

# THE WOMAN'S LEADER

## AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

#### Geneva.

During the week-end the international stage has shifted from the Hague to Geneva, and the truculent figure of the British "Iron Chancellor" has yielded the limelight to the gracious and pacific personality of the Prime Minister. It is strangely fortunate that the new protagonist takes up his tasks uncontaminated by the prickly personal contacts of the Hague. High hopes are centred upon him, and all the world waits optimistically and attentively for the speech on British disarmament policy which, as we go to press, he has not yet made. Never before has a League Assembly met under so propitious a constellation. The poison gas of the debt problem is, as it were, safely bottled up in an agreed and permanent settlement. The evacuation of the Rhineland has begun.

#### Age of Consent in India.

A Select Committee on the question of Age of Consent under the chairmanship of Sir Moropant Joshi, has been touring India in order to ascertain the efficacy of the present law, and also to make recommendations for further legislation. It is expected that the report of the Committee will be published shortly. The present law makes 13 the minimum age of consent for girls within marital relations, and 14 the minimum age outside these relations. Among recommendations made by the Committee are the following: (1) that the age of consent within marital relations be raised to 15; (2) that outside marital relations the age of consent be raised to 18; (3) that a law be enacted fixing the minimum age of marriage for girls at 14; (4) that evasion of the law by those responsible be punished by fine, or imprisonment for a duration of 10 years before the wife reaches the age of 12, or for one year after that age; the validity of the marriage to remain unaltered; (5) that registration of births and marriages be enforced, in the latter case the age of the couple to be recorded. Other recommendations are of interest in showing the growing recognition amongst enlightened Indian opinion of the need for the co-operation of women in measures of social

reform. Women police, where available (where indeed!), are recommended to aid in the investigation of sexual offences, and women willing to serve as jurors, or as assessors, are to be empanelled in the trial of cases of rape, or of marital misbehaviour. Another point of vital importance is emphasized by the Committee, i.e. that measures be adopted to give wide publicity to the marriage and consent laws. For fuller detail we must await the report.

#### Births and Deaths.

The Registrar General's 1928 statistical review for England and Wales, published last week, records a birth-rate of 16.7, a death-rate of 11.7. These rates show respectively an advance and a decline as against the preceding year, which records a birth-rate of 16.6 and a death-rate of 12.3. The infant mortality rate touches the record low level of 65. These figures are not unfamiliar to the public as they correspond with an earlier tentative estimate. Their publication, however, serves to remind us of an approach to a stationary population, as the present excess of the birth-rate over the death-rate is connected with the existence of an age-grouping of the population which cannot long continue, and which must in the near future give place to one in which the dying ages are more frequent and the child-bearing ages less frequent than is the case at present.

#### Economic Depression and the Working Mother.

The annual report of Dr. Henry Whitehead, Medical Officer of Health for Wigan, contains some significant and provocative comments on the effects of industrial depression on the lives of working mothers. He writes as follows: "These conditions mean inability to maintain additional babies. Thus arises an increase in the practice of criminal abortion either by drugs or mechanical means. If the method adopted fails weakly children are brought into the world, and our statistics are crowded with premature births, weakness at birth, marasmus, and so forth. Moreover, in many instances babies are neglected because they become a serious burden to an already impoverished family. . . . The evil of criminal abortion is extremely difficult to cope with. There should be far greater vigilance and a service of detectives should be employed for this purpose alone; no substances which are likely to cause abortion should be allowed to be sold without a medical certificate. . . ." It is an old story, and one which very many social workers and midwives could confirm out of the archives of their personal experiences. But we gravely doubt whether a strengthened detective service and a new set of prohibitions will carry improvement very far. Violent purgatives, physical jolts, and knitting needles remain to the desperate and driven mother, when expensive drugs and illicit professional services have been duly penalized. And even if the detectives succeed they will have done no more than substitute the unwanted neglected baby for the procured abortion. We venture to suggest that the way of knowledge and personal freedom is in this case the way of constructive reform. Let the working mother have ordered access to disinterested and expert medical advice when she desires, in the light of her own personal conditions and ethical standards, to prevent further pregnancies. It will then be the business of the local Maternity and Child Welfare Committee to see that conditions are such that children are likely to be wanted, rather than the business of the local Watch Committee to see that desperate remedies are not sought by desperate people.

**'Keep fit on  
cocoa'**

**BOURNVILLE**  
SEE THE "Cadbury" ON EVERY PIECE  
OF CHOCOLATE

Write  
**Cadbury, Bournville**  
about Gift Scheme

**Malnutrition.**

A survey undertaken in Barnsley, a mining town of Yorkshire, for the purpose of discovering the extent of malnutrition and lack of clothing among children, has yielded somewhat grim results. It appears that out of 11,000 children examined, about 1,000 were found to be definitely suffering from lack of food or clothing. The school medical officer reports that the money available for food in many homes is inadequate for proper nutrition though actual starvation may not be produced. Butter and milk, he says, have been replaced by skimmed milk and margarine. "A diet composed chiefly of white bread and vegetable fats may satisfy hunger, but it is totally inadequate for maintaining health and growth." Such facts are doubtless familiar to most of our readers, nor are they relevant solely to Barnsley. It is, however, as well to recapitulate them from time to time in illustration of the general thesis that the nation is spending an insufficient portion of its corporate income on its children.

**St. Joan and the Rhineland.**

A recent incident in the occupied area of Germany vividly illustrates the shrewd verdict of Bernard Shaw's St. Joan, concerning the distortion of manners and morals which overtakes otherwise estimable persons when they find themselves in the invidious position of a foreign occupation. An English social worker, giving evidence in the trial of a Wiesbaden bandmaster for the crime of having played "Deutschland über Alles" in public, asserted that at first she stood up, thinking that the melody was a hymn (she might equally well have mistaken it for an excerpt from a Haydn quartet), but subsequently sat down, since she could not, of course, rise for the German national anthem. We do not choose to suppose that the lady in question was as silly and as ill-natured as her evidence would suggest. Had she been a delegate to the recent Women's Congress in unoccupied Berlin she would probably have behaved with courtesy and good sense. She was, rather, an unthinking victim of war mentality; and it is high time that she, and others, were removed from the infections of a war environment.

**Towards Moral Equality.**

Two very interesting annual reports have recently been published. The first is that of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, which has a very extensive record of work for its fourteenth year. The vigilance and activity of this Society are well known, and it is certainly largely due to its work that State Regulation of Vice in some form or other has not found its way into various parts of the British Empire. Specially interesting chapters in the Report are those dealing with the work of Miss Meliscent Shephard, who has been sent to Calcutta, at the request of the Calcutta Vigilance Association, for a three years' campaign against the recognized brothels in that city; with the Report of the Colonial Office Advisory Committee which inquired into the new regulations against prostitutes in Singapore and the Federated Malay States; and with the Report of the Street Offences Committee. The Report is one of steady progress towards our ideal of an equal moral standard—the subject which has been truly described as the centre and core of the opposition to the emancipation of women.

**Towards Economic Equality.**

Another fighting organization, the Open Door Council, has just issued its third Annual Report—"a record of continuous political activity . . . and steady development." The adoption by the International Labour Office at Geneva of the Convention concerning the creation or maintenance of Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery, is of particular importance in the Council's view, for it sees the grave danger of newly industrialized countries being bound by the one-sided industrial traditions of countries like Great Britain where the men in industry have through long years impressed their views on industrial legislation often to the detriment of women. This Report will be read with great interest by supporters and opponents alike, for the subject of protective legislation for women in industry is the foremost controversial question in International feminist circles. And there is nothing like controversy for keeping a good cause at boiling point.

**Lady Heath.**

Lady Heath, that most intrepid, skilful, and optimistic lady of the air, has crashed at last, from an altitude of some 60 feet, on an American factory roof. As we go to press her recovery

hangs precariously in the balance, and we are left with the urgent hope that surgical skill and a sturdy will to live may give us back the life of a fine aviator and a sturdy feminist.

**Women's Air Records.**

We cannot regard with any enthusiasm the ruling of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale to constitute a special class of "Women's Records" instead of, as at present, requiring a woman to beat the existing world record before official recognition is accorded. Fortunately women will not, on this account, be excluded from the list of world records, which would seem to be the logical outcome of such differentiation, and the new ruling is announced as a tribute to many noteworthy flights by women pilots, and to the increasingly important part taken by women in aviation. It is, however, something of a double-edged compliment; and we feel that the best tribute that can be paid to a woman pilot is to forget that she is a woman, and withdraw from her all special privileges, special handicaps, and special publicity occasioned by a sensation of surprise (shocked or admiring as the case may be) that she should be there at all.

**Morals à la Mode.**

The Italian Government has not seen fit to give women the vote, but who can say that it does not look after its women. An Italian actress has been prosecuted and fined £4 for smoking in public under the new "Rules for Women" law. Then emanating from Italy we have the "moral fashion" in dress, backed by Church and State alike and by many members of the aristocracy. The crusade against short skirts, sleeveless frocks, and silk stockings has been conducted by various associations with a fervour worthy of a better cause. More than one bishop has sent circulars to his parish priests instructing them to use their influence in favour of more respectable and dignified fashions. Judging by pictures in the Press these adjectives are eminently descriptive of the new models—full cloaks, high collars, long trains, have dignity and even a certain charm when depicted in a newspaper, but they are not compatible with the changed conditions of women's lives nor indeed with modern thought. If fashion is the outward expression of contemporary thought, we need not expect the young Italian women to drape themselves in shrouds however picturesque.

**Signora Rosselli.**

At the time of going to press we are still in the dark as to whether the Italian Government has seen fit to grant Signora Rosselli a passport to England. Our readers will remember that Signora Rosselli is the English wife of an Italian anti-Fascist professor, who suffered arrest and imprisonment on no charge other than the unspecified charge that she was the wife of a man who had defied the Government by escaping from an Italian prison. As a result of publicity given to the case through the *Daily News*, Signora Rosselli was happily released, her release being coupled with an assurance by the Italian Embassy in London that she had never been arrested. If she has, in principle, never been arrested, it may be that, in principle, she is not now being forcibly detained in Italy. In which case her father's demand for a passport on her behalf will doubtless have been granted by the time this issue reaches the hands of its readers.

**A West African Pioneer.**

West African women are rightly proud of the achievement of one of their number, Miss Agnes Savage, of Nigeria, who has qualified as a doctor of medicine in Edinburgh University at the age of 23. Her success is "twice blessed," for she vindicates with one blow the claim both for sex and race equality of opportunity.

**POLICY.**—The sole policy of THE WOMAN'S LEADER is to advocate a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women. So far as space permits, however, it will offer an impartial platform for topics not directly included in the objects of the woman's movement but of special interest to women. Articles on these subjects will always be signed, at least by initials or a pseudonym, and for the opinions expressed in them the Editor accepts no responsibility.

**THE GRAND INQUEST.**

The social student and the good citizen will find much to interest them in the annual report<sup>1</sup> of the Chief Medical Officer for 1928. Sir George Newman's reports are something more than bare statistics. The plain hard facts are presented by him as, indeed, a drama of human life. As he truly says, the scientific record of the public health should mean something quite definite and important to every member of every Local Authority in this country, to every parent, to every employer of labour, and to every good citizen. This year there is the added interest of chapters dealing from inside knowledge with the effect of the Local Government Act on the public medical services. Chapter IV, which describes this change in detail, and the last chapter which summarizes the position, deserve the very careful study of all students of local government. In the words of the Chief Medical Officer, the new Act is "a co-ordination rather than an invasion. It provides a wider sphere for the application of the science and art of medicine . . . it does not encroach upon, but provides a larger opportunity for effective medical work . . . it furnishes the local organization by which the Poor Law medical work may be reformed and woven into the warp and woof of the other medical services." This, as he points out, is the task which lies before public authorities in the coming year—a task which must be undertaken in all counties and county boroughs "with good sense and goodwill" and in this task every worker in the public or voluntary health services and every public-spirited woman citizen must join.

Perusal of the report reveals the need for any change which may tend to increase the unification and efficiency of the medical services. Though 1928 is shown to be an exceptionally healthy year, there are disquieting figures which indicate the obstinate persistence of special problems which still baffle human skill. We alluded last week to the most conspicuous of these. For several years the death-rate in childbirth has been nearly stationary—a serious reflection on the advance of medical science and social welfare. But in 1928 it was found to be the highest on record, 4.42 per 1,000 births for the whole country. The figure in many counties and boroughs is still higher than this, the highest being Anglesey, 7.39, and Blackpool, 7.25. The top figures are to be found as a rule in industrial towns,

**OPIUM AND DANGEROUS DRUGS.**

By EDITH M. PYE.

Last year at the Assembly of the League of Nations Dame Edith Lyttelton took an important part in the arrangements for the sending of a commission of inquiry into opium smoking in the Far East. This commission is only to start in September, but its report is eagerly awaited. The report of the Colonial Secretary in March, 1929, that the Opium Revenue Replacement Fund in respect of the Straits Settlements now exceeds three years' opium revenue, and that further contributions are suspended until after the next opium conference, gives hope that the use of revenue from a vice in British Colonies may soon be a thing of the past.

But the traffic in dangerous drugs, both licit and illicit, is intimately bound up with the question of opium smoking, and unless this is realized, and some control of the flood of these drugs to the Far East obtained, the only improvement in the situation may be that governments in British Colonies are no longer profiting by the sale of opium, but those who were under its influence may have fallen into still deeper degradation as addicts of morphia, heroin, or cocaine. At the same Assembly last year, when the Convention of Geneva, 1925, actually came into force, and the Permanent Central Board came into existence, much outcry was made over the discovery of an appalling amount of heroin, representing it is reported 242 million doses, which had been smuggled into China during a single year. The Secretary of the National Anti-Opium Association of China reports that in certain provinces, where cultivation of the poppy has been eradicated, the population is riddled with drugs. As China has no drug factory, these drugs must be imported, and in some places they are even being sold as a cure for opium smoking.<sup>2</sup>

The attempts to prevent smuggling have hitherto been ineffectual, and as long as the output of the drug factories remains so largely in excess of the world's needs for medical and scientific purposes, now ascertainable, there will be a surplus that has to be disposed of. As long as there is this surplus, means will be

found to bring it within reach of those unfortunate beings who have become slaves to the habit.

The setting up of the Permanent Central Board at Geneva is thought by many to give hope of control of illicit traffic, but as long as these deadly drugs are considered to belong to the sphere of legitimate trade and of competition in the world's markets with all that this implies of stimulation of demand and overproduction of supply, there can be little hope of restriction of their use to medical and scientific needs. Take, for instance, the question of the supply of cocaine which already uncontestedly far exceeds the demand for legitimate use. In the British Government's report to the Advisory Committee at Geneva,<sup>1</sup> we read that in 1927 a British firm was licensed to experiment in the manufacture of cocaine and in 1928 this firm was authorized to put it on the market.

The efforts of the British Government to put into practice the agreements of the Hague Convention have been second to none, and this act of theirs does not violate it *in the letter*, because it concerns what is called legitimate competition to provide the world with cocaine for medical and scientific purposes. But it is adding to the surplus.

The only way of really controlling supply would seem to be to remove the whole question of manufacture and sale of dangerous drugs from the sphere of profit and loss. Ultimately international control should be aimed at; in the meantime, state monopoly and control of these means of relieving acute human suffering, with its distribution at cost price (as essential corollary) should surely be possible in view of the comparatively small number of factories involved. The present chief manufacturing countries are Germany, Switzerland, Japan, Holland, France, U.S.A., and Great Britain. These countries are all capable of making such a move if public opinion were sufficiently aroused.

If all States members of the League, who have signed the conventions, would agree to deal only with governments for their supplies, the drop in the surplus production and the removal of sources of profit would make detection of illicit traffic a much easier proceeding, and there would be some hope of being able to carry out the undertaking to which these states have set their hand.

<sup>1</sup> On the State of the Public Health in England and Wales (H.M. Stationery Office, price 3s.). The report for Scotland will be dealt with in a subsequent issue.

<sup>2</sup> See report on opium smoking conditions in the Far East, by H. L. May, 1927, p. 40.

## A LIFE SENTENCE OR A DEATH SENTENCE.

By CLARA D. RACKHAM.

One of the arguments sometimes used against the abolition of the death penalty is that the only alternative to capital punishment is penal servitude for life, and that such a sentence is really worse than death. Those who argue in this way are probably influenced by horror at the thought of a life without liberty, and also by a vague impression of the conditions that exist at Dartmoor and other convict prisons. It is worth while to consider what force there is in this argument, and to ask ourselves whether it is necessary that those sentenced for life should be condemned to a fate less desirable than the gallows.

What makes life worth living? Different temperaments will return different answers. A good many would include hope, and congenial work, and human relationships as three things which are indispensable to a tolerable existence and whose presence would suffice to make life, if not pleasurable, at least preferable to death. Is it possible to conceive a form of imprisonment which would confine a prisoner to the same extent as now, which would be well ordered and not extravagant in any way, but in which these things would be the important factors?

Hope may be said to be present to-day. It is well known that a life sentence does not as a rule last for life, but the prisoner is released at the end of fifteen or twenty years. No doubt such a period looks like a life-time to the criminal entering prison, but he does know that under ordinary circumstances the doors will open at last and he will again be free.

Congenial work in which a man's faculties can be absorbed and the worker can find a means of self-expression is perhaps the thing which above all others will make time pass quickly. It will also help to make a prisoner self-supporting, and less likely to burden the rates or taxes after he leaves prison. It seems therefore, as if no trouble should be spared to train and equip each one for the work that he wants to do, and therefore can do best. It would be necessary to get free from any idea that dull or cheap or simple work is all that can be afforded for men in prison. It would be necessary to provide what instructors, materials, or machinery were required, and to deal with each prisoner as an individual who was to be called upon to make the best possible use of his faculties, and to produce all that he could in quality and quantity during his life in prison.

Such work must be paid for in money and not merely in the equivalent of money (food, shelter, and clothing) as to-day. Here we find another factor to make life worth living—the power to choose, to decide between different courses, to think and plan how resources should be laid out. Besides paying money for his share in the upkeep of the prison, saving money for use on discharge, making purchases at the prison shop, money earned might also have an important connection with human relationships; it might enable a convict to help those dependent upon him in the outside world, and so maintain his responsibility for them. Without going so far as to suggest the occasional week's holiday at home which is said to be part of some prison systems, there would surely be nothing inconsistent with the necessary confinement of penal servitude that the connection between a prisoner and his relatives should be maintained as closely as is desired by the parties concerned.

There are other human relationships besides those with relatives or friends outside. Indeed, in many cases these last may be altogether absent, and the prisoner will have to rely on his fellow creatures within the prison. Fear of contamination, fear of plots and schemes or of concerted violence operate to forbid social life among prisoners, just as the need for maintaining discipline prevents a natural relationship between warders and their wards. It is this remoteness of prisoners from one another and the attitude of officials towards them which makes the prison atmosphere and is the very antithesis of citizenship or of community life. Among long term prisoners who can each be individually known to those in authority, it ought not to be impossible to build up an organization in which the prisoners themselves would take their part, and each contribute his share to the life of the whole.

If any one protests that such a regime would be too pleasant for those guilty of crimes now punished with death, we must return to where we started, that what counts is the life-long loss of liberty. Prison must be a world of its own; courage and imagination are needed, not with the object of making it easier or pleasanter, but less wasteful, repressive, and barren, more natural, vigorous, and social.

## REVIEWS.

### ECONOMIC LIBERALISM.

Liberalism may be at the bottom of the poll in the political field, but in the economic field it is advancing by a series of practical conquests embodied as often as not in the form of compromise with conservatism to the right of it and socialism to the left of it. It is moreover reinvigorating its economic philosophy, publicly divesting itself of the austere garments of the eighteen forties, and securing a fruitful interpenetration of economic theory and practical business which the early and mid-Victorians may have dreamed of but certainly failed to achieve. Of the nature of that philosophy we learned something through the politico-economic polemics by means of which the Liberal Party sought to pave the way for a Liberal revival at the last General Election. It is implicit in the famous *Yellow Book*. Mr. Keynes has brilliantly reflected certain facets of it. But in a more dispassionate and universal form it emerges also in Professor Clay's recent book, *The Problem of Industrial Relations*,<sup>1</sup> wherein a number of interlocked problems affecting our present industrial structure are expounded by a man who combines a professorship in economics with the practical rôle of wage negotiation in two continents. Professor Clay's book is, in form, a series of isolated lectures, addresses, and articles, arranged according to the chronology of the subject matter. In fact, it achieves the coherence of a planned book, moving from pre-war industrial relations, through the recorded experience of wage negotiation and regulation during the war, to the wider questions of wage theory and the scope of effective government control, ending with the general question of distribution and the politics of *laissez faire*. It is a book which no student of economics should omit to read, for it is packed with well-digested information, all of it relevant, directly or indirectly, to the unsolved present day problem of industrial organization and control.

For the understanding of economic liberalism, however, there is much to be said for reading Professor Clay's book backwards. His last word is *A Word for "Laissez Faire."* But *laissez faire* as he advocates it amounts to freedom of competitive enterprise in a field strictly regulated by the embodiment of social standards in legislation. There must be no confusion between free enterprise and unregulated enterprise. And for the effective functioning of such free enterprise, a reasonable minimum of free and equal education is needed as a starting-point. But something more is needed—and here we move back a step with Professor Clay to the chapters on distribution and property, finding there a penetrating analysis of existing property rights and a stout plea for the extinction of cumulative inequalities of wealth by drastic use of the engine of taxation—the advanced Liberal's alternative to the Socialist panacea of nationalization. Better, he suggests, to interfere with the results of mal-distribution than to thrust inexperienced fingers into its current causes; since his earlier chapter on wage theory leads to the conclusion that "the system of standard rates and agreements built up by collective bargaining is the basis of industrial relations in this country. But for an effective collective bargain, one requires a certain equality of bargaining power—whose absence in certain cases paves the way for the successful and necessary functioning of the Trade Boards system. But if justification is needed for this faith in the free and equal collective bargain it may be sought in the earlier chapters of the book which deal in concrete terms with war-time and post-war experiences in the sphere of government wage regulation and arbitration. Professor Clay is frankly sceptical regarding its further possibilities, frankly apprehensive of its malign effects upon the self-acting economic distribution of labour resources among industries in response to the varying attraction of differential wage rates which genuinely represent the marginal productivity of labour. Even the institution of national unemployment insurance has, in this respect, conduced to a certain loss of industrial mobility; a diminution in the response of labour to the pull of divergent wage-levels. Indeed, he is led to stress mal-distribution of labour as the most important cause of post-war unemployment.

Much of what Professor Clay says in these earlier chapters may seem, to the more impatient of us, to be characterized by an excess of easy optimism. For instance, his association on p. 118 of a slight fall in unemployment with a slight rise in real wages, may here seem to indicate with apparent satisfaction

<sup>1</sup> *The Problem of Industrial Relations and Other Lectures*, by Henry Clay, M.A. (Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 12s.)

## WOMEN ARE LIKE THAT.<sup>1</sup>

Out of the depths of her merciless observation Miss Delafield tells us that women are like that—"helplessly, quiveringly vulnerable where personal relations are concerned," and goes on to demonstrate her thesis throughout seventeen short stories. We have to read on, absorbed by the terrifying competence and reminded afresh of the immense cleverness shown nowadays by so many women writers. To read short stories in bulk may be a mistake, and this group of tales does definitely show that wit and a neat algebraic formula are not enough to prove the sweeping assertion of the title. Miss Delafield would rather suppress her sense of humour than dislocate her mechanism, and she suffers from a desire, in this and in her other work, to place her characters by their manners. This boiled mutton form of snobbery is harder to bear than the assumption that women are all emotion, like the grandmother and the terrible sister in "Oil-painting, 1890," a story with more horror in the poison of its frustrations than all the spiders of Miss Havisham's wedding-cake.

Miss Delafield has an admirable equipment for evoking sinister impressions. We share at once the invalid's repulsion in "The Whole Duty of Women" to the doctor who looked, in his black glossy clothes, "sleek like a seal," with "pale astute eyes behind rimless glasses," and "white square square-tipped hands." In this story the climax is really quite unexpected and effective, less obviously prepared than in "We're All Alike at Heart," in which Mrs. Rydall is only a harmless monster—unimaginative where the author would have her wicked for muddling ideas about love and calling her house Bickenhurst. The same familiar click as the machinery slips into place is heard again in "These Things Pass," "The Indiscretion," and in "Compensation." But the mother in "Compensation" is treated gently, and her muddle-headed loyalties shrewdly enumerated: the mother who lived in "a kind of moral jigsaw that she called 'fitting-in plans'." The great aim of this exercise was to ensure that May, and Arthur and Dick, should do what they wanted to do, go where they wanted to go, and have what they wanted to have, and that Father should not be vexed about it. And, as though even so improbable an achievement as this was not sufficient test of her ingenuity, it was additionally laid down by Mrs. Awdrey's inner monitor that Father must not be actually deceived, nor must it ever be openly stated either by herself or by the children, that he was anything but kind, good-tempered, and eager to fall in with their wishes.

We cannot quite believe that Miss Delafield herself believes in the rather silly young woman with Oxford friends to whom a dentist—and a good one too, is outside the matrimonial pale. We like the girl in "History Again Repeats Itself"—and here the author does not trample on her humour to serve her wit, but "The Breaking-Point" could well have been omitted from this volume. It is just tedious, which cannot be said of any of the rest of the stories.

A. L. W.

<sup>1</sup> *Women Are Like That*. (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.)

## PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT.

### A CONFERENCE

on Constructive Schemes for Improving the Conditions of

### WOMEN IN INDIA

will be held at the

CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER

on the afternoon and evening of

MONDAY and TUESDAY, 7th and 8th OCTOBER

under the auspices of

The Women of India Survey of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.

Tickets (members of N.U.S.E.C. free; visitors 1/- per session, 2/6 full conference) may be obtained on application to the Women of India Survey, 4 Tufton Street, S.W. 1.

a rate of improvement which is, to many of those immediately concerned, of insufficient magnitude to justify confidence in the economic system which produced it. Others, again, may long, and long in vain, as far as these pages are concerned, for some indication of an admission that wages and wage levels offer no final solution of the problem of human needs. Nevertheless, the book is a valuable contribution to its subject and will be sincerely welcomed by all who are called upon to deal either in practice or in theory with the difficult problem of industrial relations.

M. D. S.

## TWO GOOD NOVELS.

Having read and remembered Mrs. Ruth Manning-Saunders' last novel: *Waste Corner*, we knew what to expect from its successor: *Hucca's Moor*.<sup>1</sup> When the curtain went up, so to speak, on its sinister Cornish household, its paralysed and bedridden miner, its driven housewife with her mad fear-ridden daughter and her haunted hunchback husband, we knew that we were in for it. Hags and goblins were riding abroad, souls twisting in agony, hard words flying, wonder and destruction in the air. Indeed, one is tempted to suspect that from this part of Cornwall there is a quick train service through time and space to Wuthering Heights. But the intrepid reader who chooses to follow the misfortunes of Mrs. Manning-Saunders' deplorable quartette will undoubtedly be well repaid for any touch of mental or even physical nausea which the quest may afford. Hell is the less hellish when one is personally conducted through its ante-chambers by a real poet, and when at the end of the visit one is introduced to a devil who has at long last entered into possession of his own soul.

Mrs. Manning-Saunders is a great mistress of words. She calls them up in fiery legions. She says come, and they come; go, and they go. We are thus tempted to forgive her for the two hours' distress which her latest novel has occasioned us.

From the hands of Mrs. Naomi Royde-Smith we obtain no more generous measure of comfort and contentment. Continuing her onward literary march from good to better, from better to better still, she presents us in *Summer Holiday*<sup>2</sup> with an age-long theme, the calf-love of a young girl for a worthless man somewhat older than herself, the first flowering of passion, with its quick sequel of seduction, separation, and final disaster. But though the theme is old enough, the setting is a piece of powerful creative work from Miss Royde-Smith's own individual hand. The provincial lower middle-class household in which the undisciplined and callow Winnie has her roots, the life of the seaside hotel, where she meets her fate with its background of pier and promenade, dust, glitter, cliff, and sea, the crude and God-forsaken vulgarity of such an existence touched suddenly with the universal fire of an adoration which for an instant attains self-forgetfulness, all these things are drawn by Miss Royde-Smith with master strokes. We may be tempted to carp at details—for instance the scarcity of petty cash which may appear to the reader somewhat uncharacteristic of the class and situation portrayed. We may even cavil at something which is not a detail: at the improbably catastrophic dénouement which lacks the inevitability of great tragedy. Though it may be replied that Winnie dies in good company with Tess and Juliet.) But all said and done, when criticism has shot its hardest bolt, *Summer Holiday* stands out as one of the best novels of the year, replete with wit, and life, and vivid apprehension of the significance of small matters and the universality of great ones.

M. D. S.

## THE SEVEN DIALS MYSTERY.<sup>3</sup>

Anyone who likes detective stories, and has not yet read *The Seven Dials Mystery*, will do well to take it away for holiday reading. It is quite in Mrs. Christie's best vein. The idea of the alarm-clocks placed in the bedroom of a sleepy-headed young man by his friends and contemporaries and failing to wake him, because he had been murdered, is a good one, and the mystery is well developed through a series of exciting incidents and a good deal of amusing dialogue. Of course some readers will think Mrs. Christie has played them a trick and be angry about it, but if they look out for the trick from the beginning it will add to their amusement.

I. B. O'M.

<sup>1</sup> *Hucca's Moor*, by Ruth Manning-Saunders. (Faber and Gwyer, 7s. 6d.)

<sup>2</sup> *Summer Holiday or Gibraltar*, by Naomi Royde-Smith. (Constable, 7s. 6d.)

<sup>3</sup> *The Seven Dials Mystery*, by Agatha Christie. (Collins, 7s. 6d. net.)

## SARK AND ITS CUSTOMS.

By F. E. MATHEWS.

The beauties of Sark are well-known—its verdant dells, its limpid sea, its magnificent souffleurs thrown 200 ft. high in spray into the air, its varied coloured caves and rocks, peopled with gulls, oyster-catchers, puffins and cormorants, its lofty cliffs covered with a profusion of flowers in uninterrupted succession, primroses in masses, pink and white campions, sea-pinks, fox-gloves, sheep's-bit, scabious, cream and pink rock-roses and its bracken, gorse and heath-covered moors.

But there is another side of Sark, which is almost of equal interest. This little island, whose greatest length is 3½ miles, is practically self-governing and one finds there feudal customs that carry one back to the 16th century. It has enjoyed woman suffrage for some-time, and the inhabitants speak with reverence of Mrs. Pankhurst and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence.

The head of the island is the Seigneur, now Madame Beaumont. No transaction of any importance can be carried through without her sanction and the payment to her of a large fee. She lives with her family in the Seigneurie, which boasts of a small bronze cannon, engraved with these words: "Don de la Reine Elizabeth au Seigneur de Serque, 1596." With it she gave the island to the Seigneur Carteret, who brought over with him forty farmers from Jersey to cultivate and populate the land. These farms were held in perpetuity rent free, and are still intact, for they may not be divided, but on a fee being paid to the Seigneur, they may be sold as a whole; and too often this is done to "foreigners" (Englishmen) who unfortunately do not know the hospitable ways of the islanders.

King George V is officially known as the Duke of Normandy—England is an appendage of the Channel Islands—until lately Guernsey, together with Sark, and Jersey had their own currency and they still have their own pennies. Sark's tithes are paid in kind. Every tenth pig, sheep, etc., belongs by law to the Seigneur, though Mme Beaumont waives this claim. However, when a farmer has harvested his corn, roots, etc., he gives notice, and the next day she sends her wagon and factor who counts the sheaves and takes the tenth. Out of this tithe she pays the benefice of the Anglican Vicar. There are other taxes paid to her, and there is a poor rate and small income tax.

The administration of the island is headed by the Seneschal whose appointment is sanctioned by the Governor of Guernsey. The Court of Chief Pleas deals with misdemeanours. There is a prison in Sark with two cells, but there is no certain record of its ever having been used, though there is a legend that a little girl was put in there for stealing a pocket handkerchief, and the women came and sat outside with their knitting to keep her company.

There are two constables in the island, chosen for two years at a time, their service being gratuitous—any able-bodied man is liable; the warrant of office is a small 6 in. staff, which he carries in his pocket as he works on his farm, for he is only on duty when there is necessity. Guernsey deals with the few cases of importance.

"La Douzaine" consists of twelve deputies chosen from the farms and among the fishermen—they have charge of home affairs. Every farm must give two days' work on the roads a year, or is fined 4s. for each day. It is interesting to observe the harmonious way in which this duty is carried out, seven or eight men were mending a road outside our hotel and there seemed perfect co-operation between them as to the division of labour, carting stone from the quarry, etc.

Sark has some curious old-world laws. No vehicle may go more than 4 miles an hour (this is not strictly adhered to), nobody may drive on Sunday, except with a doctor's certificate, no passenger may be driven over the Coupée (a narrow neck of land, 300 ft. above sea level, connecting Sark and Little Sark, just wide enough for a road, but very steep), no artist may sketch on the Coupée under penalty of paying £5. No motors are allowed on the island. A special law was passed in favour of our landlord, to allow him to bring a tractor along the road to his farm. No lady dogs may be kept in Sark, except at the Seigneurie, since in Elizabeth's reign one bit the Seigneur's daughter.

Sark boasts of a charming and spacious village institute. It was erected last autumn, through the efforts and determination of a lady resident. She obtained the interest of an English settler and her work was crowned with success largely through his generosity. It contains billiard room with full-sized table, skittle alley, ping-pong and bagatelle boards, large hall with stage and foot-lights, a lantern for lectures, two loud speakers for wireless concerts and it makes its own electric light and supplies the Church. Carnegie Trustees are giving a library. The hall is also used for dances and provides a place for village

social gatherings. The annual subscription is only 5s. This building is the result of a lady's almost single-handed effort to improve the amenities of an island that is small and isolated. Sark has now not much over 400 inhabitants and for six months in the year the mail boat comes from Guernsey only three times a week. Last May the Bishop of Winchester intended to hold a Confirmation, but the sea was too rough between Guernsey and Sark for the journey. Frequently the mail boat has to make the trial of various tiny landing places before it can get in. The islanders are Protestants, and mostly Nonconformists. The sermon and the evening services are in French. The language is a Norman patois, but a large proportion of the people know also both French and English.

Sark is an honest place—on arrival in the little harbour we were told to leave our hand luggage in an open shed till called for. Our little hotel remained unlocked night and day and our bedroom which opened on to the garden had no key. At the first horse show in the island, at which we were allowed to assist, the challenge cup and money prizes were left unattended on a small table in the middle of the field. A farmer asked us to help decorate his wagon for the show. Adolphus, his son, was without self-consciousness and was delighted to be converted into an Elizabethan yokel in festive garb, with roses round hat and knees, and rose-covered braces, crossed back and front. The horse also looked proud in his rose-covered saddle and high head gear and the wagon was filled with foxgloves and daisies. There were 18 entries and Adolphus got first prize and was taken by an army of photographers.

The population of Sark is unfortunately declining rapidly. We counted only 11 boys in school, whereas, before the War, we were told there were 50. The registrar said there had been only one birth this first half year. There is a good deal of inter-marriage, but he put the declining population down largely to the effects of the War. Forty young men were conscripted (17 lost their lives) and the island was left practically uncultivated and the farm land has never recovered. The young men who returned found there was no living for their families of six and seven children and they emigrated to Guernsey. The need for international peace is felt strongly in the island.

Women are in a minority—they work in the fields and among the animals. Sark cattle are famous and no other breed is allowed in the island. They are tethered in the fields and are most friendly, coming forward to be stroked. The milk is so rich in cream that cheese cannot be made from it. The farmers are most hospitable in allowing you to walk all over their land, as long as you respect their crops.

The island pays a retaining fee to a doctor and provides him with a house. It also boasts of a lady chemist.

Sark is a land of romance, and those who have been so fortunate as to go there once, will want to re-visit it and renew acquaintance with its delightful inhabitants as well as for the sake of its wonderful beauties.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT NOTES.

## SHEFFIELD PARK KEEPERS TO HAVE POWER OF ARREST.

In Sheffield the City Council has decided that all park keepers shall be sworn in as special constables and provided with a warrant card. This will enable them to arrest wrongdoers without sending for a policeman, but their authority is not to extend beyond the vicinity of the parks and pleasure-grounds.

## FINCHLEY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL AND THE WOMEN CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION.

For several years the Finchley Women Citizens' Association has been agitating for a public convenience for women at Church End, and their annual report stated that unless Finchley women were prepared to take a serious interest in their local government, the convenience would not be provided. Some members of the Public Health Committee took exception to the statement, and raised the matter at a subsequent Council meeting. It was stated that much time and trouble had been expended in trying to find a suitable site, and that the cost of the ground suggested in Dollis Park was so excessive that the District Valuer had objected.

## DURHAM COUNTY MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS.

In connection with its school medical service the Durham Education Committee has recommended the County Council to appoint Dr. Jessie Lingard Barrie, of Glasgow, as Assistant School Oculist at a commencing salary of £600 a year, rising by yearly increments of £25 to a maximum of £650 per annum; and also Dr. Elizabeth Bainbridge, of Durham, as Assistant School Medical Officer, at a salary of £650 a year.

## TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILDS.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE.

The vote for women having been won it seems only reasonable that the N.U.S.E.C. should turn its attention to the woman voter. In order "to obtain such reforms as will secure a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women and so enable women as citizens to make their best contribution towards the common good", it is necessary "to encourage self education, independent thinking and effective action among them on all questions concerning their citizenship." In other words the full development of the personality of the voter is as important as her education in legislative activities and local administration.

The N.U.S.E.C., by the formation of Townswomen's Guilds in England and similar organizations in Scotland, has these objects in view. Let us first consider the personality of the woman voter. Though many hundreds of women are organized socially or politically into Societies, Associations and Guilds, there are many thousands of all ages who, though they have the vote, have never realized themselves as citizens and, one might even say, as fully developed human beings. Their activities have been circumscribed by the four walls of their home and centred on home duties. They may have latent talents but they are inarticulate, they may even be geniuses but the opportunity has never been theirs to discover it. The Women's Institutes have shown the wonderful potentialities of women in the country villages, for the women in the small towns and new housing areas little has been done to enable them to develop their gifts and to express themselves in creative work, to develop those powers of mind and judgment which would enhance their value as individuals and as members of the community in which they live.

The Townswomen's Guilds give this opportunity. They open doors not in order to force people through them, but to make them aware that they are there. The roll call, for instance, helps to make people articulate, to feel that their opinion even though it may be only as to their favourite flower or some housekeeping hint, is a contribution of value. Handicrafts and handiwork develop the creative idea in work by hand of skill and wisdom; art—practical skill guided by rules—gives opportunity to inherited capability. Work for its own sake, apart from money value, by means of needlework design, basket-making, raffia work, quilting, rug-making, etc., brings a desire for cultivation and progress, a horror of superficiality, the recognition of the importance of good material and the expression of the highest as we see it.

The development of the individual must have its effect on the development of the community. To this end the drama—the natural artistic expression of the life of the community—in acting, music, dancing, costume and scene designing, plays an important part. Co-operation, organization and the linking up of various activities for the production of the drama give to all an opportunity—even the audience can be creative, and the dramatic group should include people who do not act. Community singing, dramatic diversions (such as a parade of shawls, head-dress, fancy dress), charades, play-reading, competitive mimes, provide opportunities, not only for pleasurable intercourse, but for acquiring the arts of businesslike administration and committee procedure, and the realization of the interdependence of people in whatever scheme is on foot. These qualities are all necessary if women as citizens are to make their best contribution to the common good. That this type of organization does make a strong appeal to women who are outside the big towns has been proved, not only by the splendid success of the Women's Institutes in country places, but by the popularity of the Townswomen's Guilds which have been already started. Promises of assistance from speakers and demonstrators who already know the work of the Women's Institutes, and realize the need for its extension, in a modified form, to towns, give great encouragement to the promoters of the Guilds; such co-operation with these experts will go far to ensure success.

M. B.

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## CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN INDIA.

7TH AND 8TH OCTOBER.

Some constructive schemes for improving the conditions of women in India will be discussed at a Conference, organized by the Women of India Survey of the N.U.S.E.C., which will take place at the Caxton Hall on the afternoon and evening of 7th and 8th October. The programme, together with particulars of the sessions, will be announced in full detail later.

Among the subjects to be discussed will be included Mr. F. L. Brayne's Village Uplift Scheme in the Punjab, and the Women's Institute Movement in Bengal.

Tickets for the Conference, 1s. per meeting, or 2s. 6d. for all the sessions, may be obtained from the Women of India Survey, 4 Tufton Street, S.W. 1.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## NATIONAL HEALTH.

MADAM,—Your note on Sir George Newman's report on maternal mortality only repeats his suggestion that "domestic midwifery should be improved."

Now it seems to me that all the facts we have do not point to want of skill in midwives as being the principal cause of the failure to reduce mortality in childbirth as mortality from other causes has been reduced.

There is no doubt that now a great many more women have the advantage of skilled attendance in childbirth than had 25 years ago. Wages are higher, houses are better. An immense improvement has taken place in infantile mortality. With all conditions so much improved why is it that the result is so disappointing? And if one looks at the Registrar-General's returns one sees that the curve of notifications of fever in childbirth does not follow that of the district for other infections. Hampstead, for instance, in the three months ending last June had ten notifications of puerperal fever and pyrexia against five in Bethnal Green. Among nations I believe the Italian childbirth death-rate is below ours, and ours is below that of America. I see that the German Health authorities in the information they have furnished to the League of Nations, attribute the continual high level of maternal mortality in that country to what they term "the brutal struggle against over-population."

All this points to the mortality in childbirth having some connection with artificially produced abortions. The small families of the present day suggest that these practices are more common than they were 25 years ago. They affect well-to-do districts as much or more than the poor districts. Countries like Italy which are still largely Catholic probably practise them less than do Protestant countries.

It is much to be desired that information on this subject could be collected.

MAUD SELBORNE.

Blackmore, Liss, Hants.

## MISS BONDFIELD'S BAD LUCK.

We offer hearty condolences to the Minister of Labour on the fortuitous visitation of bad luck which resulted in a broken ankle caused by a fall on the rocks of Treyarnon Bay last week. We understand that she is making good progress towards recovery, and can only hope that the painful part of her affliction is happily over and that the inconvenient part will not endure into the Parliamentary session. But a broken ankle is a dismal ending to a hard-earned holiday, and Job himself could not say otherwise.

## A PROFESSION THAT IS NOT OVERCROWDED.

It is satisfactory nowadays to hear of a profession for women that is decently paid that is not overcrowded. There is at least one form of social work for which the demand is greater than the supply—the hospital social service. In a letter to the *Morning Post* recently the chairman and secretary of the Executive Council of the Institute of Hospital Almoners state that even now the supply of qualified hospital almoners is less than the actual demand for their services and that it is confidently hoped that under the Local Government Act, 1929, their employment will be greatly extended. The Institute of Hospital Almoners works in co-operation with University Schools of Social Study, and grants a certificate after a course of training extending over two years. The place of the social worker as an essential part of the team work of physical or mental treatment is only beginning to be adequately appreciated and it is good news to hear that Local Hospital Authorities are wakening to its importance.

## COMING EVENTS.

## INDUSTRIAL WELFARE SOCIETY.

13th-17th September. Lecture Conference, Balliol College, Oxford.

## NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

11th-14th October. Scottish Summer School, Allan Water Hotel, Bridge of Allan.

25th October. Reception to Women Delegates to the League of Nations Assembly, 50 Porchester Terrace, W. 2 (by kind permission of Hon. Mrs. Franklin).

## WORLD LEAGUE FOR SEXUAL REFORM.

8th-14th September. International Congress, Wigmore Hall, W. 1. Speakers from all countries include Mr. G. B. Shaw, Dr. Aletta Jacobs, Hon. Bertrand Russell, Mrs. M. Sanger. Particulars from the Hon. Secretary, 127 Harley St., W. 1.

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**FOR SALE.**—South Africa, 35 miles from Port Elizabeth; 47 acre orange farm, rich soil, under irrigation, 500 Navel and Valencia trees all in bearing; Lucerne; small house, near railway; personal interview till 10th October.—Apply, E. G. Saner, Barclay's Bank, Circus Place, London Wall, E.C.

**SECOND-HAND CLOTHING** wanted to buy for cash; costumes, skirts, boots, underclothes, curtains, lounge suits, trousers, and children's clothing of every description; parcels sent will be valued and cash sent by return.—Mrs. Russell, 100 Raby Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. (Stamped addressed envelope for reply.)

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**GOWNS** well cut and fitted by experienced dressmaker. Terms from 21s. Ladies' own materials made up. Renovations a speciality.—Grace Mayman, 168 High Street, Notting Hill Gate. Phone: Park 2943. Appointments.

**GRACE MAYMAN** begs to state that she and her staff will be on holiday from 17th August to 10th September, when she hopes to receive the patronage of old and new clients.

**SHOES** recovered, satin, brocade, or velvet, 13s. 6d.; ladies' and gents' hats cleaned and re-blocked; new hats made to sketch; furs re-lined.—The Hat Doctor, 52 James' Street, Oxford Street, W. 1.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

**LONDON AND NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE**, 35 Marsham Street, Westminster. Secretary, Miss P. Strachey. Expert advice on what to do with your girls. Addresses to schools and societies in London and Provinces by arrangement.

**EDUCATED HOME HELPS BUREAU**, 190 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W. 1, requires and supplies educated women for all domestic work. Holiday engagements. Registration: Employers, 2s. 6d.; workers, 1s. Suiting fee: Employers, 10s. 6d.; workers, 2s. 6d. (Victoria 5940.)

**FELLOWSHIP SERVICES**, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 8th September, 7 p.m. Maude Royden, "The Voices of God: In Art."

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