

WOMEN'S SERVICE  
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# THE Catholic Citizen

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

Vol. XXII, No. 5.

15th MAY, 1936.

Price Twopence.

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 Great Victory

By E. M. TURNER

On April 23rd and 24th the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene (and St. Joan's Alliance as a society affiliated to the A.M.S.H.) celebrated its historic victory, namely the fiftieth anniversary of the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts which occurred in April 1886. Fifty years is a long time; to many the existence of these Acts, and the fight for their repeal, is not even a memory. It is not, therefore, surprising that people are asking "What were the Contagious Diseases Acts? Why is the jubilee of their repeal so important an event, that it is remembered and celebrated with thanksgiving?"

These Acts which were passed by the English Parliament at various dates between 1864 and 1869, introduced the system of State regulation of prostitution into England. Hitherto—with some temporary and partial exceptions—this country had made no experiments in licensing or regulating prostitution, though practically throughout Europe some form of regulation (modelled on the system introduced into France by Napoleon I) was in force, whereby so-called "prostitutes" were registered, supervised, medically examined, and compulsorily detained in special hospitals if suspected, or convicted, of being diseased. In some countries—though not under the English system—registered women were also confined in houses specially "tolerated" or "licensed" by Governments or Municipalities and thus officially set apart for the purpose of prostitution—and profit to the state or municipal exchequers.

The English form of regulation legalised by the C. D. Acts applied to certain naval and military towns only. (This was intended as a first step, they were to be extended by degrees to cover the whole country—a folly that was made impossible by the protests organised in

1869.) The main provisions of the Acts were (1) the registration and police supervision of alleged prostitutes; (2) regular periodic examination of these women for the detection of venereal disease; (3) compulsory detention if diseased, in "certified" hospitals until discharged; (4) provision of certificates showing freedom from infection—or the contrary.

This was it will be seen, an attempt, by the State, to provide for the men of the army and navy a supply of "healthy" women officially certified as free from disease.

The aim of all regulationists, in all countries, was to prevent venereal disease and to maintain public order, and they were prepared to go to any length in the enslavement and degradation of the women concerned to gain these ends. Panic stricken by the increase of venereal disease they adopted the worst possible method of dealing with it. They failed to see that the male partners of the women they registered were, from a medical point of view, a far greater danger to the public health. They were blind to the medical futility of their system—though that futility is a medical commonplace to-day. They did not realise that the creation of a special group of women, set apart, labelled, exploited, and outside the operation and protection of common law, must be detrimental to the general community. They did not, apparently, foresee that it must inevitably lead to the corruption of the police who were given such absolute and arbitrary control of these unhappy women. Still less did they realise that their system would, in due course, make it possible for a gang of organised traffickers to set up a lucrative trade, on an international scale, for the procuring of women and girls for prostitution, or that their "licensed" and "tolerated" houses would become a most convenient market for this trade. In short they

failed to see that their system was nothing more than a particularly cruel form of slavery for which there was neither moral nor medical justification.

The English struggle against the C. D. Acts lasted from 1869 till 1886, when the Acts were finally repealed. It was a long and bitter fight with world-wide repercussions. In 1869 the regulation system was flourishing in every European country—so impregnably entrenched that it appeared impossible to move it. It had the sanction of religious, medical, political, administrative, and public opinion. To most people even to challenge it appeared not only silly but improper. Yet in spite of this deadweight of opinion and prejudice a small band of men and women, under the leadership of Josephine Butler did challenge it. They opposed every argument of the Regulationist; they exposed the medical and administrative futility of his system; they argued that it was impossible to isolate the problem of prostitution, with its attendant evils, and treat it as though moral principles and social justice had no bearing on it. It was a conflict of bitterly opposed forces "the antagonism of principles as opposite as heaven and hell" as Josephine Butler truly said. Out of the English challenge and victory came a world-wide movement against this system—a system as degrading to men as it is to women.

That is why the 50th anniversary of the Repeal of the C.D. Acts is so important historically and so worthy of commemoration. It was the first great victory—the first of many—for those who believe in "the unity of the moral law and the equality of all human souls before God—the most fruitful and powerful revolutionising principle the world has ever known."

\* \* \* \*

In connection with the above article, readers who wish to study the matter further, should send for *Present Day Opinion on Regulation* (3d.), and *The International Movement Against Regulated Prostitution* (4d.), from the A.M.S.H., Livingstone House, Broadway, S.W.1.

The Mass of Thanksgiving for the Repeal of the C.D. Acts was attended by Madame Pesson Depret, President of the French Section of the Alliance, and by our Chairman, Secretary, and other members. Afterwards Mrs. Garrard provided a most welcome breakfast, and the officers called on Fr. Vincent McNabb, O.P., to thank him for offering Mass for this intention.

## Obituary

In the name of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance we offer our affectionate and deep sympathy to our founder, Miss Gabrielle Jeffery, on the death of her mother, Mrs. C. E. Jeffery, on May 4th. R.I.P. Mrs. Jeffery was a member of the Alliance from its earliest days, and took great pride in the work of her daughter. She was in her 90th year and had been failing for some years, during which time she was devotedly and tenderly cared for by Miss Jeffery.

From the age of 16, when she became a Catholic, Mrs. Jeffery devoted her considerable literary gifts to the service and defence of the Church, and was a frequent contributor to the Catholic press.

By request of the Executive Committee Mass was offered for the repose of her soul, and a sheaf of St. Joan's lilies tied in our colours was placed on the grave. The Alliance was represented at the Requiem by Miss Barry and Miss Spender.

\* \* \* \*

Members of the Alliance will be deeply grieved to learn of the death on May 11th of our old friend and colleague, Mrs. O'Connor. Mrs. O'Connor underwent a serious operation two years ago. She had never been in good health since and died after great suffering bravely borne.

As a very early member of the Alliance and a valued member of the Committee for the last twelve years, Mrs. O'Connor was well known to St. Joan's members, and her sane and sympathetic outlook will be greatly missed.

We extend our deep sympathy to her large family, several of whom are members of the Alliance, her eldest daughter, Miss Monica O'Connor, being one of the most prominent of our younger speakers.

The Alliance was represented at the Requiem at Effingham by Miss Barry and Miss Spender, and a wreath was sent tied in our colours. The Committee are having a Mass offered for the repose of her soul. R.I.P.

\* \* \* \*

We ask the prayers of our readers for the repose of the soul of Mrs. Tynan, who died recently. R.I.P. We offer our sympathy to her daughter, Miss Tynan and her granddaughter Miss Stack, who are both members of the Alliance.

## Notes and Comments

The Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Admission of Women to the Diplomatic and Consular Services was presented to Sir John Simon in July 1934. It was not until a fortnight ago, after constant pressure from the women's societies, that the Report was made public, together with the Government decision thereon. Keen disappointment and regret will be felt that the Government has accepted the opinion of four of the eight members of the Committee that the time has not yet arrived when women can be employed in either of the foreign services. It is deplorable that a great State like ours is so timid as to be unable to take a step which has already proved successful in other countries. The Government claims that there are countries where women diplomats would not be favourably received, but even with the appointment of men tact must be exercised, and surely we might expect sufficient "diplomacy" for the appointment of women to the many countries where they would be acceptable.

We congratulate the two distinguished women civil servants who were members of the Committee on their Minority Report in favour of the admission of women to the two services, though we regret that they should have admitted any limitations such as the marriage bar.

We hope to deal more fully with the Government's White Paper in our next issue.

\* \* \* \*

On the subject of the recent incident in the House regarding the resolution put forward by Miss Ellen Wilkinson on Equal Pay for Equal Work, *Time and Tide* makes explicit the constitutional issue at stake:

Technically the Government was defeated, not on the terms of Miss Ellen Wilkinson's amendment, but on "supply." This Government, with its big majority, suffered a humiliation which not even the two weak minority Labour governments had to undergo. Votes on supply have roots deep in parliamentary history. That redress of grievances shall precede the granting of funds to the crown was the slogan of the Civil War. Because he resisted the claim, King Charles I lost his head. To-day elaborate ceremonies are still performed to remind the crown of this basic practice of the Constitution. But after the recent proceedings it is evident that not King Edward VIII but the Cabinet needs the reminder. In 1923—the last time that such a defeat occurred—Mr. Bonar Law, the then Premier, immediately set up a Committee to redress the grievance. It concerned the pay of the Lytton (war veteran) entrants to the Civil Service. By his refusal to set up a similar committee the Premier has not only treated the women differently from the ex-soldiers, but has offered a constitutional precedent to future reaction.

*Time and Tide* also comments on Miss Eleanor Rathbone's refusal to vote for Miss Wilkinson's amendment "describing the demand for Equality as 'superficial' unless it was coupled with her own pet scheme for family allowances."

Family allowances, says *Time and Tide*, may or not not be a desirable measure of reform. It is significant that many trade unions and professional associations are strongly opposed to the idea, and stick solidly to the claim of "payment for the work done." But it is no more justifiable to drag this across the march to equality than to say that the salaried woman cannot have justice until every mother is guaranteed a good house and a national midwifery service.

\* \* \* \*

Though Mr. Baldwin, in the recent contretemps in Parliament over the question of Equal Pay, disappointed feminists by showing his contempt of women's claims on this head, he yet appreciates the value of women to the Civil Service and to other professions. Recently presiding at a meeting at 10 Downing Street for the launching of the Newnham College Building Fund Scheme, the Premier said that Civil Service secrets have never been betrayed by a woman. He continued:

"Secret information has a way of leaking very often, as we politicians know to our cost. I have never known a case of a leak coming through a woman in the Civil Service, and I have known cases of leaks coming from men who ought to know a great deal better."

Pleading for greater advantage to be taken in commerce and industry of the qualifications of highly-educated university women, Mr. Baldwin said that there was an ample supply of women from universities, with qualifications of a very high order.

What a pity Mr. Baldwin is so illogical as to deny the right of women to Equal Pay for Equal Work!

\* \* \* \*

The Cornwall County Council has decided to alter as follows its regulations regarding the retirement of women on marriage. "That married women be ineligible for permanent appointment in the service of the Council; that women members of the county staff be required to resign their posts on marriage, and that, in the event of the notice of resignation not having previously been given, the marriage of a woman member of the staff be taken as notice of resignation."

When probationer clerks are appointed, regard is to be paid to the possibility of eventual promotion to responsible posts on the county staff, and the avoidance of blind-alley positions.

(Continued on page 47)

## 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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## Greetings from L'Alliance Ste Jeanne d'Arc\*

I am glad to bring you the heartiest greetings from the French Members of Saint Joan's Alliance. I wish they could share the happiness of the present hour.

It is always a pleasure to meet one's friends; but when it comes to the as yet unknown ones—as is the case with me to-day—it seems as walking through a land of pleasant discoveries. It is indeed most encouraging to feel that we are not alone, each of us in our own country, struggling solitarily in the wide world for more human dignity, more human understanding, and so for a better and higher standard for the common good.

The effort of each one of us may seem at times lost amongst general apathy. Misunderstanding might at times—if not discourage our effort, yet minimize it.

We might at times get afraid of being prompted by some selfish feeling or personal ambition, and be apt to lose in the every day work, the brightness of our faith and convictions, which so greatly influences the happy extension of our principles.

But to know that in other parts of the world, in other countries, some women like ourselves are standing for the very same principles, endeavouring to obtain the same improvements, fighting for the same causes and aiming at the same goal; and then, to come in touch with these women, and put all in common, and share our cares as well as our hopes, this means so much, does it not? It seems to multiply indefinitely our own personal efforts.

To know that we all cling together in the field, makes all the difference. It brings back that necessary confidence in the worth of our purpose which enables us to face afresh every difficulty or deception our work may bring us, and the joyful hope which prepares the favourable atmosphere for the spreading of the dear

ideas we so wholeheartedly serve and wish to communicate.

An exchange of thought and friendship can only widen our views and enrich our mutual efficiency, as well as fill our hearts with the pure joy of common work for the sake of others.

Don't we believe that if we had all of us, some of Saint Joan's virtues, the world would be so much the better for it, and being better, be the happier?

Her steady judgment never heeded anything once she saw her way was right—however out of the ordinary trodden path it might lie.

Her unmoved tenacity led her on, whatever it might mean for her peace or happiness.

Don't we feel this is what we have to do in these troubled times of ours?

Let us go ahead and lead the way; striving to sanctify our epoch and its many longings; taking the head of every movement which can be of use for the progress of humanity.

Our time is in special need of women's advice and women's help.

We shall be present in the field, wherever we may be of us, and *not* only shall we "stand and wait."

We shall "serve" with a conquering faith and work for the free development of human personality, without regard to sex, race or colour.

Although some people like to call us Feminists conceited, unbearable (and what not) we *know* Feminism is mere justice, that it is most evidently necessary to the world's welfare.

And for the sake of justice, we are prepared to give, untiringly, our most loving patience, and our most patient love—for love works miracles.

VIOLA PESSON DEPRET

\* Speech made by Mme. Pesson Depret, President of the French Section of the Alliance, at a reception given to the Committee, and office workers, by Mrs. Laughton Mathews, on April 24th.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS—(Continued from p. 45)

Where this is not likely to be fulfilled, female probationer clerks "should usually be appointed on the grounds that (i) they frequently marry before or soon after attaining their maximum salary of £150, and (ii) they are as well educated, intelligent, and efficient as men of a similar age."

The council has also decided that, as a general rule, short-hand typists should be women.—*Local Government Service, February 1936.*

Some people like to have their cake and eat it—to employ women "as well educated, intelligent, and efficient as men of a similar age," and at the same time thrust these women down to an inferior position. How long must women wait for justice?

\* \* \* \*

We are grateful to the British Broadcasting Corporation for inviting the Women's Organisations to exchange views on the B.B.C.s talks, at the recent Conference at Broadcasting House. Among questions discussed were: the timing of talks; the type of subject to interest; "Is there a woman's view on such subjects as books and music?" It was made abundantly clear that there was *not* a woman's view on such subjects, and that women wanted to be treated as ordinary listeners when talk programmes were arranged.

We thank the B.B.C. for their hospitality in providing lunch for the 400 women delegates. St. Joan's Alliance was represented by Miss Barry, Mrs. Laughton Mathews, Miss Parnell, Miss Spender, and Miss Trotman.

We trust that before long another woman may be added to the Board of Governors of the B.B.C. \* \* \* \*

It was with astonishment and indignation that we read the reports of the address given by His Grace the Archbishop of Birmingham on Easter Monday, to 2,000 men assembled in St. Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, to pray for peace.

"It's easier perhaps for women to pray," he said, "than for men, and it's lovely to hear children praying. But when men pray, and make sacrifices, the world understands that this is no mere child's play, or women's piety; it is strict business, a hard fact of life."

And later, when talking of pilgrimages:

"They are not easy things or comfortable trips, one does not ask easy things from men, one can usually get women pilgrims."

Evidently His Grace has no very high opinion of women and their piety or he would not indulge in derogatory expressions at their expense. Does the Church value "women's

piety" less than that of men? Her calendar is full of the names of women saints; Our Lady is ranked higher in the Hierarchy of Heaven than any other saint, and the liturgy again and again extols the courage and strength of the women martyrs. Surely His Grace does not seriously think that women's sanctity is of lesser value. Or does he consider that for some reason sanctity is an unnatural strain for men?

\* \* \* \*

Miss Bridgid De Vine, editor of *This and That of the Universe*, recently drew her readers' attention to an excellent article, "The Vocation to Marriage," by the Rev. Father Bede Jarrett, O.P., which appeared in the *Chronicle of the Convents of the Sacred Heart* (1934). The passage which she quoted with special approbation refers to the unmarried woman, for the article deals with the vocation of celibacy as well as that of marriage.

A mother's interests are naturally and rightly centred on her own children and home. A religious naturally and properly attends most to the cloister's concerns. But the unmarried woman has a wider field of work and love if she cares so to see it, if she sees that she also is ordained to a work in the deliberate plan of God. She has no limits to the width of her interests. She has all the world to see to. She has no narrow field of affection, but her sympathy embraces all those who need her. And in a world of sorrow and bewilderment who does not? What makes her life seem, and indeed truly, so lonely can become the opportunity of reaching an unnumbered host of souls. Because she has no one she has all the world.

We are so used to hearing the unmarried woman spoken of as having missed her vocation that this article is singularly refreshing. But we recognise that it is possible for a woman to be married and care for a large family and yet accomplish wonderful social work. Josephine Butler is an outstanding example of this. \* \* \* \*

We offer our warmest congratulations to Mr. Edward Burnham on the occasion of his marriage to Miss Lilian May Johnston, at St. Anne's, Vauxhall, on April 18th. Mr. Burnham, who is a member of the Catholic Citizen's Parliament, is a friend of St. Joan's Alliance, and has rendered much valuable clerical help to the office, for which we take this opportunity of thanking him.

We have much pleasure in congratulating our members Mr. and Mrs. Kettle of Uganda, on the birth of a son.

Our member, Dr. Evangeline Adams Clark, has been awarded the Jubilee Medal for services in Bukaba, Tanganyika Territory, and we offer her heartiest, though belated, congratulations.

## International Notes

From *A Candéia* (Brazil) the well-produced organ of *Alliança Santa Joanna d'Arc* we learn that for the first time in the State of **Rio de Janeiro**, two women have been appointed as Secretaries of State—one in the Department of Public Instruction, and the other as Secretary of Labour.

\* \* \* \*

We note from *Stri-Dharma* (India) that on the 13th March, the Council of State accepted the resolution put forward by Sir Ramuni Menon that the existing sex disqualification which prevented women from being nominated and elected to the Council of State should be removed. Up till now women have only been allowed to *vote* for members of the State Council. It was very gratifying to Indian women to know that there was not a single word of opposition when the full removal of sex disqualification was debated in the Council. Several Indian members were, in the words of *Stri Dharma*, "notable champions of women in the speeches made on this historic occasion."

\* \* \* \*

We learn from the *Bulletin of the International Council of Women* that a great women's manifestation, in which 19 organisations took part, was recently held in **Athens** to protest against certain emergency decrees prejudicial to women's right to work.

The meeting took place at the Alik Theatre, which was crowded to the last seat. Mme. E. Varda, Hon. Secretary of the National Council of Women of Greece, who presided over the proceedings, introduced the various speakers who dealt with the grave problem which is confronting women wage-earners in their country, from various points of view. The claims of organised women found expression in a resolution which was passed by acclamation at the end of the meeting, demanding among other things: Equal Pay for Equal Work; fixing of minimum wages and salaries by the State on a basis of complete equality for men and women; Equal Political, Civic and legal rights; abolition of prostitution regulated by legal or administrative measures and of brothels; severer punishment for traffickers and extension of measures for the suppression of the traffic in women and children; equal rights of access to all public and private positions, in all professions alike.

We take from *Equal Rights* (U.S.A.) the information that on March 4th the Court of Appeals of **New York State** announced its opinion that the Minimum Wage Law for Women only was unconstitutional, thus upholding the *Adkins v. Children's Hospital* decision of 1923 when the Supreme Court of the U.S.A. declared

"We cannot accept the doctrine, that women of mature age, *sui juris*, require or may be subjected to restrictions upon their liberty of contract which could not lawfully be imposed in the case of men under similar circumstances. To do so would be to ignore all the implications to be drawn from the present-day trend of legislation, as well as that of common thought and usage by which woman is accorded emancipation from the old doctrine that she must be given special protection or be subjected to special restraint in her contractual and civil relationships." (*Adkins v. Children's Hospital*, 261, U.S. 525, 1923.)

The New York decision was made in connection with the exploitation of women in a laundry. Though it is of course undesirable for women to be exploited it is equally undesirable that they should have a *special* minimum wage which puts them outside the pale of ordinary citizenship.

\* \* \* \*

The women of **Hungary** have issued an invitation to women of all countries asking them to take part in a gathering which has been given the name of the International Women's Week. This event has been arranged to take place in Budapest from July 8th to 15th. Apart from the social side of the programme with its meetings and receptions, delegates and their friends will be invited to private homes where they will be able to share in the lives of their Hungarian hosts and hostesses and to exchange ideas.

S. A. B.



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## Reviews

**A History of the Church, Book I.** By Philip Hughes. (Sheed & Ward, 10s.)

In this first volume of what is to be a series Father Hughes deals with the world in which the Church was founded. This belated review can only give unstinted praise to a study which is admirable in its precision and compression.

C. S.

**L'Eglise Et La Femme.** By Colette Yver. (Editions Spes. Paris 12 frs.)

Christianity brought into the world the entirely new postulate that in the sight of God all are equal. Although the Christian Church did not consciously go to work to abolish slavery, the oppression of women and kindred abuses, yet with such a postulate these things were bound to die a natural death.

Mlle. Yver does not write as a feminist but her interesting study shows very clearly that Christianity once and for all overthrew any permanency in the idea that woman is an inferior being. It is true that woman has not yet attained to her rightful position in the scheme of the Universe and that since the first Christian era she has often been thrust down, but, given the Christian ethic, her ultimate attainment to full stature is a foregone conclusion, for the Church is ever "faithful to the principle of individual development of personality" so that all our powers, be we man or woman, may be used in the service of God. C.S.

## JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

In connection with the Jubilee Celebrations of the Repeal of the C.D. Acts a Public Meeting was held at the Livingstone Hall, under the joint auspices of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene and St. Joan's Alliance, Mrs. Corbett Ashby presiding. The chief speaker was Mme. Pesson Depret, President of l'Alliance Ste. Jeanne d'Arc and General Secretary of the French Branch of the International Abolitionist Federation, other speakers being Miss Higson, Mrs. Laughton Mathews and Miss Neilans. Mme. Pesson Depret described the workings of the Regulationist system in France and the growing success of the Abolitionist fight. Her fine and well-documented speech will be printed in full in the next number of *The Shield* (organ of the A.M.S.H.), and members are strongly recommended to procure a copy.

We congratulate the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene on their most successful Lunch held at the Criterion to celebrate the 50 Anniversary of the Repeal of the C.D. Acts. Dr. Maude Royden nobly deputised as Chairman since Dame Rachel Crowdy had been called to Geneva to advise the Traffic in Women and Children Committee. The speakers were Mr. R. A. Butler, great-nephew of Mrs. Josephine Butler; Mr. A. S. G. Butler, her Catholic grandson; Professor Gilbert Murray, and Mme. Pesson Depret.

## HON. TREASURER'S NOTE

Very many thanks to those who so quickly and so generously answered the appeal for Jubilee Donations. One kind person who wishes to remain anonymous has sent £25 in honour of Our Lady of Walsingham. Those who haven't sent yet please be generous before or by St. Joan's Feast Day, May 30th. Thank you again!

C. M. GARRARD

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## LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH

Hon. Sec.: Miss Bowden, 22 Fern Grove, Liverpool, 8.

A meeting was held on April 20th, at 146 Upper Parliament Street, by kind permission of Miss Wylie, when Dr. Isabel Heath gave an interesting talk on "Health and the Weekly Budget." A lively discussion followed.

Several books were suggested as suitable for the Public Libraries.

We hope to have the pleasure of Dr. Heath's company on future occasions. This was her second lecture to the Liverpool Branch.

## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

NON-PARTY.

Office—55, Berners St., Oxford St., London, W.1.

Patron: Saint Joan of Arc. Colours: Blue, White & Gold

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

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