# CATHOLIC CITIZEN

Organ of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, 55, Berners Street, London, W.1.

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July 15th, 1921.

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.

### BIRTH CONTROL.

By a CATHOLIC MEDICAL WOMAN.

I have been asked to write this article as a Medical woman who is also a Catholic.

I have been working for some years as a doctor in ante-natal and infant Welfare Clinics so that I think I may claim some knowledge of the problems that the workingclass mother has to face, both in bearing children and also in rearing them. The problem of Birth Control has been brought before us in an acute form lately by the establishment of the first Birth Control Clinic in this country, through the instrumentality of Dr. Marie Stopes (a doctor of Science but not a doctor of Medicine). The Press as a whole has preserved a decent silence on the subject, but the opening of this clinic has been advertised and commented on in a few of the newspapers. I say advisedly, that we are, as Catholics, "up against," a terribly insidious campaign against Christian morality. For at this Clinic the use of contraceptive\* methods are taught to working class mothers, who as a whole have fortunately not learnt the use of such methods as their upper and middle class sisters have.

I will now endeavour to set forth the reasons why, as Catholic women, we should set our faces utterly against Birth Control of this sort.

## 1.—These Practices are against Nature.

I say unhesitatingly that the natural decent instincts of both women and men revolt against such practices. Do not, for a moment, misunderstand me. I do not say that no decent

men or women adopt them. Alas! they do, in many cases. But I do not believe that any normal, right living man or woman contemplates the use of Birth Control methods, in the first instance, without a shudder of repugnance, although later on this normal right instinct may be subdued, as the conscience gets seared and hardened.

But as a whole the ordinary good instincts both in men and women of the working classes are against such practices.

In the upper and middle classes too, when we look back to the generations immediately preceding ours, we see how repugnant such practices were to all our Protestant forebears, and how they repudiated en masse, the teaching of Bradlaugh and others on Birth Control, in the middle of last century. This is the more wonderful as they had no definite Catholic teaching to enlighten then on this point. But alas! owing to the collapse of the religion of the ordinary Protestant, such as we have been witnessing for the last twenty years, the best natural instincts of many men and women of the educated classes have become gradually overlaid by an artificial and feverish yearning for pleasure and self-realisation. And these people have been led astray by Neo-Malthusian teaching in the absence of definite religious influence (however imperfect).

If this Birth Control Campaign is allowed to continue unchecked, it will kill the maternal instinct in a large number of women who adhere to it, or at any rate greatly enfeeble it.

II.—These practices are against much expert medical opinion.

I hope my readers will pardon me if I speak very plainly.

<sup>\*</sup>I use the word "contraceptives" in the widest sense, to include all chemical and mechanical means for preventing pregnancy.

At a recent meeting of the Obstetric Section of the Royal Society of Medicine on May 5th,\* four of the leading specialists on women's diseases in London, namely Dr. Giles, Dr. Gibbons, Dr. Herbert Spencer and Professor McIlroy, strongly condemned the use of contraceptives. They unanimously agreed that the use of these by women during early married life often led to their being unable to bear children later on when they might wish to do so. Mrs. Scharlieb and Dr. Amand Routh, in their evidence before the National Birth Whitechapel. Rate Commission† based on their long and wide experience of treating women's diseases, also lay great stress on this point. Indeed their evidence is a sad commentary on the old proverb as applied to having children;

"He that will not when he may When he will he shall have nay."

Professor McIlroy at the discussion referred to above, said that it was a fact that neuroses in women were largely the result of the use of contraceptives. Mrs. Scharlieb also, in the course of her evidence before the national Birth Rate Commission, + speaks of the many cases of women she has come across who have become nervous wrecks from the use of Birth Control Methods.

III .- These practices are against the teaching of the Catholic Church.

of a family by the use of chemical or mechanical means or by other unnatural methods.

We must take our stand on this matter firmly as Catholics and have no truckling with the enemy whatsoever.

The Church however does not forbid the limitation of a family by the voluntary abstention from intercourse for a time and she also allows that intercourse may be limited to certain periods when pregnancy is less likely to supervene.8

Thus in cases where a woman is bearing children too rapidly for her strength, these methods that the Church allows may be followed.

Such voluntary abstention from, or restriction of intercourse are rendered possible in the married lives of practising Catholics where the

Catholic sacramental life, is shown by the fact that they are practised by many orthodox Jews in the poor and overcrowded districts of

practice of Catholic asceticism such as Lenten

fasting, etc., makes it easier to subdue all natural instincts when necessary. The habit-

ual use of the sacraments with their inflow of

habitual grace should make self-control far

in communities which lack the help of the

That such methods are not impossible even

Mrs. Burgwin in her evidence before the National Birth Rate Commission makes this clear.\*

It is very sad to think that in the day when women have just come into their own, politically, that a woman should be the principal mover in this Birth Control Campaign and that so many educated women are supporting her. It behoves us therefore who are keen progressive Catholic women to oppose this propaganda with all our might and main. Let us, however, support with all our power, both privately and at the polls, all measures taken to care for and preserve the health of the working class mother.

The excellent Newman policy of the Ministry of Health has been rapidly bringing into being a number of these measures during the last few years.

Space forbids my indicating these except The Church entirely forbids the limitation very briefly. They are (a) The provision of milk for necessitous expectant and nursing mother (b) The establishment of Maternity Clinics where the health of Mothers before and after child-birth is attended to by doctors; (c) The establishment of more Maternity Homes where mothers can go for their confinements and a greater provision of skilled midwives and Home Helps when the mothers are confined at home.

Let us also as women voters press for better housing conditions amongst the poorer classes. I have seen with my own eyes the devastating effects of overcrowded homes on the health of working class mothers.

Let us also oppose, tooth and nail, all efforts to do away with a decent living wage for the working man. The Trades Boards should never have been abandoned by this Government. But above all, as Catholics, we must look to and work for, the enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in our Homes, as the surest way of defeating this devilish campaign.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Birth Control is well-known, we had hoped that it would be unnecessary to touch upon the unpleasant subject, but in view of the nauseating propaganda of Dr. Marie Stopes and her supporters, we have thought it wiser to give the Catholic position clearly for the benefit especially of our non-catholic readers. I will let you know. We are grateful to the medical woman who in our leading article.

In reply to our congratulations on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of his Episcopal Consecration, we have received from his Eminence a card of acknowledgment, with his portrait and blessing.

His Grace the Archbishop of Birmingham writes to the Hon. Secretary as follows: "I thank the members of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society very sincerely for their kind words and good wishes, and thank you for transmitting them. I bless the Society, and pray that under the banner of St. Joan of Arc it may gain fruitful victories."

We offer our hearty congratulations to our co-religionist, Miss Olive Clapham, the first woman to qualify as a barrister. Miss Clapham took her B.A. degree at Oxford with honours in jurisprudence. She is the only daughter of the late Mr. Walter Clapham, and of Mrs. Clapham, of Hull, and was educated at the Convent of the Canonesses of St. Augustine in Hull. She is only twenty-three.

Mdlle. van den Plas writes to thank us for our congratulations on her election to the municipal council of Woluvé Saint Lambert, and promises to transmit our congratulations to the other Catholic councillors.

The Hon. Secretary having asked his opinion on the liability of nuns for Jury Service Mr. Holford Knight kindly sends us the following information:

21st June, 1921. In answer to your inquiry as to the liability of nuns for jury service, I think I can reassure you.

Hitherto, men members of religious orders have not been summoned for jury service. I have seen the authorities responsible for sum- subscription.

As the Catholic attitude towards artificial moning jurors and have made suggestions irth Control is well-known, we had hoped through them to the Home Office to ensure that this practice shall be extended to women members of religious orders. I have reasons for believing that this will be done. Otherwise, an amending Act will be necessary.

Directly I hear further about the matter,

I thank you for your kind expressions and has been kind enough to deal with the subject the references in your interesting journal. I am always glad to be of service.

> 1st July, 1921. I am now informed that a Bill to amend the Juries Act will be prepared by the Home Office and presented to Parliament at a favourable opportunity. This gives you ample time to make representations on the points you desire to be raised.

Meanwhile, if a nun is summoned for a jury she should at once communicate with an Officer summoning her and he will probably withdraw the summons.

I gather that the Under Sheriff of London (24, Red Lion Square, W.C.), will do this. This is a temporary alleviation of the difficulty but to get statutory protection all the influence of your Society must be exerted.

We should like to know, however, what nuns themselves think about it. It seems to us that some nuns who now attend police courts might do valuable service as jurors, and it is possible they would be willing to serve. Anyway they should be consulted

The Consultative Committee of Women's Organisations held its first meeting on July 6th. Lady Astor, M.P. was elected Chairman, Miss Picton Turberville Vice-Chairman, and Lady Galway Hon. Treasurer. A telegram was sent to Geneva to the Conference on the Traffic in Women and Children, urging that active steps be taken to prevent this

Owing to increased postage the annual subscription to the "Catholic Citizen" will now be 3s. Subscribers whose subscriptions fall due in January are asked to send the extra 3d. (which covers the increased cost to end of 1921), when next they write to the Office. Those subscribers who may not have occasion to write can add the extra 3d. to next year's

<sup>\*</sup>See "The Lancet" for May 14th, 1921., p. 1024. †See pp. 247, 269 and 271 of "The Declining Birth-Rate," published by Chapman and Hall.

<sup>‡</sup>Page 271, "Declining Birth Rate." § See Monsignor Brown's evidence in "The Declining Birth Rate," p. 393.

<sup>\*</sup>See p. 229 "Declining Birth Rate."

## THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

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

Office: 55, Berners Street, London, W., 1. Tel. Museum 4181.

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## A Mother's Letters.

Father Alexander's book "A Mother's matters it is less because of indifference than welcome sign that the fact that all is not well women who rank as devotees. Their pettiness with our methods of training the young to tempts men to regard Religion as effeminate face the dangers of life is gaining ground in and paltry. Here one can imagine an alert Catholic circles. Indeed, upon this question young girl enquiring what she is to think of of instructing youth in the mysteries of sex, the pettiness of a mind which can reject the Catholic and non-Catholic teachers alike may say in the words of the Spanish proverb: "We are all in the tale of God forgive us." One is woman are petty, as no doubt they are. glad to see that Father Alexander lays stress upon the well known fact that a number of young girls are led astray through ignorance. demand for an equal moral standard, and she Speaking of the White Slave Traffic he says will have learnt that in the eyes of the women (p. 26), "that dreadful trading in souls and of to-day the sanctity of marriage and the bodies is largely supplemented from the dignity of womanhood do not depend on the ranks of those who face the world without a heaviness of the social punishment meted out scrap of information regarding the dangers to an errring woman, while her partner in to be run-nay, without even elementary know- guilt goes free. When exhorted to be superior ledge of their own nature and its demands." One is therefore the more surprised to find and docility she will ask whether these virtues the writer contradicting himself further on have not been practised by women until they (p. 102) by saying that he instinctively have almost become vices. Whether there blames the girl, when he hears of a fall, for had is not such a thing as righteous anger, she acted in conformity with the innate whether the words "Learn of Me for I am modesty of her sex, she would have resolutely withstood all attempts on her virtue. "As a rule, all the evil is put down to the sharer in her guilt, but I hold that the lion's share falls ask, but these are perhaps details, for the to the girl. Hence it is that her social punish- most part the book is valuable. There are ment is the heavier.'

assumed role of "mother," and writes him- However, there is a paragraph (p. 35) which self down a veritable son of Adam "The should be omitted in any future edition. We woman tempted me'' is far too popular a theme have yet to learn the full power of suggestion as an excuse for male profligacy. Indeed this over the human mind, and nothing could be is not the only instance of the mother in this more disastrous than to tell young girls that book showing a strange tendency to excuse they must be considered "as patients." A

Letters'' (Burns, Oates, &c., 1s. 6d.) is a because of the pettishness and selfishness of sacred truths of Religion, and the grace of the Sacraments because some so-called pious

The modern daughter will know, too, that her mother has misunderstood the feminist to men in meekness, patience, long-suffering meek and humble of heart" were addressed to women only.

All this and more will a modern daughter chapters in it-such as that on Curi-Here the reverend writer has forgotten his osity—which are of the greatest value. men. If men, she says, fight shy of Church good deal of nonsense is talked upon the

point, which Father Alexander is here discussing, nonsense for which, I think, medical men are mainly responsible, for they persistently ignore the fact that it is the weak and the suffering who consult them. Nature never does her work in a clumsy fashion.

There is yet another paragraph which I could wish had been omitted, and that is the paragraph briefly alluding to child outrage. Here again "the mother" finds nothing better to say than that "it shows the need of vigilance on the part of mothers, some are culpably lax in this respect. Little ones should not be left in the company of persons of the other sex for any length of time, no matter how good, or apparently good, those others may be, and a great deal of danger would be averted if children were more decently clothed than they sometimes are." I do not think the reverend writer can have fully realised the terrible implications of this passage. No woman could write in this way of the appalling crime of child outrage, it would be far better not to touch upon the subject at all than to deal with it so inadequately.

Father Alexander's book is addressed to women, or rather to young girls. It purports to have been written by a woman, it is therefore as a woman that I have criticised it. For mothers of very young children should swell the frankness and freedom of that criticism I the throng of our paper sellers.

erave his pardon.

L. DE ALBERTI.

## Paper Selling at Church Doors.

"BY ONE WHO DOES IT."

We have not enough paper sellers in the C.W.S.S.

Our paper is well edited, well printed and contains expressions of the best Catholic thought; it should be more widely spread.

Those responsible for it will not be content until it is sold monthly at the door of every big church in London and the great provincial dread of paper selling, thinking it would make them unduly conspicuous, unpopular or much criticised. As a matter of fact it is the simplest thing possible; all you need is to have vision. You leave home with a roll of papers under your arm, you must look as nice and as trim as possible; nothing on which can be blown about and made untidy in the breeze, no escaping wisps of hair. You get to the church door about fifteen minutes before Mass established is bright:

commences. Quietly you take up your position before the main entrance and hold out one paper in the right hand, so that everyone can see what it is, remarking from time to time, "THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN. Twopence. This month's number, just out." If there is anything of a striking nature in the contents. it could be mentioned. Soon people come up to buy first by ones then by twos, and later on there will be a run on the paper. Buying is infectious and spreads. Month by month these people become regular customers and as a rule very friendly.

Most people regard you as a church official and ask the hours of the services, the name of the preacher and where the procession forms up, and it is well to be posted on these matters. Also one should have a few shillings worth of

coppers as change.

True, occasionally individuals pass by with a haughty stare and curled lip, but these are the people who do not count, the people who do, respect you even if they do not always buy. And the children come and watch and ponder in their little minds. And the children will count in the future-"the younger generation knocking at the door." Certainly all who are not decrepit or the

M.F.

#### FOR PEACE WITH IRELAND.

The Procession and Mass Meeting organized by the Women's Freedom League on July 2nd for Peace with Ireland, was entirely successful. Many societies took part; the section of the C.W.S.S. was very well supported. The only other Catholic Society which took part in it was the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom. Father Philip Fletcher walking all the way. There were many distinguished speakers, both men and women, in Trafalgar Square. Father Bede Jarrett was advertised to speak, but was towns. So many people have a groundless unfortunately unable to be present. Mrs. Anderson, representing the C.W.S.S. spoke eloquently in support of the resolution for peace. The resolution calling for "an immediate cessation of strife and warfare between England and Ireland and the establishment of Peace and concord," was passed with great enthusiasm.

> As we go to press the sky in Ireland seems to be clearing, and the prospect of peace being

## Child Welfare in 1921.

The coming of National Baby Week, in the first week in July, brings a fresh opportunity for calling attention to the needs of the children. The day has not yet dawned—perhaps its dawn is not to be desired—when any branch of social service can be left entirely to officialdom. The inspiration and stimulus of voluntary work are of inestimable value in infusing life through the dry bones of legislative enactments, however good their intent. The municipal and Parliamentary franchise have put into the hands of women a new power for service, and, while it must never be forgotten that the welfare of the child is the business of all citizens, the subject makes a special appeal to women. There are, too, certain aspects of child welfare upon which women are specially competent to pronounce judgment and to demand redress.

Further, the weapon of the Franchise has been in their hands for so short a period that it has not yet had time to become blunted in its use! In the days of the fight for the franchise, women developed a remarkable talent for asking searching and embarassing questions with regard to "things as they are." There is need for such interrogation still, with regard to the subject of maternity and child welfare.

Under the Maternity and Child Welfare Act of 1918, local authorities were given permission to provide certain important and much needed agencies for the benefit of Mother and child, and the Ministry of Health, on its arrival, encouraged the provision of antenatal and infant welfare centres, dental clinics, maternity hostels, health visitors (sufficient for the needs of the child population), special wards or hospitals where mothers can be cared for during pregnancy (much needed, owing to crowded hospitals and inadequate housing), small observation wards for ailing babies requiring skilled feeding and nursing, an adequate number of well-trained, wellpaid midwives, and a supply of home-helps (women trained to visit in the home, and do the housekeeping, etc., while the mother is laid up-an incalculable boon in many working-class homes.)

The increase of these agencies has led to a steady decrease in the infant mortality rates, that for 1920 (80 per 1000 births) being the lowest on record. But workers for child welfare are now faced with a new danger: the cry of "Economy." The Act above referred to, is permissive only, not compulsory, and

already certain local authorities have decided that the easiest department in which to effect economy is that concerned with the health and well-being of its children. One large town, with a high mortality rate, has reduced its staff of health visitors from 20 to 12. What will be the result on the mortality rate of that town? Women citizens are needed who will ask the local authorities this question. Is it economy to save a few pounds and lose several valuable lives? Is it economy to invest nothing in laying up health and strength for the future citizens of this country?

It is probable that such question-asking will not always be popular, but women citizens who care for children will not be deterred on that account. And Catholic women, remembering the story of St. Christopher, will know that

"Who bears the burden of a little child "Carries the Lord of Heaven on his back."

M. S. GRAY.

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£6 19 11

Three more members have contributed £1 each towards the £30 for which I am appealing. I am still hoping for the other £25. We beg those of our members who will be enjoying their holidays during the next two months to send the C.W.S.S. a thankoffering!

Subscriptions usually dwindle about this time, but our Secretary takes no holiday from the large correspondence that must be attended to as usual, and the expense has been greatly increased by the latest postal rates.

GABRIELLE JEFFERY.

## International Notes.

The Woman Citizen (New York) contains a full account of the brilliantly successful Convention held at Cleveland in April, by the National League of Women Voters, a new and powerful organisation of American women of which Mrs. Maud Wood Park is the president. The outstanding aim of the League is to organise women in the interests of honest government on a non-party basis. The women are up against the 'boss' system in politics, so omnipotent in the States, and are resolved to make a hard fight for purity and honesty in political life. Hence the indignation of the male 'machine politician.'

The most outstanding speech, however, in this memorable Convention was Mrs. Chapman Catt's eloquent appeal at a mass meeting for international peace. She put it that peace was 'a national question, greater than any party, any man,' and she appealed to women to concentrate individually and collectively, on the business of putting war out of the world. We wish her every success in her noble campaign.

Le Feminisme Chretien is, very justifiably, full of rejoicing over the successful results of the women's voting for the first time in municipal elections on April 24th, the "ladies" day" as it was termed in Belgium. Women voted in large numbers and with admirable seriousness, and a surprising number secured election on to the Municipal Councils. A preliminary list is printed giving the names of nearly 100 elected women, drawn from all parties, and among them we note with much pleasure those of such staunch suffragists as Mile. Louise van den Plas (Cath.) and Mme. Jane Brigode, (Lib). Now Belgian women are agitating for the Provincial vote, but it is rumoured that the Liberal and Socialist parties, alarmed no doubt by the long list of Catholic women Councillors, are very lukewarm about this further reform. The men's Ligue Démocratique Chrétienne, on the other hand, has officially issued a strong resolution in favour of the immediate extension of this further right to women.

We learn on the authority of the *Bollettino* of the Italian Catholic Women's Union that Queen Elizabeth of Belgium voted in the recent municipal election standing in the queue with other women awaiting her turn to approach the ballot-box.

Suzanne Grinberg, "avocate à la cour de Paris" contributes to La Française an incisive article on the many practical inconveniences to which married women may be subjected by the existing French law on "marital authority." We note also an enthusiastic article in favour of all kinds of sport for women—even football—by a man physician Dr. Pillet.

\* \* \* \*

After two separate debates in the South African parliament the Women's Suffrage Bill still stands adjourned and its fate is still in the balance. The debates have proved the veriest re-hash of all the most stale arguments against sex-equality, though the friends of the measure did valiant service on our behalf. The Woman's Outlook gives the full text of this short but pregnant Bill together with many interesting details of the active propaganda work on its behalf that the women of S. Africa are carrying on. After the monster petition in favour presented some weeks ago it is worth noting that Mr. Merriman and his friends were only able to hand in petitions against the Bill from less than 500 persons.

We learn from the Luxemberger Frau that the need has been felt in Luxemburg for an improved organisation for Catholic women and for a better defining of their practical aims. Among these, seventeen in all, we note: the improved civil status of women, the combating of public immorality, better housing and hygiene, child protection, temperance legislation and the guarding of Christian schools.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.—Hon. Sec., Miss A. J. Musson, Fair View West, Rainhill. Members are asked to pray for the repose of the soul of Mrs. Deery, one of our earliest members, who died on May 29th. B.J.P.

Two representatives of the C.W.S.S. were present at the enthronement of the Archbishop of Liverpool at the pro-Cathedral on July 4th.

The Office, 55, Berners Street, London, will be closed during the whole of August. Correspondence will be attended to as usual.

#### INTERNATIONAL

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Organ-" The Catholic Citizen," 2d. monthly.

#### OBJECT.

To band together Catholics of both sexes, in order to secure the political, social and economic equality between men and women, and to further the work and usefulness of Catholic women as citizens.

#### METHODS.

1. Strictly non-party

 Active propaganda by political and educational means.

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