

# THE WOMAN'S LEADER

## AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

#### The Optional Clause.

The signing of the Optional Clause by this country on 19th September is, of course, a momentous forward step as regard the peaceful settlement of international disputes. In addition to Great Britain, India, New Zealand, South Africa, France, Peru, and Czechoslovakia attached their signatures, the Irish Free State having already signed separately. The Australian signature was held up owing to their political crisis, and Canada expects to receive instructions any moment. The reservation made by the British countries, with the exception of the Irish Free State, applied to disputes with any other member of the British Commonwealth and to disputes in regard to which the parties to the dispute have agreed to have recourse to some other method of peaceful settlement. Moreover, proceedings in the Court are to be suspended with regard to any dispute which is being considered by the Council of the League. The British countries all signed for ten years, France only for five. So many of the great countries of the world have now signed the Optional Clause, there is little danger that the kind of international dispute which can be decided in a court of law, should now be settled other than by these means. We hope that next year's Assembly will see an equally large number of countries signing the General Act relating to the arbitration of those non-justicial disputes out of which war generally arises.

#### Disarmament on Land.

The withdrawal of Lord Cecil's resolution which he introduced before the Third Committee of the Assembly of the League of Nations, asking that one of the principles underlying disarmament should be the limitation of both personnel and material of land forces, need not involve any weakening of the present Government's stand on the question of trained reserves, as the resolution brought forward by the Greek delegate in its place without specifically mentioning this aspect will enable the question to be raised. In view of the undoubted fact that any attempt at disarmament is a farce if it leaves conscript armies with trained reserves unlimited as at present, it is hoped that the British point of view, on which the last Government gave way only very reluctantly in the hope of bringing about some kind of agreement, will be sedulously upheld on the Committee. We do not want to run the risk of this country's showing it can make a stand where comparatively small sums of money are concerned, but giving way when it comes to a question of principle in which it has itself no direct interest.

#### Child Marriage.

Amid considerable excitement, and with the Government putting its weight on the side of reform, Mr. Sarda's Child Marriage Bill was passed in the Indian Legislative Assembly on Monday last, by the solid majority of 67 to 14 votes. The Bill is applicable to all religious communities, and establishes a punishment of imprisonment for a month or a fine of £100 for all persons who celebrate the marriage of girls below 14 and boys below 18 years of age. Opposition, on the ground of interference with social and religious customs essential to the sanctity of Indian family life, naturally made itself felt during the debate; but the vociferous cheers which greeted the passage of the Bill revealed overwhelming support for this very considerable and tardy instalment of social reform.

#### Mui Tsai.

A Hong-Kong correspondent writing in *The Times* of 20th September, provides a significant reminder of the position, as it stands to-day, of the girl-slavery, or *mui tsai* system which continues to flourish under the British flag. He is not blind to the difficulties of the situation, as it faces the British administrator on the spot: the traditional fear of interfering with native social customs, the legal difficulty of differentiating the *mui tsai* from the adopted daughter, the continued migration into Hong-Kong of Chinese refugees and their slaves, and the solid administrative problem of dealing with thousands of unwanted and unattached girls in the event of the system ceasing to operate. But on the other hand he is not blind to the wretched inefficacy of the present policy of declaring the *mui tsai* legally free with the offer of Government protection. In fact, she continues in her slavery, and the horror of its conditions remains buried in the unavoidable privacy of native home-life. It is clear that a positive and militant policy is needed, one which will, in the face of expense, active and passive resistance, administrative difficulty, and misrepresentation, take the field against this intolerable evil, seek it out and stamp it out. Upon the women voters of Great Britain lies the responsibility for seeing that such a policy is pushed forward with vigour and dispatch.

#### Ins and Outs.

The Board of Education has just issued a circular announcing a proposed increase in the grant for those Local Authorities who make satisfactory arrangements with regard to the education of children up to 15 when the raising of the school age comes into force on 31st April. In addition to calling their attention to the need for working out a four years' curriculum for children over 11, it also draws attention to the expected need for an increase in staff. This is to be met by encouraging entrants to training colleges, by retaining teachers of pensionable age up to the age of 65, and, once again, by the retention, or if necessary the recall, of married women teachers. It has always been thus. The demand for married women teachers arises when the supply of teachers is short and vanishes when it has grown. The hollowness of all arguments—save the economic one—directed against their employment, could not be more clearly exposed. Many a married teacher has had the experience of being recalled and dismissed from her employment according to the state of the labour market. We hope, however, that those Local Authorities who at present do not permit the employment of married women teachers, but carry out this suggestion of the Board, will not be allowed even to re-impose the ban.

#### New Widows' Pensions Bill.

The terms of the Widows' Pensions Bill have now been published and are not so extensive as had been rumoured last week, as the Bill is to be only a first instalment. As we expected, it is to provide for the inclusion under the Act of pre-war widows with

children until the youngest child reaches the age of 16, instead of 14½ as at present, and for the giving of pensions to wives over 65 whose husbands were over 70 at the time the Old Age Pensions part of the Act came into force. In addition, all it will do is to provide that a widow will receive the full pension to which she is entitled in addition to any workman's compensation she may be drawing; at present the amount of compensation is being deducted.

#### Jurywomen.

When a jury was being sworn in at the Old Bailey on Monday last, it was noticed that the defending counsel of a man charged with offences against a girl, was challenging one after another, all the women called to serve on the jury. On being asked whether his objection was based on sex, he admitted that it was. "I object to the practice," said the Recorder, "but I cannot stop it." We object to the practice too. It is clearly one which vitiates the real value of women's jury service, since it occurs most frequently in the very type of case where the point of view of a woman is required to redress the existing standards of our judicial system. In our view it will not, and cannot be stopped without a statutory requirement that any juror whose presence is challenged shall be replaced by a member of his or her own sex. We hope that the Bill drafted by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship which incorporates this and other points will be brought before Parliament this session.

#### Drunkenness.

The licensing statistics for England and Wales during 1928 were issued last week by the Home Office (Cmd. 3393). They show, in comparison with those for 1927, a very marked decrease in the number of convictions for drunkenness. Indeed the low level for 1928 of 55,642 was only reached during the abnormal war years of 1917 and 1918 when supplies of alcoholic liquor to the home population were drastically limited. Looking below this total we find a not unexpected but none the less significant sex distribution. The 55,642 cases were composed of 46,798 men and 8,844 women. This wide divergence may be partly accounted for by the fact that women on the whole find it less easy to put their hands on the petty cash necessary for the expensive process of getting drunk. But for all that we think that they deserve a meed of credit. The discontinuous and unregulated work of the home, diversified by petty worries and anxieties faced in comparative isolation, and often under a barrage of physical distress arising from the multitudinous sickness complications of pregnancy (or avoidance of pregnancy) incurred under intolerable conditions, must constitute a fertile soil for the temptation to seek the immediate and certain physical consolation of alcohol.

#### Space, Sun, and Beauty—in the Country.

The movement towards the preservation of open spaces both in town and country, and towards bringing some of the amenities of country life into our cities, is growing in force day by day. The agitation in the Press to prevent the beautiful hill by Friday Street from being sold to the builders is a case in point. Feeling is rising that the preservation of places of particular beauty, especially near our great cities, should not be left to the generosity of a few individuals but should rather be a concern of the State. As regards not only the use of land for building, but also its desecration in other ways, such for instance as by the erection of electricity poles in some of the most beautiful valleys and hills of the Lake District—this also is a very much a national affair. We commend to all our readers interested in this question the reports recently issued by the National Trust (7 Buckingham Palace Mansions, S.W. 1) and by the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (17 Great Marlborough Street, W. 1). Much of what has been done and what can be done is set out here, and bodies of citizens can learn many ways in which useful pressure can be brought to bear on the State and on Local Authorities.

#### —In Town.

It is welcome reading that the Government hopes to introduce a Bill dealing with the preservation of London Squares, so that these should be permanently preserved as open spaces. We hope in addition that these squares at present so little used by the inhabitants of the houses which surround them will be thrown open and become really public gardens. The report just published of the London and Home Counties Traffic Committee

emphasized the need for playgrounds for children every half mile, and showed the increasing number of accidents to children—especially between the ages of four and nine due to "playing in the roadway". How better could the squares be used than in providing such playgrounds? The interest which has been aroused by Mr. Lansbury's proposals to make facilities for sun bathing and to improve those for swimming—especially for women in the London parks—is another happy sign of the times. Why those of us who are interested in sex equality have not long ago insisted on facilities for women's bathing in the Serpentine, it is difficult to say!

#### Unemployment and Young People.

The report on the work of the Advisory Committees for Juvenile Employment has just been issued, and shows that on the whole unemployment among juveniles is essentially a "black spot" problem, and that apart from the distressed areas the 70,000 juveniles—the average number during the year for any one day—are in themselves a changing body, including those who defer taking up employment in the hope of obtaining some special situation, and those who are changing from job to job. Reference was made last week to the work of the juvenile employment centres; this new report gives also an account of the scheme for the transfer of young people from the distressed mining areas to selected situations in more prosperous districts. Many Local Authorities have compiled useful surveys of local trades and professions, and the London Advisory Council for Juvenile Employment has published an excellent "Guide to Employment for London Boys and Girls". The Committee reports greater readiness among girl applicants to enter domestic service; no doubt the better conditions of employment are beginning to have their effect. The Advisory Committees are also giving increasing help to children leaving secondary and other post-primary schools.

#### Education by Gramophone.

An interesting educational experiment is being made by the International Educational Society of 91 Petty France, Westminster, whose moving spirit is Sir Martin Conway. The Society exists in order to provide gramophone records of lectures on a multitude of subjects by men and women each of whom is distinguished in his or her own province of learning. These records should prove of immense value both to individuals and organizations who are not themselves able to get in touch with the world's finest thinkers. There are many for whose needs the valuable work being undertaken by the British Broadcasting Corporation cannot cater; but there are few for whom the International Educational Society will not be able to open many windows. The lectures themselves consist of two double-sided records, lasting approximately twenty minutes, and costing 4s. 6d. a record. Membership of the Society carries with it a reduction in the price of records, and is only one guinea.

#### Why Women do not Stammer.

With perfect confidence, we venture the assertion that had women, instead of men, been found to be the stammering sex, a very simple and universally accepted cause would have been found for this curious sex-distinction. It would have been explained as a defect of nervous co-ordination, one of many aspects of the weakness of women. But unfortunately it is men who stammer. Indeed, a correspondent to *The Times* of 16th September is forced to admit that men and women stammer in the proportion of 16:1. Some explanation is therefore needed that is not derogatory to the dignity of the male sex, and the correspondent in question, quoting from an unnamed German professor, is prepared to furnish one. Men, it appears, stammer more than women because they are more civilized—less near to the savage than women. Stammering being caused by "the interference of the conscious mind with what should be a sub-conscious thought process, so the growth of conscious processes, stimulated by civilization, being more advanced in the male, tends to an increase in stammering propensities." All this is very interesting, and we feel that the professor in question could, if he gave himself to the business, furnish an equally convincing explanation of why men are not only the stammering sex, but also, if comparative statistics are to be trusted, the suicidal sex, the short-lived sex, the drunken sex, and the criminal sex. Can it really be that civilization is such a d-d-d-dangerous thing?

### A WORLD OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY.

In the course of the next fortnight, up and down the country the winter's work in adult education will be taking shape. And in the industrial centres of population, under the ægis of the extra-mural departments of the universities, both old and new, groups of working-class students will be settling down to their new session, two solid hours of class work a week from October to Easter time, under Board of Education rules, qualifying for a Board of Education grant. It may be safely surmised that well over 10,000 students will be thus employed, and that the vast bulk of them will be serious and constant members of whatever classes they may join.

But one point which cannot fail to strike any person who comes into contact with this modern venture in adult education, is the fact that whereas at its outset it was overwhelmingly a masculine venture, year by year the infusion of women students in the classes increases. And to this increase, so far as we can generalize from limited experience, no kind of resistance is opposed. It is a rare and dubious statement to make about any sphere in which women are engaged as fellow workers with men. In the ancient universities, social taboos against free and equal co-operation with women, obstinately outlive the written rules and regulations which excluded them from academic responsibilities and privileges. In the newer universities, whose staffs are so largely recruited from Oxford and Cambridge, the old habits of thought are only too apt to find expression in an anti-feminist bias in the matter of appointments and promotion. The same may be said of the Civil Service, where the masculine traditions of public school and university are reinforced by official inequalities of salary and status. In elementary and secondary school teaching, certain economic factors have produced acute symptoms of sex rivalry. In the medical profession the recent campaign against the admission of women to the London hospitals tells its own tale. The legal profession is riddled with sex-vested interest. The Church stands four-square in its denial of equal opportunity for service. Moving from the professional to the wage-earning classes, we are confronted with the multitudinous disabilities of women wage-earners in the trade union world, rooted in the supposed clash of economic interest, or in mere shadowy prejudice as the case may be. Meanwhile, the observer whose eyes penetrate to the intimacies of the wage-earner's home, is only too apt to find there a male autocrat who is disposed to regard with a measure of satisfaction the economic dominance which our present wage-system gives him, and to stand very firmly for the full measure of his marital rights. In one sphere after another, as we have from time to time had occasion to remind our readers, barriers both tangible and intangible still oppose themselves to the free and equal development of women as human beings.

### GENEVA: MATTERS ECONOMIC AND LEGAL.

By KATHLEEN E. INNES.

Two lines of development have been of particular interest through this year's Assembly—the economic and the legal.

The importance which is coming to be attached to the removal of the more direct causes of war is revealed by the large section of this year's Report which is devoted to economic problems. Since the setting up of the Economic Committee, and the Economic Consultative Committee, investigations have been pursued, and much valuable information collected. The unanimity of the conclusions reached is remarkable. The tendency to heighten tariffs is seen everywhere as a hindrance to the development of peaceful intercourse and commercial recovery, and the recommendations are uniformly that steps should be taken to bring about movements in the opposite direction. This year the subject of chief interest is the state of the coal industry and the recommendations in the report state that protective measures have only aggravated the depression in the industry as a whole. The last of the proposals put forward is "that the existing artificial restrictions to trade in coal and artificial stimuli to production should be abolished." The British Government is naturally particularly anxious for progress over this problem, and Mr. W. Graham devoted a considerable portion of his speech in the Assembly to it, and proposed that the second (technical) Committee should be asked to draft an appropriate resolution, for later submission to the Assembly, with a view to an early conference, which shall deal particularly with conditions of employment in the industry.

A draft resolution refers the matter to the I.L.O. and asks

Yet in the world of adult education we appear to reach a state in which there is, in very truth, "neither male nor female." Both the woman tutor and the woman student is taken for granted with a measure of unaffected friendliness which seems like a blessed foretaste of the feminist's new Jerusalem. Only, perhaps, in the form of occasional repercussions from the outside world, does the woman adult student or tutor receive a sharp reminder of her sex. The woman tutor whose experiences inspire these reflections (a veteran of the suffrage movement with a preternaturally keen nose for the familiar odour of sex prejudice) confesses that in the world of adult education she forgets that she is a feminist since the occasion to remember it has never, in the ten years or so of her personal experience, arisen.

One is tempted, at this point, to ask the question, why has this peculiar state of grace developed in this particular quarter? Two reasons, one negative, the other positive, present themselves in reply. In the first place, the movement in question is a comparatively new movement, and as such it is unburdened with exclusive and inequitable sex traditions. The second and positive reason has, however, in our opinion, far more to do with the matter. It is concerned with the quality of the men who compose the tutorial classes themselves. They are, each in his own way, exceptional men. They are the very cream of the skilled labour and clerical classes. They are not, like the middle-class university undergraduate or professional man, normal specimens of their class, pursuing the normal and necessary course of their economic lives. They are, in fact, a small minority of a very much larger class, who care so much for the things of the mind and the spirit that they are prepared to make a very considerable sacrifice of leisure for the pursuit, under difficult circumstances, of those elusive ingredients of the good life. We have, on occasions, finding ourselves in a gathering of such adult students and sharing its diversions or deliberations as the case may be, become conscious of the extraordinarily fine quality of the human material which habitually composes them. They are the salt of the earth. In such soil then, one might logically expect to find the roots of that equity which recognizes "neither male nor female." The best people are instinctively good feminists.

It is, we presume, the dream of adult educationalists that in the future their movement may comprise not exceptional, but the normal working men and women. We share their hope—adding this further hope of our own, that when this comes to pass, the movement may succeed in infusing its larger world with the attitude towards women students and teachers which characterizes it to-day.

for its inclusion in the 1930 Agenda of the I.L.O. Conference, and the convening of a technical conference meanwhile.

While many delegates see difficulties in any attempt by the League to bring about general tariff reduction, where conditions differ so widely, Dr. Breitscheid summed up the situation in a phrase: "As long as tariffs are used for bargaining, there can be no economic health in Europe."

But, as more than one delegate has noted, the disappointing thing about the unanimous conclusions to which the experts come with regard to trade barriers, is that hardly any action results. And here lies the interest as previously mentioned, of M. Briand's proposal for some sort of economic federation of Europe. If the scheme, as very generally adumbrated, has seemed rather to embarrass delegations whose Governments had not considered it, there has been general agreement at Geneva that "economic warfare" must be attacked, and that its abolition is a vital factor in the ending of war. M. Briand is to submit to the different Governments, a memorandum defining in more detail what he has in mind. As always, difficulties have come first into the minds of delegates, but the real absurdity of twenty-seven different customs areas in Europe is clearly beginning to be felt. While some critics hold the suggestions to be so premature that they are likely to disappear now from League programmes, others remember that already in the League's short history proposals greeted at first as quite impracticable and consigned to oblivion, have revived in useful form and led to practical results. It is likely that this may in the end

be the case with Mr. Briand's idealistic plan. The Assembly is fully alive to the danger of any European scheme seeming to be directed against any continent or grouping outside Europe, and whatever is developed, this must be safeguarded. Meanwhile, Mr. Graham's proposal for a "two years tariff holiday, during which countries should agree not to increase, or to impose new, tariffs pending the calling of a conference to bring about some general agreement in 1931" was put forward as supplementary to Mr. Briand's, or to some other later scheme.

On the side of legal developments, this year's Assembly can record definite progress and definite promise. Apart from signatures of the Optional Clause—which have been almost tumbling over each other since Great Britain led the way—plans are now well advanced for the first Conference, in 1930, on the Codification of International Law—and the path has been cleared for the adhesion of the United States to the Permanent Court of International Justice. The U.S.A. will, when its adherence has been ratified by the Senate, take part in Council and Assembly in the election of the judges, and in any amendment to the statute, while a special provision insures that no advisory opinion affecting its interests can be asked for without its consent.

The growing importance of the work of the Permanent Court is signalled by the provision agreed to at this Assembly for its permanent session, and by the fresh arrangements which have proved necessary for the terms of service for the judges. A realization of how the acceptance of law is increasing, is made more vivid when it is remembered that this need is partly due to the number of Arbitration Treaties and Agreements which are being concluded, and which, in case of any differences over their interpretation, etc., accept reference to the Court among their conditions. Reference to the Court is provided for in one section of the General Act, of the 1928 Assembly, and France and Czecho-Slovakia have announced its coming acceptance by their governments. The British Government thinks some revision of its clauses is necessary, but hopes to accept it in a revised form next year.

Another scheme of a different nature, but having in common with legal proposals, the desire to make war less likely, is that put forward for granting financial assistance to states victims of aggression. Early in the Assembly, as we have seen, Mr. Henderson announced that Great Britain would pledge its support to this scheme; but, as noted, he made a very important reservation when he added at once that we should only be bound thus to assist states which had already carried out measures of disarmament in accordance with the agreement at the Disarmament Conference, to which we look forward next year. When we remember further, that the loan, if made, will be fully guaranteed, and that the decision as to what state has been a victim of aggression, can only be taken by the Council of the League by unanimous vote—and that on the Council we are permanently represented—it is difficult to understand the critics who saw in this step anything dangerous to the British Empire! In any case, no final conclusions as to the exact form in which the scheme will be accepted are now to be arrived at before the 1930 Assembly.

Space forbids reference to such interesting humanitarian activities of the League as the steady work which is going on in child welfare and health, and the endeavours to control opium manufacture and traffic. The developments that have been dwelt on have all of them the most important bearing on the question of security. The state of mind which is "security" is, it has again and again been insisted, a first condition for disarmament. Surely it is not too much to say, that it should be appreciably nearer on their account, and that real measures of disarmament ought to follow.

The difficulty of getting agreement has been emphasized again this week, in the reception given to Lord Cecil's speech, raising again the question of the inclusion of trained reserves in calculating military resources. It is far better that this question has been raised now, if it was going to be raised, than that it should come up at a later stage and wreck the hopes of a conference. There is time now for reflection and for the framing of proposals to meet the different points of view.

If the tenth Assembly, by its positive progress towards establishing a sense of security, and by its boldness in facing the difficulties that exist, brings the day of real measures of disarmament appreciably nearer, that will in itself prove its main achievement.

## SLAVERY.

By C. NINA BOYLE.

### PART III.

In India, where the Hindu child-marriage slavery does not prevail, marriage by purchase is well established. As in Africa, the last thing to be considered is the consent of the girl, neither is there any machinery which she can put in motion to protect her person. Whether she be infant or grown up, once the contract is signed by her owners and guardians it is binding.

In Sind there is a heavy shortage of women owing to the appalling maternal mortality and neglect of girl infants at birth. A brisk trade in kidnapping women for sale has sprung up. The girls kidnapped are often already married; but so dreadful is the position of a woman in the greater part of that country, none dare raise the question of a woman's identity to the man who has control of her; and when purchased, her chance of escape is not one in a million. A protest was recently made in a local publication—not that women should be sold, and without their consent, but that men should be so anxious to get a wife who would bear them a son that they could not take pains to satisfy themselves of the *bona fides* of those who offered wives for sale!

The purchase of small girls for service as public prostitutes in the temples is open and unashamed, and is apparently perfectly legal. A woman spends her time and money in repurchasing these children or in forestalling the priests when they have selected a victim. The point to be noted is that whether this woman or the priests purchase the child the possession of her after purchase is undisputed. Yet quite recently a dinner was given by the British India Society to Sir Harcourt Butler and Sir William Harris, Lord Reading presiding, to congratulate them on having put down the last remnants of slavery in India.

In China the sale of little girls is so common as to escape remark. The system which prevails in Hong-Kong, and which has not yet been put down in spite of legislation, was imported by Chinese colonists and only exists among Chinese residents. The price of girl children in China can be quoted as a sign of economic conditions. If the child slave does not die of ill-usage the owner recoups himself by selling her for a wife when—or before—the term of service runs out, and buys another child. "Adoption" is another form of this slavery. The purchase is for a term of years, but adoption is for life.

In most of our island possessions where a native population is aboriginal the same status will be found. In Ceylon an agitation is just being started against the farming out of children for labour. It is probable that boys are thus farmed; it would be interesting to know whether the dens of ill-fame, where children of 8 and 10 were kept in bare cells for the use of men, have been suppressed. Ceylon and Java both had an evil reputation for girl children.

In Mauritius, child marriage is illegal but is the rule. It is carried on under the noses of the police and no one interferes. If children are born before the parents reach the legal age of marriage they are all registered, later on, as having been born at the legal moment—which must make the records of the island extremely valuable.

Even in the exceptional cases where married women achieve a position of power and importance, their condition is the same when it comes to the question of freedom in marriage; and I ask my fellow-women, emancipated now and enfranchised, what they are going to do about it? What is going to be their contribution to history in this century? Are they going to do for their sex what men did for theirs—set them free, and make the Slavery Convention a reality? Or are they going to do as so many would have them do—renounce crusading, proceed along the lines of least resistance, and abandon the slaves to that long, dreary process of "educating public opinion," in the course of which that education itself must make the ignominy more bitter, the slavery more revolting, to its victims?

Let me assert here, that the predominance in the counsels and the machinery of the League of Nations of men who look on women as possessions or as breeding cattle is one of the gravest menaces to the women who have achieved freedom; and in these days, when so many matters are being removed from the national to the international arena, it is a menace that we must face and face boldly.

## THE AWAKENING OF EGYPTIAN WOMANHOOD.<sup>1</sup>

By MAY ZIADÉ.

The awakening of modern Egyptian womanhood falls into three distinct periods: the first period covers the whole of the nineteenth century; the second begins with the twentieth century and closes in 1919; the third period, which is still going on, opens with the Nationalist movement.

### I.

The history of modern Egypt begins with the reign of Mehemet Ali,<sup>2</sup> and it was during his reign that there appeared the first signs of a Feminist awakening. In 1831 this great ruler ordered his Minister, Habib Effendi, to buy ten young Sudanese girl slaves. These young women were chosen with the aid of the French doctor Clot Bey, and they were then trained for midwifery. At the same time Mehemet Ali arranged that two eunuchs of his harem should study medicine and surgery. The present School of Nursing and Midwifery owes its existence to these two events.

In 1840, the Egyptian poetess, Aishah Ismat Taimur, was born. Her father, contrary to all customs of the day, gave his daughter a good education, which indeed entitles him to be enrolled among the forerunners of the Women's Movement in Egypt. Aishah wrote poems in Arabic, Turkish and Persian; she also published a novel dealing with social and moral questions, and wrote numerous essays and articles dealing with such problems as the education of girls, the reform of the marriage laws, the questions of divorce and of the family, long before Qasim Amin took up these questions. All through her life she upheld the ideal of the equality of the sexes, and she continued to write until her death in 1902.

Meanwhile, the lives of the Muslim women followed their usual course: they were veiled, ignorant, and secluded in the harem, never dreaming that there could be any other life for women, a life of light and liberty. However, the progressive movement went forward steadily. European missions, especially those of a religious character, began to enter the country and they founded schools both for boys and for girls. The first European schools for girls were those started by the Catholic Sisters of the Order of the Good Shepherd, at Shubra near Cairo (1844); the American Protestant School at Ezbekieh, in the centre of Cairo, was founded in 1856, and the third pioneer school was that of the Italian Franciscan Sisters in 1859. From that time forward the number of European schools increased from year to year, until in 1873 the first Egyptian School for Girls was founded by the Princess Ceshmet Afet, the third wife of the Khedive Ismail Pasha.<sup>3</sup> After this, many other schools of this kind were founded, so that during the lifetime of Aishah (i.e. from 1840 to 1902) about one thousand schools for both sexes were founded by Government, municipal, private and European authorities.

During the reign of the Khedive Ismail the intellectual movement was very active amongst Egyptian men. Many well-educated men were trained in the schools of their own country; several also went abroad and studied at foreign universities. At that time many modern scientific books were published as well as several translations from foreign languages. Among the most intelligent of the men of those days was the Muslim reformer Sayyid Gemal ad-Din al-Afghani, who spoke with fiery eloquence of renaissance, of independence, and of liberty. As they listened to him the most broad-minded among his male hearers associated woman with these great ideas of national emancipation.

All through this period, as well as in the days which were yet to come, the Feminist cause was generously supported by many princesses and ladies of the aristocracy.

### II.

The second period began during the last decade of the nineteenth century; it owed its inception to the work of one courageous and just man—a man with a compassionate heart and a clear social vision—the judge, Qasim Amin, a disciple of Gemal ad-Din al-Afghani, and a friend of Sa'd Zaghlul Pasha. Between 1899 and 1902 Qasim Amin published two books on

<sup>1</sup> Abridged translation of an article by Madame Ziadé in the *Oriente Moderno*, for May, 1929. Madame May Ziadé is well known throughout the Near East for her writings on literary and social questions. For the past fifteen years Madame Ziadé has lived at Cairo. In 1929 the Government of the Lebanon decorated her with the "Médaille du Mérite Libanais" (the only time a woman has received this honour).  
<sup>2</sup> 1769-1849.      <sup>3</sup> 1830-95, a grandson of Mehemet Ali.

the emancipation of women, in which he demanded the reform of the laws relating to marriage, polygamy and divorce, and summoned his compatriots to provide the women of the land with a good education and to set them free for the welfare of the nation and the race. He insisted on the abolition of the veil; without this he held that all talk about the freedom of woman would be a mere farce. Several factors contributed to urge Qasim Amin to issue this appeal which, when it was issued, had the effect of an earthquake throughout the Islamic world.

The theory of Qasim Amin immediately divided public opinion into two camps: the camp of the *sufuriyyun* (champions of the uncovered face), and the camp of the conservatives.

The first wife of Husein Rushdi Pasha,<sup>1</sup> who was a French-woman, and who wrote under the name of *Niya Salima* (Pure Intention), published two books about the harem in Egypt and the questions of polygamy and repudiation, which supported Qasim Amin's theories.

Aishah, the writer and poetess, died in 1902, and her mantle fell upon a girl named Malak Hifni Nassef, who was at that time a student. A little later she became well-known under the name of *Bahithat al-Badiyah* (student from the desert). When she had passed her final examinations in 1903 she gave herself to the work of education. In 1907 Bahithat married the chief of the Bedouin tribe, er-Rimah (in the Fayyum), and began her career as a writer and reformer.

In 1905 another event helped to open the way for Egyptian women to study in Europe. Mohammed Maghrabi Pasha, then Secretary-General to the Ministry of Education, sent his niece to a school in London; this aroused the indignation of the conservatives: "Fancy sending a Muslim girl, alone, into a foreign land, and to a school kept by unbelievers!" When the girl returned to Cairo she was appointed Assistant Principal of the normal school for girls at Bulaq; she was the first Egyptian woman to occupy this post, which had hitherto been held only by Europeans.

In 1907 a new journal made its appearance in Cairo; it was called *al-Garidah*, and it was the organ of the party "*al-Ummah*" (the Nation). Its political editor was Ahmed Lutfi Bey es-Sayyid: Egyptian thinker, liberal writer, and the friend of Qasim Amin, who was then the Minister of Education. The *al-Garidah* became an open forum for all the new ideas on politics, literature, art and social reform. All the younger intellectuals, the followers of Ahmed Lutfi Bey, who are to-day the well-known leaders of the renaissance movement, were his collaborators.

*Bahithat al-Badiyah* was among the contributors to this paper, and her articles were eagerly read and discussed. In 1911 she took part in the Islamic Congress at Heliopolis, and laid before it her moderate and sane proposals for reform.

Alongside of this effort to arouse public opinion to the sense of the need for reform, women were initiating all kinds of practical social service. In 1909 Lady Cromer founded a dispensary for sick children and poor mothers; shortly afterwards her example was followed by several Egyptian ladies of the aristocracy; their society was the first philanthropic association founded by Muslim women. The women of the Copt community also soon became active, establishing schools, caring for the poor and the orphan, and founding a fine large hospital. The Christian women of Syrian and Lebanese origin also worked hard, founding schools and philanthropic activities, striving to arouse public opinion by their writings, and assisting Qasim Amin in his mission as the "liberator of womanhood."

The Egyptian University which was founded in 1908 by the present King of Egypt, then Prince Fuad, opened its doors also to women, and established for their benefit special courses in Arabic and in French. Several other societies for mutual education and preparation for citizenship were initiated during this period, but all these efforts came to an abrupt end with the War. For the women of Egypt the War years were years of silence and of waiting.

(To be continued.)

<sup>1</sup> Several times a Minister in the Egyptian Government. He died in 1928.

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## PSEUDO-PSYCHOLOGY.

Miss Rosamond Langbridge, having acquired the elements of Freudian psychology, has applied herself to the task of reinterpreting in the light of it, the life, work, and personality of Charlotte Brontë.<sup>1</sup> For this task she is, however, singularly ill-equipped. In the first place, though abundant and accessible material lies ready to hand, she has failed to master accurately the bare facts of Charlotte's life. Her book is full of mistakes. In the second place she writes very poor English, in illustration of which we may quote such a phrase as: "Far more than this type of woman will be the death of other people, will she cause her own decay." In the third place she lacks the historical background which would enable her to distinguish the peculiarities of Charlotte from the common forms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—a very necessary preliminary to any accurate interpretation of character. In the fourth place she has no conception of the nature of evidence. She is content to build a portentous theory of childish terrorism, complex, and repression, upon an imaginative enlargement of certain apocryphal incidents dubiously chronicled by Mr. Gaskell, and subsequently challenged by Mr. Clement Shorter. At the same time she wholly ignores the considerable body of fascinating relevant material presented by the published records of Charlotte's own childish poems and fantasies, which would, given a modicum of human understanding, have led her to very different conclusions regarding the atmosphere of the Brontë nursery. In the fifth place she is unfortunately devoid of a quality which we may, somewhat inadequately, term "reverence." Like a more eminent contemporary biographer she has set out, in Ruskin's phrase, "to diminish the honour of those to whom the assent of many generations has assigned a throne." But she has never seriously asked herself why that throne was assigned, and possibly if she had, no answer would have been forthcoming; for so many aspects of the Brontë story appear to be beyond her powers of apprehension, even as ultra-violet rays to the human eye. The vivid intensity of imaginative life lived out in the quiet parlour of Haworth Parsonage, the transcendental white-hot integrity of the three sisters, and the miracle of their flowering genius, do not appear to stir her pulses or inflame her imagination. Their books, from a literary point of view, do not seem to interest her. No acute or sublime sense of pity deflects the smirking gusto of her search for repressed or distorted sexuality. One feels, after reading her book, much as one might feel after listening to a Freudian analysis (and a poor one at that) of Isolde's *Liebsted* by a man who had no music in his soul, or to an exposition of St. Mark's Gospel by a convinced believer in the Marxian theory of historic materialism.

With such disqualifications of understanding and technique it is not surprising that Miss Langbridge produces for our diversion a Charlotte Brontë widely dissimilar to the figure transmitted by the affectionate hands of her painstaking, common-sense contemporary, Mrs. Gaskell: a repressed, soured, and jealous Victorian spinster, "her spirit broken by humiliations," her physical nature warped by disappointed sex ambition, a victim from childhood of paternal oppression, reinforced by the spiritual tyranny of "a hideous religion," furtively yet self-consciously covetous of a married man's admiration, "her whole hope pinned on securing an intellectual or a distinguished husband." This is "the real Charlotte" which Miss Langbridge opposes to the "clergyman's daughter, the parish visitor—whom Mrs. Gaskell draws." But in what work has Mrs. Gaskell drawn Charlotte on these lines? In none with which we are acquainted. Certainly not in the classical biography which Miss Langbridge has read with such meagre attention.

These may seem at first sight hard judgments of a published work, and lest they should seem unduly hard we will submit to the judgment of our readers two passages quoted bodily and without comment, before delivering a final verdict:—The first concludes an analysis of Charlotte's attitude to M. Héger: "Women are grown-up children, and what they want to be there is. To women in love this rule applies with almost grotesque results, and I can fancy it would not be hard for Miss Edith Sitwell to make a really funny thing of Charlotte's love affair." The second is an account of Charlotte's wedding: "At the end of June Charlotte was presented with that symbol of superiority over all other states of womanhood, the wedding-ring, and was married to her Arthur in a white muslin gown—for is it not the secret longing and determination of every woman to look young enough to be married in white!—and a white bonnet trimmed

<sup>1</sup> *Charlotte Brontë, a Psychological Study*, by Rosamond Langbridge. (W. Heinemann, Ltd. 8s. 6d.)

with green leaves. Whether the choice of raiment was fitting or inappropriate, with regard to Charlotte's age, we do not know; but at least the Haworth people, true to the invincible dogma that all brides look beautiful, declared that 'she looked like a snowdrop' in her wedding dress. . . ."

We have ourselves sometimes been tempted to cherish regrets concerning the publication in 1913 of the Héger letters and later of certain early poems of Charlotte's which were found among her papers. There seemed to be a certain indecency in exposing to the general gaze such secret passages of her inner life. Those doubts were eventually set at rest by the enrichment of human sympathy, the new sense of tender intimacy, which the sharing of such experiences brought to those who had already found in the poems and novels, but above all in the extraordinarily self-expressive letters of Charlotte Brontë, a kind of personal friendship transcending time and space. Compared with that, the danger of a little occasional crude comment from persons having neither eyes to see nor ears to hear did not appear to matter very much. And indeed on reconsideration we are convinced that it does not.

M. D. S.

## THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

By BERTHA MASON.

## ARTICLE II.

## POWERS AND DUTIES OF BOROUGH COUNCILS.

Our article of the 13th September, the first of a series of four which we hope may find place between now and 1st November in THE WOMAN'S LEADER, was concerned (1) with the new work which will devolve upon County Boroughs as well as upon County Councils, owing to the transference to them of the duties now performed by Board of Guardians, and (2) with the need for an increased number of women members on these councils.

In this, the second article of the series, we propose to call attention to the work shared alike by County Boroughs and non-County Boroughs, which especially affects the lives, the health conditions, and the homes of the people.

Before dealing with these specific subjects, may we remind our readers of one point with which they may be already familiar, i.e. the difference between the councils of *county boroughs and non-county boroughs*.

The *County Borough Council* is the most complete local government authority in existence, in that it is independent of the *County Council*, and at the same time possesses all the powers of a *Municipal Council*.

The *non-county borough council* like the urban district council, shares its authority with the *County Council*.

The *Work of Borough Councils*.—These local authorities are responsible amongst other things, for *Housing*, public health and sanitation, education, maternal and infant welfare, food control, maintenance of law and order, facilities for healthy and legitimate recreation, and finance. They have also to deal with problems of acute distress among the inhabitants of their boroughs and the provision of temporary work for the unemployed.

It is not possible in the limited space at our disposal to dwell at length on every point mentioned in the above summary. We propose, therefore, to call attention to three or four departments of work which are concerned very closely with the home conditions of the community, viz. housing, public health, maternity and child welfare.

*Housing*.—The question of housing is one of the most urgent problems which Borough Councils have to face to-day. Its importance cannot be over-estimated. "The most complete schemes of infant welfare, maternity work, and school medical work, and the most efficient of hospital services," says the Medical Officer of Smethwick in his last annual report, "will avail but little in the case of those who live in overcrowded, insanitary houses, and who must perforce be compelled in some measure at least to neglect the advice as to healthy living which they receive, but which their home conditions render impossible to carry out."

It will be readily admitted that the health and happiness and morality of the community depend enormously on the condition of the home and its immediate surroundings. As the Medical Officer well points out, "no insurance system, no service of health can ever take the place of well-built, well-ventilated,

(Continued in column two, page 259.)

## NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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## WOMEN IN INDIA.

CONFERENCE 7TH AND 8TH OCTOBER—CAXTON HALL.

Wide interest is being aroused by the Conference to discuss the extension of the women's education and health services in India, and other constructive schemes of social reform, which is being organized by the Women of India Survey of the N.U.S.E.C. The Conference is to be held at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on 7th and 8th October, and Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., will be in the chair. The sessions will be as follows:—

MONDAY, 7TH OCTOBER.

3 to 4.30 p.m. Women's Institute Movement. Speaker, Mrs. Sen.  
4.30 p.m. Tea.  
4.45 to 6 p.m. Scheme for Training Social Workers. Speaker, Mrs. Bruce Richmond, London Committee of Bengal Social Service League.  
8 to 10 p.m. Village Uplift. Speakers, Captain J. Ingram, Organizing Secretary of the Gurgaon Experiment, and Miss E. Wilson.

TUESDAY, 8TH OCTOBER.

3 to 4 p.m. Extension of the Women's Health Services. Speaker, Dr. Kathleen Vaughan.  
4 to 4.30 p.m. Child Marriage. Speaker, Mrs. Underhill (Starr).  
4.30 p.m. Tea.  
4.45 to 6 p.m. Extension of Women's Education. Speaker, Mr. J. Richey, C.I.E., former Educational Commissioner with the Government of India.

Tickets, price 2s. 6d. full Conference, or 1s. per session (free to members of N.U.S.E.C.), may be obtained on application to the Women of India Survey, 4 Tufton Street, S.W. 1.

## SCOTTISH AUTUMN WEEK-END SCHOOL.

BRIDGE OF ALLAN—11TH-14TH OCTOBER.

May we again call the attention of Societies and members to the Autumn Week-end School which is being organized by the Glasgow S.E.C. and W.C.A. for the Scottish Federation of Societies affiliated to the N.U.S.E.C. The school (the full programme of which was given in THE WOMAN'S LEADER of 20th September) is to be held from Friday, 11th October (midday), to Monday morning, 14th October, at the Allan Water Hotel, Bridge of Allan. The subject of the school is to be "Problems of Population". Fees are £2 5s., single lecture 1s. Further information may be obtained from the Secretary, 172 Bath Street, Glasgow.

## IMPORTANT—CHANGE OF TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS.

Societies and members are requested to note that the National Union is no longer subscribing for the telegraphic address "Voiceless, London," and that all telegrams should in future be addressed "Victoria 6188, London."

## NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

## MOULSCOMBE TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

The first horticultural show held on the estate was organized by the Moulscombe Townswomen's Guild on 17th September, when Lady Chichester, President of the Guild, opened an exhibition of flowers and vegetables grown in the members' gardens. In addition to the horticultural exhibits there was a separate section for wicker stools made by the members. The opening was followed by a demonstration of dyeing by Mrs. Rowland.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS.

MADAM,—I have read with great interest Miss Bertha Mason's article on Local Government News in your issue of 13th September; being away from home it only reached me a few days ago. I am deeply convinced it ought to be strongly stressed everywhere that we should pay great

attention this year to the November Elections to the Councils. We have far too long been apathetic over these elections, and let anyone who chooses to come forward have a seat. We do not yet fully know what the new duties imposed upon the Councils are, and it behoves us if we care for public welfare to be exceedingly careful that enlightened people get upon them. The provisions of the new Local Government Bill are extremely complicated, it was very evident at the time of bringing them forward in the House of Commons, Mr. Neville Chamberlain himself did not know what would be their outcome. Luckily we now have an accomplished woman advocate in the House, Miss Susan Lawrence, and we saw how she pulled him up many times in his floundering over statements which were so confusing, that as *Punch* remarked, "only Susan and Neville knew what was going on". We down below must wait to see how new rules turn out in action, and in the meantime take every care the right people are put up to work the rules. So far it is quite evident that without re-constitution many of the present Councils are quite unfit to execute the extra work put upon them. I have long watched Local Councils and have seen how unsatisfactory is their composition. Men go upon them because they enjoy their names being somewhat prominent in their communities, and feel it a rise in life; above all builders and relatives of builders get on, purposely to grind their own axes—a local builder one sees on an Education Committee will get the repairing of all the local schools. In places where land is changing hands for building purposes, as is happening now all round London, it is important to have early information. A small tradesman will become a rich man through selling sites for houses. Small houses would not have been built on damp and derelict land had Councilors been careful to be as they should be, guardians of public welfare. And while stating the above I feel most strongly that more women should be urged to become Councilors—a woman if she does such work at all probably does it because she means to do it well and thoroughly, and not for any advantage to herself. And a single woman can if she chooses give time to the work. Council cottages that I know of would never have been built to distress the housewives that have to work in them had some woman been there to consult the mothers as to convenience and economy. I would like to say more but space forbids.

Harrow.

ELIZABETH COBB.

## NATIONAL HEALTH.

MADAM,—In all the discussions on maternal mortality, there is one factor which is never mentioned, and yet is probably the true reason why the rate remains undiminished.

Maternal mortality tends to be higher among primipara than among multipara. Owing to the steady fall of the birth-rate the proportion of the former has been increasing for many years, and is sufficient in itself to account for the undiminished maternal mortality rate. Another factor which supports this theory is that the rate is practically the same in all ranks of society.

If this is the case, it would seem that maternal mortality has reached its minimum unless causes can be discovered by research. Most deaths appear to be unforeseen accidents (the proportion from puerperal sepsis is, I believe, not large), and the causes must therefore be much deeper than can be reached by pre-natal care. The suggestion that all maternal deaths should be subjected to post-mortem investigation seems to offer a more fruitful field, than does pre-natal care, for the discovery of causes.

E. S. DANIELS,  
Late Health Visitor, Edmonton.

139 Whittington Road, N. 22.

## THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. (Continued from page 258.)

and sanitary houses." A great responsibility rests upon Borough Councils in connection with the housing problem. Their powers are not limited simply to the provision of new houses. The reduction of overcrowding, the reconditioning of old and defective houses, and the clearing of small insanitary areas fall within their scope. Much good work has been carried out in many local boroughs in regard to the better housing of the community, but in other places the provision of healthier and more convenient dwellings, and the reduction of over-crowding have been slow. Many people are still compelled to live in dwellings which are dilapidated, damp, insanitary, and unfit for habitation, with the result that they suffer in health. Better housing, including provision for more fresh air and sunlight, would do much to reduce the disease and debility which is prevalent in our midst. It would do still more to increase the vitality and general tone of the community, the lack of which is often the cause of ill-health.

The urgent need of the moment is, more houses for the working people at reasonable rents. It is estimated that if this need is to be met 575,000 houses must be built within the next two years. We realize the difficulties of the housing problem. We are fully alive to the need also for economy to-day. On the other hand, it is sounder economy, surely, to spend money on the provision of decent houses with rents which working people can afford to pay, rather than on luxury improvements, and in repairing the damage to health caused by bad housing.

Schemes for the erection of large dancing halls, golf courses, and so-forth, highly desirable in themselves if the community can afford the cost, might be well postponed until the community is satisfactorily housed.

(To be continued.)

## COMING EVENTS.

## B.B.C.

*Monday, 30th September.* 10.45-11 a.m., "Common Sense in Household Work: How I Planned my Kitchen," Miss Sydney Bushell.

*Wednesday, 2nd October.* 10.45-11 a.m., "A Woman's Commentary," Mrs. Oliver Strachey.

## BRITISH COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE.

*1st October.* 1 p.m., Luncheon, 17 Buckingham Street, Strand. Speaker: Mrs. Tucker (Bermuda Woman Suffrage Society), "Franchise in Bermuda."

*2nd October.* 3 p.m., Reception to Dr. R. Jull, Australian woman delegate to the League Assembly.

## MORLEY COLLEGE FOR WORKING MEN AND WOMEN.

*4th October.* 8 p.m., 61 Westminster Bridge Road, S.E. Professor Ramsey Muir, "The Industrial Outlook." Public Lecture.

## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN.

*14th-18th October.* Annual Meeting and Conference, Albert Hall, Manchester.

## NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

*7th-8th October.* Caxton Hall, S.W.1. Conference on Women in India, under the auspices of the Women of India Survey. Tickets and particulars from 4 Tufton Street, S.W.1.

*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).

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

*7th October.* 6 p.m., St. Patrick's Clubroom, Soho Square. Miss Susan Musson, "Recent Legislation affecting Illegitimate Children." Chair: Miss FitzGerald.

## WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

*17th October.* 4.30 p.m., Minerva Club, Brunswick Square, W.C. Miss Jenner, "Development of the Woman's Movement in South Africa."

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

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**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.)

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