



THE
CATHOLIC CITIZEN

VOLUME IV. 1918.



CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY,
55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON. W. 1.

THE
CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST

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

VOL. IV., No. 1.

January 15th, 1918.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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.

THE STORY OF MOTHERS' PENSIONS.

By JUDGE HENRY NEIL.

(Father of the Mothers' Pension System.)

Two laws enacted by the State of Illinois in 1899 and by nearly all the other States in the following few years, have played a great part in the affairs of dependent mothers and children in the United States.

The first one of the laws known as the Industrial School Act, authorised private corporations to accept the guardianship and care of children whose parents were too poor to take care of them.

It authorised these private Institutions to collect from the common tax funds about ten dollars per month, per child, while the children were under their care.

These private Institutions also collected by private contributions an amount equal to ten dollars per month per child or more.

Being the legal guardian of these children they had the power to, and did give them out by adoption to people who were willing to adopt other people's children, and after the children were given out by adoption the real parent or parents, usually the mother, lost all right, and title to, and knowledge of her children.

The law made it a criminal offence to give the parents any information as to the whereabouts of the child.

The other law enacted at the same time known as our Juvenile Court Act, authorised the creation of Children's Courts with power to take children away from the parent or parents when the child was not receiving proper care and to turn it over to these Institutions.

Under these two laws, tens of thousands of fatherless children were taken away from mothers who were too poor to pay for the

food, clothing and shelter of their own children, during the twelve years following their enactment in 1899.

These Institutions grew at a tremendous rate.

The City of New York last year paid over three and a half million dollars for the care of 22,000 children in the Institutions in New York City.

One could hardly ride from one large city to another without seeing on the hillside great buildings—containing from two hundred to two thousand of these dependent children.

Early in the year 1911 I happened to go into one of these Institutions and in questioning some of the children I found whenever I asked a child: "Where is your mother?" the muscles of its mouth would twitch, the tears would start down its cheeks and it would be speechless with emotion. I soon saw that this was too tender a subject to recall to the child's mind.

I then went to the Children's Court in Chicago to see the process of sending children to these Institutions.

The first case I saw was that of a mother with five children. She was too weak to stand so they gave her a chair, before the bar of the court.

The testimony was that the father had died three years before, the mother had taken up the double job of going out all day to work keeping some other house clean and then coming home at night to care for her own home and her five little ones—a thing that I have since found that no woman unskilled in the art of getting money can possibly endure for many years.

The officers testified that this mother had endured this double job for three years, and that she was now broken in health, weak and unable to stand. Being unable to go out to work any more, she could not pay the rent and the landlord had ordered her out of the house and having nowhere else to go she had come to the Children's Court for help.

Then the officers decided that they would send one child to this Institution and another to that Institution and so parcel out the whole five, each to a different Institution.

I saw the mother's face twitch in the agony of despair and I said: "wouldn't it be more humane, more kind, if you took this woman out at the back of the Court House and shot her before she realised that you are about to take all of her children away from her for ever?"

Then I said: "Who pays for the food, clothing and shelter of these children after you have taken them away from this mother?" and the presiding judge said: "The Institutions collect by law from the tax funds ten dollars per month per child."

Then I said: "Why don't you give the ten dollars per month per child to this mother and let her take care of her own children. She has been taking better care of them than any Institution can, for less."

Then the Judge said: "The law allows the money to be paid to the Institutions but not to the mother."

Then I said: "Let's change the law."

An officer said: "The Institutions are organised, they have thousands of jobs to give out—every five children sent to an Institution creates one more job for some other person other than the mother. The institutions have great contracts to give for food, clothing and other supplies and they send expert lobbyists to every legislature with the result that they can get the tax-payers' money for the care of children but the mother can't."

Then I said: "Does no one go to the Legislatures and represent the mothers?" and they said: "No." Then I said: "I'll go."

I at once went to the Legislature of Illinois. I said: "Mr. Legislator I have been to your Institutions, I know you buy healthful food, warm clothing and you build magnificent sanitary buildings for these children after you take them away from their mothers, but you can't buy mother love it is not for sale anywhere, at any price, and that is what these children need and will not be comforted with-

out." I said: "Mr. Legislator you are wasting the tax-payer's money by eliminating the voluntary labor of the mothers. No one else will give his labor to the care of these children for so little pay. It will cost the tax-payer much less to hire the child's own mother to care for these children for him. Now, Mr. Legislator, won't you enact this little amendment to your law, stating that when the father is dead or incapacitated for work and the mother is fit and it is to the best interest of the child to remain at home and she can by no reasonable means get the money to support her children, the Court shall order the money paid to the mother instead of to the Institution and that she be allowed to keep her own children." And that Legislature enacted that amendment without a dissenting vote, and on July 1st, 1911, that law, the first State-wide Mothers' Pension Law went into effect in Illinois.

Since then I have travelled from State to State, from legislature to legislature telling this story, and now thirty States out of the forty-eight—those with the largest populations—have this law and are operating this Mothers' Pension System. Last year over one hundred thousand children were cared for by their own mothers under this system, and the tax payers have found that it costs much less to hire the child's own mother than to hire any other person. It also saves the mothers and saves the children.

Our readers will be glad to have the story of Mothers' Pensions in Judge Neil's own words. In sending us this article Judge Neil tells us that "the Catholic Church in America was one of the greatest forces in getting the Mothers' Pensions laws enacted."

To Members of the C.W.S.S. only.

The annual meeting will be held on Saturday, February 16th, 1918, at 3 p.m., at The Catholic Association Rooms, 55, Russell Square, W.C. Names of candidates for election for the Executive Committee, duly proposed and seconded, also resolutions for the Agenda, must reach the Secretary on or before January 23rd.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

We read in the *Univers* that Dr. Keating, Bishop of Northampton, in speaking recently at a meeting of the Catholic Women's League, stated that most of the feminist societies were non-Christian and warned his audience not to read their literature. We presume that his Lordship was thinking of foreign lands, for here in England "feminism" is voiced by the Suffrage Societies, and we do not know of any suffrage society which is definitely anti-Christian, or which issues immoral literature. Moreover, besides the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society there are others that are definitely religious, such as the Church League for Woman Suffrage, the Free Church League the Scottish Churches League, the Friends League and the Jewish League.

* * * * *

It is true that certain immoral and irreligious books and pamphlets have been issued in the name of feminism. Some of these are written by men more concerned with the spread of atheism than of feminism, others by more or less obscure women, who speak for themselves. It seems to us that these books excite more attention in circles outside feminist societies, than among feminist themselves. It so happens that an attempt was made a few years ago to run just such a newspaper as his Lordship has in mind. It was boycotted by all the Suffrage Societies, and went down to a dishonoured grave, after a brief and ignoble run.

* * * * *

The death of Dr. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson removes a great pioneer of women's rights from among us. The famous doctor signed the first petition for women's suffrage presented by John Stuart Mill in 1866. The story of her struggle to obtain admission to the medical profession will be familiar to all or at least to the majority of our readers. Unable entirely to overcome the prejudice of English medical students she obtained her M.D. in Paris, and was London's first woman doctor. She was elected Mayor of Aldeburgh, and was the first woman to fill the post of mayor in England. The C.W.S.S. sent a telegram of condolence to her daughter, Dr. Louisa Garrett Anderson.

We wonder what the good people who were so convinced that the women of England were fast becoming drunkards will make of Lord d'Abernon's speech at the Royal Institute of Public Health. Lord d'Abernon, who is chairman of the Liquor Control Board, stated that owing to the increase of women employed in industry there had been a decline of 73 per cent. in drunkenness among women. And the returns of sickness and mortality among women gave proof that there had been no increase in private drinking. The *Daily News* commenting upon this speech in a leading paragraph entitled "A Tribute to Women," says "that women are scrupulously avoiding anything that could be described as excessive or immoderate drinking." "That is a great testimony," it says, "to the women of England, for while there can be no question that certain external factors, such as the restriction of public-house hours, the welfare work in factories, and the women's clubs outside, have all had their effect, the outstanding fact is that the women of the country, working under a strain that might seem calculated to impel them towards such relaxation as the public-house and its contents claim to provide, have resolutely eschewed indulgences detrimental alike to their functions as mothers and citizens."

* * * * *

The deputation to the Home Secretary against the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which a representative of the C.W.S.S. was to have accompanied, is postponed. It will be received by Sir George Cave before the Bill is again brought forward.

* * * * *

As we go to Press the news reaches us that the Woman Suffrage Clause passed the House of Lords by 134 to 71. So it would seem that nothing now can prevent six million women from receiving the vote shortly. Among the congratulations we have received comes a message from Canon Higgins, which will appeal to our readers: "Advance Woman? Strike for your moral dignity!"

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

Office: 55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W., 1.

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THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST.

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Hon. Editor
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MISS LEONORA DE ALBERTI.
MISS BRADY.

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

A BLACK PAGE OF HISTORY.

Mr. and Mrs. Hammond had their book "The Town Labourer," 1760-1832 (Longmans 10/6), almost ready for publication when the European war broke on the world. They put it aside for the more urgent task of war work, and published it a few months ago, justly feeling that the subject with which it deals has a direct bearing on problems that are daily becoming more urgent. The picture they have painted of England before the Reform Bill is not a pleasant one. With a judicial restraint more deadly than any heroics they have given us a vivid description of the cruel factory system. Children and women were the chief workers, men were in a much smaller proportion, and worked shorter hours. Children were forced to labour almost before they could speak or walk, and often parents through no fault of their own were dependent on their children's earnings. In many parishes no poor relief was allowed to parents who had children unless the latter were in the labour market. "Men, women and children were in the grasp of a great machine that threatened to destroy all sense of the dignity of human life." There was no limit to the power of magistrates and their clerks over the liberties of the working classes; who were bound hand and foot and left at the mercy of their employers. Christianity, the religion of love and pity, the religion of the poor, was pressed into the service of exploiting the poor for the benefit of the rich. The rich man felt that by giving a fraction of his ill-gotten wealth to relieve

the necessities of the poor, upon whose labours his wealth depended, he might yet bribe the keeper of the gates of Heaven. By the Combination Laws all possibility of common action was denied the working man—he was the slave of his employer, to be persecuted and imprisoned if he endeavoured to ameliorate his lot. For had not an all-wise Providence decreed that he should be born to labour and be subordinate and dependent on the ruling classes.

"Peace, order, and progress all turned on discipline; the rough artisans must not be allowed to act or to think for themselves, and must be made to accept the rule of their masters without question: they must take what wages their masters, who were the best judges of the circumstances of the trade chose to give them. The State, that is to say, was to abdicate in favour of the employers. The employers' law was to be the public law. Workmen were to obey their master as they would obey the State, and the State was to enforce the master's command as if it were its own." This policy which lay behind the Combination Laws of 1799 and 1800, was, as the authors tell us, the most unqualified surrender of the State to the discretion of a class in the history of England.

Women, we are told, worked all day in the factories, and spent their nights cleaning, sewing and cooking. That has not changed, they do it still. But it is the chapters on the employment of children, the little slaves upon whose labour much of the industrial power

of England depended, which present a picture of revolting cruelty. The serf labour of the pauper children, the labour of the so-called free children, the horrors of the "climbing boys," or chimney sweeps, all this makes painful reading to lovers of England.

It is to be hoped that Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's scholarly work will be widely read and studied. For though it is always a mistake to judge the mentality of one age by that of another, and though we have travelled far since the dark days with which the book deals, nevertheless a study of the past gives experience in judging the problems of the present. Apart from the lessons to be drawn if the reader will understand something of the jealousy with which the working classes held the rights won by the blood and anguish of their predecessors; something of their distaste of the employer, something, too, of the bitterness which still exists between class and class. And to remove that bitterness should be the aim of every Christian.

L. DE ALBERTI.

LONDON NEWS.

55, Berners Street, W.1. Hours, 3-30-5-30. 10-30-12-30. Other times by appointment. A class will be offered for the intentions of the Mass at St. Patrick's, Soho, at 10-30, on Sunday, 31st. We will be glad to hear that Miss Gadsby has been through the Serbian Red Cross, a card from her with a stitch, sending best remembrances and good wishes to us all. We are pleased to hear that our Associate, Father Miele, has received the Military Cross.

CHRISTMAS SALE.

Our best thanks to Mrs. O'Sullivan Beare, and as our palmist, and to all who helped at the above sale. We realised the sum of £6d. Our thanks are very specially due to the Suffragists, and their organizer, Miss Gadsby, to whose power of organization the success of the sale bears witness.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.—Hon. Comptroller, Miss E. O'Callaghan, 4, Onslow Street, Fairfield. The annual business meeting of this branch was held on Friday, January 4th, at 18a, where Miss McDonald was in the chair. The reports were read and approved. Sleep through a report was read and approved at the morning's meeting. A hill-top drawn was decided to hold on the 25th, and it is hoped to thy zestful day in summer dawn.

hoped that members will come and bring their friends, so as to ensure its success. The society was glad to welcome Miss Barry at its meeting, as it was some time since she was amongst us.

Subscriptions are now due and should be sent to Miss McKinley, Hon. Treasurer, 75b, Berkeley Street, Liverpool.

Subscriptions for THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST should be sent to Mrs. Macdonald, 115, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool.

THE OTHER MRS. SCARLETTE. A. H. Bennett. (Kegan Paul, 6s.). This is Miss Bennett's first excursion into the kingdom of fiction, and she provides us with a topical and entertaining story. For those who enjoy the occult, and who does not, there is a ghost "an honest ghost, that let me tell you." The moral underlying the story, if we read Miss Bennett aright, is that up-to-date women should practise a wide charity and not jump at conclusions when a modern girl's conduct seems open to suspicion. At the same time we do not think that the ladies who formed the Committee of the Women Helpers' Organisation came out too badly on the score of charity. A Committee is after all in a position of trust, and the engaging of a secretary is an important matter; and the adventures of the "other Mrs. Scarlette" would have put a strain on most people's charity, but we will not be so unkind to Miss Bennett as to give her plot away.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FRANCHISE CLUB.

The above Club has inaugurated a series of Saturday afternoon Discussion Teas, which from the opening meeting promise to be very popular. Staff Sergeant John Simpson (of the Australian Forces) opened the meetings with a lecture on "Australia and its opportunities for women." The lecture was of great interest, and we are happy to say that Sergeant Simpson has promised us an article on this important question.

NOTICE.

It would save much labour at the Office if all whose subscriptions to the "Catholic Suffragist" are due would send them in without delay. This notice likewise applies to the annual subscriptions to the Society, which fall due in January.

MY LADY POVERTY.

Since the Saints love her she must be beautiful, for they cherish only that which is loved of their Lord. Yet here in the slums it is at times hard to see wherein her glory lies.

My Lady Poverty! Robed in squalor, allied with dirt, shamed by overcrowded indecency! Beautiful she is indeed, with an unearthly beauty, in the shadow of the cloisters, surrounded by chaste handmaidens, or guarded by the gentle austerity of holy monks.

But here—in the slums how shall we chant her praises, and show forth the delicacy of her loveliness?

Yet here, amidst surroundings repellent to all right minded Christians, some of her brightest jewels glow.

See this worn, shabby woman, thin with overwork and underfeeding, coming back from a long day's charring to her three-roomed house where the children home from school run in and out in noisy confusion. Her husband, an ill-tempered, often out of work, smokes sullenly in the corner. She gets the tea, helped perhaps by the more capable children, or it may be a grown up girl in service, who "sleeps out," is there to give a hand; and when the noisy young ones are safely in bed, after a very poor meal, she sets to work upon a labour of love;—the baking of a cake, the materials for which have been scraped together by dint of the whole family ungrudgingly going a little shorter than the usual "short,"—for the only boy old enough to be at the Front.

Where shall we find generosity like this? The gifts of the poor! Can the diamonds of the wealthy ever gleam and flash with such fire of love?

Then again how they lend to each other! It is Soeur Thérèse of Lisieux who tell us (and how truly!) how very much harder it is to lend than to give.

One does not feel the generous glow of a freely offered gift, nor the expectation of eager thanks. It is often very inconvenient, and the borrower, intending to repay, is seldom very grateful;—yet how often one feels certain the loan will never be repaid,—

there is something altogether irritating about the transaction, an inveterate borrower is fearful strain on one's patience. But the poor are so ready to accede to this thankless form of giving—for this is what it often amounts to.

A little bread here,—a bit of dripping there,—a sixpence, a shilling in time of need change hands so cheerfully,—the fingers of My Lady Poverty do not cling to filthy lucre. I fancy, too, that the poor do not "use uncomfortable words" when they give, or lend to each other. Words that rasp and rant and make the unfortunate long to fling money in the mud at the feet of the donor. No they have a fellow-feeling, an understanding of each other's lives that makes it "wondrous kind."

Truly even here is she beautiful,—My Lady Poverty,—trailing the grey robes of serfdom, walking hand in hand with ignorance, dirt, squalor. But should these be boon-companions? Surely not. Nor do we rest until she is set free from her bondage. The better housing, the better education of the poor, the training of mothers, the guarding of infant life—to whom do these responsibilities belong?

To our legislators and County Councils certainly, but also to each one of us. None may stand aside and say:— "I am not my brother's keeper?"

Those of us who are unable to come into actual personal contact with the poor, at least take a practical interest in them. It is always something, however small, that we do for them.

And we may study their circumstances. It is the hardest heart can scarcely do so unless we read up statistics concerning them.

How can we read even the short article "Industrial Unrest" in the *Catholic Suffragist* of November 15th last, with a feeling that the horrors of overcrowding therein reported cannot be allowed to pass unheeded?

We dare not sit still and say we are doing nothing, or we shall not do anything for the little slaves upon whom the industrial power of the world is bent.

Catholic Women shall be heard in the land, each one of us, with steady pressure shall have her shoulder for ever at the wheel, gradually the chariot of My Lady Poverty shall move forward; the mountain of indifference, of "laissez-faire" shall be surmounted, and she shall come into her own again;—a thing of light and sweetness, beautiful with the beauty of Bethlehem and Nazareth, dissociated from the ignorance and squalor that have so long accompanied her.

It may be not in our day, but let us keep the vision ever before us—My Lady Poverty, —fair and beautiful as the Founder of the Catholic Church surely desired that she should be.

MARION A. NORTHCOTE.

POEMS BY FOUR WOMEN.

There is something rather attractive in the idea of four sister poets joining together to produce their maiden book of verse—something indicative of the new spirit of comradeship among women and showing a lack of anything morbid or self-conscious. Thus we bring a prejudiced mind to this little volume with its charming title, and it does not disappoint us. As a first book of verse it is all through above the average. The poems are born of freedom and simplicity, of real spirituality and understanding; they spell a love of the fresh air and open spaces and of beauty in wholesome form.

Miss Enid Dinnis, a member of our Society, is a poet whose sense of beauty is upheld by a profound spirit of mysticism and devotion and a very real depth of feeling. To her the seeker after the ideal is no long-faced puritan proceeding on life's journey in solemn gloom, but a joyous, light-hearted traveller, "riding full of cheer, A-singing in the night." "The Blithesome Quest," "Cuckoo," and, perhaps best of all, "To one said to be Sleeping," from which we quote below, are as fine as anything in the book.

They have bidden thee sleep. Thee sleep! Sleep through a myriad springs! At the morning's call to the wind-swept hill-top drawn, Turn to thy zestful day at the pink o' the summer dawn.

Thee sleep?—by the twitterful hedge where the earliest chaffinch sings.

"He has gone to his rest," they cried. But rest didst thou ever desire? Rest for thy generous zeal at the height of the matchless game! Nay, thy soul its repose shall earn in the place of the light-some flame At grips with thy stubble and dross, where the gold is tried by fire.

Miss Gertrude Vaughan, well-known both as writer and suffragist, has a charming and delicate fancy, which in some of her war poems rises to unexpected strength. "Confessional" and "No News" are among her best and "The Cloud" is a haunting little poem—especially to those who remember that in the day of adversity, the writer was not among those to stand aside saying:

Dear Cloud! I would not have thee break on me.

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