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 AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

Traffic in Women and Children in England.

An interesting article appeared in last week's *Spectator* written by a contributor who has examined Part II of the League of Nations Report on Traffic in Women and Children, and gives some particulars with regard to the condition in Great Britain. Apparently the inquiry was confined to England and to the four towns of London, Liverpool, Southampton, and Hull. Most of the details refer to the two former. The writer states that

There are certain conditions in England that vastly alleviate an evil which assumes such tragic proportions in certain Continental, and still more in certain South American, countries. In the first place the laws against souteneurs—men who live on women's immoral earnings—are rigorous, and rigorously administered. As one of this class remarked frankly to the League investigator (who was passing as an accomplice in the traffic) in London, "The police here don't like our sort." In the second place there are, of course, in this country no licensed houses of prostitution. That severely limits earnings. Again the report quotes the best of all testimony, that of a souteneur himself: "A woman here can't earn enough to keep herself. Why, she will walk the streets all night and bring back no more than a pound in her pocket." Thirdly, as regards the international traffic, Great Britain's insular position makes the supervision of migration both inwards and outwards far simpler than it can be in countries with land frontiers.

Broadly speaking, then, the investigators report that prostitution in England is a precarious business and in the main unremunerative. Partly for that reason a few girls were encountered who would have been glad to go abroad to lead the same life, but had not money to pay their fares.

Dealing with actual "traffic" in the technical sense of the term, the investigators speak highly of the precautions taken, particularly in regard to children under sixteen going abroad for any kind of public entertainment performance, and state definitely that they have found no evidence of any traffic being organized in Great Britain. The best test, of course, is the number of foreign prostitutes found in Great Britain and the number of British prostitutes found abroad. Of the former class the investigators came on only one, a Roumanian, and in regard to Englishwomen abroad they speak of "a small number (1, 2 or 3)" being noted in Italy, Egypt, and France, and rather more in the United States.

Family Allowances for Income Tax Payers.

An amendment was moved in the House of Commons last week by Major Hills to increase the allowance for the education of children above that allowed by the Finance Act of 1920. The proposed clause would allow the parents to deduct the whole cost of the child's education. He also moved a new clause to allow rebate of income tax to a husband in respect of the cost of his wife's confinement including doctor's and nurse's fees and another new clause to increase the deductions from assessable income from £36 for the first child and £27 for each subsequent child to £72 and £54 respectively. All three amendments were refused by Mr. McNeill on behalf of the Government on the ground that it was no business of the Government to encourage large families. But there seems no ground to expect this result, even if the amendments had been accepted, in view of the statement made by Professor Leonard Darwin, who on

behalf of the Eugenics Society urged the increase of children's allowances on the ground that in the class affected the number of children actually born is at present only about half that needed to replace their parents without any increase in population and that even this low ratio was falling "with remarkable rapidity".

Liquor (Popular Control) Bill.

Our correspondent last week had followed the fate of this Bill down to the opening of the debate in the House of Lords. The date was resumed on Thursday, 7th July, when unfortunately the Government Whips were put on against it, and it was lost by 36 votes to 144. Lord Birkenhead, in a characteristic speech (mainly devoted to answering Mr. Lloyd George's comments on the reform of the House of Lords), stated that the proposals of the Bill were "ill-conceived, confusedly thought out, financially unsound and in absolute antagonism to the spirit and traditions of the British people." This thesis was hardly adequately developed, and we are left to puzzle why the Government went so far as not only to oppose the Bill, but to put on their Whips against it. Lord Balfour of Burleigh, in a most able speech, showed that there was no political campaign against intoxicants in the Bill, but that the Bill "was against the system under which intoxicants were sold. The only hope of reform is to replace that system by something better. The Bill opens the door to constructional reform." We hope that the supporters of the Bill will not be daunted by this reverse. The powers they have to fight are apt to clothe themselves in strange disguises, but the forces behind the Bill are united and determined.

Maternal Mortality.

The question of maternal mortality and the welfare of mothers and children generally, was discussed in considerable detail last week by a Conference organized by the National Association for the prevention of Infant Mortality. The Minister of Health, in his opening address, while glorying in the low infant death-rate, which only amounted to 70 last year, pointed out that maternal mortality continued to give them cause for anxiety. He hoped that the new regulations with regard to the notification of puerperal fever and the reminder which had been sent to Local Authorities with respect to the powers they possess for dealing with this disease, would in time bring about good results. He emphasized the need for increased ante-natal work. Lieut.-Col. Fremantle, M.P., in speaking on maternal mortality, showed that, as a rule, in the better factories, with the exception of the textile workers, potteries, and laundries, women did not return to work after marriage; this limited married women to rougher, less skilled employment and ill-paid home work, which combined with the care of family and household, reduced their strength and stamina.

Social Workers in Conference.

From 24th June until the middle of July next year, Paris will be swarming with social workers of every variety. Four International Congresses are announced which follow each other in rapid succession. The first is the International Housing and Town Planning Congress from 24th June to 30th June. The second is the International Congress of Child Welfare from 2nd to 5th July. The third is the International Congress of public and private welfare. The fourth represents a new experiment as it is the first attempt to bring together social workers from all countries to discuss problems of general interest. It will be divided into four sections: The general organization of social work; education and training for social work; methods of social care work; social work and industry; social work and public health. As a preliminary to this gathering some

American social workers have suggested holding an informal meeting with their European colleagues in Geneva this year and the Save the Children Fund International Union has undertaken to give opportunities for this from 29th August to 5th September. No formal lectures will be given, but facilities for personal exchange of views will be provided and visits of interest will be organized including the League of Nations, the International Labour Office Headquarters, the 8th Assembly, Leysin, etc. The Secretary will be prepared to take rooms from 8 Swiss francs a day for those who wish to attend if applications be made as early as possible to 31 Quai du Mont Blanc, Geneva.

The House of Lords.

An impression seems to exist among the younger Conservatives, the opposition, the diehards, and other opponents of the Government's reform proposals that of this unlucky scheme nothing more will be heard. It is assumed that there has been a complete fiasco, and that the Cabinet is prepared to admit defeat and adopt for its own the useful proverb: "Least said, soonest mended." But it is not at all certain that they are right. What roused antagonism and enabled it to prevail was as much the method of procedure adopted as the actual changes which it was wished to make. Those were drastic and must always have been bitter to a certain type of constitutionalist. But they were also ingenious, and many a Conservative who could not like them might have been induced after a time to vote for them on account of the immediate advantages which they promised. Time, however, was needed, and tactful presentation, and neither of these was given. By attacking the privileges of the House of Commons without carefully preparing their ground beforehand the Cabinet made success improbable; by omitting on so important an issue to consult their own party organization they made defeat certain. But what remains? They have now been obliged to explain that they did not intend to create a constitution in which the House of Lords could either override the House of Commons, or be placed in such a position of privilege that they could not be reformed without their own consent. They have said this, and so strongly has feeling been roused that they will be obliged to stick to it. But there still remains the actual reform of the House of Lords, and now that the constitutionalists have been pacified by the explanations, and the Lords have approved their own pruning, and even the grafting on to their ancient stock of new nominated members, there seems no reason why, if the Government still want these things, they should not go through. The only interesting question is—does the Government still want them? Why should they? Theory is all very well, but in practice the present House of Lords is not, except for one point, unsatisfactory. And that, after all, is the best that can be said of any revising and delaying Chamber. The one point is, of course, the sex of peers. Even if the peeresses in their own right were admitted, there would always be few of them, too few to allow of selection by capacity, and at times there might be none. Among the nominated members on the other hand women could claim to be represented. Therefore, we sincerely hope for our own sakes that they will go on with their proposals.

The Substance of Power.

It seems odd, though perhaps it is not odd, that the more democratic our political institutions become in the country at large, the less room for democracy is found within the walls of Parliament. If members will vote as they are told, and sit in their places while occupants of the front benches talk, that is all, for the moment, that seems to be required of them. And most of them, apparently, are content with this position. They know that if they choose to exercise it, power is theirs, and as long as no attack is made upon this potential authority, in which case, as we saw last week, even the most docile of the three parties is in an uproar, day to day authority may go where it will.

This may be, as the followers of the Government at any moment aver, to the Cabinet, or, as oppositions pretend, to some sinister inner ring of the Cabinet. It may go, as in the case of Pitt, to a Prime Minister in person, who takes counsel of no one, or, as not long ago happened, to a Prime Minister who does not consult his colleagues but is advised by a ring of friends from outside the Parliamentary machine. It may reside, according to writers on politics, with the Whips, or with the caucus; in fact, according to scaremongers, with "Big Business" or with the Bolsheviks; more power than many people imagine remains with the king and when assured of a docile

House of Commons, modern governments allow their actions to be greatly influenced by the known wishes and the supposed intentions of the House of Lords. Outside Parliament there is the Press. No one newspaper in this country has ever continuously controlled public policy, but the Colony of Victoria in Australia was for many years governed and known to be governed by the *Melbourne Age*. Which of these directions it takes depends upon personalities, finance, and fashions of thought. At some times men will tamely acquiesce in a type of control which at another, without apparent reason, they will resent most fiercely. There is a reason, of course, but our present knowledge of what we may call committee or institutional psychology is almost negligible. In days to come there will probably be evolved a code of behaviour, precepts of mental hygiene which will be adopted by public bodies in order that they may remain alert, honest, far-seeing, and fair-minded. At present we can hardly grasp that such things are possible, and as a beginning none of us know by what or whom we are actually governed and few of us care.

An Opportunity for the Church.

The adequacy or inadequacy of clerical stipends was a matter of vigorous discussion by the Church Assembly on Friday of last week. Mrs. Moore gave a vivid description of the life of an overdriven parish parson's wife, attempting to fulfil her double function of home-maker and honorary curate on a lamentably inadequate income. The Archdeacon of the East Riding on the other hand, argued that the poverty of the clergy was greatly exaggerated. Nobody, however, appears to have indicated the point at which the shoe really pinches in clerical life. It pinches (as in other walks of life) where a family exists and during that period of the family's evolution when its members are undergoing secondary and University education. It pinches the clergy on the whole more severely than it pinches the members of other occupations in receipt of similar incomes, because the educational ambitions of the clergy are disproportionately high in relation to their customary standard of living. And the pinch is in their case often the more inevitable because large numbers of them are still precluded by conscientious scruples from making use of the easy and effective methods of family limitation which are so widely practised by the professional classes. One would suppose that these two characteristics would lead any discussion of clerical stipends inevitably in the direction of family allowances—more especially in view of the fact that the Wesleyan Church and the London School of Economics have already blazed a trail. But this does not appear to have happened. We sincerely hope, however, that the Committee of Inquiry which was on Friday last appointed to investigate the matter, will consider this particular solution, and recognize it as a very apt expression of Christian ethics in relation to family life.

When a Woman Handles Money.

When a woman successfully bears and rears a family of six or seven children on a wage of round about £3 a week, no public prominence is accorded to her achievement. And why should it be? The thing, though very arduous and difficult, is nevertheless very often done. But when a woman earns something over £1,000 a year or handles large sums of money by way of business, considerable attention is focussed upon her. And very naturally the thing so seldom happens, or is allowed to happen. Thus the emergence of Mrs. Irma Dell Eggleston as "the most highly skilled Liberty Bond specialist" in Wall Street, trading some £6,000,000,000 worth of bonds, is hailed by the *Daily Express* as a feminist portent worth a whole column. And so indeed it is. Mrs. Eggleston must have had a tough and at the same time delicate job winning her way into the male preserve of the stock and share market, adapting herself to its traditions and its traditions to herself. We heartily congratulate her on her "big business" and hope that as she confidently predicts, "The time is coming when women will invade the business world in larger numbers. They will hold higher and more responsible positions than they have now, and they will be paid accordingly."

Another Precedent.

For the first time a woman, Miss Helena Heslop Harrison, has been awarded the Earl Grey Memorial Fellowship at Armstrong College, Newcastle. Miss Harrison has just taken a very shining first in botany and has embarked upon a piece of post-graduate research which the Fellowship will enable her to carry forward. So far we have heard no word of any scheme for the limitation of women students at Armstrong College.

DISARMAMENT.

As we write there still exists some small hope of avoiding disaster at Geneva: by the time these words are in print it may have disappeared. If it has disappeared, we seem to be confronted with an era of competition in armaments as dangerous and far sillier than that which led up to the outbreak of the Great War. The present deadlock is about cruisers, the sizes, armament, and total tonnage of the cruiser fleets of England, America, and Japan. Nobody supposes that these three nations will make war upon one another within the lifetime of any cruisers built within the next few years. The immediate question would therefore seem to be a matter not so much of danger as of money and popular feeling. But in fact it is dangerous. In the first place it will be a shocking thing if within ten years of the Armistice competitive building is begun again. In the second, as the Washington correspondent of *The Times* points out, questions of fleets lead on to questions of naval bases. It is open at any moment to America to discover that if there were a naval war it would almost certainly be waged all over the planet, and that she is practically devoid of naval bases.

The cruiser question, if the information which reaches this country is correct, is comparatively simple. Great Britain is at present sleeping at night with under 300,000 tons of cruiser. The Americans came forward with a proposal that the three countries should adopt the 5:5:3 ratio for cruisers that they have adopted for battleships, and that 300,000 should be the maximum permissible tonnage. They added that they themselves would use nearly all of this amount to build ships of 10,000 tons mounted with 8 in. guns. Our Admiralty replied that *as we should be obliged, in order to maintain parity, to build as many 10,000 cruisers as the United States*, this figure would not allow of our having anything like enough smaller cruisers to carry out the essential policing of our trade routes and the safeguarding of our Inter-imperial communications. The Americans offered to raise the maximum to 400,000 tons, but our naval experts answered that on this basis we should need not 400,000 but 600,000 tons, if not 700,000, and added, not in the most tactful manner, that whereas our small cruisers with their 6 in. guns are vital to us, the proposed American fleet of large cruisers is in our opinion unnecessary, and to be taken as a mere rationalist gesture or flourish.

The Americans not unnaturally retort that a total of 600,000 tons more than twice as much as we are managing with at present is not disarmament, but an enormous increase in arms, and their newspapers, not only those traditionally hostile to Great Britain,

interpret our claims as being a denial of the principle of parity. Mr. Bridgeman in reply states that to accept anything less would be for us to accept the position of distinct inferiority. And there we are. What hope remains is not theoretical, but springs from the practical position. We have at present fifteen of the larger cruisers. Each of these ships takes about three years to build, and it will be a long time before the United States can hope to equip herself with even our present number, to say nothing of finding and training the crews who would be needed to man them. Mr. Bridgeman has therefore referred back to an earlier proposal of his that as far as this type is concerned Great Britain should take a naval holiday, confining herself to the construction of the 7,500 ton ships which in fact she needs. It may still be possible to reach some sort of agreement along these lines, letting the question of possible American building stand over. Let us hope and pray that something of the sort can be arranged. Even this modified failure will be sufficiently disgraceful, for it shows that not only the American but the British delegation are still thinking, planning, and arguing in terms of barbaric naval rivalry. It may be absurd of the Americans, safe in their continent, to want any large cruisers at all except for giving local colour to naval ports. But if they do it is less absurd of us to believe that because they build them we must build them too? What does it matter to us how much money the United States chooses to sink in these enormous ships? We are not at war with her. Before we could possibly be at war with her, every one of her cruisers would be scrap-iron. If she chooses to ruin us she has without a single cruiser the means of doing so—the millions of pounds worth of gold locked up in the vaults of the New York banks. She might half ruin herself in the using of it, but that is of the essence of war. Our only protection against the United States is not battleships, but the fact that the English-speaking peoples do not wish to destroy or to injure each other. This is our sole safeguard, as it is the sole hope of civilization, and it is this which is undermined by these naval experts and their talk at Geneva. If we want more of one kind of cruiser we must have less of another. What else is disarmament? It certainly is not saying to other countries that because we have trade routes they must only build the types of ships most convenient to Great Britain. Finally, what of the Covenant of the League? What of the spirit of Locarno? We have asked America what reason she has for wanting these great ships. Should we not ask ourselves the same question? Again, why are we obliged to build as many 10,000 ton cruisers as America? Why?

THE HOUSING PROBLEM.

By G. W. CURRIE.

II.

What can women do? What means of effective pressure is at their disposal? The evils complained of and their continuance as a source of money-making depend mainly upon the acquiescence or inaction of the very authorities who are in a position to cure them. The quickest way to destroy this acquiescence or inaction is publicity, and if, as should frequently be possible, it can be ascertained what members of an inert authority are favourable to the right course it will naturally save much time. Some authorities do not require stimulus: often a really defective authority contains numerous individual members keen upon improvement. To such these criticisms are inapplicable. To every active member of an inactive authority a debt of special gratitude is due. The real enemy is not so much the antediluvian councillor who frankly regards housing as a nuisance and says so in an "after dinner" sort of way—his bark is often worse than his bite. It is the "just man made perfect"—the interested hypocrite who professes deep anxiety to promote houses and has his weather-eye fixed firmly on the rates all the time. The "programme seller" in the municipal theatre. The Ministry of Health knows and understands the type. Sir George Newmait writes, "In my last two reports I have drawn attention to the supineness or unwillingness of some local sanitary authorities in the discharge of their statutory health duties. Perhaps it has been to the interest of their members not to be active . . . or for one reason or another they have not given the ratepayers the benefit of their services."

This is a palpable charge of corruption: things must be pretty bad by the time the Ministry of Health makes it. No wonder Lord Cave giving judgment in a House of Lords case (not, it is understood, a case presenting features of moral corruption at all) said that further legislation was required, or that Mr. Chamberlain

in his 1925 report (v. p. 77) tells us that "this and other aspects of the law affecting the disqualification for membership of local authorities were under consideration at the end of the year . . ." Women voters should press the Ministry of Health to publish the evidence on which he is relying. Mr. Chamberlain is not the man to wish to shield rascality. They should also press for Lord Cave's "further legislation". Lord Cave, we gratefully remember, was the Home Secretary who finally carried "votes for women". In my view it would be entirely reasonable to require that the nomination papers or some declaration to be made on assuming office—paid or unpaid—in any municipal area should disclose to the public the facts of the case—should make a reasonable disclosure, that is, of the extent and nature of a candidate's property interests in the area he seeks to serve. An interest in well kept property is, in my view, a good point in a candidature. No one wishes to exclude good landlords from public life. Further, any continued failure to keep property in decent order should be made a disqualification for election and for the exercise of the franchise. In Parliament, a good deal of wise toleration exists and alongside of it, especially at election time, a great deal of publicity. A black sheep in the Parliamentary fold is soon found out. Legislation to keep bad landlords out of the House of Commons is not worth asking for. In borough councils the position is different, though the number of actual slum owners sitting in them must I think be small. As a rule a slum owner pursues his nefarious trade in private. I do, however, believe that a small number of really drastic examples in municipal life would do much good and a strengthening of the law is required. Mr. Chamberlain's real difficulty in legislation is not a personal one with diehard members of the House of

(Continued on page 187.)

THE PARADOX OF EGYPT.¹

Egypt has been styled "the land of paradox". The events of the past month show that it continues to live up to that reputation. Diplomatic friction became so intense between Britain and Egypt that a "Note" was reinforced by the crude expedient of three Dreadnoughts sent to cover with their guns the Custom-houses of the two principal Egyptian ports. The tension was immediately "relieved", for Egypt—being from a naval and military point of view of negligible strength—had to recede from the position she had taken up. Yet her own Prime Minister described the British demands as "tending . . . to diminish the sovereignty of the nation and the authority of Parliament, and to infringe the constitution".

Within three weeks of this latest phase of the eternal "Egyptian Question" the sovereign of Egypt is the guest of the King of England, and plain British citizens, with memories longer than three weeks, read in some bewilderment the columns describing the processions and banquets and felicitous speeches.

Men and women of goodwill can only hope that a tithe of the sentiments expressed is true and capable of translation into concrete results. Over five years ago we declared Egypt an "independent sovereign state". Certain points of difference were reserved for treaty agreement. That treaty has not been concluded. Both countries are finding the position impossible—indeed farcical.

While the newspapers are describing the monarchs and the gilded state coaches, the real figure of importance in the background is the astute Sarwat Pasha. He was Prime Minister of Egypt when she forced Britain to a grudging assent of her independence and the termination of our unhappy eight years' Protectorate; he is again Prime Minister at a time when, in spite of the recent crisis, there are many circumstances favourable to progress along the path towards a final settlement.

THE ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE GUILD.

The forty-fourth annual Congress of the Women's Co-operative Guild was held in Leicester from 20th to 24th June. It was the largest Congress that has yet been held, with over 1,030 delegates from all parts of England and Wales. Mrs. Bird, the National President, was in the chair, and the annual report, showing that the Guild has made good progress during the last year in spite of the industrial crisis, was presented by Mrs. Eleanor Barton, J.P., the General Secretary.

The resolutions on the agenda were many and varied, dealing with most of the current political and social problems, and also with different aspects of the Co-operative movement. Resolutions were carried demanding Equal Franchise, the nationalization of the mines, and the improvement of mining conditions, the raising of the school age, the amendment of the Widows' Pensions Act so as to introduce a non-contributory scheme and include all widows. There were several resolutions dealing with disarmament, protesting against militarism in schools, condemning the action of the Government with regard to China, all of which were carried with large majorities. The national care of maternity and schemes to reduce the death-rate of mothers were discussed and resolutions passed calling upon the Ministry of Health to take this matter up more seriously. Resolutions asking for mental deficiency reform, the extension of the Rent Restrictions Act, the amendment of the National Health Insurance Act, were also carried. The Blanesborough Report was condemned.

The Women's Co-operative Guild as an organization of 57,874 married working women, is recognized as representing the woman in the home. The delegates were all women of this type, and the resolutions were therefore discussed from the point of view of the working class wife and mother. The high standard of the discussion spoke well for the education that the Guild has given its members, for it has always taken the point of view that a married woman is not solely concerned with her home, and that it is her duty as a wife and mother, not only as a citizen, to take her part in public affairs. The success of this education is also proved by the fact that 72 guild women have been appointed magistrates and that over 500 sit on various public committees, such as county and municipal councils, Housing Committees, Maternity Committees, etc.

(Continued at foot of next column.)

¹ Contributed by the Women's International League, 55 Gower Street, W.C.

EQUAL FRANCHISE.

Trafalgar Square Demonstration—16th July.

The Equal Political Rights Demonstration is now being supported by 29 Organizations. Speakers have already been announced. The following arrangements are being made:—

(1) A room at Craig's Court Restaurant, Craig's Court, Charing Cross Road, Whitehall, has been taken by the Committee for Friday and Saturday afternoons, and will be available for inquiries and for a Headquarters and Cloakroom for the Demonstration.

(2) The Programme of the Demonstration is being prepared and will be on sale by the Stewards and at the Literature stall.

(3) Tea will be obtainable at Craig's Court Restaurant.

(4) Community singing will be taken at 4.30 p.m.

Deputations to Members of Parliament.

Deputations to Members of Parliament are being arranged by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship in Westminster, Kensington, and Finchley.

Resolutions on Equal Franchise have been passed at all recent meetings, and the campaign for Equal Franchise formed an important part of the Liverpool Conference of N.U.S.E.C. Societies, when Mrs. Hubback spoke on the need for an active campaign this winter. A well-attended meeting of the Durham S.E.C. is reported in another column.

Equal Franchise Literature.

The fourth edition of the popular pamphlet by Dame Millicent Fawcett—*What the Vote has Done*—has been issued and can be obtained (price 2d.) from the N.U.S.E.C., 15 Dean's Yard, S.W. 1. This valuable compilation should be in the hands of all those who have to answer questions from doubters as to the direct value of the vote. *The Case for Equal Franchise*, by Miss Macadam and Mrs. Hubback, now in its third edition, has been brought up to date, so that it contains all the facts and figures relating to the franchise movement, including the Prime Minister's pledge, his recent speech at the Albert Hall, and arguments against Equal Franchise at the age of 25, etc.

Equal Franchise and the Kensington Society for Equal Citizenship.

At a well attended garden party held by the Kensington Society for Equal Citizenship in the attractive gardens of Pembroke Lodge, by kind permission of Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Corbett, a unanimous resolution was passed in support of equal franchise. Garden parties are the order of the day at present, and readers are reminded that they afford a golden opportunity for resolutions on this subject.

Danger Ahead?

The following extract from the *Sunday Times* of 10th July may be of interest to our readers:—

"The section of the Cabinet that is hostile to the enfranchisement of the woman of twenty-one is still hoping to get the suffrage question shelved, and an active campaign to that end is in preparation. It is not likely, however, that the Premier will go back on his explicit declaration on the subject. He is slow in coming to big decisions, but when he makes up his mind he does so with finality."

(Continued from previous column.)

This year's Annual Congress showed that the Guild is an active and progressive part of the Co-operative movement, and one of the most advanced organizations of married women in the country, as well as being the oldest. The Guild is a self-governing body, though it works in close touch with the different sections of the Co-operative movement, and uses its influence fully to extend Co-operative trade. It also works in close touch with the Labour and Trade Union movements, and is particularly in sympathy with Internationalism. There is in existence an International Women's Guild, representing fifteen countries, and each year a representative from one of the foreign women's Guilds is invited to the English Congress with all her expenses paid.

CROSBY HALL.

A CLUB AND HALL OF RESIDENCE now open for WOMEN GRADUATES OF ALL NATIONALITIES.

For further particulars apply to—

THE WARDEN, CROSBY HALL, CHEYNE WALK, S.W. 3.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL DINNER AT GENEVA.

FROM A CORRESPONDENT.

On Wednesday, 15th June, 1927, a brilliant company of nearly 200 persons, from over thirty different countries, gathered in the big dining-room of the Hotel des Bergues. The International Council of Women acted as hostess, and entertained the Members of the Council of the League of Nations. It was a great occasion, for never before had the Council of the League accepted an invitation to dine with the members of a private organization. The tables were tastefully decorated with irises in the International Council colours, purple, yellow, and white. The Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, President of the International Council of Women, presided, and was supported at the head table by the members of the Board of Officers of the International Council. Nine members of the Council of the League of Nations had accepted the invitation, their Excellencies Sir Austin Chamberlain, M. Paul Boncour, M. Benes, M. Zaleski, Jonkheer Beelaerts van Blokland, M. Villega, M. Urrutia, M. le Dr. Judice and M. Sarafoff. His Excellency Herr Stresemann had written to express his great regret not to have been able to accept the invitation, as he was the guest of honour at a Press dinner given the same evening. Dr. Nansen likewise wrote to say how sorry he was that he had a previous engagement. Sir Eric and Lady Drummond were also present, as well as prominent members of the League Secretariat and of the International Labour Office.

Lady Aberdeen, in her speech of welcome to the guests, drew attention to the importance of the occasion as recognizing the help that organized women could give to the League in all departments of its work. She showed how the pioneer women, who drew up the International Council of Women constitution in 1888 had in many points anticipated the Covenant of the League of Nations. The object of the Council has been to bring the women of all races, religions, and classes together in a common unity of purpose to further the principles and practice of the Golden Rule in all relations of life, and with this view National Councils of Women have been formed in forty different countries, each such Council being a federation of Women's Societies, and every Council, large or small, being given equal place and representation. Lady Aberdeen said that the International Council was expressly prohibited from associating itself with any one propaganda, and all the different lines of work which have been adopted have been undertaken by the unanimous vote of the affiliated National Councils, the first and foremost of these being Peace through Arbitration. All activities of the International Council have been carried on by means of that international co-operation which lies also at the basis of the work of the League, and which recognizes as its chief power the magic influence of bringing together divers individual personalities in common thought and purpose for common action. Sir Austin Chamberlain in his reply acknowledged the help that women could give and hoped that the League would be as strong and vigorous as the International Council when it has reached the venerable age of 39. Madame Avril de Sainte-Croix, in her delightful French way, spoke of international co-operation and what it meant for the world. M. Paul Boncour, in his reply, expressed the hope that the women in those countries where they still lacked the suffrage would soon come to their rights. Dr. Alice Salomon spoke in German of the ideal underlying all international work; she was followed by M. Benes, who pleased the guests very much by acknowledging that he had always been a good feminist, that when Czecho-Slovakia became an independent country the statesmen at once gave full rights of citizenship to women. In a short French speech Sir Austin expressed his appreciation of Lady Aberdeen's wonderful work through the International Council of Women, and her health was drunk amid cheers, and the evening closed with a reception, which gave the numerous hosts an opportunity of meeting their guests.

HOUSING IN WESTMINSTER.

The report¹ of a survey of housing conditions in the Victoria Ward, Westminster, carried out by a small group of Westminster citizens has given publicity to a state of affairs which is hardly credible in a civilized country, still less the heart of the Empire. The facts, compiled by the two trained investigators, are all the more convincing because they are presented in so restrained

(Continued on page 186.)

¹ Copies of the Report may be had free on personal application from N.U.S.E.C., 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, or by post on receipt of 1½d. stamp.

THE PLEASURES OF HISTORY.

ENGLISH LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGES. By L. F. SALZMANN. Oxford University Press, 7s. 6d. net.

ENGLISH WOMEN IN LIFE AND LETTERS. By M. PHILLIPS and W. S. TOMKINSON. Oxford University Press, 10s. net.

In recent years historical scholars have fixed their attention less and less upon the doings of kings and statesmen, and more and more upon economic and social conditions. This change of point of view has, of course, affected the teaching of history in schools. Instead of learning the dates and genealogies of the Kings of England, the young student now acquires information about how the cave man lived and what kind of bedroom furniture was used in the time of Queen Elizabeth. The change has its drawbacks both for teacher and pupil. The political history of England is full of enchanting stories about individuals which illuminate the dull framework of tables and dates with an appeal to the imagination. Without some equivalent stimulation of interest economic facts are apt to be even duller than political ones. The teacher of history now has to evoke stories from tax records and manor rolls instead of taking them straight from the pages of chronicles. It is a difficult though a fascinating task. Lecturers and writers have, however, tackled it with enthusiasm and some of the educational publishing firms are giving them good help. The Oxford University Press is particularly successful with its popularized books of social history. Mr. John Johnson, Printer to the Press, has a genius for choosing and reproducing illustrations. The two books to be considered to-day are notably enriched in this way. The delightful riverside scene from a manuscript in the British Museum that many of us know appears in both of them; but the illustrations are mostly different, for whereas one book deals with the whole of English life in the Middle Ages, the other is specially about women, and, after a few pages of introduction concentrates on the two hundred years between 1650 and 1850. It has not quite so many illustrations from illuminated manuscripts, but a great many from seventeenth and eighteenth century woodcuts and engravings. I am not quite sure whether it is an advantage for the schoolchild student, but it is certainly a drawback for the older reader that in both books the description of the pictures is given not underneath them, but only in the table of contents, and that in neither case is there much bibliographical information.

English Life in the Middle Ages is a slight book, but an agreeable one. In less than three hundred pages it skims lightly over various aspects of the thousand years between the coming of the Angles and the Saxons to Britain and the end of the Wars of the Roses. One of the chapters is about women, and gives some idea of the life and labours of the mediaeval housewife.

The authors of *English Women in Life and Letters* touch on her, too, but soon pass on to the seventeenth century. Their method is to illustrate the conditions of women's lives in different periods from the diaries and letters of individual women. Margaret Paston, Dorothy Osborne, Elizabeth Pepys, Susanna Wesley, Hannah More, and Fanny Burney figure in their pages. They draw not only on historical records, but on English fiction from Defoe to Mrs. Gaskell. Altogether this is a delightful book, and one which will be appreciated by any intelligent girl who likes history, as well as by many older people.

WIVES AND CELEBRITIES.¹

These short stories are all grouped round one theme; the lot of the ordinary person married to a celebrity. In most of the cases treated the celebrity is a man and the ordinary person a woman; but in one of the best stories, "Trevor at Minola," the central figure is a lady best-seller, author of *Pearls and Point Lace* and *Hearts in Pawn*. The book is not satisfying, as it gives one the feeling that the author has not quite achieved what she set out to do. The people in them are not quite alive; and neither the descriptions nor the conversations are quite convincing. This may be owing to the fact that the setting is almost entirely American, and that modern American civilization is apt to produce an unreal feeling in a British reader, at any rate in one who has not lived in America. Be this as it may, there is certainly enough in them to make one want to go on reading, and to hope for another book from the same author in which the achievement will be more complete.

I. B. O'M.

¹ By Helen Granville Barker. (Collins, 7s. 6d. net.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS.

By BERTHA MASON.

CLEAN AIR AND THE ECLIPSE.

The Public Health (Smoke Abatement) Act came into force on 1st July. It is by no means a drastic measure and might have been carried further with advantage. It touches only the fringe of a problem which has awaited solution for hundreds of years. The evil of smoke-poisoned air, which admittedly causes daily injury to the health, spirits, and general well-being of the community, serious damage to vegetation and buildings, and enormous material waste (to say nothing of the increased cost in the matter of household washing and infinite and unnecessary work and worry to good housewives) is a matter which sooner or later—we hope sooner—must be tackled in a fearless and definite manner. Meanwhile, there is encouragement in the fact that the Act to which we draw attention is a step in the right direction, and as such we welcome it. It increases the penalties for the emission of smoke and stirs up backward local authorities to a sense of their duties. It provides for the prevention of the emission of smoke in new buildings other than in private dwelling-houses, the smoke of which, it is said, is responsible for more than half the smoke evil, and it contemplates the issues of new by-laws. The Act, so far as it goes, will, if properly enforced, do something to reduce the vast volume of soot-polluted air which day by day pours forth from many chimneys of our town and cities, carrying in its train damage to vegetation and property, and injury to health, even to life itself.

The success, however, of the new measure depends upon the efficiency with which it is administered. The adequate and successful enforcement of the provisions of the Act depends in no small degree upon the intelligence and diligence of the local authorities into whose hands is committed the administration of the measure.

For centuries complaints have been launched against the evils of coal-smoke. In the sixteenth century we find John Evelyn, as readers of his diary (1661) will remember, denouncing in bold and vigorous language "the impure and thick mist accompanied by filthy, fuliginous vapour which perpetually overhangs the august and opulent city of London." Through the succeeding centuries the complaints have continued, but, and in spite of many efforts, the problem of smoke abatement still awaits solution. To-day "the hellish and dismal cloud of sea-coal" hangs over West Hartlepool for instance, much as in John Evelyn's time, it "hung over the august city of London," for in *The Times* of 29th June, 1927, we find these words in the letter of a correspondent: "Those who come to witness the eclipse here" (West Hartlepool, it must be remembered, being in the belt of totality), "have to face a problem besides that of weather, i.e. the smoke which belches forth from numerous chimneys in dense columns, and which cannot be minimized to any great extent for the brief hours of the eclipse. It will be necessary for those who wish to have a clear view to go to one of the ends of the bay, leaving West Hartlepool, which is almost enveloped in smoke."

The primitive view that there is some commercial value in dense volumes of smoke, the blacker the better, apparently still prevails in some quarters, but public opinion has been steadily growing during the last few years in the direction of the essential necessity for the purification of the air upon which we depend for our existence. Is it too much to hope that in 1999, the date on which the next total eclipse will be visible in this country, that those who are here to watch may see (weather permitting) the awe-inspiring spectacle in an atmosphere pure and free from man-made smoke?

The weakness of the new Act lies in the fact that the domestic chimney, the cause of so much mischief, is exempt from its provisions. The love of the British for the open grate and the cheery coal fire (a love shared by the writer) is hard to uproot. The solution of the problem, so far as the domestic chimney is concerned, seems to lie for the moment in the direction of making it easy and inexpensive to use gas and electricity for heating and cooking, and in hastening the arrival of smokeless fuel. Progress is being made in the last-named direction, but its day is not yet.

[We regret that this article was crowded out of our last issue.—ED.]

HOUSING IN WESTMINSTER.—Continued from page 185. and dispassionate a manner. All students of housing should study them carefully, and we hope this effort may lead to similar surveys. But now that such conditions are revealed in all their horror what next? Mr. G. W. Currie, one of the survey group who has made a special study of the housing problem in London, is contributing valuable articles to our pages on the subject.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

President: Miss ELEANOR RATHBON, C.C., J.P. Hon. Treasurer: Miss MACADAM. Parliamentary and General Secretary: Mrs. HUBBACK.

Offices: 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1. Telephone: Victoria 6188.

EQUAL FRANCHISE DEMONSTRATION.

Trafalgar Square—Saturday, 16th July.

We hope that our members are going to be present in large numbers at the Trafalgar Square Demonstration on 16th July at 5 o'clock. Dame Millicent Fawcett will be present. Miss Macadam and Mrs. Hubback will speak on behalf of the N.U.S.E.C. For further particulars see Equal Franchise page.

MEETING WITH DAME EDITH LYTTLETON. Caxton Hall. Monday, 25th July.

The meeting which is being organized by the N.U.S.E.C. in order that representatives of women's organizations may have an opportunity of meeting Dame Edith Lytton is being held in the Lounge of the Caxton Hall on Monday, 25th July. Tea (price 1s. each), 4.30 p.m.; Meeting, 5 p.m.

FINANCE.

We print to-day the list of contributions which by an oversight was omitted last week. A third gift of £25 from Mrs. George Cadbury, and £30 from the Liverpool Women Citizen's Association more than completes the first hundred required to secure Mrs. Corbett's promised gift to which she attached the condition that an additional £400 shall be made up in donations of £25 or £50. (These amounts may, if desired, be collected in small sums.) The munificent donation from Liverpool is part of the proceeds of a summer fête. The Petersfield S.E.C., always generous, has given a further gift of £10. We extend very cordial thanks to all our generous contributors, many of whom have given both to the Guarantee and to the Equal Franchise Fund. Many very encouraging and kind letters have been received from officers of Societies with generous promises for the autumn.

RESPONSES TO THE GUARANTEE FUND, 1927-9.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

WOMEN IN THE UPPER HOUSE.

MADAM.—You quoted two extracts showing that sex disqualification could not be maintained in a reformed Upper House from speeches made by Lords Salisbury and Birkenhead, the two most powerful opponents of the Peeress's Bill in 1925. May I give another also, from the debate of 1926. Lord Birkenhead then said:—

"Women in a reformed House of Lords should have the same right in equal conditions with men."

ASTOR.

REORGANIZATION OF THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

MADAM,—Will you permit me to make one or two observations regarding the extracts from the Report of the Southborough Committee quoted by Miss A. Scott, which, taken from their context, are likely to be misleading and to assume an undue value.

For example, with regard to the question of convictions for drunkenness, the complete sentence from which Miss Scott designedly omits the first half reads as follows: "A comparison of the records of convictions for drunkenness in different towns is of doubtful value owing to the variation in conditions as between one town and another, but so far as this comparison can be made, it does not appear that any greater reduction in the number of convictions for drunkenness has been achieved in recent years in Carlisle than has been achieved in many other cities and towns."

If comparisons on this point are of doubtful value, and most people will agree that they are, the conclusion reached by the Committee which Miss Scott stresses is valueless. Again, if a nearly 50 per cent. reduction in the number of licensed houses, thus doing away with insanitary, redundant, and otherwise undesirable premises, together with a reorganization of the methods of sale, the removal of many objectionable features in the public-houses, have not resulted in a reduction in the quantity of drink sold, as well as in the reduction of temptation, immorality, etc., what has been the good of the reduction effected during the past twenty-two years under the Act of 1904?

Moreover, it is difficult to understand upon what basis the Committee made their comparisons in regard to the quantity of drink consumed. The Carlisle State Management Authority does not possess a complete monopoly, two large hotels, one restaurant, and eleven clubs being free to obtain their alcoholic liquors where they will; while there is no means of recording the importations from outside the area.

The curious attitude adopted by the Committee in its interpretation of the terms of reference under which they were appointed is exemplified in Miss Scott's next quotation. The Committee were not asked to consider the extension of the schemes to "any other particular area or place", but they were definitely asked to report "whether the experience already gained affords grounds for the development of any such system by an amendment of the licensing laws." On this point they state "... there are many problems involved... which lay entirely outside the scope of the present Committee's inquiry and into which we have not inquired". In a word the Committee felt themselves unequal to the definite duty laid upon them by the terms of reference. Is it any wonder that the report is not taken seriously, or that the Lobby Correspondent to *The Times* declared that its proceedings were an "object of mirth"?

A. F. HARVEY,
Secretary, Temperance Legislation League.

Parliament Mansions,
Victoria Street, S.W. 1.

THE HOUSING PROBLEM (continued from page 183).

Commons. Many roughly so described would scorn to touch slum property: and I would not myself say anything harder of them than that they are needlessly alarmed and should not regard the crusade against slums as unpatriotic communism. The difficulty is with the type of backwoods employer who still sweats labour and whose sole contribution to citizenship is a cheque to a party war chest in exchange for which he expects and actively demands to be left alone to behave as unreasonably as he likes. This type seldom wants to sit on a municipal council.

The borough councillor pilloried by Sir George Newman is undoubtedly an ordinary rascal and English law should treat him as such. When are we to see Lord Cave's Bill? So much for borough councillors: next week we may consider the position of slum landlords.

THE MALTHUSIAN LEAGUE.

A DINNER to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Bradlaugh-Besant Trial and the subsequent formation of the Malthusian League will be held at the HOLBORN RESTAURANT on 26th JULY. Speakers: DR. ANNIE BESANT, Mrs. MARGARET SANGER, MR. H. G. WELLS, DR. C. V. DRYSDALE, MR. JOHN SUMNER.
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NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

DURHAM S.E.C.

The Annual Meeting of the Durham Society for Equal Citizenship was held in the delightful hall of St. Hild's College on Thursday, 30th June. Miss Christopher presided over the meeting, which was very well attended. Mrs. Hubback gave a very stimulating account of the position with regard to Equal Franchise, and urged the members to spare no effort in supporting Mr. Baldwin in his promise to introduce legislation on this subject next Session. The Honorary Secretary of the Society presented the Annual Report, which gave an account of a very satisfactory year's work.

GLASGOW S.E.C. AND W.C.A.

On Wednesday, 22nd June, the Executive Committee invited members to meet Lady Parsons, who gave an interesting address on the development of engineering as a profession for women. Lady Parsons made special reference to the work done by Atalanta, Ltd. (Women's Engineering Works), of which she is Chairman, and by special request showed three of the small tools manufactured by the firm, orders for which are being received from all over the world. The address was of special interest to those interested in new openings for women in industry.

BIRMINGHAM N.C.W. AND CITIZENSHIP S.E.C.

At the annual meeting of the Birmingham branch of the N.C.W., held on 20th June, at the Botanical Gardens, Edgbaston, an audience of about 300 members listened to an excellent address on Equal Franchise by Mrs. Corbett Ashby, which gave encouragement to a vigorous campaign in the autumn. Twelve Ranger Guide Companies and eleven women's societies had taken part in the annual Citizenship competition, organized by the Citizenship Sub-Committee, and the prizes and certificates were awarded at the meeting.

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EQUAL POLITICAL RIGHTS CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE.

SATURDAY, JULY 16. 2.30. **Poster Parade** starting from Craig's Court Restaurant, Whitehall, S.W. 5 p.m. Equal Franchise Demonstration in Trafalgar Square. Speakers include Mrs. Despard, Dame Millicent Fawcett, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence and many others. Community Singing at 4.30.

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DRESS.

THE HAT DOCTOR, 52 James' Street, Oxford Street (near Bond Street Tube), W. 1. Re-blocks, makes hats, stitched hats (Ladies' or Gentlemen's), recovers shoes, satin, thin kid, canvas; material provided 7s. 6d., toe capped, 8s. 6d. Furs altered and remade.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

LONDON AND NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE, 35 Marsham Street, Westminster. Secretary, Miss F. Strachey. Expert advice on Openings and Trainings for professional women; interviews 10-11 (except Saturdays) or by appointment.

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 17th July. 6.30, Rev. W. Hudson Shaw, "The New Prayer Book."

EDUCATED HOME HELPS BUREAU, 190 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W. 1 (new address), requires and supplies educated women for all domestic work. Registration: Employers, 2s. 6d.; workers, 1s. Suiting fee: Employers, 7s. 6d.; workers, 2s. (Victoria 5940.)

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Please send THE WOMAN'S LEADER to me for twelve months. I enclose 6/6.

Name

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