

WOMEN'S SERVICE
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THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

The Age of Marriage.

The Indian News Service states that during the last few weeks three more States have promulgated laws raising the age of legal marriage to 12, and of real marriage to 14 or 16. In Kota the age at which boys may marry is also raised to 16, that of girls being 12, while girls under 18 may not marry men over 35, nor girls under 20 men over 45. Arrangements have been made whereby prosecution can follow even if such marriages have been performed outside the State, which gives ground for hope that it is intended to enforce the law. There is no need to say how welcome are these acts to English women, nor how we hope that they will encourage other States to follow the same example, nor how they add to our determination that our own legal age of marriage shall be raised. At present, as our readers know, it is 12 for girls and 16 for boys. The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship intends to ask the Home Secretary in the autumn to alter this 12 to 16. The reform commands an almost universal agreement; it is opposed only, so far as we know, by a certain section of the clergy, who feel that it might prevent marriage between a wronged child and her seducer. It is hard to believe, however, that such marriages are thought desirable by any large number of people, and against it we must put the fact that many seductions are only accomplished by means of a promise of marriage. In any case the point could always be met by allowing special cases to be dealt with by special licence.

Crimes Against Life and Crimes Against Property.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is able to report "encouraging signs" in its annual report for 1926-7. The number of cases inquired into and the number of children affected have decreased as compared with the previous year. The prosecutions too show a decline from 692 to 527. In the matter of canal boats, concerning which the Society is continuously vigilant, it is reported that many parents now have their children at home or with relatives, in order that they may attend school. One of the best signs, according to the report, is the fact that fewer children are requiring help, and in spite of all that remains to be done, the world is becoming a better place for children. Incidentally there has been a decrease in the number of cases due to the drunkenness of parents, which in the early years of the Society constituted its chief pre-occupation. Meanwhile, however, the

activities of this indefatigable organization continue to meet the dead weight of our current standard of social values. Last week a correspondent from Rochester called attention in *The Times* to the sentence meted out to a man who had been found guilty of beating a two-year-old child until it fainted. The child is reported to have had "seven different types of bruises and wounds." Its mother was forced to listen to its screams outside a locked door. The sentence imposed at Old Street Police Court was six weeks hard labour. The same issue of *The Times* recorded the sentences of nine months and six months hard labour respectively, imposed at Marlborough Street Police Court upon two men concerned together in the theft of two motor-cars.

Women and the Churches.

There has been held at Lausanne during the last three weeks a World Conference on Faith and Order, which has been attended by 400 representatives from Christian churches. They have completed reports on "The Christian Ministry" and "The Sacraments", and have also made a declaration to all Christendom on the subject of Christian unity. This exceedingly interesting and authoritative document in its last paragraph states "it is to youth that we look to take the torch of unity. We men have carried it too much alone through many years. The women henceforth should be accorded their share of responsibility. And so the whole Church will be enabled to do what no section can hope to perform". We are, of course, glad that this has been said, and especially glad that it has been said in such terms. It is exhilarating when a claim is conceded in the name of justice or even of expediency, but in fact there is no call to which human beings, and perhaps especially women, respond more freely or welcome more than the call to share responsibility and faith and work.

Municipal Administration in Belfast.

In May last the Belfast Corporation appointed a special Committee of five of its members "to examine the salaries, wages, and duties of all the Corporation employees." The Committee has now presented its report, which recommends complete reorganization and reduction both in number of staff in the various departments, and also in the scale of payments in several instances. Co-ordination between the various departments seems completely lacking, and, with the exception of that of the Town Clerk, "waste and extravagance" was found in all departments. The report recommends the resignation of the Medical Officer of Health, asks that the present Manager of the Tramway Department shall be transferred to a secondary position; lays stress on the need for an appointment of a Commercial Director with authority over the Surveyor's Department, and finally asks the Council to instruct the Finance Committee to make such arrangements as will ensure that every account passed for payment is certified as correct by the City Treasurer. A similar state of affairs existed in Dublin and was immediately dealt with when the Government of Southern Ireland was established. When the Government of Ireland Act was passed in 1920, one-third of the 900 officials of the Belfast Corporation were protected in their privileges and sinecures; and the remainder, as the Report points out, dominate the wards through their membership of the political parties, and candidates are not selected by any party unless they "pledge themselves that never under any circumstances would they vote for the reduction of the salary or wages of a Corporation employee." The Committee pathetically inquires: "What hope may the ratepayers entertain of good government in circumstances such as these?"

Old Age.

The greatest triumph of old age is when it ceases to be old. The papers have been full of remarkable instances of longevity recently. A woman died lately in Spain at the age of 110, mentally and physically normal to the last. A married couple have recently celebrated together their 103rd birthday, both in good health and able to enjoy life. A lady of 92 who celebrated her birthday last week by flying to Cologne and back with her two grandsons says that though people seem to think she is old, she is not so in reality. In a leading article *The Times* says that centenarians seem to be so many that soon no newspaper will trouble to mention them and no telegrams of congratulations will be sent to them. It remains to be seen whether the modern discovery of a synthetic vitamin will influence the length of life in the future, but already the allotted span of threescore and ten is exceeded so frequently that it has ceased to be remarkable. Best of all, of many of these veterans the saying of the psalmist no longer holds, for their closing years are not years of labour and sorrow, but of enjoyment to themselves and encouragement to others. This, however, is not always true. What can be more desolate than the old age of the very poor who have outlived every relation on whom they have a claim and have nothing to depend on but their meagre State pensions? Child Welfare societies exist in abundance but little is done for the old; the Liverpool Council of Voluntary Aid has, however, now started an admirable new venture in the formation of an "Old People's Welfare Committee", which aims at performing every kind of necessary service for indigent or solitary old age such as acting as an intermediary between the old person and the Poor Law, friendly visiting, social gatherings, and so forth.

Women Motor-Cyclists.

Anybody who has ever ridden a large motor-cycle will be pleased to learn that in spite of appalling weather the British Women's team has won the International Vase in the international six days' trial which has been taking place in the Lake District. They lost only five marks out of 900, the next trio, Danish men, losing seven marks, and the third, British men, losing thirty-nine. In the middle of the week *The Times* reporter stated that torrents of rain and the consequent state of the surfaces had turned the trial from a contest between machines into a test of human endurance. On the last day, 41 miles of climbing, many competitors failed to make the ascent of Blea Tarn, and even some of those who did, including Miss Cottle, were thrown from their saddles as the loose sand and stones gave way under their wheels. The competition could not have taken place in more trying conditions, and we are proportionally proud of our winners. To add to this satisfaction Great Britain won the International Trophy, so that all our representatives, men and women, receive gold medals. To mark this out as an athletic week, in contrast to last week's academic feats, comes the news that Miss Sheila MacDonald has climbed Kilimanjaro. This mountain, as our children know, is 19,321 feet high, and Miss MacDonald is the first woman to reach the summit.

Women Cricketers 100 Years Ago.

In an extract from *The Observer* in August, 1827, we read that a vast concourse of spectators assembled at Stoney Fields, Halmaker, by invitation of the town crier, to witness a cricket match between eleven married and eleven unmarried ladies. "After a fine display" the single ladies won. It would be interesting and perhaps enhance the feat if we knew how the players were attired.

Women and Engineering.

This year the annual conference of the Women's Engineering Society will be held, coincidentally, with the Shipbuilding and Engineering Exhibition, at Olympia from 15th to 17th September. Its main feature will be a debate between Miss E. M. Kennedy, secretary and director of Messrs. J. B. Stone & Co., and Miss N. M. Jeans, technical assistant to the Infinitely Variable Gear Syndicate, on "the relative importance of the commercial and technical sides of engineering under present-day conditions." An official lunch will be given to the Council of the Women's Engineering Society by the exhibition officials at Olympia. It is symptomatic of the growing importance of this six-year-old women's organization that its secretary, Miss Caroline Haslett,

has been appointed as the only woman member of the Committee of Engineers recently set up to study the technique of food refrigeration.

Sylvia Pankhurst and an International Language.

One never knows what a member of this astonishing family will do next. Sylvia Pankhurst's latest effort is on entirely new lines. She has discovered a new international language called Interlingua and in a book recently published by Kegan Paul "Delphos, the Future International Language" (2s. 6d.) discusses its merits as compared to those of other efforts towards a common tongue. *Headway*, the organ of the League of Nations Union, gives an interesting review on the August issue. Miss Pankhurst appears to have unearthed a surprising number of international languages, including Ido, Interlingua, Romanal, Universal, Medial European and Occidental, in addition to the better known Volapuk and Esperanto. She unhesitatingly pronounces in favour of Interlingua which was invented by Signor Peano about twelve years ago. Interlingua is based on Latin and is almost grammarless. At the risk of drawing upon ourselves the wrath of our readers who are devoted advocates of Esperanto, we agree with our contemporary that Interlingua is worth further investigation.

Pictures from the Past.

We print elsewhere in this issue a review of the history of the London and National Society for Women's Service by Mrs. Oliver Strachey, which has recently been published. Not the least attractive feature of this well got up little book are some reproductions of less well-known photographs of Dame Millicent Fawcett. Perhaps the most charming of these is one of her as a young girl of 16 with her sister Agnes, aged 18, beside her. Other illustrations bring the great pre-war suffrage marches vividly before us.

Mother India.

We make no apology for publishing a second article on Miss Katharine Mayo's *Mother India*. This amazing book is described by *The New Statesman* as "the most fascinating, the most depressing and at the same time the most important and truthful book that has been written about India for a good deal more than a generation." It concerns everyone, but above all it concerns and should be read by every woman, and the question raised by E.F.R., "What are women to do about it?" is one that will afford matter for speculation and controversy to the women's movement for many months, perhaps many years, to come.

The French Woman's Nationality.

The Manchester Guardian had an interesting article last week on the new nationality and naturalization law which came into force last Sunday in so far as it affects Anglo-French marriages. Under the new Act a French woman who marries an Englishman retains her nationality unless she takes formal steps to assume that of her husband, and the children of the marriage are French if the couple are domiciled in France. Should, however, the couple leave France immediately after the marriage she loses her French nationality. A French woman already married to an Englishman may recover her French nationality if her husband consents. The effects of the new law on the nationality of children of mixed unions appear to be very complicated and a great deal is made to depend on the mother's choice of nationality.

Local Government Journal in Australia.

A new local government journal, *The Local Authority*, has been recently published in Melbourne with the support of the Municipal Association of Victoria. The inaugural foreword reminds readers that Local Government in the Dominions has long passed the elementary stages and is now highly complex in character.

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 women'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 PRESERVATION OF BELIEF.

The World Conference on Faith and Order, attended by 400 representatives of the Christian churches from all over the world, by approaching its task in a scientific spirit has not only accomplished an important work but set a valuable example. It wished to explore the possibilities of Christian unity, and was wise enough, as a beginning, to attempt only "to register the apparent level of fundamental agreement and the grave points of difference remaining, and to suggest certain lines of thought which may in the future tend to a fuller level of agreement." Of the particular problem thus examined we do not wish to write to-day; we are concerned with the wisdom of the method. The reading of history, the study of politics, teach us that nothing is more uncertain than the effective hold of the human race on individual truths. Each group, each generation of men learns its peculiar lesson, shares a peculiar illumination, which like a film of petrol on the ground seems for the moment incomparably beautiful, brilliant, impossible to overlook. The moment passes and it is gone, sometimes challenged and bodily swept away, sometimes merely faded. In either case what should have been the heritage of mankind passes into the custody of scholars, men who to common knowledge are absent-minded and without practical influence on affairs. Their difficulties are great enough. We publish articles from time to time pointing out the need of international indexes, librarian's libraries, translations, and other guides to scholarship for scholars. But they are nothing to the difficulties of the rest of us. The human race has a primitive appetite for facts, and perhaps, of all its appetites, only this and its craving for noises are over-served. Day after day facts pour upon us, impossible to remember, almost impossible to sort—facts which may serve us to conduct the morning's business, facts which may distract us from the smells of tubes, facts which are a contribution to human knowledge, and facts which have just been adequate to earn a hard-up journalist half a crown. French beans are cheaper. . . Skirts will be worn longer. . . Someone has succeeded in blinding a fish—or was it a rabbit?—in such a way that the

MOTHER INDIA: ITS CLAIM ON THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT.

Our recent review of this extraordinary book—by a reviewer born and bred in India—began and ended by declaring it a challenge not only to the people of India but to every Western woman. It is indeed—a challenge loud enough to waken the dead, and with something of the accusing note traditionally attributed to the Last Trump. On a reader steeped in the traditions of the women's movement, yet deaf hitherto to the call of India (and there are probably many such among the special public of this paper) the effect of the book cannot but be devastating. It lets loose a flood of ideas, yet they are ideas not pointing to a single, clear-cut course of action, but jostling against and contradicting each other.

The first few chapters—those concerned with the problems specially affecting women, with child marriage, with the horrors of the child-mother's mishandled confinements, with the wretched lot of the widows, with the seclusion of women and its effect not only on themselves, but on the educational and economic needs of a country wasting for trained and intelligent activity—strike at first on the ears of such a reader as a clear call to British women, to use every scrap of their political power and social influence (precisely how is not so clear) to secure the emancipation of their Indian sisters.

But then one reads on, and as Miss Mayo's indictment of the Hindu piles itself up, one sees a race of men endowed with nearly every ugly quality that can bring misery not only to its possessor but to the world—incredibly callous to the suffering of every sentient thing except their individual selves, sensuously soft and sexually depraved, inert and economically unproductive, yet acquisitive and ambitious, mendacious, superstitious, diseased themselves and propagators of disease to others. With this picture in the mind, one reaches the paragraphs devoted to Miss Mayo to the population problem. She has already told us that the Hindu has an average life-span of only 23 years, that at no period of life does his expectation of life exceed 35 years, that he is often sexually exhausted at 30; yet that the maternal mortality of a generation (what, by the by, is her measure of a generation?) exceeds 3,200,000, or more than the whole death-rate of all the allied countries during the world-war. Yet despite these facts, despite famines and epidemics, she states that "the soil of India is to-day supporting 54,000,000 more

disability has been transmitted through six generations of offspring. . . Kent has beaten Middlesex. . . Thousands of these sentences beat upon our minds. Thousands of such facts force themselves upon us as we live our lives, and the result is a certain contemporary outlook, the vital, energy-giving apprehension of certain faiths, such as the belief that war is not only an evil but sinful and ruinous, or the belief that women's minds are reasonable and will give value in return for cultivation, or the belief that moderately hygienic habits should be made possible for everybody and be observed by all. We have paid heavily for these articles of mental furniture, and we want them to be used and valued by our descendants, who will not have paid for them. There is no certainty that it can be done, but if it can the method is that of the conference on Faith and Order—we must register our agreements. The last Imperial Conference inaugurated a new level of understanding between Great Britain and her Colonies not by discovering new truths, but by stating clearly what everybody who was interested in the subject knew already. In the same way if we care that the faith for which we stand shall endure we must to a certain extent abandon our exciting, stimulating differences, and fix our eyes on the dull common ground which in any age of the world must unite us with the fiercest of our opponents. We must find it and map it out and see to it that our maps are handed on. We are told that the ink in which books are printed to-day will be completely faded in a hundred years. This sounds too good to be true, and probably is not true, but if it prove to be true, what we must write out with fountain pens and impress on the minds of our children will be not the arguments which split us into sects and schools, but the underlying conceptions of womanhood and humanity which have inspired us and made our progress possible. While these remain what we have won remains and can be increased. If they be lost—as in the past they so often have been lost after having seemed proven and established—sooner or later all our battle will have to be fought again.

human beings than it sustained 50 years ago, plus an estimated increase of 7 or 8 per cent every ten years," attributes this result to British rule, and concludes that "deprived of infanticide, of suttee, and of her other safety valves, yet still clinging to early marriage and unlimited propagation, India stands to-day at that point of social development where population is controlled by disease, and disease only." Elsewhere she quotes the verdict of "one of the most eminent of international Public Health authorities: 'The British are to blame for the world threat which they [the Hindus] constitute. If the British had not protected them, the virile nations of the North would have wiped them out.'" One is tempted to agree, to murmur—

Thou shalt not kill, yet need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive.

and to wish that the British would withdraw altogether and leave Hindu and Muslim to fight it out.

But then a fresh series of doubts assail us: Would Muslim and Hindu be left to fight it out? Or would other European nations, coveting empire yet less fit to exert it than ourselves, step in? If a clear field were left, is it so certain that the Hindu, with his numerical superiority and the lift-up we have given him, would not prevail? Or if the Muslim prevailed, would that be for ultimate world welfare? What about polygamy and the Mahomedan subjection of women and *pardah*? What happens behind that veil? Is it left for another Katharine Mayo to tell us? Having put our hands to the plough, are we not morally bound to see the job through? And finally, does not Miss Mayo herself give instances which show that the Hindu is teachable and adaptable, more so perhaps than tougher, more self-dependant, intellectually slower races?

And so we get back to the point from which we started, that the book is a challenge to the whole women's movement, international but especially British—a challenge not to plunge in rashly and blindly, but to study, investigate, ponder, and wherever and whenever we see an opening, to act.

Certain obvious points suggest themselves. What about our own age of marriage? Will not the fact that in this country a girl of twelve may legally be married, however seldom it happens, inevitably weaken the case for strong action to raise the age in India? Has not the British Government of India been

excessively timid in shirking the question? In this and other matters one is tempted to suspect that Miss Mayo, in her generous indignation at the injustice of Indian and foreign criticism of British rule, has been too lenient to us, too easily put off with the excuse that "you cannot hustle the East," too apt to forget the effect of custom in rendering even Western minds callous to evils not too obtrusively forced upon them. One could multiply quotations from her own book to show that the best Hindu (such as Gandhi) would have welcomed (in their hearts and deeds, though never in words) stronger British action against some of the evils she denounces, and that our excessive patience has been mistaken for connivance due to a Machiavellian desire to keep India weak. Would not "the Mussolini touch," provided it were exercised solely in the firm suppression of undeniable evils, be perhaps better understood by the East than methods which have for mother the democratic customs of Great Britain and for father the sceptical atmosphere of Oxford? Women, at least, have a right to say to the Hindu, "Know that whatever our votes, our pens, our voices can do will be done to oppose and not to further your claims to self-government, until you show that you have learnt not to oppress others. First free your own wives, widows, and 'untouchables.' Learn to treat your own children and animals with humanity, before you ask 'Mother England' for greater freedom, greater powers, for yourselves."

E. F. R.

THE DEFENCE FORCE IN KENYA.

By W. MCGREGOR ROSS.

Kenya Colony, that turbulent little Dependency of ours, situated on the East Coast of Africa and just on the Equator, is earning an unenviable distinction for itself just now by legislating for the compulsory arming and drilling of all male European residents from 18 years of age upwards. Instigated by a group among the European land-holding class, the local Government has apparently decided, in the face of considerable opposition in the Colony, to force the necessary measure through by the use of the official majority in the Legislative Council. The Acting Governor, Sir E. Denham, has taken full responsibility for this step—a step, it need scarcely be said, which is unique in recent British Colonial practice.

A small and timid group in the Colony has been demanding a defence force at intervals for more than twenty years. In 1905 this group sent an hysterical memorial to the Secretary of State in London, imploring protection by Imperial troops, the erection of forts and the enrolment of some such conscript force as is now being created. The simple African peasants filled these patriots with panic. The latter described them as "a human volcano," "a smouldering fire" which was likely to burst forth in uncontrollable eruption and destroy them (the petitioners). "The day of that eruption no one can foresee," they said. "It may be to-day, it may be to-morrow, or it may be some years hence, but that it will come is an absolute certainty." This panic has been revived at intervals since then, and some of the old agitators who were prominent in 1905 have been busy last year and this in pressing for conscription. Actively supported by the present Governor, Sir Edward Grigg, a Bill for the creation of this force has been passed through all its stages, the official members of Council voting for it, under orders.

Latterly, as many of the well-wishers of Kenya in this country hoped would be the case, a group has arisen in the Colony to obstruct the policy of the Governor and the panic-mongers. Lieut.-Col. Driscoll, a Kenya resident with a unique military record, has promoted a petition to the King, praying His Majesty to disallow the imposition of conscription on the Colony. An Anti-Conscription Committee has been formed, and no less than 1,500 signatures of adult European residents have been obtained in a few weeks to the petition. The Chairman of this Committee, Mr. J. A. Cable, has come to London to present the petition to the Colonial Office. Although the Governor has vehemently denounced assertions in the Colony that the force was being organized for defence against the natives, the Anti-Conscription Committee declares that the Governor's statements are only intended for consumption in England. It declares that there would be difficulty in finding language adequately to express the falsity of the impression which the Governor's remarks are likely to make in England. In no settler quarter has it found that any reason is assigned for the necessity of a defence force except for protection from the natives. On the Government

side extreme ingenuity has been needed to advance reasons, plausible enough for uninformed readers overseas, for this latest move in the long panic. Possible trouble on the Abyssinian border, and possible trouble with Bolshevik influence have despairingly been suggested. The Governor advances the view that the white population is far too dependent on the natives, so as a first step towards correcting this impropriety, he decides to arm and drill the whites—largely at the expense of the natives! Mr. Amery has been asked in the House whether the entire cost of the new organization may be met by a special cess on the conscripts themselves, but he maintains a bland disregard of the financial aspect of the measure.

Any Governor of Kenya who was genuinely concerned as to the European population there being unduly dependent on the natives might well begin by seeing that the former pay a more reasonable share of the taxation of the Colony than they do at present. European women are exempt from all direct taxation. European men, whatever their wealth, pay a uniform direct tax of £3 annually. The poorest shop-assistant behind the counter and the wealthiest land-owner alike pay £3. In twenty-five years all the immigrant races together have paid less than £330,000 as direct taxation. In the same period the African natives in Kenya have paid more than £5,800,000. All nationalities there have paid indirect taxation in the form of Customs duties, but here again the gross amount paid by the natives exceeds that paid by all other races put together. It is the European group in Kenya that is most resolute to continue *living on* the natives that is most anxious to have a defence force to keep them in their places. That is easily understood. The land-owning class, which numbers less than 2,000 Europeans, provides the bulk of the adherents to this new and discreditable innovation in colonial administration. Even among these there are many who are violently opposed to the entire scheme, as they feel that there is inherent in it a grave reflection upon themselves as employers of native labour. We in this country must all wish them success in resisting the application of conscription.

FOURTH CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE OF THE NEW EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP.

At Locarno, the City of the Pact, over a thousand people have just met, representing over forty nations, to discuss the best way to educate the new generation with its new outlook started by the Pact—an outlook substituting co-operation and understanding for competition and distrust.

The theme of the discussions was "The True Meaning of Freedom in Education," and it was discussed from every point of view by eminent learned professors, world-famous analysts, and every sort of educator from places as wide apart in cultural background as, say, Austria and Liberia, or France and America, or England and Czecho-Slovakia.

For many Mrs. Ensor set the keynote when she spoke of the "relativity of freedom," and suggested that one need was for parents and teachers psychologically free so that they might liberate the spiritual and mental forces of the child and help it through much scope for creative self-activity to attain self-mastery and a realization of itself as a channel for the new forces of life in order that it might put all its forces into the serving of mankind.

The energy and enthusiasm abounding at the conference, perhaps specially among those belonging to the newer nations, showed us what tremendous forces the war had liberated, and therefore the great need that education should turn all this force into constructive channels of love and usefulness.

Perhaps it would interest readers of THE WOMAN'S LEADER to know that this large, brilliant, and successful gathering was organized by women.

C. M. STYER.

CROSBY HALL.

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

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WOMEN'S SERVICE.¹

Even before the birth of the organized movement for women's suffrage in London there existed a small committee of women including Barbara Leigh Smith, better known as Madame Bodichon, which had as its object the improvement of the economic position of women by increasing their opportunities of employment. This committee of women—in itself a novelty in the 'sixties—established an office, with an employment bureau, a training centre, and a reading room, and endeavoured to arouse public opinion on the subject, while at the same time doing what was possible to help the unfortunate women who applied to them in large numbers. Mrs. Oliver Strachey has told the story of this early beginning in the attractive little book just published which gives us the history of the London and National Society for Women's Service. The present Society may be claimed, she tells us, as a "collateral descendant, if not an actual great-granddaughter, of the original committee in 1858."

The movement for the economic independence of women soon became identified with the movement for political emancipation as the leaders recognized that the possession of the vote is the key to all true equality. Mrs. Strachey tells the story of the early suffrage movement in London. The present generation of suffragists will read with interest of the hot controversies of those early years, the beginning of a long series which are not yet ended. In 1871, the first fierce battle was waged and the existing societies were "rocked to their foundations." "One sees people resigning wholesale; one hears of letters of protest and gathers a general impression of excited emotions, but the actual cause of it all remains wrapped in official mystery." The real cause of the upheaval was that one party later called the "Isolationists" was out for suffrage pure and undefiled. They stood for the principle of "avoidance of any other agitation." The "agitation" then in question was the campaign led by Josephine Butler against the Contagious Diseases Act.

All this has a familiar ring about it. Substitute for the Contagious Diseases Acts Birth Control and Family Allowances and might not this apply to the events of March last? "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose."

Other no less vehement storms followed from time to time, but the curious fact emerges that the clash of honest opinions did not injure the movement. More than once it is recorded by Mrs. Strachey that fresh developments opened out and money flowed in after one or other of the frequent crises through which it passed.

We are tempted to linger on the historical passages which help us to regard our own acute differences with a more philosophical and tolerant eye, but we must return to the evolution of the London Society. We trace it with Mrs. Strachey's help through the years of the great pre-war suffrage campaign and through the war itself, in both of which it played so distinguished a part, to the present time when it has concentrated its efforts on educational and political work for the complete economic emancipation of women, including of course the final extension of the franchise, which is part and parcel of the same question. So we return in 1927 to 1858; once again there exists the centre, now the spacious and comfortable Women's Service House, with its boardroom, its offices, its reading room, and library, from which efforts extend in different directions to bring closer the economic equality of women with men, but thanks to the liberality of an anonymous friend, on how different a scale. There are few subjects which more urgently demand specialization at the present time when women are still heavily handicapped in regard to payment, promotion, or opportunities, when fresh legislation is contemplated which will add to the existing handicap, and when the married woman is in certain professions compulsorily dismissed. The final extension of the vote is in sight, but the political, social, and economic equality which should follow has still to be won. Every suffragist should read Mrs. Strachey's delightful book which is greatly enriched by illustrations which vividly recall the facts about which she writes with so much knowledge and understanding.

¹ *Women's Suffrage and Women's Service*: the History of the London and National Society for Women's Service, by Ray Strachey. To be obtained from L.N.S.W.S., 35 Marsham Street, S.W. 1. Stiff back, 1s. 6d. (postage 2½d.); leather 3s. 6d. (postage 3½d.).

THE WOMEN OF THE MEDICI.¹

Cocks often forget that there would be none if it were not for hens. Not only cocks, but other people also sometimes make the same mistake. For example, the present writer has allowed herself, too readily, to think of the Medici family as mostly male and magnificent. Yet a moment's reflection tells one that there must have been a reasonable proportion of ladies of the Medici. Yvonne Maguire deserves thanks for bringing this fact home out of the realm of theory. She does not lay claim to deep research, she acknowledges her debt to other modern writers, but what she sets out to do she does successfully. She shows that Medicean magnificence needed the helpmeet, willing to pretend little and do much, just as inevitably as any modern politician or Anglican vicar.

These helpmeets had many maxims to guide them; the good housekeeper of the male imagination was held up for their imitation then as now. Many a husband, no doubt, echoed the prayer of a certain Giannozzo Alberti, who, kneeling with his wife, prayed to God that "we may live long together in happiness and concord, with many male children, and that He would grant to me riches, friends and honour, and to her faithfulness, modesty and the gifts of a good housekeeper." A fifteenth century mother gave instruction to her daughter, about to undertake the adventure of marriage, in the form of twelve commandments. Our digestion being less robust than that of this bride, a line or two from them may suffice. "Take care not to be merry when you see he is wrathful, nor to be angry when he is merry," "Do not any great thing of your own accord, without the consent of your husband," "I command you not to talk too much, . . . For even if a woman is very foolish, if she speaks little, she is thought wise." No wonder that, as our author remarks, Medicean women "lived soberly and without undue luxury to the end."

Neither were the men given to personal ostentation, rather did they spend their money on public works of art. It is even possible that in their day they were accused of the contemporary equivalent of bolshevism for "the first prominent member of the family, a certain Salvestro, headed the rising of the Ciampi, or woolcarders, against the wealthy merchants who held all the political power," and the name of the Medici was, time and again, connected with opposition to the oligarchy of wealth.

Is anything really new? Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Piero's spouse, shows how the very excess of dutifulness in the "old fashioned" wife produces the modern woman. Like many of our "advanced" women of to-day she did not neglect the domesticities, "I must see how we can clean and scour" and "Please send the sheet without the hem stitching" were typical sentences to be found in her letters, but "she was also a highly cultivated intellectual woman, who wrote poetry and took part in politics." Again, like some of the "advanced" we know to-day, she was, in spite of, or because of, this fact, a friend of the higher clergy, who then as now, may sometimes have wearied of the too cloistered virtue of their female followers. Lucrezia wrote, after being ill in 1467, "All our friends among the Cardinals have sent and offered me all their possessions, and even the Holy Father sent some of his treasure more willingly than I can say," and Filippo Martelli, writing to Lucrezia's husband, Lorenzo, says "I know that the Cardinals have talked about her, and have decided that no finer lady ever came to Rome" and, after her death this was the tribute paid: "Sometimes her actions, from the political point of view were more prudent than (Lorenzo's). She advised the most important persons as well as the magistrates, and she also admitted the humblest to her presence and all she sent away happy and contented."

The efficiency of the dutiful wife in the Italy of the fifteenth century was due in large part to the fact that her husband, constantly away from home, would leave all his affairs, domestic, social, political, economic, in the hands of his spouse.

Clarice Orsini, wife of Lorenzo, was preoccupied with ecclesiastical matters, and the nearest she would go to political intrigue was when she sought preferment for her pet clergy. She was the mother of ten children, and led a quiet life at home for the most part, while her husband pursued his business elsewhere. Neither of them were good correspondents, but she could say things when she did write: (as in August, 1478), "I wish you would come and spend an evening here for many reasons, especially because I cannot believe your business keeps you so tied there as you would like me to think."

¹ By Yvonne Maguire. (George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.)

Her son, Piero, then aged 8, describes his sisters thus: "Giuliano thinks of laughing and nought else, Lucrezia sews, sings, and reads; Maddalena knocks her head against the wall without hurting herself; Luigia can already say a few words; Contessina makes a great noise all over the house." Grown up they may seem to some less pleasing, that is if we are to believe Alfonsina Orsini (herself a ruler of "masculine" force). "I want to tell you a story that has been going round lately. Mona Lucrezia, as you know, had been promised the priory of Capua by the Pope, and when it was given to Giuliano Ridolfi she was much grieved, and as she is not accustomed to suffer things that displease her, she could not bear this, but went to the Pope and complained at length. First she complained of His Holiness, and said that everybody wished her ill, and spoke evil of Madonna Maddalena and of you, and said particularly that I mocked and derided her . . . a few days ago Contessina made such a fuss in the house that all the Palaces and Banks are full of it. This is known to the Cardinals and everybody for it was overheard by outsiders."

It all might have happened yesterday. And the female faults of taste in dress were, in the opinion of certain men, as egregious then as (in a wholly different way) they appear to-day.

Thus does a contemporary gentleman condemn them:—"The most skilful painters and sculptors count as nothing against women, neither their faces nor their limbs remain as God made them. Some of their dresses are cut low enough to show the armpits; then in a jump their collars stick above their ears. Girls that once went about in a modest way have cut their hoods down to a cap now, and wear a collar with all sorts of little beasts dangling down into their bosoms. As for sleeves they are as fat as mattresses. Was anything more destructive or useless ever invented? Can a woman lift a glass with these things on, or remove anything from the table without soiling both sleeves and table cloth, not to speak of upsetting the vessels? They squeeze their waists in too, cover their arms with their tails and their throats with their hoods. But to talk about these women, beginning with the train, is never to come to an end. Then they pile their hair up high enough to reach the roof. Some curl it, some plaster it down, others powder it; it is enough to make one sick."

Truly those engaging men and women of the days of the Medici were the patterns of those we meet and wonder at to-day.

A. H. W.

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MEN AND WOMEN IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

The Annual Report of the Council of Women Civil Servants for 1926, recently published, gives an interesting record of the work of the Council, but shows that, so far as equality between men and women in the Civil Service is concerned, much remains to be done. A notable step in the right direction, however, was the opening of the examination for the Administrative Class to women on equal terms with men. Two women, Miss Russell Smith and Miss A. H. M. Kilroy, were successful, taking ninth and twelfth places respectively in the List for the Home Service, and Miss Smietson was subsequently appointed. The hope that the necessity for a large increase in the staff to deal with work arising under the Widows', Orphans' and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act, would result in a reasonable proportion of the Higher Posts being filled by women was not fulfilled. The advantages given to women in this connection are confined to the creation of a new post as Deputy Chief Woman Inspector, the addition of £100 to the salary scale of the existing Woman Inspectors and a considerable increase in the number of Assistant Inspectors. With regard to Equal Pay, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has declined to take any action or even to receive a Deputation on the ground that the present state of the national finances will not permit it. The Equal Pay Committee is continuing its campaign and hopes that it may be possible to compel the Government to discharge at a not distant date the pledge contained in the Resolution in the House of Commons in 1921, that the question should be reconsidered in three years from that date. The Report concludes with a note on the organization of the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Health Insurance Department showing that as far as Health and Unemployment Insurance are concerned, the men and women staffs are still in the main strictly segregated, but that in the Pensions work each Inspector, whether man or woman, is responsible for the whole of the work in the particular area assigned to him or her and both men and women refer to the Divisional Inspector. Thus two very dissimilar methods of dividing the work are in force side by side. The note adds that the large number of additional Assistant Inspectors has had two noteworthy results: (1) That in many cases women Assistant Inspectors are now on the staff of men District Inspectors and are not only employed on Pensions work, but also on sections of Health and Unemployment Insurance work hitherto assigned to men; (2) that there has been a serious drop in the proportion of higher to lower posts held by women, so that it is now about one in eight as compared with about one in 3½.

The Annual Report of the Federation of Women Civil Servants also deplores the slow progress towards equality between men and women in the Service, and states that in March this year, seven years after the first equality resolution was passed in the House of Commons, the Postmaster-General said that it was not practicable to equalize the prospects of promotion of men and women in the Savings Bank Department, each sex having its own line of advancement, the 842 clerical men with 313 superior posts and the 1,451 clerical women with 124! The Report goes on to say, "A very great deal more pressure must be brought to bear upon Ministers in their constituencies before women will be given opportunities to qualify for promotion to higher posts in the Civil Service." Here is yet more evidence of the urgent need for Equal Franchise. The question of the creation of a Common Seniority List in the Departments employing a mixed staff has, except in the Ministry of Health (where a Committee of nine members including three women has been set up to consider the aggregation of the Outdoor Staff of that Department), been either shelved or referred to a Sub-Committee of the Departmental Whitley Council, "but with women in a minority on every Committee there is very little hope of success." During the year, *Opportunity*, the organ of F.W.C.S., has published a series of special articles on the work of women in the various professions, which have been much appreciated, and the paper has been widely read by those interested in equality between the sexes.

K. I. H.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS.

By BERTHA MASON.

EDUCATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

The Report of the Board of Education for the school year 1925-6, issued a few weeks ago, states that the period under review was "one of great difficulty" owing to the dispute in the mining industry, which rendered necessary a careful review of national and local estimates for the financial year 1926-7. "The interim programme worked out with local authorities and the withdrawal of circular 1371, so far as can be judged, has not been unsuccessful."

With regard to advances made during the last three years, it is noted (1) that in the sphere of elementary education the number of classes with more than fifty pupils on the register has fallen from 24,972 on 31st March, 1924, to 19,982, 31st March, 1926. (2) The teaching staff in the three years 1923 to 1926 was increased by over 3,000.

This is all to the good, but there is room for improvement; a still further reduction in the number of classes containing fifty pupils is necessary if good results are to be attained. (3) In secondary schools, the number of pupils on 1st October, 1926, was 376,829, an increase of over 13,000 since 1922. The number of free-place pupils rose during the same period from over 129,000 to over 142,000.

During the period 1924 to 1926 capital expenditure on elementary schools was approved to the amount of £2,468,361 and £3,476,664 respectively. On secondary schools the expenditure during the same period was £1,698,002 in 1924-5, and £2,017,561 in 1925-6.

Last year school clinics increased by 186. The number of schools and the number of pupils medically inspected during the same period was 1,040 and 150,800 respectively. The number of children ascertained by local authorities to be defective within the meaning of the Education Act during the year was, 191,476. Of these 49,939 were in attendance at Special Schools, 111,006 were at ordinary elementary schools, 5,310 were in other schools, hospitals, and institutions, and 25,221 were at no school or institution. The number of Special Schools in England and Wales in 1926 was 1,100, with accommodation for 90,271 children, a material increase over the previous year in both respects.

It is interesting to note that increased facilities for practical instruction in domestic subjects continue to be provided. During 1924-5 the number of girls receiving instruction in these subjects was 454,285, as compared with 446,409 in the previous year. About 100 new centres equipped for housecraft have been opened, and several unsatisfactory centres replaced by new premises. The total number of qualified and fully employed teachers of housecraft has been increased by about 80. It is satisfactory to learn that in one form or other instruction in housecraft is now very general. The possibilities of the subject as an educational factor is being more and more realized, with the result that there is increased co-operation between school and centre, and between housecraft teachers and those responsible for infant welfare work. Only a few authorities have so far failed to make provision for practical instruction in domestic subjects.

SALE OF MILK FROM BEERHOUSE.

The Public Health Committee of the St. Pancras Borough Council have recently ascertained that certain premises in that borough which have been registered since 1918 for the sale of milk were also being used as an off-licence beerhouse and general shop. The shopkeeper was prosecuted last June for selling milk from which milk fat had been extracted to the extent of 18 per cent. The Magistrates drew attention to the apparent unsuitability of milk and beer being sold from the same premises.

Section 5 of the London County Council (General Powers) Act, 1908, provides for the removal from the register of the name of any person carrying on the trade of purveyor of milk from premises which are, in the opinion of the sanitary authority, unsuitable for the sale of milk. The St. Pancras Health Committee being emphatically of opinion that an off-licence beerhouse and general shop is unsuitable for the sale of milk, have recommended that the registration of the owner of the shop as a dairyman, and the premises named as a dairy, be cancelled.

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EQUAL FRANCHISE: RECORDS OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

It is not generally understood that any woman voter whether a member of the N.U.S.E.C. or not, who is interested in the subject of equal franchise, may apply to the headquarters of the Union for particulars of the record of any Member of Parliament. Woman voters or potential woman voters who wish to communicate with their member with a view to his support when the promised legislation is introduced, should fortify their position by accurate knowledge of his attitude in the past. But, judging from Press cuttings, there have been many recent conversions to the Prime Minister's proposals and the Parliamentary Secretary of the National Union will be grateful for any recent information secured in the constituencies as to the views of M.P.s in places where there is no society affiliated to the Union in order to enable her to keep the records at headquarters up to date.

THE SCOTTISH AUTUMN SCHOOL.

Our readers are reminded of the autumn week-end school to be held at the Glenburn Hydropathic, Rothesay, from Friday, 30th September, to Monday, 3rd October. It does not seem possible that during that time any human being can take their full enjoyment of the lovely scenery and attend the programme of nine lectures which has already been arranged, but doubtless the members who attend will do what they can. The inclusive fee for the week-end is £2 7s. 6d., for a single day 17s. 6d., and we hope that as many members as possible will take this opportunity for conference and discussion and the acquiring of additional knowledge before the work of the winter begins. A leaflet giving full particulars will be issued later from 172 Bath Street, Glasgow.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"MOTHER INDIA."

MADAM,—I have been interested in following the reviews and reports on Miss Mayo's book *Mother India*.

In your issue of 19th August you state: "The only action that we can conceive as suitable is either the public refutation by those concerned of the facts . . . or the immediate and complete reform of the system . . ." by the Government.

The question immediately arises, supposing the facts to be true, is "The Government" to impose drastic and exceedingly unpopular reforms upon the Hindoo population; quite regardless of the fact that many of these customs are deeply rooted in religious beliefs? To quote from Count Keyserling's *Travel Diary of a Philosopher*: "The whole of their cult is permeated by the spirit of animal procreation. Here, for the first time in my life, I behold the display of sexual activity, not regarded as something unclean, but as something holy, as symbolizing the divine in nature."

The British in India have always endeavoured to allow complete freedom of religious beliefs, and to hold impartial justice between the different forms; occasionally, and as tactfully as possible, they have tried to alter some practice, with the result of unlimited trouble and discontent and bitterness, as in the case when "suttee" (the wife being burnt alive on her husband's bier) was forbidden.

All big changes come slowly, and in India where Time does not matter as it does in Western countries, how much more slowly can alterations take place.

I sometimes feel that women's societies are apt to become rather emphatic over the question of India and to take for granted the fact that the "Government," implying the British officials, are invariably fools or knaves, or both. At the National Council of Women's Annual Conference in Birmingham in 1925, a Hindoo woman made a wild speech, prejudiced, inaccurate, and distorted to such an extent that I found it almost impossible to restrain myself at all—the audience placidly accepted her statements.

Extremes are never right; and the middle way between the Eastern metaphysics with its static ideals and the progressive materialism of the West is not easy to find.

May I suggest to other readers of THE WOMAN'S LEADER a very interesting book on India, by Al Cathcart, called *The Lost Dominion*.

(Mrs.) LOVEDAY CAMERON.

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