

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

Organ of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, 55, Berners St., London, W.1.

VOL. VI., No. II.

November 15th, 1920.

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.

WOMEN IN ANCIENT IRELAND.

By PROFESSOR MARY HAYDEN, M.A.

The poets and the prose writers of ancient Ireland, like those of most other countries indeed, seem not greatly to have liked women; at any rate they said a good many hard things about them. We find, for example, in the 9th century tract called "the Instructions of King Cormac," that that wise monarch considered women "silly councillors, greedy of gifts; not to be trusted with a secret, ever ready with an excuse," and full of other faults, too numerous to mention. Such grumbings are scarcely, however, to be taken seriously.

The position of woman in the Erin of long ago appears to have been one of honour and independence. The law considered her as a free citizen of the state, and when she married she by no means merged her identity or her status in that of her husband. She could still sue and be sued, she could even give evidence in a law case against her husband or in his favour. She controlled her own personal property and used it as she pleased. In the epic narrative "The Cattle Raid of Cooley," we find Maeve Queen of Connacht and Aillil her husband disputing together as to which of them is the richer; which possesses the finer store of golden cups and ornaments and rich robes and the more numerous herds of cattle.

A married woman could carry on a trade in her husband's house, and should she be divorced—in pagan times divorce seems to have been frequent—she carried with her a share of the profits of her skill, and her instruments of labour, such as her spinning wheel and so forth.

Instead of paying a dowry to the prospective husband of his daughter, the father received a "bride price." Probably in very early times the wife was regarded as a slave actually purchased, but even the earliest tales show no trace of her occupation of a low or degraded position. Slaves there certainly were, women as well as men, and no doubt their lot was often hard, although more generally they seem to have been well treated. I cannot recall any instance where the flogging or torture of a slave is mentioned.

Girls as well as boys were generally sent as babies to be fostered by a stranger family, usually one of a slightly lower rank than that of their own parents: they remained with their foster parents often till almost grown up. With a girl a larger fosterage fee was given, perhaps it was considered that she would be less able than a boy would be to repay in after-life the care of her foster parents by favours to themselves or to their children. Girls were instructed in domestic arts, and those of higher rank in fine sewing and embroidery. In this art, Irish ladies had great skill. When the hero Cuchullain visited the home of the princess Emer, he found her surrounded by the maidens of her household to whom she was teaching embroidery. The law condemned a fosterer who neglected the education of his ward to forfeit two-fifths of the fosterage fee.

The literature of pagan Ireland shows us women engaged in a variety of occupations, some of them strange enough to modern notions. They acted as the official messen-

gers of kings and chiefs; as physicians to cure illness or heal wounds; even as fencing teachers to instruct the young nobles in "the skilful play of weapons." Women satirists are mentioned, whose powers were so greatly dreaded that none dared to offend them. We have the name of one woman judge or Brethen, whose decisions we are told were long quoted as precedents; and amongst the "High Kings" of Ireland one woman also is numbered, Macha, who is said to have reigned about 300 B.C.

In ordinary life the women shared freely in social intercourse. The apartments of the ladies of the chief or noble's family were called the *grianán* or sunny rooms, but they were not confined to these. At formal banquets they seem usually not to have been present, but on ordinary occasions they took their meals with the men of the household; the lady of the house sitting by her husband's side. They were expected to be able to converse agreeably; it is told in praise of some that they had "the gift of conversation"; and they were consulted on important matters. In public councils too they had a place, "sitting with their own people," we hear. We find their arbitration too sought in disputes between tribes or families.

A kind of chess was the favourable indoor game, and some ladies had great skill in playing it; out-of-doors they took part in chariot races and joined the hunting parties, at least sometimes.

Even noble ladies did not disdain to engage in household occupations, especially in cookery. We hear that the Princess Findabar, daughter of Queen Maeve, broiled herself the salmon which was set before her parents' guest. When a chief returned from battle or from the chase, his bath was often made ready for him by the fair hands of his wife or his daughter. Descriptions of the dress of matrons and maidens are very usual in old Irish literature. They seem to have loved bright colours and to have worn a great deal of jewellery. The great length and beauty of the hair of the heroine is often mentioned in the epic tales—sometimes alas! they used dye or face-washes. Truly there is little new, good or bad, under the sun.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Our excellent contemporary, *La Femme Belge*, is doing good service by printing a Report on industrial hygiene among women workers in Belgium prepared by Melle. Willems, herself a factory worker, which gives lamentable details of the insanitary conditions under which thousands of women are compelled to carry on their work. People who are fond of asserting that we are over-inspected in England should realise better what the workers have to suffer from under-inspection.

A further article, by Melle. Julie de Bie, on the need for Welfare Workers, or Lady Supervisors in all large industrial establishments, sums up very effectively the industrial position where women are concerned:

"Nothing," she writes, "has been done to prepare women for the factory and nothing to prepare the factory for her. Factories were built by men and for men and nothing has been planned for women in the organisation of industrial labour, neither the work, nor the premises, nor the discipline, nor the hygienic precautions, nor the moral protection that her sex demands."

Miss de Alberti's account of the Geneva Congress written for the *Catholic Citizen* is translated and reproduced in full.

* * * *

In Germany 38 women sit in the National Assembly, 155 in Provincial Parliaments and about 1,400 on Town Councils. Nevertheless women still have a hard fight before them to acquire real economic and professional freedom. (Frau Stritt, in *Jus Suffragii*).

* * * *

Jus Suffragii (Oct.) gives some amazing details of the lengths to which sex prejudice went in Tennessee in the electoral struggle to prevent the final adoption of Woman Suffrage. Our election methods are tame indeed in comparison. Mrs. Chapman Catt writes: "Never in the history of politics has there been such a force of evil, such a nefarious lobby as laboured to block the advance of suffrage in Nashville, Tennessee." Fortunately the women were quite equal to

(Continued on next page.)

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

We call the attention of our readers to the important and interesting meeting to be held at the Central Hall, Westminster, on Monday, November 29th, at 8 p.m. (Not on the 24th, as first advertised). The officers of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance will be in London, and the two British Societies affiliated to the Alliance, the National Union for Equal Citizenship and the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society are organising a mass meeting in co-operation with various other societies, to congratulate the women of the United States on their enfranchisement, and to welcome their president, Mrs. Chapman Catt, who led them to victory in a long and arduous fight. Women from other countries will also make short speeches. We must make this meeting in honour of our American sisters a great success, and we urge our readers to make the meeting known far and wide. Offers of help in stewardship, distributing handbills, and clerical work will be gratefully received. Members and sympathisers of the C.W.S.S. are earnestly requested to get their tickets as quickly as possible from 55, Berners Street, and to help in disposing of as many as possible; by so doing they will help the funds of the society.

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The Holy Father has once again made it quite clear that he is anxious for women to take their share in public life. In answer to the President of the Spanish Catholic Society the Accion Catolica, who asked the Pope for guidance, Cardinal Gasparri writes that those who had concluded from a recent allocution that the Pope desired Christian women's organisations to be exclusively directed into religious channels were mistaken. The Holy Father considers that it behoves everyone who desires the welfare of the people to enter the political arena and to unfurl the flag of Christ in order that the light of His divine teaching and the flames of charity may extend not only amongst the few but throughout the world. The Pope, therefore, urges all women to have a clear understanding of social problems. This should ring the death knell of anti-suffragism among Catholics, we have at various times given publicity to the Holy Father's desire to "see women electors everywhere."

We offer our congratulations to Councillor Ellen Chapman a former member of our Committee on her election as Mayor of Worthing.

* * * *

We note with interest that Lady Rhondda has sent a petition to the King asking that a writ may be issued summoning her to the House of Lords. If she is successful in proving her right to a seat no doubt the other peeresses in their own right will follow her example, and we shall have our House of Lords and Ladies.

* * * *

We read with great regret of the death of his Grace the Archbishop of Glasgow. Our readers will remember the splendid suffrage pastoral that he issued in the Lent of 1917, before it was popular to be a suffragist, which pastoral, with his Grace's permission, was published in the *Catholic Suffragist* of March 1917.

International Notes—continued.

the occasion. We read that "no women ever worked harder than the Tennessee women; they are largely young and they started in full vigour, and I saw them grow pale and weak and fairly prostrated before they were through."

* * * *

The *Bollettino D'Organizzazione* of the Italian Catholic Women's Union, states that in their active anti-divorce campaign they have been much cheered by the number of sympathetic letters and promises of prayers they have received from Catholic societies and individuals in England, France, Belgium and Spain.

* * * *

La Francaise (Oct.) publishes an eloquent appeal to the French Senate signed by Mme. de Witt Schlumberger, urging the immediate discussion of the Woman Suffrage Bill which was passed by the Chamber of Deputies in May, 1919, and has been ignored by the Senate ever since. French Suffragists are naturally growing impatient at such treatment.

V.M.C.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

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

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

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THE MORAL HEALTH OF THE NATION.

The interest displayed by public spirited men and women, of all classes and creeds, in the moral question is a promising characteristic of this century. It is a healthy sign denoting that the false modesty which made any allusion to the social evil impossible has been broken down. That barrier to reform has been demolished by the modern woman, it is a blessing we owe to the suffrage movement. Too often in the past women were content to leave the subject alone, their part being to stone any sister who had fallen from her high estate, and to be careful that she had no chance of recovering her position. That may sound bitter, but it is a fairly accurate description of the Victorian attitude. The latest sign of the new interest in the moral condition of the State is given us in the report* recently issued by the Committee appointed by the Association for Social and Moral Hygiene to enquire into Sexual Morality. This Committee of Enquiry originated from the desire felt by those, who had been for many years associated in adversely criticising proposed repressive legislation as well as the existing law, to consider:

(1) What existing or proposed legislation they could support; and

(2) Methods other than legislative by which not only individuals, but associations, institutions, and the Government itself might promote sane and healthy sex relations.

Many Societies were represented on the Committee including the Catholic Woman's

* The State and Sexual Morality.—George Allen and Unwin 1/6 net.

Suffrage Society, represented in the first place by Miss Mott and then by Miss Lenn, and the Catholic Social Guild, represented by Dr. H. Ingleby. Monsignor Brown was one of the co-opted members. The Committee met for the first time in October, 1918, and concluded its sittings in June, 1920, the meetings being held as a general rule once a fortnight. The witnesses included medical men and women having special knowledge of venereal disease, magistrates and women police.

The report issued by the Committee is, as one would expect from such a Committee, a very valuable document. One notes with relief in the first place that the Committee do not pin their faith to punitive measures in the suppression of vice, they consider that such legislation has on the contrary increased immorality by taking away the hope and the opportunity of recovery. Indirectly, by providing means of recovery, and by the improvement of general conditions of life, Government can do much. Individual and associated understanding and effort can do more. We are not surprised, therefore, that the Committee recommends that it should be clearly understood and laid down in Police Orders that no person should be arrested for mere solicitation, but only for actually indecent or riotous behaviour, and that they are opposed to any legislation specially aimed at prostitutes as a class. These views will have the hearty support of feminists, who have long advocated such methods of dealing with a great evil.

The Committee realise the need of con-

structive work, and suggest many amendments or changes in the existing laws, mainly with a view to the protection of minors of both sexes. But, they say, so long as legislators and administrators act on no intelligible principle of justice or equality on the one hand, and on no scientific basis of the connection of effects with causes on the other, the panic cry, "For God's sake let us do something—anything!" must be resisted.

The causes of prostitution, they tell us, are manifold—economic, social, political and moral. The causes enumerated include the low rate of women's wages, though in this respect some progress has been made; bad housing, excessive use of alcohol; and the influence of standing armies. While considering that little good can be done by the State as embodied in Parliament and Police, in amending public morals by punitive or coercive measures, the Committee do firmly believe that the State, if it became an association of loving and responsible citizens, could prevent prostitution and sexual promiscuity by personal and concerted measures based on an appreciation of, and a determination to grapple with, the root causes of these evils. Ignorance, self-indulgence and an absence of high ideals are the most serious causes of sexual promiscuity and the most difficult to combat. They can only be met, the report says, by the spread of knowledge and of a high moral standard throughout the community. Like the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases the Committee advocate that "more careful instruction should be provided in regard to moral conduct, as bearing upon sexual relations, throughout all types and grades of education." Such instruction should include the teaching of a single standard of morals for both sexes, and insistence on the fact that continence for either sex is compatible with health and well being. In the words of the Royal Commission, "such instruction should be based on moral principles and spiritual considerations, and should not be based only on the physical consequences of immoral conduct."

For reasons with which most of our readers will be familiar the Committee oppose the notification of venereal disease, and it is scarcely necessary to say that they are equally opposed to any encouragement being given

by any public authority to the prophylactic policy advocated by the Society for the Prevention of Venereal Disease.

There only remains to say that this valuable report is presented, save for a few reservations, with unanimity. Among the reservations the Catholic members of the Committee disagree with the recommendation that infection in marriage should be a cause for divorce, though they agree that it should be cause for separation, and several members wish the age of consent to be raised to eighteen, whereas the majority of the Committee would have it fixed at seventeen.

The report, which should be read by all interested in the moral welfare of the nation, may be had at the C.W.S.S. Office (55, Berners Street, W.1), price 1/6 (post free 1/8).

L. DE ALBERTI.

Christmas Sale November 26 & 27

Please remember to send in your gifts for this sale not later than November 25th, and to come and purchase your Christmas presents at our stall in the Caxton Hall. This annual sale is the chief means we have of raising money for our work, and I earnestly beg every supporter of the C.W.S.S. to contribute to it as generously as possible. Who has not several little articles among their belongings which would not be missed and would cost the giver no more than a little time and trouble to send. Everyone can help to swell the exchequer in this way. Parcels should be addressed to Miss Barry at 55, Berners St., W.1, without delay, and it will be of great assistance, if a price is put on the goods. Will every reader of this appeal send the society at least one gift?

GABRIELLE JEFFERY.

Equal Pay Procession.

The equal pay procession and demonstration organised by the National Union of Women Teachers on November 6th, to protest against the Burnham Report, was a very successful function. Many societies including the C.W.S.S. had sent contingents, and banners, and there were short speeches from the representatives of these societies at the demonstration in Trafalgar Square. Miss Fedden was the speaker for the C.W.S.S.

THE C.S.G. AND THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

No creation of the present government has come in for so much abuse as the Ministry of Health, both for its sins of omission and commission. The Catholic Social Guild has just published an interesting pamphlet called "The Catholic Attitude to the Ministry of Health." The pamphlet consists of two parts, the first by the Rev. J. B. McLaughlin, and the second by Dr. Alexander Mooney. Not all of this pamphlet is criticism and much of it is very true and very just. At the same time Father McLaughlin makes certain statements that seem to call for comment.

For instance he says:—

"Again in promoting health, it (the State) must not destroy natural responsibility and authority. By nature a mother has charge of her child—not the health visitor. A man has charge of his own body, and of his family—not the medical officer, nor the education officer. By nature the man responsible for building healthy houses is the builder; the man responsible for providing pure milk is the farmer. And any attempt to transfer authority and responsibility from their natural owners to State officers and nurses is unsound in both ways; it destroys rights and in the long run the work will be worse done."

One agrees almost entirely with the first part of this statement in so far at least as it agrees with the law as it stands at present in this respect. That is to say Health Visitors can only advise, and the law merely steps in when the parental neglect is causing grievous suffering to the child, or when the child's condition is a menace to the cleanliness of other children with whom it comes into contact in the school.

With regard to the second part of the statement however one is tempted to ask whether Father McLaughlin has never been in a slum district and seen the harm done there to leaving the provision of houses to the speculative builder. No, Father McLaughlin's theory would have been excellent in the Middle Ages when men built houses thus serving their fellows for the Glory of God; but it is useless in these days when men build for profit and for that alone.

Again he says:—"We inspect the child, treat him at the clinic, and prosecute the parent for interfering." It may interest him to know that in the L.C.C. area at least, children

are not treated (except in the Minor Ailments department where such matters as cut fingers are attended to) unless they are accompanied by their parents or Guardians or bring their written permission.

Father McLaughlin suggests some practical steps to meet the situation which is perhaps not quite so bad as he thinks it is.

His first suggestion is that Catholics should take part in the work of the Ministry in every way they can. This is a piece of most excellent advice and one can only hope that it may be followed. At present Catholic Social Workers are much rarer than they should be, consequently much of the work has to be done by the paid official, usually an over-worked official. It is true that in a considerable experience of Social Work the writer has never met officials of the type described by Father McLaughlin but she realises that they do exist nevertheless. The remedy is in Catholic hands. If sufficient Catholic voluntary workers come forward to deal with Catholic congregations the work will not be done by officials. England is in some ways an economical country and will not pay officials to do that which can be better done without remuneration.

Again Father McLaughlin suggests that parents should refuse to allow their children to be inspected at school as legally they are entitled to refuse. There is neither time nor space here to urge the benefits of medical inspection but as an answer to those who claim it is a hardship to inspect the child of the poor man while allowing the child of the rich man to escape, I would point out that one of the planks in the programme of the Irish Labour Party (which is almost entirely Catholic) is school Medical Inspection.

With regard to the secret instructions which Father McLaughlin says are given to Health Visitors, etc., the L.C.C. at least does not give any such instructions, though of course the writer cannot speak of other Health Authorities.

Dr. Mooney's article was originally a paper read before the St. Luke's Guild at Cambridge. It is exceedingly interesting and deserves to be read not only by Catholic Doctors, for whom it was originally intended, but also by all those who are interested in social questions.

A. M. CARROL.

THOUGHTS FOR CATHOLIC PARENTS

"In the no distant future Secondary Education will be free to all. Manchester's Council is considering whether the time is not already ripe. . . . There is a widespread demand for free Secondary Education in cities other than Manchester, though there are obvious difficulties in the way."

This announcement was made by the press last month and its importance can hardly be exaggerated.

Catholic parents have rarely, thank God, needed stimulus in the matter of Elementary Education. Let the number of our Catholic Primary schools bear witness; and all parents, worthy of the name, desire their children's advancement. They would give them not merely as much but more than they have had themselves. In these days, however, when political and industrial unrest prevails on all sides and higher wages are made a mockery by still higher prices, many no doubt will view this movement with disfavour, affirming that further "freedom" in Education will merely mean further burdens in taxation.

There is but one answer:—

Economy in Education is no economy, and Catholics, least of all, can afford to forego any possible advantages. Take but this parallel: Children stunted for food while young and growing invariably become weakly if not diseased men and women. The best physique demands the best nourishment. So is it with the mind, so that the better education children are given the better able are they to make their way in the world, the better citizens will they prove, better fitted in every way to forward not only their own welfare but that also of their neighbours of the Church and of the State.

So much for the theory; but when we come to the question of ways and means, we find the article already quoted continues:—

"The only practical policy is to increase the number of secondary schools."

Catholic ratepayers then are faced with the probable necessity of contributing to a much heavier Education rate and, in addition, that of providing by their own unaided efforts new Catholic Secondary Schools. An impossible burden under present conditions! So that while Secondary Education may be free throughout the land, more than half our

Catholic children will be denied it simply because the Catholic Secondary Schools will prove too few and too small to hold them. The danger is grave, for there will come the temptation to ambitious parents to send their children to the Council Secondary Schools.

What is to be done? Our duty is clear and it is twofold:—

Firstly, to support the demand for free Secondary Education (in the interests of our general national progress) and secondly, to demand full support for our Catholic Secondary School both present and future. In a word our fair share of the rates.

Both in municipal and parliamentary elections Catholics, women as well as men, can and must make their voices heard. Otherwise the victory will fall to those who are ever seeking to stamp out religion from the schools.

E.C.H.

WOMEN POLICE.

One could wish that all who still misunderstand the motives of those who advocate Women Police could have been present at the meeting of the C.W.S.S. when Mrs. Moore Nisbett, gave an eloquent account of her experiences as a policewoman, and gave reasons, why women police are needed. Earlier in the week Mrs. Nisbett had spoken at the International Women's Franchise club, and on both occasions her audience was greatly moved by her eloquent appeal for support in the cause, which she and her colleagues regard as a mission. Her description of the underworld where women are dragged lower and lower without a chance of recovering self respect was a terrible revelation even to many who are not ignorant of social problems, and of the sores of our so called civilization. Women police are needed to take charge of female offenders not only in the interest of the women, but of the policemen likewise. They are needed again in all cases of assaults on women and children, to take evidence and assist the victims. Many a scoundrel gets scot free, because a pure minded woman cannot bring herself to give details of his filthy conduct to a policeman. Mrs. Nisbett concluded her speech by appealing to Catholic women to do all in their power to forward the movement, and to pray earnestly that this great reform might be established throughout the Kingdom.

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and Catholic Women's Suffrage Society.**

In co-operation with several other Societies

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To Celebrate the
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AND TO WELCOME MRS. CHAPMAN CATT
will be held at

**THE CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER,
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Speakers—

Mrs. CHAPMAN CATT

(President of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance, and the
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Mrs. FAWCETT, J.P., LL.D.

Miss E. F. RATHBONE, J.P., C.C., M.A.

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Wed., Nov. 24, 8-15 p.m. "The Economic Consequences of Peace." (by Mr. J. M. Keynes). Mrs. SWANWICK, M.A. Chairman, Mr. No man Morrison.

Wed., Dec. 1, 8-15 p.m. "Clap-trap." Miss NINA BOYLE.

Wed., Dec. 8, 8-15 p.m. "The Press, its Power and Influence." Mr. J. A. Spender. Chairman, Mr. J. C. Squire.

Wed., Dec. 15, 7-15 p.m. HOUSE INNER, "Woman from a Man's Point of View and Man from a Woman's Point of View." Mr. J. WELLS THATCHER, Barrister-at-Law. (Other Speakers announced later.) Chairman, Mr. Goldfinch Bate.

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**THE
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The Monthly Organ of

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**The Women's Freedom League
WEDNESDAY "AT HOMES"**

At 3 p.m., at

Minerva Cafe, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1.

Wed., Nov. 17, 3 p.m. Sub-Inspector MORE-NISBETT, W.P.S. Subject, "Why and how we need Policewomen." Chair, Dr. Knight.

Wed., Nov. 24, 3 p.m. Miss MARGARET RUSSELL. Subject, "Education amongst High Caste Women and Girls in India." Chair, Miss Reeves.

Wed., Dec. 1, 3 p.m. Miss E. PICTON TURBERVILLE, O.B.E. Subject, "Religion and Politics." Chair Rev. W. C. Roberts, M.A.

Wed., Dec. 8, 3 p.m. Mrs. La CHARD. Subject, "One year of Municipal Work." Chair, Mrs. E. M. N. Clark.

Wed., Dec. 15, 3 p.m. THE LADY AMHERST OF HACKNEY. Subject, "The New Spirit and the Home." Chair, Hon. Mrs. Forbes.

ADMISSION FREE.

All readers are asked to come and buy their XMAS PRESENTS at the

**Green, White and Gold Fair
26 and 27 Nov., at CAXTON HALL.**

Articles for the C.W.S.S. Stall are still wanted and should be sent to 55, Berners Street, before November 25th.

**THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S
SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.**

Office—55, Berners St., Oxford St., London, W.
Patron: Saint Joan of Arc. Colours: Blue, White & Gold
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.

METHODS.

1. Strictly non-party
2. Active propoganda by political and educational means.

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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