

WOMEN'S SERVICE
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THE

Catholic Citizen

Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society), 55 Berners Street, London, W. 1.

Vol. XIX, No. 5.

15th MAY, 1933.

Price Twopence.

Daughter of the ancient Eve,
We know the gifts ye gave and give ;
Who knows the gifts which *you* shall give,
Daughter of the Newer Eve ?

—Francis Thompson.

Fight the Good Fight

BY VERA LAUGHTON MATHEWS, M.B.E.

The great fight for the Emancipation of women in this country has long been crowned with success, and the memory of injustice and suffering has been lost in the more vivid memory of enthusiasm and joy in working for a noble cause. It was very thrilling therefore to all those women whose countries have recognised their right to citizenship, to find themselves once more in the middle of a real Suffrage campaign. This was what befell the delegates to the Conference of the International Alliance for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship which was held at Marseilles in March last.

France, with Switzerland and Bulgaria, retains the distinction in Europe of still refusing its women any share in national voting rights, in spite of a Suffrage campaign extending over many decades and a magnificently organised movement throughout the country.

Things so often work out for the best in ways that cannot be foreseen, and possibly those countries where the women have had really to fight for their enfranchisement are just those who will most benefit from all the lessons which are learnt in a long struggle for freedom. Probably the Frenchwomen will look back on these years of endeavour as we English Suffragists look back on our campaign—as a period of education for life, the value of which cannot be overstated.

One thing is certain, and that is that at the present moment the French Suffragists are

getting gloriously impatient. There are times when patience is no longer a virtue and becomes almost a vice, and such a time has arrived now in France. The Frenchwomen were particularly interested in hearing details of the famous Suffrage campaign in England, and were never tired of asking information from the British delegates, several of whom had taken an active part in the militant movement in this country.

Madame Vérone went so far as to cry aloud on the public platform, "If we are afraid of prison, we shall never have the Vote," while Madame Brunschweig in a speech called on her audience to imitate the determination of the English in concentrating on the one question of the vote as the instrument by which all other reforms may be won. Madame Vérone and Madame Brunschweig are the Presidents of the two big Suffrage Societies in France which are affiliated to the International Alliance, and naturally their utterances carry great weight.

The question particularly under discussion among French suffragists at the moment is Tax Resistance. A large group is in favour of women, who have no say in the spending, refusing to pay income tax; others feel that this time of national stress is not the right moment for embarrassing the Government, and no general policy has yet been decided on.

A Suffrage Bill has already passed the Chamber of Deputies three times in France,

but has been thrown out by the Senate, each time with a decreased majority.

The public interest in the question of votes for women was well demonstrated at the huge Suffrage meetings which we attended—at Montpellier, Nimes and Avignon before the Conference proper at Marseilles, then at Marseilles itself and afterwards at Toulon and Nice. In each case the Opera House or the largest available hall had been taken for the meeting, and was crowded to the doors; in some cases there was a crowd outside who had been unable to gain admittance. A large proportion of every audience was composed of men.

In addition to these big Suffrage meetings, there was a "banquet" and an official reception by the Mayor and Municipality in each of these towns, and also a reception at every small town or village that we visited during our days of sight-seeing—generally a reception by the Mayor and Councillors as well as by the local Suffrage group. There were speeches in plenty, there was the "vin du pays" which we drank to the success of the Suffrage movement, there were flowers and flowers and flowers—bouquets and buttonholes and armfuls. At the little village of Orange near Avignon we were taken to see the Roman amphitheatre, parts of which date from 200 B.C. At Vence, which we visited from Nice there was a particularly delightful reception when there was a guard of honour of little girls dressed in the costume of Old Provence and laden with the inevitable baskets of flowers. At the little village of Sospel, nestling in the heart of the valley near Nice, there was a memorable Suffrage meeting round the wash tank in the village street, when the busy women ceased for a moment from their work and listened to what the Suffrage delegates had to say to them.

The Conference proper at Marseilles, held to plan the future work of the International Alliance, occupied five days, under the presidency of Mrs. Corbett Ashby, who had flown from Geneva where she was official British delegate to the Disarmament Conference. At Marseilles there were delegates from nearly every country in Europe as well as from Uruguay, Australia, India, Turkey and Egypt. It was very interesting to notice how the Oriental delegates took every opportunity of pointing out to the French people that they who, until a few years ago, had been hidden behind the Mohammedan veil, now enjoyed full political rights, while the French women, the

leaders of fashion, were still denied citizenship.

On the opening day of the Conference there was an official reception at the Town Hall. With flags decorating the streets "Honneur aux Féministes Internationales," and massed bands playing, we were received by the Mayor and Town Councillors and listened to experiences of Woman Suffrage in action in five continents. During the afternoon a deputation was received from the working women of the town of Marseilles—old fisherwomen, sellers of sweets, vegetables, and tobacco, all carrying bouquets and dressed in old-time costume, lace bonnets, shawls and quilted petticoats which had belonged to their great-grandmothers—a lovely and unforgettable picture.

After tea we were able to go on to the balcony and look over the beautiful view of the Old Port, for the Mairie stands right on the quayside. On the other side of the Port, backing on to that peaceful scene, are the backs of grey houses, sordid, menacing—the *maisons tolérées* which make of the fair city of Marseilles one of the plague spots of the world.

For it is not only in regard to Woman Suffrage that France lags behind. It still holds to the abominable system of State Regulation of Vice, and at the great public meeting on the Traffic in Women, the public of Marseilles learnt from expert speakers how these two questions walk hand in hand—and that as long as the system of tolerated brothels exists so long will the bodies of young girls be regarded as articles of commerce.

The work of the International Alliance falls under several different Commissions. During the Marseilles Conference it was decided, on grounds of economy, to drop two of these separate Commissions—Women Police and the Unmarried Mother and her Child—and fuse the work in that of other Commissions. The remaining Commissions are for Equal Political and Civic Rights, Equal Moral Standard, Like Conditions of Work and Peace. Receiving the Reports of these Commissions and drafting the resolutions to be sent to the League of Nations and to the Auxiliary Societies of the Alliance formed the chief work of the Conference.

The most living impression which delegates took home to their own countries was not of any particular piece of work, not of any specially beautiful scene, but a renewed sense of the unity of the feminist movement throughout the world, a renewed confidence in all that our cause holds for the future of humanity—a renewal of faith, hope and love.

Notes and Comments.

We offer our affectionate congratulations to our Liverpool and District Branch, which attained its majority on May 6th. The Branch held its inaugural meeting on May 6th, 1912, at the Hardman Hall, Miss FitzSimons of Manchester presiding. The speakers were the Revd. T. J. Walsh and Miss Abadam. Father Walsh was the first priest to speak from our platform, and on this occasion he apologised for the clergy, who had not realised, he said, all that the woman's movement stood for. Miss Abadam's eloquence was a help to the new Branch, as it was to Headquarters, and she never failed on big occasions to speak for us.

* * * *

We note that the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform has decided to consult certain representative persons from India, among them is one woman only, the Begum Shah Nawaz, but it is reported that evidence will be taken from other women. We trust that the Women's Indian Association and other organised bodies of women in India will be consulted.

* * * *

Miss Monica Whately has been adopted as the prospective Labour Candidate for the Clapham Division of Wandsworth.

Miss Whately recently toured India to investigate conditions under the "Ordinances."

* * * *

As soon as it was known that the Worcester Chamber of Commerce had sent a resolution to other Chambers of Commerce stating that the unemployment problem cannot be solved so long as husband and wife are both "allowed to earn," all feminist societies, including St. Joan's S.P.A., rose in protest.

The Worcester Chamber of Commerce, in forwarding their resolution, asked all other Branches of the British Association of Chambers of Commerce to support the resolution at the Annual Meeting of the Association on April 29th.

Letters were sent in to the Secretaries of the British Chambers of Commerce protesting against the proposed injustice, and pointing out that the only sound policy is to employ such persons as are best fitted to do the job which has to be done.

We understand that the Worcester resolution was dropped without discussion.

St. Joan's S.P.A., with other feminist societies, has frequently complained of the light sentences passed on men for sexual offences against women and young children. We were therefore pleased to read in the "Times" the report of the Recorder's charge to the Grand Jury, on the occasion of the opening of the Central Criminal Court, in which he spoke of certain anomalies in punishment.

In the old days, he said, it was property that mattered, and that had been to some extent perpetuated. For stealing a person might be sent to penal servitude for five years, for stealing in a dwelling-house for 14 years, and for perjury for seven years. But if a man detained a woman in a disorderly house against her will, or committed an indecent assault on a child over 13 years of age, or committed an act of gross indecency with a member of his own sex, the most he could get was two years. That was a most anomalous and indefensible state of things that one day might receive the attention of the Legislature.

We trust that these words coming from so high an authority may hasten a change of law.

* * * *

We are glad to note that the Treasury has appointed Miss H. Martindale, O.B.E., to be Director of Women Establishments H. M. Treasury, in succession to the late Dame Maude Laurence.

ST. JOAN'S S.P.A.

We are delighted to report that St. Joan's S.P.A. will have the honour of entertaining the Rev. Père Sertillanges, O.P., of the Institut Catholique, Paris, at a dinner at Pinolis', [Wardour Street] on Wednesday, May 24th, at 7-30.

Père Sertillanges, a distinguished Thomist, is a firm supporter of the Woman's Movement, as shown by his book, "Féminisme et Christianisme." He has kindly consented to give an informal talk, after dinner, on his views on this subject of Feminism and Christianity.

Members and friends should apply early for tickets to Miss Barry, 55 Berners Street, W.1. Tickets are at the moderate price of 3/6.

We remind our readers that this event provides a splendid opportunity of interesting the clergy in our movement, and we hope that many will bring a priest guest with them.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":

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

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

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Traffic in Women and Children in the East

The success in 1927 of the first Travelling Commission, which made a special investigation into the traffic in women and children on behalf of the League of Nations, led many to hope that the Council of the League would extend the enquiry into other countries than those visited at that time, being the American Continent, Europe, the Near East, and certain countries on the shores of the Mediterranean. In October 1930 another Travelling Commission set out from Marseilles on behalf of the League to continue the investigation in the Far East. As in the first Enquiry the funds for the extension of the Enquiry were provided by the Bureau of Social Hygiene, New York, all honour to them.

The Commission returned home on March 16th, 1932, after visiting many centres in Asia, China, India, Persia, and Japan, etc. Their Report is now issued at the price of 16s., which, unfortunately, may deter many from buying it. Yet for the success of the undertaking the support of public opinion is essential. Here our friends of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene have come to the rescue by issuing a full summary of the Report at the price of 1s., which may be obtained from them at Livingstone House, Broadway, S.W.1.

We are aware that many well meaning people justify licensed prostitution, but we are convinced that if they fully realised what the evil system means, and its close connection with the traffic in women and children, they would find their position untenable. In relation to sexual vice it is impossible to believe that the establishment of centres of corruption and disease is calculated to prevent a "greater

evil." For this reason, if no other, every abolitionist should strive to make the Report known.

An Editorial in the current number of the "Shield" deplors the little notice which this second Report has aroused, and recalls how the First Report "startled the whole civilised world." This must be remedied, and the best way is to make the A.M.S.H. Summary widely known.

A Commission of this nature have to proceed warily lest national susceptibilities be offended, and the Enquiry therefore was to be limited to the international aspect of the question. At the same time where the Commission found certain national conditions prevailing which might contribute to the development of international traffic they were authorized to ask permission of the authorities to enquire more closely into such conditions.

This Report shows once again how far the women and girl inmates of licensed brothels are completely at the mercy of the proprietors. Always in debt, even when laws are passed to help them they know nothing of them, or are so brow-beaten that they dare not take the advantage offered. The tale is everywhere the same. Such persons as believe that licensed prostitution and tolerated brothels can be justified should remember that they are responsible for bolstering up the worst form of slavery.

As "The Slave Market News," April, states: "The significant and awful fact that is forced upon one by reading the lines, and between the lines, of this stupendous volume (the Report) is that slavery of women and girls is looked

Mahommedan Women

The April number of "La Française" contains three articles concerning Mahommedan women: "La Liberation des Femmes Musulmanes," by Madame Malaterre Sellier, the report on the position of women in Turkey given by Madame Senika Rauf, Turkish delegate to the Marseilles Conference, and the report by the Egyptian delegate, Madame Charoui Pacha. In these three articles we read how swiftly these women are progressing considering how short a time it is since their seclusion and subjection was universal.

The Feminist Congress of Constantine held last year showed that in North Africa, Morocco, Algeria and Tunis a movement is afoot for the interpretation of the Koran in the most favourable sense for the moral, social and political education of women.

Turkey has realised that to carry weight in world affairs a country must give its women equal rights with its men. In changing their constitution from the autocratic to the democratic, the Turks have given women their rights with the one big exception of the Parliamentary vote, which, however, the Government has now promised.

Turkish women may enter for all branches of University training. Every career is open to them and they may be journalists, doctors, engineers, State officials, lawyers, magistrates, and women have the municipal vote and sit on the Municipal Council. Equal pay is universal.

In Palestine and Syria, though the women are still in many ways materially restricted and still wear the traditional veil, they are allowed equality in education and are convinced that the rest will soon follow.

In Egypt it is chiefly on the educational side that the women have made progress. Schools and faculties are attended by women on an equal footing with men. During the ten years since the foundation of "L'Union Féministe Egyptienne," of which Madame Charoui Pacha is President, the veil has been abolished, the minimum age of marriage has been fixed at sixteen, and laws are now in preparation for the abolition of "maisons tolérées" and for the repression of Traffic in Women. Egyptian women have equality of pay with men in the public services.

C. S.

upon as being of another order to slavery of men. The god of lust reigns and rules in dark habitations, and helpless women and children are bartered in multitudes to satisfy the sensuality of men."

The unfortunate Russian women refugees left destitute, form almost the entire source of supply of Western prostitutes in the international commercial centres of China. That fact gives the lie to those comfortable persons who deny that poverty has much connection with prostitution.

But the chief value of this second investigation lies in the fact that like the first it lays the blame for this international slave traffic upon the system of licensed prostitution; tolerated houses are the port of call and the destination of the traffic.

The civilised world now condemns the corrupt system, and in so doing condemns those obstinate countries who still adhere to it.

L. DE ALBERTI.

The members of the Commission were: Mr. Bascomb Johnson, America, Chairman; Dr. Alma Sundquist, Sweden, and Mr. Karol Pindor, Poland. Mr. W. von Schmieden, of the League Secretariat, was the secretary.

"Apostolatus Maris" (March), gives an encouraging report of the Women's Branch of the work. Progress has been made during the first year in making contacts with seafaring women, and circulating the news that help is available. It is incumbent on maritime communities, says "Apostolatus Maris," which derive their wealth from the sea, to provide for women seafarers, no less than for men, safe accommodation, a friendly welcome, and refreshment of mind and soul. The Association Catholique Internationale des Oeuvres de la Jenne Fille has taken up the work nationally and internationally.

Mrs. Laughton Mathews's Sea Ranger Company, S.R.S. Golden Hind, who have helped at various festivities of our Alliance, are giving a Dramatic Entertainment at 3 p.m. and at 8 p.m. on Saturday, May 27th, at the Millicent Fawcett Hall, 46 Tufton Street, S.W.1. Tickets 2s. 6d. and 1s. from 57 Carlton Hill, N.W. 8.

International Notes

The white women of South Africa have not long been enfranchised, but already a woman has been returned unopposed to Parliament. She is Mrs. Reitz, wife of the Minister of Lands. We offer our heartfelt congratulations to the women of South Africa.

* * * *

Chile. A Government Commission has been considering the revision of the Municipal Constitution. Among the suggested reforms it is proposed to give the municipal vote to women, with eligibility to be *regidores*. These proposals passed the House of Deputies by a large majority, and it is expected that the Senate will approve.

The National Committee for Women's Rights takes the Senate's consent for granted, and the municipal vote as a step only to future triumphs.

* * * *

Belgium. From "Le Féminisme Chrétien" we learn that the newly promulgated Belgian Law on Nationality, provides:

1. That Belgian women who have lost their nationality on marriage to a foreigner, or by their husbands acquiring foreign nationality, may recover their Belgian nationality by declaration, after three years from the date of the new law.

This advantage is not conceded to women who are Belgian by marriage only, or who have become French under the Franco-Belgian Convention of September 12th, 1928, concerning the nationality of married women, except in the latter case where the marriage has been dissolved.

2. A foreign woman whose husband is already a naturalised Belgian may acquire Belgian nationality by declaring, within two years of the date of the new law, that she desires to do so.

These clauses are temporary.

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Isle of Man. Our congratulations go to Mrs. Shimmin, who has been returned unopposed for Peel in the House of Keys, and is the first woman to sit in the Manx Parliament.

* * * *

U.S.A. The great news we have been expecting has now reached us, Mrs. Bryan Owen has been appointed by President Roosevelt to be Minister for the U.S.A. to the Court of

Denmark. It is reported that her appointment has given great satisfaction.

Another appointment which will give all feminists pleasure is that of Mrs. N. Taylor Ross, appointed by President Roosevelt to be Director of the Mint. We offer our congratulations to these distinguished women, and also to the President, who does not fear to use talents at his disposal, irrespective of the sex of their possessors.

* * * *

We cull from a speech of Mrs. Roosevelt this delightful example of a "Presidential We" quoted by the New York "World Telegram": "From my life in Washington I know how difficult it is to keep in contact with public opinion in the country once a man gets there. That is where I believe I can help, since my husband's mail is so tremendous he cannot possibly look at all of it. I think that my correspondence is the avenue through which WE can keep in touch with the public and that it will give US a real picture of the life of the country; so I hope that people will write to me when I get to Washington."

* * * *

Barcelona. "La Sembradora," which we are glad to receive, is a monthly journal of Associations of Young Catholic girls, preparing to do battle with evil, and to save their country—another form of Catholic Action and a new apostolate.

A. A. B.

THE MARSEILLES CONFERENCE

On Monday, May 1st, a meeting was held at St. Patrick's Club, Soho, under the auspices of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, when Mrs. Laughton Mathews gave an account of the conference of the International Alliance for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship held at Marseilles recently, at which she was our representative.

Mrs. V. M. Crawford, from the chair, after expressing her pleasure at presiding once again at a meeting of the Alliance, spoke of the great success which Mrs. Mathews had met with in France. The fact that she was a Catholic, a married woman, mother of three small children, and a one-time militant suffragist, appealed to our French colleagues. An excellent interview

with her had been published in "La Française," Paris.

Mrs. Mathews gave a delightful speech detailing her experiences in the different towns visited; the work of the Conference; and the great Suffrage Meeting at Marseilles, at which she spoke as delegate from Great Britain.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH

Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Stewart Mason, 33 Grosvenor Road, Birkenhead.

We held our Annual Party at the Blue Coat Chambers on Monday, February 7th, and realised a profit of £2 10s. We offer our hearty thanks to all who contributed to its success, and especially to Mr. Baines, our M.C., to Miss Johnstone and Miss M. Parnell who looked after the refreshments, and to Miss Bowden, who was responsible for the decoration of the room.

On March 20th, Miss Nancy Stuart Parnell gave us a most interesting address on "Slavery in the Modern World." A vote of thanks was proposed by Mrs. A. Stewart Mason and seconded by Miss Bowen.

We hope to celebrate the 21st birthday of the Liverpool Branch on Monday, May 29th, when we propose to have a supper at 30 Blue Coat Chambers, Liverpool, followed by a social evening, at which some of our members will give us a short sketch. Mrs. Laughton Mathews will speak, and Miss Barry and Miss Parnell hope to be present. The tickets, which include both supper and social, are 1s. 6d. each, and may be obtained from the Secretary.

TREASURER'S NOTE

Members who will read elsewhere in this issue of the CATHOLIC CITIZEN of the visit of our Chairman to the Marseilles Congress as our delegate, will realise the vital importance of this piece of work, and we are now appealing for financial help to cover the expenses, which were kept as low as possible. Any donations for this object will be most gratefully received.

The Alliance is now the possessor of a market barrow, at which old clothes and other articles are sold twice a week. This so far has proved a great success, but it is essential that a constant supply of goods must be kept up if this success is to continue. Any second-hand articles for sale will be welcomed and should be sent to the office, 55 Berners Street.

P. M. BRANDT.

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