from any financial anxiety. We shall be grateful also for special contributions. Subscriptions and donations should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer (for the paper), Miss Brady, to the office. Another very important way of helping is by devoting some time to selling the paper outside the churches and at Catholic and Suffrage meetings. Will any members willing to help in this way send in their names to Miss Monica Whately, who is organising the sale of the paper?

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## THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC CONGRESS AT CARDIFF.

Canvassed by the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society.

The Catholic Woman's Suffrage Society has lived through three years of strenuous activity. It seems a far cry to those early days when two delegates of the Society gathered up their pamphlets and badges, and went forth to Newcastle to woo the Catholic Congress. The Congress received the delegates splendidly, and help came from many friends. The "Catholic Times" paid tribute. It told its readers that "Whereas two Delegates from the newly-formed Catholic Women's Suffrage Society have attended the Congress, it would appear from their extraordinary activity that there had been at least one hundred!" Such propaganda, it said, means success.

In this spirit was inaugurated the annual event of the Society's attendance at the Catholic Congress. Since then, have been Norwich and Plymouth, and this year the Society canvassed the National Catholic Congress, at Cardiff.

A fortnight before the date of the Congress it was my great pleasure to go to Cardiff to organise the meeting to be held in the Whitehall Rooms. The Secretary and local members of Committee of the Congress gave me every kindness and help. Our poster, advertising the meeting, was given a place of honour in the Congress office. There are many Suffrage Societies in Cardiff, full of enthusiasm, all extending the hand of welcome to newcomers in the cause. The Editors of the local papers and local sympathisers were most kind to me, making my work a real joy.

The London and Liverpool Secretaries and delegates, on their arrival, were at once absorbed in preparations for our meeting and in general propaganda. One of the delegates supplied us with a motor car, and this, carrying our colours and posters, did splendid advertising and greatly helped us.

The Society had been very fortunate in securing on its platform Miss Abadam, Mrs. Walter Roch and Mr. Francis Meynell, Miss Kathleen Fitzgerald, B.A., occupying the chair.

The speeches were individually most interesting and original, and held the attention of the large audience in a remarkable manner. Miss Abadam, in her address, rose to wonderful power, and during the remaining days of the Congress I heard on all sides expressions of admiration and wonder at her eloquence,

and at the great conviction she conveys. Her discourse dealt with the historical aspects of the woman's movement.

Miss Kathleen Fitzgerald, in her speech from the chair, announced that Lord Ninian Crichton Stuart, having given a Suffrage pledge at his election, had been invited to address the meeting. In reply, a refusal came from Lord Ninian in these words: "I regret that, owing to the methods employed by those attempting to gain votes, it is quite impossible for me to identify myself in any way with the movement."

Lord Ninian's attention was drawn to the fact that the methods of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society are entirely constitutional, and we communicated his correspondence with our Society to the Cardiff Suffrage Societies and to the local press.

The resolution proposed by Mr. Francis Meynell was carried unanimously.

The attendance at the meeting was splendid, at least three hundred and fifty people were present. It was said to be the second largest meeting of the Congress.

The remaining days were devoted to canvassing the sectional societies attending the Congress, and to the establishing of a local branch. In this effort we were quite successful.

The delegates attended the opening meeting of the Congress. The Lady Mayoress of Cardiff, Mrs. Robinson, personally invited the delegates to the Lord Mayor's reception and expressed regret that engagements prevented the Lord Mayor and herself from attending our meeting. We attended the meetings of the Catholic Women's League, the Catholic Social Guild, the Catholic Trade Unionists, the Catholic Stage Guild, the Catholic Guardians' Association, the International Catholic Association for the protection of young girls, and the general meeting in the Cory Hall. Everywhere we continued our propaganda and gained many friends.

I may say, in conclusion, that our efforts will be put forth to the doing of even more successful propaganda for the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society at the National Catholic Congresses of the future, until such time as our great Cause shall come to victory.

MARY E. O'SULLIVAN.

## NEWS FROM LONDON AND THE BRANCHES.

The office, 55, Berners Street, London, re-opens on the 13th inst. Office hours, 3-30 to 5-30, or at other times by appointment. The Secretary is always glad to welcome members at the office.

The sum realised from our stall at the Christmas bazaar, organised by the United Suffragists, was £13 13s. We thank those who sent gifts, and all buyers and sellers.

Members are reminded that Mass is offered at the request of the Society every first Sunday of the month, at St. Patrick's, Soho, at 10-30, the intention being for peace, and those killed in the war.

### BRANCHES.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—It has been decided to confine ourselves for the present to spiritual action, during the national crisis, and have Mass offered, as far as possible, each week, in a number of the poorer parishes of the city. These Masses have been said regularly so far, and notice of them given out in the church on the previous Sunday.—Hon. Sec., Miss Rose Grafton, Manresa, Vernon Road, Edgbaston.

**BRIGHTON AND WEST SUSSEX.**—At the outbreak of war the Society joined with several other local Societies in forming the Brighton and Hove Branch of the Women Suffrage National Aid Corps, Miss Bennett and Miss Busse being on the Committee. We are pleased to say that already much good work has been done.—Hon. Sec., Miss Busse, 5, Belvedere Terrace, Brighton.

**CARDIFF.**—On the outbreak of the war the Hon. Secretary was able, through the courtesy of the priests, especially the Rev. A. Van den Heuvel and Rev. E. R. James, to form a Voluntary Aid Detachment of Red Cross Society, composed of Catholics from all parts of the town, with Dr. Dillon as medical officer. The Society wish most sincerely to thank Councillor F. H. Turnbull, President of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and the Secretary, Mr. Chabrel, and the other members, for their kindness and courtesy in lending us the fine room at their headquarters in Charles Street. They have done all they could to help our Society.—Hon. Sec., Miss Bryan, 1, Moorland Place, Cardiff.

**HASTINGS AND EAST SUSSEX.**—The local Belgian Relief Committee invited our Hon. Secretary to serve on it, as the representative of this branch of the C.W.S.S. She accepted the invitation, and has attended the meetings which have been held weekly since October. One of the members of our Executive Committee having offered her services to the French Red Cross Society is now serving as interpreter in a Military Hospital in Paris. Another member is working actively in a local Hospital for the wounded soldiers, which is established in the Convent of Our Lady, Filsham Park, St. Leonard's.—Hon. Sec., Miss Isabel Willis, Mount Lodge, The Mount, St. Leonard's.

**LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT.**—Members have met on Saturday afternoons to mend and renovate garments for distribution amongst the poor; seventy garments have been given away. A number of our members are working as relief visitors of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Organisation. The office, 18, Colquitt Street, reopens on Saturday, 9th inst. Hours, 3 to 6 p.m.—Hon. Sec., Miss Rodgers, 66, Park Road South, Birkenhead.

**MANCHESTER AND DISTRICT.**—Many of our members have undertaken special work during the war crisis.—Hon. Sec., Miss E. Sullivan, 163, Queen's Road, Harpurhey, Manchester.

**MIDLOTHIAN.**—Our members are working for the Belgian refugees, and for the S. & S.F.A.—Hon. Sec., Miss Mardon, The Tower, Strathearn Road, Edinburgh.

**PLYMOUTH AND DISTRICT.**—The Hon. Secretary has unfortunately gone to Ireland, but the sewing meetings organised by her are being carried on.

**STIRLING.**—Mrs. Barry must be congratulated on the promotion of her husband, but the Stirling members of the C.W.S.S. greatly regret her removal to Greenock. Before her departure she was presented with a silver salver by the members of the Catholic Girls' Association, of which she was President. In this office she has been succeeded by another member of the C.W.S.S.—Miss Martin. The Society is well represented in the public work of Stirling. Mrs. Hugh Robson is not only Assistant County Director of the Stirlingshire Red Cross Society, but is also Matron of the V.A.D. Hospital in Stirling, and Mrs. Bentley Murray is Senior Quartermaster and Treasurer of that Institution. The latter is also Hon. Vice-President of the Stirling branch of the Belgian Relief Committee.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Murray, The Sheiling, Stirling.

**WAKEFIELD.**—Since August we have been very busy with Relief Committees, plans for assisting refugees, and ambulance work.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Reader, Westgate End House, Wakefield.

**WIMBLEDON.**—The members present at the annual meeting at the Suffrage Club included Mrs. Huggett, Miss Fennell, Miss Kelly and Lady Laughton. It was agreed that a donation of 10/-, from the local fund, should be given towards the rent fund for the head office. Miss Fennell, in seconding, the vote of thanks to the Executive, made an excellent short speech. It was to be regretted that more members of our local branch were not able to avail themselves of this opportunity of meeting together. It is hoped that all Wimbledon members will become subscribers to the "Catholic Suffragist" and send in their names and subscriptions direct to the head office. The annual subscriptions to the Society of 1/- should be sent in now to the Hon. Sec. of the Wimbledon Branch.—Hon. Sec., Lady Laughton, 9, Pepy's Road, Wimbledon.

N.B.—Branch reports should reach the Editor by the 5th of the month.

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