

# THE Catholic Citizen

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

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APRIL 15th, 1924.

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.

## Maternity and Child Welfare.

BY GABRIELLE JEFFERY.

Of the several branches of Public Health work in this country, Maternity and Child Welfare is the most vital, and may be regarded as a sound national policy, for it aims at building up a race of strong and healthy citizens. In a word, it is prevention rather than cure, and in proportion to its success the need for the remedial services will diminish. In official language, Maternity and Child Welfare means the care of the mother before and after childbirth, and of children up to the age of five years, when they pass on to the supervision of the Education Authorities.

Let us consider for a moment a few figures on infant mortality, which will serve to show the immense importance of this work. Of every 1,000 children born in 1870, 160 died in their first year. In 1900, 154 died, or a total loss of 142,000 lives that year and only a saving of 6 per 1,000 in 30 years. But from 1900 onward the infant death rate has steadily declined, until in 1922 it was brought down to 77 per 1,000, or exactly half that of 1900.\*

It cannot be claimed that this improvement is solely due to Maternity and Child Welfare; no doubt improved housing, sanitation, the Factory Acts, etc., have been contributing causes, but that this improvement does coincide with the development of Maternity and Child Welfare, will be found in reviewing some of the landmarks in its history. School doctors testify to the higher standard of

\* These figures are taken from the Annual Reports of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health.

health and physique in the children of the present day, and the educational work of the ever-increasing number of Welfare Centres cannot reasonably be questioned.

One of the first steps in Maternity and Child Welfare was the appointment of Health Visitors by Local Authorities between 1890 and 1900. These are women trained for the work of visiting homes where there are babies and young children and giving advice and assistance to the mothers. Health Visitors are usually fully trained nurses or midwives, or possess other high qualifications. They are as a whole a body of most conscientious women, devoted to their work and much appreciated by the mothers with whom they come in contact.

In 1902 the Midwives' Act was passed, which set up the Central Midwives' Board. Its chief enactments were (1) that no woman should take the name of "midwife" unless she were certified under the Act as a trained midwife; and (2) that no woman should attend a woman in childbirth, otherwise than under the supervision of a doctor, unless she were a qualified midwife. It also placed midwives under the supervision of the Local Authorities. This Act was a great safeguard to the mother and child and dealt a blow at "Sairey Gamp" and her like.

In 1907 followed the Notification of Births' Act, making it a duty of the father and any person attending the birth of a child to notify the birth within 36 hours to the Local Authority in any area where the Act was adopted by the Local Authority.

The amending Act of 1915 made it compulsory on Local Authorities to adopt the Act. The effect of this Act was to provide a much earlier notification of birth than is required under the Registration of Births, and it is from such notification that the Health Visitors obtain the information necessary to their work.

Lastly, the Maternity and Child Welfare Act, 1918, gave power to Local Authorities to submit schemes for attending to the health of mothers and young children, to the Local Government Board (now the Ministry of Health). If approved, these schemes receive a grant of 50 per cent. towards their cost. It also provides that every Council having powers under the Act *must* set up a Maternity and Child Welfare Committee, to which all matters relating to this subject are referred. This Committee *must* include two women.

The scheme adopted by a County Council, with which the writer has some acquaintance, no doubt gives a fair example of other Authorities' schemes. In this county 23 Welfare Centres have been established. Each Centre is opened weekly and is in charge of a doctor and one or two health visitors are in attendance. To these Centres the mothers come for advice and bring their babies to be weighed; there they may buy Glaxo, etc., much below chemists' prices, or, if they are necessitous, it may be supplied to them free upon certain conditions. Each Centre has a Committee representative of the district, who are responsible for details of the administration and inquire into the applications for free milk. From the Committee are drawn the voluntary workers who help at the Centre, entertain the mothers to tea and generally make them feel at home.

The scheme also provides for the following developments:

1. The Home Nursing of mothers and children in cases of necessity (epidemics of measles, whooping cough, etc.).
2. Midwives for necessitous women, where the local service is insufficient.
3. Creches and Day Nurseries for the children of mothers who go out to work.
4. Home Helps for mothers during the period of confinement.
5. Hospitals for children needing in-patient treatment.
6. Hospitals for complicated cases of con-

finement, or where the home conditions are not suitable for confinement at home.

7. Convalescent homes for nursing mothers and children.
8. Homes and other arrangements for attending to the health of children of widowed, deserted and unmarried mothers.

But, except for the Centres, this comprehensive scheme was rendered almost a dead letter owing to an instruction issued by the Ministry of Health in February 1921, intimating that all schemes involving capital expenditure were to remain in abeyance, and that the cost of Services already in existence was to be kept down as low as possible, or even reduced. This step was taken, of course, in the supposed interest of national economy, but to quote the words of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry: "to save money on Maternity and Child Welfare is to lose it." Or to paraphrase a now classical utterance, you cannot have an A1 nation with C3 mothers and babies.

Happily, however, with the advent of Mr. Wheatley to the Ministry, this disastrous policy has been revoked, and Local Authorities are being given to understand that urgently needed developments, such as hospital accommodation for maternity cases, will receive sympathetic consideration as regards grant from the Ministry. It remains for public opinion (including women voters) to impress on Local Authorities that they are solid for the Government in this move.

Though much progress has been made in the reduction of infant mortality, there remains more to be achieved in other aspects of the work. The maternal mortality has remained stationary since the beginning of this century, and certainly calls for investigation and the extension of pre-natal care. The care of the "toddler" also has not been developed to the same extent as that of the infant.

Is it too much to hope that in a not far distant future we may see some wise and experienced woman at the head of the Ministry of Health, for surely in this department she will find only an extension of her natural functions to the larger family of the State. Thus we look forward to the dawn of that ideal of Maternity and Child Welfare, a nation of happy citizens, with sound minds in sound bodies.

## Notes and Comments.

Elsewhere we give reports of the Annual Meeting and the meeting on the Legitimacy Bill. While there is no opposition to this Bill itself, considerable controversy rages round the proviso re-inserted on the motion of the Archbishop of Canterbury, that the Bill shall affect only those children whose parents were free to marry at the time of their birth. Extremists on both sides make a complicated question still more difficult to solve.

Mr. Frank Briant's Bill to enable Peeresses in their own right to sit and vote in the House of Lords, passed its second reading by 313 to 46. It had the backing of Lady Astor, Miss Jewson, Mrs. Wintringham, and Mr. Wignall. The Bill is supported by members of all parties, and if it becomes law it will enable twenty peeresses in the United Kingdom to take their seats in the House of Lords. It was a great disappointment to women when Lady Rhondda's attempt to break down the barrier to the House of Lords was defeated. The Bill will pave the way to the creation of Peeresses for services to the nation or for outstanding merit, which would entitle a man to be raised to the peerage. In view of the support it has received from all parties, it is to be hoped that the Government will give the Bill facilities. Members of St. Joan's S.P.A. went a-lobbying in support of the Bill. We wish it success.

The new Body of Experts, under the League of Nations, appointed to enquire into the conditions under which the traffic in women and children is carried on, met in Geneva on April 1 to draw up a programme of work. Colonel William Snow, Director of the American Bureau of Social Hygiene, is chairman, and Princess Cristina Bandini and Dr. Paulina Luisi are the two women members of the Committee.

The first session of the Permanent Health Committee was held in Geneva from Feb. 11 to 21. Dr. Alice Hamilton, of Harvard University Medical School, has been recently appointed to this Committee, presumably in the place of Dr. Josephine Baker, whose

name, we note, is no longer on the list of members. But why only one woman should be on this important Committee, and why no British woman is ever appointed to any of the Commissions of the League, are questions which we are unable to answer.

Mrs. O'Connor and Miss Barry represented the Alliance at the Consecration of Mgr. Brown at Southwark Cathedral on March 12.

Miss Connolly, voter in the constituency, represented us on the deputation organised by the N.U.S.E.C., which interviewed the candidates at the recent Abbey bye-election.

We ask the prayers of our readers for our member, Mrs. O'Sullivan, of Valentia, Ireland, and for Mr. Finlayson Gauld, who died recently.—R.I.P.

### Dinner to Miss Vera S. Laughton, M.B.E.

On March 25, thirteenth birthday of the society, St. Joan's S.P.A. gave a dinner to Miss Laughton at the Haymarket Club, to wish her joy and God-speed on her journey to Japan, where she is to be married to Mr. Gordon Dewar Matthews. The Committee presented Miss Laughton with a charming gold travelling clock, the "Under Thirtys" gave her a silver horse-shoe brooch for luck. Miss FitzGerald, who presided on the occasion, said that she had had quite other plans for Miss Laughton, who had frustrated them by getting married, but she knew that Miss Laughton would carry the torch to Japan and help her Japanese sisters in their onward march. Miss Laughton, in replying, said she was very touched at the kind wishes and the charming presents given her. She was sorry to frustrate Miss FitzGerald's plans, but at the same time, perhaps they would not be frustrated, as she had every hope of carrying on her public work. She would always keep in touch with the Alliance. Miss Fedden painted a black picture of the man-made country to which Miss Laughton was going, but Miss Laughton, undismayed, said that anyway there would be plenty of work for her to do.

## 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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## A Year of Promise?

If there is one virtue more than another which the feminist movement has taught us, it is the virtue of perseverance. Years come and go, and the resolutions sent up to each new government present a weary sameness. And yet we know that it is only by sticking to our guns that the reforms we are determined to bring about will ultimately become the law of the land. Those unable to come to the Annual Meeting will wish to have the text of the resolutions sent to the Labour Government. They are as follows:

1. *Equal Franchise*.—St. Joan's S.P.A. calls upon the Government to adopt and pass through all its stages a Bill granting the Parliamentary Franchise to women on the same terms as men.
2. *Solicitation Laws*.—St. Joan's S.P.A. calls upon the Government to repeal the solicitation laws directed solely against alleged "common prostitutes," under which law thousands of women are every year convicted, on police evidence only, of soliciting to the annoyance of men, whereas it appears that in cases of men annoying women, the annoyed person must come forward to give evidence.
3. *State Regulation of Vice*.—St. Joan's S.P.A. calls upon the Government to abolish the system of regulated prostitution or tolerated brothels throughout the Crown Colonies of Hong Kong and the Straits Settlements.
4. *Veneral Disease*.—St. Joan's S.P.A. protests against any system of compulsory examination of women for venereal

disease in any area under the control of the British Government. It further opposes the introduction of compulsory notification and treatment of venereal disease on the ground that it will inevitably tend to the introduction of compulsory examination and detention of women, and will have an adverse effect on the present voluntary system of confidential treatment.

5. *Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919*.—St. Joan's S.P.A. calls upon the Government to amend this Act so that, in practice, it will ensure that "a person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage, from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to any civil or judicial office or post, or from entering or assuming any civil profession or vocation, or from admission to any incorporated society (whether incorporated by Royal Charter or otherwise), and a person shall not be exempted by sex from the liability to serve as a juror.
6. *Equal Guardianship*.—St. Joan's S.P.A. calls upon the Government to adopt and pass through all its stages the Guardianship of Infants' Bill.
7. *Separation and Maintenance*.—St. Joan's S.P.A. calls upon the Government to adopt and pass through all its stages, the Summary Jurisdiction (Separation and Maintenance) Bill.
8. *Widows' Pensions*.—St. Joan's S.P.A. calls upon the Government to introduce

an adequate system of pensions for widows with dependent children.

9. *Equal Pay*.—St. Joan's S.P.A. calls upon the Government to establish throughout the Civil service, a system of equal pay and equal opportunities for men and women.
10. *Women Police*.—St. Joan's S.P.A. calls upon the Government to recommend chief constables throughout the country, to include carefully chosen and highly trained policewomen as an integral part of their police.
11. *Unemployment*.—St. Joan's S.P.A. calls upon the Government to undertake that any sum of money allocated for the training of unemployed or the provision of relief works, be divided equally between men and women, in proportion to their numbers.
12. *Divorce*.—St. Joan's S.P.A. protests against any further extension of the grounds for divorce.
13. *Legitimacy*.—St. Joan's S.P.A. calls upon the Government to adopt and pass through all its stages, a bill to legitimate children on the subsequent marriage of their parents.

To our programme of equality the Labour Government is more or less pledged: Equal Franchise, Equal Guardianship; it stands likewise for Widows' Pensions. We believe these reforms are coming near. Elsewhere we speak of Equal Franchise. There is no opposition to the Summary Jurisdiction (Separation and Maintenance) Bill, and none to the Legitimacy Bill in itself. The question of State Regulation of Vice has become urgent on account of conditions in Hong Kong, and the demand being made to the Colonial Office to re-introduce the Contagious Diseases' Act in Singapore. At the call of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene all Women Societies will, we have no doubt, bombard the Colonial Office with resolutions of protest. British women have made up their mind on this point, women of other countries, too, as they learn all the horrors of this abominable system, are rising in arms against it. It is an outrage, and its futility in stamping out disease has been proved over and over again.

We will have none of it. Let the British Government understand that!

L. DE ALBERTI.

## International Notes.

We offer our cordial congratulations to Spanish women, who have now obtained the municipal vote, and are eligible as municipal candidates. When General Primo de Rivera takes in hand the reform of the Parliamentary system, it is expected that Spanish women will obtain the Parliamentary vote.

\* \* \* \*

*La Française* publishes an excellent résumé of the very successful annual meeting just held of the French Women's Suffrage Union. Presided over by Mme. de Witt-Schlumberger, it was addressed among others by Mrs. Corbett-Ashby, and it passed unanimously a strongly-worded resolution expressing the hope that the approaching General Election will be the last in which French women will suffer the humiliation of having to stand aside.

We note that Melle Odette Simon, whom we had the pleasure of seeing in London last summer, has been elected on to the central Council of the Union.

Mme. Jane Misme, until recently editress of *La Française*, has just produced a play, "L'Epouse Nouvelle," at one of the Paris theatres.

\* \* \* \*

An admirable article by Dr. Muret, of Lausanne, in the *Mouvement Féministe* (Geneva), puts the whole argument against the Vote Familial in clear and conclusive terms. He declares it to be "absolutely contrary to any rational conception of Feminism," and by arrogating fresh rights for the father of a family, it inflicts further injury to the position of the mother.

We learn from the same source that at a recent meeting organised by the Vaucluse group of the French Women's Suffrage Union, the Archbishop of Avignon, with all his "grands vicaires," was present.

\* \* \* \*

Melle Van den Plas contributes to *Le Féminisme Chrétien* an able summary of an important series of lectures given by M. Vialatoux, a well-known Catholic writer on sociology, at Lyons, on "The Female Personality," in which he draws logical conclusions entirely supporting the main principles of the feminist movement. Such writings are

(Continued on page 35.)

## Annual Meeting.

The Annual Meeting of St. Joan's S.P.A. was held at Bedford College on March 15 (by kind permission of Miss Tuke and the Council).

In moving the adoption of the Annual Report Miss O'Farrell said that, it being impossible to speak of all the very useful work done during the year, she might perhaps emphasise the work done by the Society during the general election, especially in the help given to women candidates.

Miss Bodley, in seconding, said that in her opinion equal franchise was coming near, and for this the Society had always stood. In speaking of the *Catholic Citizen*, Miss Bodley appealed to members to come forward as paper sellers, to help the paper to become self-supporting.

Miss Bumpstead, in moving the adoption of the financial statement, said that the work done was out of all proportion to the small amount spent; she begged all members to increase their subscriptions. A shilling nowadays would only pay for eight letters, and that did not go far.

Miss Sherwin, in seconding, spoke of the work done at the Office as being entitled to the highest praise.

A series of resolutions, published in another column, was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Miss Kathleen FitzGerald, B.A., the chairman, in addressing the meeting, spoke of the wonderful changes that had taken place during the twelve years of the Society's existence. She believed that instead of eight women M.P.'s we should soon have eighty, and that full equality was not far distant. Members might ask was their work not done, she would reply, No, when they saw their Hon. Secretary relax her efforts it would be time to rest, but she did not believe that day would dawn.

After an interval for tea, a public meeting was held on the question of the Legitimation Bill, the chair being taken by Miss Kathleen FitzGerald, B.A.

Mr. Mitchell Banks, K.C., M.P., sent apologies for absence. He had been kept in his constituency on urgent business, and was unable to return in time for the meeting.

The following resolution was moved by the Hon. E. A. St. Aubyn Harney, K.C., M.P., and seconded by Mr. F. W. Sherwood, Recorder of Worcester:

"This Meeting calls upon the Government

to adopt and pass through all its stages, a Bill to legitimate children on the subsequent marriage of their parents, and welcomes the fact that thereby, after 600 years' divergence, it will bring the law of the land into harmony with Canon Law.

Mr. Harney said that he was wholeheartedly in favour of the legitimation of children wherever possible, but confessed that his enthusiasm had been damped by the insertion of the proviso in the House of Lords, and that for his part he would do all he could in the House of Commons to drive it out of the Bill. At the same time, if not successful in this, he would vote for the measure as it stood.

Mr. Sherwood said that he had taken much interest in the question for many years past, and intended to speak on it from a non-party point of view, in keeping with the spirit of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance.

The question had been a burning one for at least 600 years, and since the Council of Merton in the thirteenth century there had been a "bifurcation" between Church and State upon it. By the customs of England, children born out of wedlock were deprived of all title to inheritance—by the Canon Law they were legitimised by the subsequent marriage of the parents, and the present Bill was an attempt to restore this. The Bishops in 1296 attempted to bring the Civil Law into line with the Canon Law, but the Barons made the famous answer: "We will not change the old and approved laws of England." Thus Austin Harrison was quite wrong when in 1916 he denounced the rule: "Once a bastard, always a bastard," as the creation of narrow-minded ecclesiastical superstition. The Church was, in fact, always more liberal than the Bill as it left the House of Lords; it objected to the term "Nobody's child," and always deemed legitimate the children of putative marriages even of those subsequently annulled. Scotland preserved the old Canon Law, and now perhaps the wrong will be righted after 600 years.

It might be that some sort of proviso would be necessary, and if it should be found that the House of Commons determined to have one, it would be well to see whether the Canon Law did not provide a much more liberal form than that brought forward in the House of Lords recently. In the Inns of Court, Canon Law has been totally ignored and neglected. This should be remedied and the Scotch Law on the question, which differs from it in some respects, should also be studied.

Mr. Turrell, Recorder of Banbury, also spoke, and the resolution was carried.

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Brady, Miss	1	11	6
Brettingham, Miss	7	6	0
Bumpstead, Miss	3	0	0
Cockrill, Miss	1	0	0
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Dorman, Miss	1	1	6
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\*In gratitude for finding lost relative through the Alliance.

I am very grateful for the goodly list of subscriptions and donations acknowledged above, but regretfully announce that the money has already gone to meet last quarter's rent and office expenses. Another quarter is owing from March 25th, and we have nothing in hand to

meet it. I am most anxious therefore to receive all outstanding subscriptions and contributions promised towards rent.  
G. JEFFERY.

## LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Hon. Sec., Miss N.S. Parnell, B.A., 91 Bedford St, Liverpool.  
The Cake and Candy Sale in connection with the "No More War" Demonstration, in which our branch had a stall, was a great success, realising £31, towards which we contributed £3 10s. The Committee would like to take this opportunity of thanking all those members who by their gifts or their purchases brought about this gratifying result.

## Equal Franchise Meeting.

A Public Meeting organised by the Women's Freedom League to demand that the Government shall give immediate facilities to Mr. Adamson's Equal Franchise Bill, so that women shall be able to vote at the next General Election at 21 years of age and on the same terms as men, was held at Essex Hall, on March 27.

The speakers were Lady Terrington, M.P., Dr. Helen Hanson (League of the Church Militant), Miss Horan (National Union General Workers), Miss Ursula Williams (Women's National Liberal Federation), Miss Anna Munro (Women's Freedom League), Miss Helen Fraser (N.U.S.E.C.), Miss James (F.W.C.S.), and Miss Marguerite Fedden (St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance).

Miss Fedden, after briefly commenting on the injustice, illegality, and absurdity, of withholding the vote from women between 21 and 30, when they are doing useful work as mothers, doctors, teachers, nurses, civil servants, domestic workers and factory hands, proceeded to enumerate the ways in which women of over 30 are disfranchised; she mentioned about ten examples, commenting on each. She concluded by showing how time could be spared for the Bill if the Government, which is pledged to equal franchise, really wished to give it facilities, and she said she hoped the Bill would pass the Commons, and the Lords, receive the Royal assent, and be placed on the Statute Book without delay.

## International Notes. (Continued.)

especially valuable in all countries where the education of public opinion is a necessary preliminary to the granting of the vote.

A Bill is now before the Belgian Chamber conferring the Provincial vote on women on the same terms as it is enjoyed by men.

\* \* \* \* \* V. M. C.

Miss Barry represented the Alliance on the deputation to the Home Secretary, organised by the National Council of Women, on the subject of women police. The Home Secretary told the deputation that the Home Office views the subject with great interest, and a committee is to be set up to consider it.

**ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND  
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NON-PARTY.

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