### THE

# CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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

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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 FAREWELL.

THE pages of THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN are scarcely the place of a dispassionate criticism of this book. No volume of contemporary verse could better endure such a test; but is not this the voice of a dead friend? Our Shepherdess has left the "maternal hills and bright" of time, and her voice comes to us now from beyond their farther side, sweetly as of old but a little sadly, borne upon the winds of death.

Alice Meynell went to her grave in the meridian splendour of her unique powers. The most modest of great writers, she perhaps never realised how much she had withheld from her readers; but possibly some consciousness of the approaching end accounts in part for the fertility of her last year. That year witnessed, one writer has pointed out, the appearance of one third of her entire poetic output.

Of that output this posthumous volume is fairly typical. This poet's dearest interests moved her to the last. Nature, childhood, the Arts, the Faith are again and for the last time her themes; one or two poems in connection with the War—dear Saints, how different from most "war poems"!—recall the "Fathers of Women."

It is even more important to note—though truly one is merely noting the expected—the same high qualities, spiritual, intellectual and aesthetic, that bind together Mrs. Meynell's entire poetic legacy in the splendid unity of a great art and a great soul. Here then, is the old subtlety of thought and emotion that will not yield its last preciousness to a first reading; here is the reticence that is never cold, the austere simplicity—as in the choice of metres—that is never commonplace. Here, finally, in her stanzas to a young poet—quaintly inscribed "To Antiquity"—is a gleam of the old humour.

\*THE LAST POEMS OF ALICE MEYNELL (Burns, Oates and Washburne, Ltd., 3s. 6d.).

Catholic readers will probably turn with most interest to the lyrics of the Faith. One of the most touching of these is "To the Mother of the Son of Man." "To 'A Certain Rich Man" "is an example, not alone in Mrs. Meynell's work, of creative exegesis. "Christmas Night," the greatest of this group, makes even Christina Rossetti's inspired Nativity Songs appear a little less inspired. And who but Mrs. Meynell could have collocated without incongruity St. Peter and Shelley in a poem entitled "The Voice of a Bird"?

One would love to quote a dozen things, but as we think of all we have lost (and gained) in this member of that very small family of the elect, the Artist Saints, it is simply impossible to pass over the last two poems of this her last book. The first of these, echoing the marvellous reverberations of De Quincey's "Everlasting Farewells!" suggests our best consolation:—

'How mend these strange 'farewells''?
'Vale''? 'Addio''? 'Leb'wohl''? Not
one but seems

A tranquil refutation; tolling bells That yet withhold the terror of his dreams.'

And here, in "The Poet to the Birds," is the last stanza of her last poem:—

'My human song must be

My human thought. Be patient till 'tis done.

I shall not hold my little peace; for me There is no peace but one.'

"The footfalls of her music waken not sounds, but silences."

So wrote Francis Thompson of Alice Meynell. In this paper to which she was ever a gracious friend, may one venture to add the words which a third poet has written of yet a fourth:—

'The footfall of her passing soul is sweeter than her singing.' V.C.T.

# SERVICE WOMEN IN PEACE-TIME.

By VERA S. LAUGHTON, M.B.E. (Member of the Service Women's Council).

To have lived and worked together in good Holiday Houses which have been established fellowship and with common aims, makes a at St. Leonard's and Southsea, training in know the joy of meeting those with whom we science or other branches of work likely to worked and adventured and suffered in Suffrage days. There is a similar bond between ing money and rail fares, have been given, and the women who strove during the war to play their part as members of H.M. Forces. There is this difference between ex-service men and ex-service women—that every man who was young enough and fit enough is an ex-service man. The ways in which women served their months after work has begun in order that country during the war were much more varied and there is much more likelihood therefore of there being some quality in common among those who of their own choice became enrolled members of the Services.

The majority of the women who served in the ranks were very young, many of them only just the minimum age of eighteen, and having stepped over the threshold of life into a world that seemed full of adventure and romance, at St. Leonard's and Southsea which have been they naturally cling now to any associations which will keep those memorable years as something more than a memory. Numbers of women, not all young, have said to the writer, of their Service days, "It was the happiest time of my life." No active-minded woman Club, artistically and even luxuriously furwants to live in the past, but that feeling among hundreds of women has made doubly welcome the grant from the United Services Fund which made possible the organisation of ex-service women.

War profits of the Navy and Army Canteen Board, in spite of very low prices, ran into millions, and when it was decided to devote these profits to the benefit of the ex-service men whose money it really was, the Women's Services, whose members had also bought at the Canteens, claimed a share for ex-service women. £200,000 was apportioned to women, half being for the use of women who had served in the Nursing and V.A.D. Services, and half for ex-members of the W.R.N.S., Q.M. A.A.C., W.R.A.F., Women's Forage Corps, and Women's Legion (Motor Transport Section). It is with the second class that this article is concerned.

A large sum, arranged in such a way as to last fifteen years, was set aside for the Service Women's Benevolent Fund. Grants are made for sick benefit, convalescence at one of the

bond which is not lightly severed. We all secretarial work, house-decorating, domestic prove successful. Outfits for overseas, landmany varied necessitous cases have been assisted. A Loan Fund is now being started to make loans free of interest to women wishing to start in business. The loan is to be repayable in small sums monthly and not for several there may be no heavy burdens to harass the initial stages of the business.

The remainder of the money from the United

Services Fund has been most wisely expended in Clubs and Hostels, which form rallying centres for young business girls, and in many instances are places where they can live at a moderate cost either permanently or temporarily. In addition to the two seaside Clubs already mentioned, big Clubs have been opened in Edinburgh and in London. Both Clubs are fine houses in a good position and are very popular centres of ex-service activities. So here in London, in Buckingham Gate, is a nished, with bedrooms and bathrooms and comfortable lounges, which can be joined for 6s. a year by the women who served their country in H.M. Forces, and who now as struggling clerks or domestic servants, have something very practical to remind them that they are also Old Comrades.

In addition to these Clubs, grants towards Club-rooms for regular re-unions of ex-service women have been made in Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester and Nottingham. A number of beds have also been reserved for ex-service women at the Helena Residential Clubs, London.

These benefits have all been secured through the United Services Fund, which is one more proof of the value of organisation, for it was only because service women held together that the necessary action was made possible.

The Service Women's Association Council, composed of two representatives from each Service, which has looked after the ex-service women's interests, has had other tasks in

(continued on page 33).

# NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Elsewhere in this issue we give reports of the Annual Meeting, and the decisions taken regarding the work for the year, and the name of the society. The voting on the 17th makes it clear that our members are not prepared to part with a name that has endeared itself to them.

Lady Astor secured a triumph in the House of Commons when she brought in her bill to prohibit the sale of intoxicants to young persons under the age of eighteen for consumption on licensed premises. The House was crowded, and the Bill passed its second reading by a majority of 282. Lady Astor assured the House that she had the support of the churches, and of the teaching and medical professions, as well as of women's organizations. The handsome majority by which the second reading was carried should secure a passage into Law even of a private member's

The Legitimation Bill, the second reading of which was passed unanimously by the House of Commons, has been now passed by the Standing Committee. The clause which provided that nothing in the Act should operate to legitimate a person whose father or mother was married to a third party when the illegitimate person was born, was struck out. It was this clause which made the Bill practically a non-controversial measure, as it stands the Bill would legitimate a person by the subsequent marriage of the parents, whether there was no obstacle to their marriage at the time of the child's conception and birth or not. This is where controversy comes in.

The Matrimonial Causes Bill which gives a woman the right of divorce on the ground of her husband's adultery passed its second reading on Friday, 9th, by 231 votes to 27. Mr. Bridgeman said that the Government did not oppose the Bill, but he viewed with alarm any prospect of the introduction into it at later stages of the "abominable" proposals of Lord Buckmaster's Bill.

Besides these Bills, since we last went to Press the Criminal Justice Bill has been introduced into the House of Lords by the Lord Chancellor. Clause 24 of this Bill abolishes "the presumption of law that an offence committed by a wife in the presence of her husband is committed under the coercion of the husband." It is indeed time that this relic of the past was done away with. If a wife is foolish enough to allow herself to be coerced she can still plead to that foolishness, the Bill leaves her that loophole. The Bill deals with other matters besides the coercion of wives, and among them is the proposal to abolish Grand Juries at Quarter Sessions, and to expedite the trials of accused persons.

Still another question of deep interest to women has been recently before the House, that is the question of pensions of widows with dependent children. Sir William Joynson-Hicks, speaking on behalf of the Government, condemned the proposal on grounds of economy, and obtained its defeat by 248 votes to 184. In an article entitled "Avenge me of Mine Adversary, "the Woman's Leader pleads the case of the widows, and we believe with our contemporary that there is sufficient support in the country for this reform, a reform which in the long run will be the truest economy, to persuade the Government to yield. The cause of the widow and the fatherless is one that must go straight to the heart of any follower of Christ.

The Action Sociale de la Femme write that they will have a day devoted to Woman Suffrage at their coming congress.

The execution of Monsignor Budkiewiez by the Soviet Government has shocked the conscience of the civilized world. The C.W.S.S. was among the many Catholic and non-Catholic bodies which sent telegrams of protest to the Soviet Government against the execution of Archbishop Czieplak and his colleagues. The Archbishop was reprieved.

# THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":

55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W., I. Tel. Museum 4181.

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

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MISS GABRIELLE JEFFERY, Hon. Treasurer. MISS VERA S. LAUGHTON, M.B.E.

MISS ISABEL WILLIS, Hon. Press Secretary

# Work for 1923.

Every year at the Annual Meeting of the C.W.S.S. one is astonished at the amount of work which can be got through in an afternoon by a body of people determined not to waste time. Since the Annual Meeting of 1922 a 4. new Government has come into power, wherefore a series of resolutions on points included in the C.W.S.S. programme were put from the Chair, carried unanimously and sent up to the new Premier and the Government Departments concerned. Those who were not present will like to have the exact wording of the resolutions. They are as follows:

1. The C.W.S.S. calls upon the Government to introduce and pass through all its stages, a bill granting the Parliamentary franchise to women on the same terms as to men.

2. Solicitation Laws. The C.W.S.S. calls 5. upon the Government to repeal the solicitation laws directed solely against alleged "common prostitutes," under which laws thousands of women are every year convicted, on police evidence only, of soliciting to the annoyance of men, whereas in a recent appeal case, it would appear that in charges of men annoying women, the annoyed person must come forward to give evidence.

3. Venereal Disease. The C.W.S.S. protests against any system of compulsory examination of women for venereal disease in any area under the control of the British Government. It further opposes the introduction of compulsory notification and treatment of venereal disease on the

introduction of compulsory examination and detention of women and will have an adverse effect on the present voluntary system of confidential treatment.

Sex Disqualification. The C.W.S.S. calls upon the Government to amend the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919, so that in practice, it will ensure that "a person, shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage, from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to any civil or judicial office or post, or from entering or assuming any civil profession or vocation, or from admission to any incorporated Society (whether incorporated by Royal Charter or otherwise), and a person shall not be exempted by sex from the liability to serve as a juror."

The C.W.S.S. calls upon the Government to adopt and pass through all its stages, the Guardianship, Custody & Maintenance of Infants' Bill, 1923, and the

6. Separation & Maintenance Orders Bill,

Widows' Pensions. The C.W.S.S. calls upon the Government to introduce an adequate system of pensions for widows with dependent children.

The resolution which stood in the name of the York Branch: "That the name of the Society be changed from 'The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society,' to that of 'The Catholic Women's Citizens' Society,' found only three supporters.

Some controversy was aroused by the resolution moved by Miss Havers and seconded by ground that it will inevitably tend to the Miss Whateley: "That the last clause of our Constitution 'to further the work and useful. ness of Catholic women as citizens', be so interpreted as to permit of the Society taking part in any movement which in the judgment of the Committee, is likely to promote a permanent World Peace, essential to the free development of womanhood."

Miss Havers explained that the Committee had felt debarred from taking part in peace demonstrations, without a definite mandate from the members; she had therefore put forward the resolution in order that members could give or withhold that mandate. To meet an objection raised that the resolution could not be carried into effect without infringing the non-party policy of the C.W.S.S. Miss Laughton moved that the words "not of a party nature" should be inserted after the words any movement. Miss Willis moved that the words "not definitely" of a party nature be inserted. Both amendments were lost and the resolution carried with one dissentient, who explained that she was as eager for peace as anyone, but did not consider the question as at present advocated free from party poli-

There may be truth in that, and yet the best way of rescuing the question of peace from the shackles of party is for people of all shades of to judge, whether any particular demonstration for Peace is such as the Society can support.

L. DE ALBERTI.

Service Women in Peace Time (cntd. from p. 30) addition to its dealings with the United Services Fund. There was for instance the question of membership of the British Legion. Until last year, membership of the British Legion was confined to ex-service men, though ex-service women were invited to join the Women's Branch, which consists of the dependents of ex-service men. This was altered at the last General Meeting and ex-service women now join the Legion on terms of equality with the men. Another matter on which action has been taken though not as yet with a satisfactory result is the differentiation of treatment by the Board of Education of exservice men and women teachers. In the case of the former (home service men included)

their war service counts towards pay and pension, while no such regulation extends to women.

In addition to the Service Women's Council, each Women's Service has still a flourishing Old Comrades' Association, which holds debates, dances and other re-unions, and has swimming, hockey, and tennis clubs, which are all self-supporting. The Q.M.A.A.C.O.C.A. has a fine riverside camp near Old Windsor with huts to sleep twenty, and facilities for boating and swimming.

The Association of Wrens has within the last year taken on a constructive piece of work by affiliating with the Girl Guides, and has already supplied a considerable number of officers for this movement, which as an educational force among children holds so much hope for the future. The special branch of work undertaken by Wrens is the promotion of Sea Guide companies. Women who learnt so much from the Navy during their short period of service, are now anxious to hand on that knowledge to those who were too young to learn it first-hand for themselves. Throughout all our Service period, our work was overcast by the dark shadow of war, and the thought that our experience was being gained at such a terrible cost. And now this wonderopinion to take part in it. By the terms of ful thing has come to pass, that the Service the resolution it is now left to the Committee comradeship can be experienced, and the sealoving spirit given scope, in a movement which is based not on war, or the thought of future war, but on mutual help and understanding, discipline, control, kindliness and the need for more and more knowledge-in a word on the attributes which more than any others stand for a lasting peace.

#### C.W.S.S. MEETING.

Members and friends are invited to meet Mrs. Finlayson Gauld (Vice-Chairman, Edinburgh C.W.S.S.), on Tuesday, April 24th, at 37, Woburn Square, W.C.1 (by kind permission of Miss Gorry).

Speech 5-30. Tea 5 p.m., 9d.

We are glad to hear that one of our early members, Dr. Eileen Hickey, after graduating with 1st class Honours, took 1st class Honours in Bacteriology and Pathology, and is now Hæmatologist to the Mater Hospital, Belfast.

#### International Notes.

It is pleasant to learn from La Française that Mme. Malaterre-Sellier, the Catholic Vice-President of the French Union for Woman Suffrage, has just enjoyed the unique honour of being invited to address the Municipal Council of Bordeaux on the Suffrage. Questions and discussion followed, and in the end the Council adopted a Resolution begging the Chamber to discuss as soon as possible M. Justin Godard's new Suffrage Bill.

We learn from the same source that the French National Council of Women has petitioned the Chamber to re-establish Summer Time, to which, it will be remembered, agricultural interests in France are so strongly opposed.

A new "students' house" is about to be opened in the Boulevard Raspail, Paris, exclusively for girl students at the university, containing 150 bed-sitting-rooms and every convenience in the way of baths, laundry, restaurant, library, etc., all at a moderate cost.

Le Féminisme Chrétien reports the passing of a new law in Belgium which allows women to act as witnesses to official documents. It is. as Melle. Van den Plas remarks, a small matter, but it happily removes the last vestige of civil inequality as between the

La Femme Belge has turned its February number into a plea for the Belgian lacemakers. The subject—one full of interest is treated exhaustively in its artistic, historical and economic aspects. The Belgian lace trade, it seems, is passing through as tragic a crisis as agriculture in England. Being a purely feminine and home industry, wages are lamentably low, hours over-long and industrial organisation exceedingly difficult. The younger generation shews itself less and less disposed to learn a handicraft which rarely produces a living wage, and the fear is that this exquisite art, one of the glories of Flanders, may die out almost entirely.

The woman's movement is making truly marvellous progress in India. We learn through the news service of the I.W.S.A. that the United Provinces Legislative Council, a body representing 47 million people, has just passed unanimously a resolution giving the

women the parliamentary vote. This is the third Indian Province which has taken advantage of the right to enfranchise women at their own discretion, Madras and Bombay being the other two. Three native States-Travancore, Jahalwar and Cochin-have also given the vote to women. Meanwhile four Indian women have seats on the Bombay Corporation, there is one woman magistrate, and the first woman barrister, Miss Tata, was called to the English bar only the other day. We are also reminded that the Burmese women who already have the franchise, are no whit behind their Indian sisters in progressiveness and are likely to be represented at the Rome congress

The Giornale Della Donna reproduces a number of letters from eminent French men and women in favour of the suffrage. Among these we note, beside those of distinguished women such as Maria Vérone and Sarah Bernhardt, those of two of the Catholic Academicians, Georges Goyau and Henri Bordeaux. \* \* \*

The woman's movement, it appears, is at length making progress in S. America. Chilian women have founded a Feminine Civic Society, which agitates not only for civic rights but also for the political vote. And in Brazil a Suffrage Bill has anyhow passed its first reading by a large majority. Meanwhile both in the Argentine and Uruguay Catholic Women's Leagues are carrying on useful preparatory work of a social and educational

L'Ame Populaire reports that the first association in Belgium for paying "allocations familiales" has been successfully founded at Liége and will be available for some 40,000 workmen. Families will receive from ten to forty francs per month for every child under the age of fourteen, besides a subsidy at birth. We read further that the great Semaine Sociale, which is to meet at Grenoble next August will have Population as its subject.

The Luxemburger Frau applauds the action of Italian women in protesting to their government against the immorality of so many cinema films, and urges the need of greater strictness in licensing films for adults. It is not sufficient, it declares, merely to protect children as is done at present. V.M.C.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS.

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'Women in Parliament' Fund.

The above list includes all donations given at the Annual Meeting on March 17th, and for each and everyone I tender my sincere thanks and the promise that the money will be most economically spent. A member, who wishes to remain anonymous, has generously subscribed £12 10s., the office rent for the first quarter at the new rate. If any other members or friends feel they can follow her example for the other quarters, or give part of the sum, they will be doing a great service to the Society. G JEFFERY

#### THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE C.W.S.S.

The Annual Meeting was held at the Caxton Hall on Saturday, March 17th, with Miss Kathleen Fitz-Gerald, B A., presiding. Mrs. H. More Nisbett in moving the adoption of the report said that it was impossible in a short speech to dwell upon all the work done in the year. It was a most inspiring report, and

well justified our international name. She congratulated the C.W.S.S. especially on the success of the society's efforts in respect to V.D. measures in Uganda.

Miss Christine O'Connor, whom we gladly welcome back as a member of Committee, said that everyone must be impressed at the amount of work which had been done during the year. She was particularly pleased to see the report of foreign visitors welcomed by the C.W.S.S.; she hoped that that side of the work might be extended.

Miss Whately in moving the adoption of the financial statement said that it was amazing to read of the enormous amount of work which had been done for so little money. She reminded the audience that the continuous jumble sale held at 55, Berners Street was a fruitful source of income. She hoped everyone would help to keep it going.

Miss Wall in seconding the adoption of the financial statement took the opportunity of paying a handsome tribute to the CATHOLIC CITIZEN.

The Chairman then called upon Miss Eleanor FitzGerald to appeal for funds. Miss E. FitzGerald can make even an appeal for funds witty and amusing, and must have been pleased as well as the Hon. Treasurer, at the response to her speech. Elsewhere we deal with the resolutions passed at the meeting.

After an interval for tea Mrs. H. More Nisbett gave an eloquent address on the need for Catholic women in Parliament, and dealt with some of the social evils which call for reform.

The Committee wish to thank most heartily all those who helped in preparing tea.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

#### FAMILY ENDOWMENT.

Mrs. Hewitt, Chairman of the Public Service of the Catholic Women's League, asks us to say that the only time the C.W.L. considered Family Endowment it was discussed on economic lines, no resolution was taken, and it was not suggested that any Catholic principle was involved.

Our readers will remember that the writer of the note to which the C.W.L. takes exception based her remarks on Miss Fletcher's book, "The Christian

#### THE THE EDITOR OF C.W.S.S.

Dear Madam,

Will you permit me to make a brief remark with reference to your recent controversy on the "allocations familiales" question. The numerous excellent societies in Franch which concern themselves with family subventions, are, with one exception, due to private initiative. State interference is dreaded, and the last bill brought before parliament was defeated by a large majority. And it is just this State interference that Miss Fletcher and the C.S.G. are out to combat. In France, the permission of the parent is first obtained before the grant is made, or the home visited. There is no question of "handing over any responsibility for a child's maintenance," for such responsibility is the unalienable right of the parent.

Yours faithfully,

IRENE HERNAMAN, C.W.S.S. and C.S.G.

#### INTERNATIONAL

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#### LECTURES.

Wednesday, April 18th, 8-15 p.m. Debate, "The Dominant Sex." Miss Nina Boyle, Dr. JOSIAH OLDFIELD. Chairman, Miss MARY GRANT.

Wednesday, April 25th, 8-15 p.m. "Toc H." Speaker, Mr. BARCLAY BARON. Chairman, Lieut.-Col. BATES, D.S.O.

Wednesday, May 2nd, 8-15 p.m. "An Alternative Labour Policy." Speaker, Commander P. H EDWARDS, D.S.O. Chairman, Miss MANNING

Wednesday, May 9th, 8-15 p.m. "Experiences in Russia." Speaker, Mrs. Stan Harding. Chairman, Miss Nina Boyle.

Wednesday, May 16th, 8-15 p.m. Annual General Meeting.

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# 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.
- Active propaganda 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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