

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

The Pact in the Balance.

As we go to press an acquiescent, if not favourable, mood seems to reign in Paris regarding the attitude adopted by the British Cabinet on the German Security Pact. That attitude is in the main quite consistent and perfectly well-known. Our Government is apparently prepared to join with France and Germany in guaranteeing the existing demarcation of frontiers on Germany's western edge. We believe that such readiness reflects the broad movement of public opinion in this country. Beyond the introduction of some efficient municipal enterprise Germany did nothing between 1871 and 1914 to prove her fitness for the sovereignty of those portions of Alsace-Lorraine which the treaty of Versailles assigned to France. Great Britain is glad to accept German assurance that the present *fait accompli* shall not be reopened and to join in a guarantee that shall make that assurance effective to France. Equally will the Government find ready support for any refusal to undertake a similar guarantee with regard to the Polish Frontier of Germany. Large sections of the British public are not convinced of the equity or stability of territorial arrangements in this part of Europe, and are not therefore prepared to demand from Germany anything more than a guarantee that such readjustments as the future may bring forth shall be made by arbitration within the Covenant of the League and not by sudden force of arms outside it. On one point, however, we are not clear. Has our Government accepted the French demand that a French invasion of Germany in defence of Poland shall constitute no breach of the proposed pact? Before the flagrant inequity of such a suggestion we stand appalled!

Mr. Baldwin keeps his Word.

Some doubt has been thrown by the Press (ourselves included, we confess it) upon the intentions of the Government with regard to the recommendations of the Food Prices Commission. Speaking at Welbeck Abbey on Whit-Monday, Mr. Baldwin dispelled those doubts. The Government, he said, "appreciate the value of the Royal Commission's recommendation and its spirit, and they propose to set up a Food Council of a representa-

tive character." So far so good. The least that the Government can do for the housewife is to keep under continuous observation the complicated operations of distribution and exchange by which her daily bread and meat are supplied. And we dared to suspect that they weren't even going to do that! To what pitch of faithlessness have governments driven us!

Women in the Birthday Honours.

Though there is a fair sprinkling of women in the Honours List many names are conspicuously absent. In the honours conferred on Madame Albani, already announced in these columns, Lady St. Helier, Miss Lumsden, Miss Beadsmore Smith, Mrs. Wills, and Lady Cook, the services of women in the sphere of art, education, public work, and nursing have been recognized. Among others whose names appear we are pleased to notice Mrs. Hume Pinsent, whose work for the welfare of the feeble-minded deserves recognition, and Councillor Cox, of the Salvation Army, who have been awarded the G.B.E. Local Government is represented by Councillor Margaret Pilkington, of St. Helens, and Councillor Miss Henrietta Bartlett, of Birmingham. We have no space to mention other names, but one honour which strikes us as peculiarly well deserved is that which falls to Miss Margaret Isabel Willden, Matron of the Leper Settlement, Botsabelo, Basutoland.

Time—the Silent Propagandist.

In 1908 Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb used the machinery of a Royal Commission on the Poor Laws to launch upon the world a carefully constituted and scientific scheme for the break-up of the 1834 Poor Law and the distribution of its functions among overlapping specialized public authorities of more up-to-date creation. They supported their proposals by a public propagandist campaign of prolonged and unparalleled intensity. They held mass meetings in all parts of the country. They recruited their platforms from among the eminent personalities of all creeds and parties. They established an office in Clement's Inn, where a mighty band of voluntary workers were kept enthusiastically and feverishly at work sending out literature, and more literature, and yet again more literature. They drafted parliamentary bills. They ran a periodical called (if our memory serves) the *Crusade*. But all in vain. The greater public remained unmoved, and after several years of tireless effort, these two incomparable reformers retired to Eastern Asia, leaving the Boards of Guardians to function in this country upon approved nineteenth century lines under the Ministerial direction of Mr. John Burns. On Wednesday of last week Mr. Sidney Webb moved in the House of Commons a resolution calling for the reform of the Poor Law, broadly on the lines set forth in Mr. Webb's Minority Report of 1908. The Minister of Health, replying in a sympathetic speech, accepted the motion on behalf of the Government. It was, he said, the intention of the Government to "tackle this question seriously at the first opportunity." The resolution was subsequently carried without a division. We offer our sincere congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb; and to Mr. Neville Chamberlain all good wishes for the large and complicated task which lies ahead of him.

More Light?

In speaking of birth control at the annual congress of the Royal Institute of Public Health at Brighton last week, Miss

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M. M. Chadburn, senior obstetrician, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, expressed the view that much more knowledge on the subject was required; she considered that a consensus of women's opinion, which she said was at present relatively unknown, was called for. Dr. Norman Haire, honorary medical officer of the Saffron Hill Maternity Centre, considered that birth control was necessary for the welfare of the individual and of the nation. Dr. Scharlieb spoke strongly against any form of artificial control. On Sunday, the Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Barnes, preaching at Brighton Parish Church, dealt with the evils of reckless child-bearing. At the evening service Canon Hicks declared his profound disagreement with the views expressed by Dr. Barnes at the morning service. From these divergent views, both on the medical and moral aspects of the question, the perplexed lay person both in medicine and morals will turn with some expectation to the report issued to-day of the Special Committee of the National Council of Public Morals entitled "The Ethics of Birth Control," which we will discuss in a forthcoming issue.

Labour Women in Conference.

As was fitting, the National Conference of Labour Women which has been meeting in Birmingham under the presidency of Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., spent much of its time on the Budget proposals. Not only the question of the new tax on silk and artificial silk, but also the Government's Contributory Pensions Scheme came in for criticism—one member going so far as to say that the Poor Law was infinitely superior. Readers of this paper will be interested in this view on one of the subjects for which it specially stands, and they will be glad also to know that a resolution protesting against the present Government's opposition to the passage of the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill was carried unanimously, as was a resolution urging stringent dealing with any Labour representative not supporting sex equality, economic, educative, and political. The resolution on Birth Control, almost identical in terms with that passed by the Council of the N.U.S.E.C., was also passed after a lively debate. A new resolution calling upon women's sections to levy themselves for the running of women Parliamentary candidates was carried; it will be interesting if this results in an increase in the number of Labour women standing. Other resolutions were dealt with on the subject of housing, health and sanitary conditions in public elementary schools, trusts (with special reference to food supply), and there was a vigorous discussion on the subject of family migration.

A Historic Picture.

Our readers may have wondered what has happened to the picture by Mr. Charles Sims, about which so much controversy arose a while since, of Lord Balfour (then Mr. Balfour) and Mr. Lloyd George introducing Lady Astor into the House of Commons. It will be remembered that the picture would not have been commissioned had not the then First Commissioner of Works agreed to the idea of its being hung in the House of Commons; but afterwards opinions changed, and it was decided to enforce strictly the rule against accepting pictures of living persons, and it became necessary to find a home for what was undoubtedly the picture of a historic occasion even though the actors were and are happily still alive.

At Bedford College on 21st May it was made evident to a large company of guests that such a home had been most successfully and appropriately found. We were told by Dame Edith Lyttelton (speaking in the unavoidable absence of Dame Millicent Fawcett) that many institutions had claimed the honour of housing the picture temporarily, but that naturally the right place was a woman's college in the centre of the Empire. Dame Edith stressed the fact that the picture was only lent to the College: it belonged to the nation and one day the nation would want it back. She ended with words of thanks to Lady Astor for all that she had done for the causes that women had at heart. The audience, who were all gathered in the Oliver Hall at Bedford College facing the picture, then listened to a characteristic little speech by Lady Astor in which amongst other things she told us that she was far more interested in what women thought now than in what posterity might say. We were relieved to learn from her that she will have no difficulty in following Dame Edith Lyttelton's advice to resist every temptation to become a man! After the speeches the gathering turned into a delightful garden party, and Bedford College is distinguished for its hospitality. The only blot on an otherwise perfect

afternoon was the very regrettable absence of Dame Millicent Fawcett, who was to have been one of the guests of honour, owing to the death of her sister.

Sons of Adam.

A correspondent has written to ask us whether any official figures are available to prove or disprove statements made in the British Press, to the effect that Field-Marshal von Hindenburg owes his recent presidential success to the bedazzled military enthusiasm of Germany's women voters. So far as we are aware no such figures are available—though we should welcome correction from any reader possessing a nearer acquaintance with German politics. Certainly they would be exceedingly interesting if they were available. It is true that under the new political régime in Germany certain individual States have tried the experiment of recording the votes of men and women separately in connexion with State elections, and that such experiments show in the main a tendency for women voters to gravitate towards the centre parties, eschewing alike the violence of the extreme Nationalists and the violence of the extreme Communists. But our correspondent must be well aware that since the days of our first male ancestor, both in political and domestic life mankind has shown an obstinate hereditary tendency to "chercher la femme." We must, therefore, regard this latest assumption of our Press as understandable but non-proven. Equally non-proven, in our opinion, is the recent statement of a member of the late Prussian Royal House that God Himself was responsible for the electoral triumph of Field-Marshal von Hindenburg. Doubtless, in the opinion of some sections of the Press the Jews or the Bolsheviks were responsible. In our own opinion the whole German people were responsible—for regrettable though perfectly comprehensible reasons.

The Mistress of Girton.

The new mistress of Girton College, Cambridge, is Miss E. H. Major, M.A., at present Head Mistress of King Edward's High School, Birmingham. Miss Major, whose appointment will take effect in October next, has had a distinguished career as a teacher, having previously been on the staff of Blackheath High School and Head Mistress of East Putney High School. She is an old Girtonian and obtained Honours in the Historical Tripos. She will be greatly missed not only at King Edward's but also in the educational and civic life of Birmingham generally, where her vigorous personality and ready wit have made her a real power.

Women on 'Change.

We offer our hearty congratulations to Miss Keogh on her admission as a member of the Dublin Stock Exchange. It appears that this triumph of equity and commonsense was only achieved after considerable hesitation and heart-searching on the part of existing members, Miss Keogh's entry being imperilled not by any written rule but by the awful (we use the word in its archaic sense) taboos of tradition and custom. However, all's well that ends well. The Dublin Stock Exchange has earned honourable mention as a pioneer institution, and we most sincerely hope that what Dublin thinks to-day London may think to-morrow—or the day after.

Marriage and the Income Tax.

The *Westminster Gazette* announced last week that Dr. Marie Stopes and her husband, Mr. H. V. Roe, are fighting the question of assessing a man and wife for income tax on their combined incomes. Dr. Marie Stopes declares that she and her husband will go to prison rather than pay the tax. Women's organizations are in practical agreement on the injustice of a joint assessment, and it will be interesting to see if the spirited action of Dr. Marie Stopes and her husband will hasten reform.

Pensions for Widows.

The difficulty of arriving at the ideal scheme of pensions for widows still continues to excite a great deal of interest. Two letters appeared in *The Times* on the subject last week. One from Lady Astor deals with the subject of pensions for the younger widows and larger allowances for children. She has decided to modify the amendment which she has tabled to bring the younger widows back to a pensionable status at 45 or 50. Another letter by Mr. Edwin Stockton urges the inclusion in any pension scheme of those who are not covered by insurance.

A NEW DEPARTURE AT GENEVA.

As foreshadowed last week, the upshot of discussions as to the future relations between the two most unsuitably yoked partners, traffic in women and child welfare, has resulted in the retention of the work under a single committee to be known in future as the Advisory Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People. (This title caused some perturbation to the logical minds of the French representatives who represented that "la jeunesse" was an inclusive term covering children as well as adolescents.) The Committee, however, will in future sit in two separate sessions, the one following the other, each with its separate set of assessors, one for the traffic in women and the other for the child welfare section. Both sets of assessors will have the privilege of attending both sessions, but may only speak, unless by special invitation, for their own section. Additional experts representing any particular aspect of the questions dealt with may be invited to attend for one meeting only.

The work of the Children's Committee has been defined as being that of documentation, research, and discussion, and emphasis was properly placed on the importance of the normal child as the basis of study and the constructive aspect of child welfare. From the embarrassing wealth of subjects falling under the comprehensive title "Child Welfare" the Committee selected the following programme for the approval of the Council of the League:—

(1) A study of the law relating to the protection of life and health in early infancy (in collaboration with the health organization of the League). (2) A compilation of the law relating to the age of consent and to the age of marriage. (3) The question of the repatriation of delinquent or neglected children with a view to an international convention on the subject. (4) The restriction and regulation of child labour. (5) The effect of the system of Family Allowances, whether paid for by equalization funds, by individual employers, or out of family funds, on the well-being of children and on the birth-rate and child mortality rate (in collaboration with the International Labour Office). (6) The effect of the cinematograph on the mental and moral well-being of children.

Many other important subjects, such as the adoption of children, the deserted child, the elementary school age, were suggested, but it was felt that the above deserved prior consideration. Several, at the request of members of the committee and assessors were referred to the agenda for next year's session. A decision relating to social insurance is of interest at the present moment in view of the discussions of the International Labour Conference: The Committee decided to ask the I.L.O. if practicable to obtain information as to the effect on the physical and moral well-being of children of "measures taken to alleviate the hardships caused by unemployment, sickness, or death of the wage-earner, whether through social insurance or other statutory

TWO SPRING VISITS TO PALESTINE, 1921, 1922.

By MILLICENT GARRETT FAWCETT, G.B.E., J.P., LL.D.

CHAPTER XXV.—CHRISTIAN SOCIAL WORK IN PALESTINE. If Jews have reason to be proud of their colonies, their orphanages, their schools, and their hospitals, Christian nations may also look with pride on the work which their churches and societies have carried on in the country which gave them the Founder of their religion and His own supreme example of the Christian life.

I think it is safe to say that for the greater part of the 400 years when Palestine was under the Turk, native Palestinians, apart from the joys given by sunshine, a fertile soil and beautiful surroundings, owed almost everything which lifted them out of grinding tyranny accompanied by ignorance and preventable disease to the constant solicitude, the unwearying self-denying services of Christian societies and Christian individuals.

Nearly every educated Syrian whom we met had been educated in Christian schools and colleges. Christian missionaries were often voluntary ambassadors making known in their own lands the methods of Turkish Government, its ruinous system of taxation, its sham provision of schools where the medium of instruction was the Turkish language, which not one per cent. of the children understood. As to the Turkish system of taxation, the taxes were farmed out and the tax-gatherer could demand from the unfortunate cultivator the last piastre that could be wrung out of him by sheer force and terrorism. The Christian missionaries and Christian explorers and archaeologists told the

provisions such as Poor Law Relief, State Pensions, etc., whether inclusive or not of extra allowances for dependents."

Another recommendation of the Committee for future work dealt with "Biological Education." This somewhat ambiguous title is intended to cover instruction for the young on sex questions, the ambiguity being required to satisfy scruples of delicacy on the part of some of the French-speaking delegates. The inclusion on the programme of the education of children in the history of the League and in principles of International Peace was also discussed, but it was pointed out that the question had already been under consideration in the Committee for International Co-operation and that a resolution recommending that children should receive such instruction had been referred for consideration at the sixth meeting of the Assembly. A reference to the matter is, however, included in the President's report of the Committee, which will indicate the importance attached to the matter, and link the general welfare of children with the basis of all true welfare—International peace.

Thus a notable beginning was made which represented a new departure in the activities of the League. A British onlooker could not fail to be impressed by the prominent and sympathetic help given throughout the whole proceedings by the delegate of the British Government, Mr. S. W. Harris, of the Home Office. A feminist observer would be gratified by the useful part taken in the deliberations by women members, whether delegates or assessors, especially by Miss Grace Abbott, the delegate from the United States, and Dr. Pauline Luisi, the delegate from Uruguay.

A very different atmosphere, however, prevailed across the river, in the large hall where the conference of the International Labour organization met. There was this year not a single woman Government delegate, though Ireland, Denmark, France, and Holland had women Government advisers and Miss Julia Varley sat as a British Labour adviser. Deliberations on matters specifically relating to the welfare of women and children without at least some women representatives are now impossible, though it must not be forgotten that even on the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People there were only two women Government delegates. But a conference dealing with problems of industry which affect women workers equally with men, not only women in the labour market, but women and children in the home, is an almost wholly black-coated assembly. But space will not allow a digression on the urgent need for the far more adequate representation of women in all the councils of the League. So far as the new departure relating to children is concerned, we, in this country, are fortunately placed with three British women as assessors, in addition to one dealing with the traffic in women. This in itself will stimulate interest among the members of the great organizations which they represent, one of which at least we are glad to think includes many thousands of girls and boys of all lands. E. M.

world of these things. *The Land and the Book*, by the American missionary, Rev. W. M. Thomson, D.D., is a witness: so are the writings of Laurence Oliphant and a hundred others.

Where at the present moment the able Minister of Education in Jerusalem, Mr. Humphrey Bowman, is proceeding with his great task of establishing a school in every village in Palestine, his way has been prepared for him by generations of work by the Church Missionary Society, with its schools and churches spread over the country; by Presbyterian Mission establishments of equally beneficent activities, as well as by the great American College at Beirut, while sanitation and public health have been cared for by innumerable hospitals, maintained by the English and German Orders of St. John of Jerusalem and other associations of nearly all the Christian nations in the world. Cook's guide book (published before the war) says that Beirut possessed six hospitals—American (2), French, German, Italian, and British: thirty-eight Christian Churches, forty-two Christian boys' schools and twenty-five Christian girls' schools. It is impossible to measure in any statistical form the good that has been done by these institutions, but judging from what can be read in such a book as Dr. Thomson's, which describes Palestine as it was in the first half of the last century, its present condition is almost inconceivably better than it was then.

It was then quite impossible for unarmed travellers with safety to go over the country: armed robbers were to be met

with in every direction. Such an expedition as ours, for instance, consisting of two elderly women attended by an unarmed and rather elderly dragoman, would have been looked upon as rash to the point of insanity. Now all that is changed and the country is as safe as Surrey or Sussex. A great deal of this improvement is due to the haven introduced by the spread of education, through Christian missionaries and also by their precept and example. Native Syrians uninfluenced by Christian education, so far as we came across them (and our impressions are confirmed by Laurence Oliphant and other writers long resident in the country) are in general firmly convinced that no foreigner ever comes to their country except to make money by it or in it. Money is to them not only the most powerful but the only motive of any exertion. The group of Syrians bitterly opposed to the Balfour declaration whom I had met in Haifa the previous year, said this to me in so many words: "No one does anything except for money." We were then in the company of two ladies, both of extensive missionary experience who had lived and devoted their lives for many years to Palestine. One belonged to a wealthy family and had lavished a considerable private fortune in running a hospital, starting schools, and all kinds of other benevolent schemes. The other was not similarly endowed by fortune, but she was one of the saints of the earth, with no thought for self and wholly devoted to the raising up of the native population, among and with whom she lives. So I replied to those who stated that there was nothing ever done except for money by pointing to these two ladies and saying, "Then how do you account for Miss N. and Miss T.?" Of course they had nothing to say.

Speaking only of places which we ourselves visited, there were hospitals or medical missions and missionaries at Tiberias; a church and hospital at Nablus; a medical mission at Hebron; church, hospital, and schools at Jaffa; church, hospital, and schools at Haifa; churches, schools, dispensary, and hospital at Nazareth, while of course in Jerusalem itself almost every Christian nation in the world has maintained churches, schools, and hospitals there for centuries; for Jerusalem is not so much the capital city of Palestine as the religious capital of the world.¹ Besides these great institutions, which can hardly be missed even by the most casual tourist, we came into contact in this second visit with smaller and humbler, but equally devoted, efforts prompted by Christian motives to help the people of the country. One of these I must mention. A lady, now aged and infirm, once a Christian missionary, has given all the later years of her life to educate and train poor blind Syrian girls. For their sake she stayed in Jerusalem all through the war. She teaches them music, singing, needlework, and, paradoxical though it sounds, their own language. Arabic is sufficiently difficult from any point of view, and to make it more difficult the spoken and written language are very different from one another. These difficulties Miss Lovell has trained her pupils to grapple with so successfully that a lady, Miss Nixon, appointed by the Government about eighteen months ago to be the inspector of women clerks and other girls employed in Government offices throughout Palestine, took one of Miss Lovell's pupils to teach her the language and assured us that she could not wish a better or a more intelligent tutor nor one trained in better methods. That Miss Lovell's educational methods are many sided is illustrated by the fact that some of her pupils turn out most exquisite needlework. Miss Lovell finds out what each child's capacity is and trains her in a way to bring it to its utmost perfection.

LONDON SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE.

The London Society for Women's Service have arranged a series of At Homes on Tuesday afternoons, at 5.30 p.m. (tea 6d.), at Women's Service House, 35 Marsham Street, Westminster, S.W. 1.

The following are the speakers:—

The Work of the Civil Service.

9th June. The Foreign Office. The Rt. Hon. the Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, K.C.

16th June. The Ministry of Labour. Miss Margaret Bondfield, J.P., Chief Woman Officer, National Union of General and Municipal Workers.

23rd June. The Civil Service Commission. Sir Stanley Leathes, K.C.B.

30th June. The Home Office. The Rt. Hon. the Viscount Gladstone, G.C.B.

¹ In *Tancred* Disraeli, writing in his enthusiasm of his first sight of the city, exclaims: "The view of Jerusalem is the history of the world; it is more, it is the history of earth and heaven."

OAKUM PICKING IN CASUAL WARDS.

The Casual Poor (Relief) Order, 1925, which came into operation on 1st May, is primarily a consolidating order, that is to say, an Order incorporating the principal provisions of the Orders of 1882, 1892, 1911, 1913, and 1914. It is also intended, we are told, to bring about an improvement of the conditions which are in force in the casual wards of institutions under the control of Boards of Guardians. We welcome the small but acceptable variations in the dietaries, being convinced by experience that they will tend to an increase in the efficiency of those who benefit thereby. We welcome also the reduction of the period of work in casual wards from nine to eight hours per day. On the other hand we regret exceedingly that the Minister of Health has seen fit not only to retain the useless and undesirable oakum picking task as one of the authorized tasks of work in casual wards, but actually has increased that task in the case of men and women who remain in the wards for one night only. Under the 1882 Order, as all Poor Law Guardians are aware, the prescribed task for the male casual who remained for one night only, was one pound of unbeaten, or two pounds of beaten, oakum; for the woman, half a pound of unbeaten, or one pound of beaten, oakum. Under the new 1925 Order, the casual remaining for one night only will have a heavier task, as the one pound of unbeaten, or two pounds of beaten, oakum prescribed by the previous Order for the man, is increased to not less than one and one-third pounds of unbeaten, and two and two-thirds of beaten, oakum; and in the case of the woman, to not less than one-third at least of two pounds of unbeaten, and of four pounds of beaten, oakum.

Further, it must be noted that while the amount under the 1882 Order was the maximum amount in each case, the amount prescribed by the 1925 Order is the minimum amount, so that the actual amount may in point of fact be still further increased.

In days gone by, oakum was of use in connection with the building of wooden ships. To-day, of course, it is of value in shipbuilding. Twenty years ago oakum picking, which at that time was an ordinary prison task, was described by the Controller of Prison Industries as "low-grade work, without a redeeming feature to it, and second only to the obsolete tread wheel." To-day the task is, we understand, no longer set to women, and very rarely to men prisoners.

In most of the casual wards of institutions under the control of Boards of Guardians, the oakum picking provisions of the 1882 Order are rarely enforced. They have become a dead letter in many institutions. It is therefore difficult to understand why in a 1925 Order for the relief of the casual poor, oakum picking, which is admittedly painful, undesirable, and of no practical value, inasmuch as there is nothing to see for a day's work except a heap of hemp on the floor, should not only be retained as one of the authorized tasks for casuals, but actually increased in severity, and its *strict* observance insisted upon in every Union.

The provision not only countenances a task which in many institutions has been abandoned as undesirable and utterly useless, but it will tend to discourage Guardians who prefer to give the casuals useful rather than useless work, from so doing.

We cannot believe that Mr. Neville Chamberlain can have fully realized the soul-deadening effect of this particular provision. Indeed, his reply to a question put in regard to the matter in the House of Commons on 14th May, when he is reported to have said that "he was beginning to wonder whether it is necessary or desirable to continue this task in casual wards," seems to indicate that he himself is extremely doubtful as to whether the retention of a provision which was out of date is a wise step.

In view of this statement of the Minister of Health, we are of opinion that a strong expression of public opinion in regard to the futile and degrading task of oakum picking, and a demand for the amendment of the Order of 1925, in regard to the oakum provisions sent to the Government and to Members of Parliament, would quickly result in the repeal or amendment of the provision to which we take exception.

We urge that action be taken by all bodies of organized women.
BERTHA MASON.

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

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SONS OR DAUGHTERS?

By RAY STRACHEY.

If we could choose beforehand whether our children would be sons or daughters, what would happen? Imagination begins to run riot at the very idea; first the secret personal imagination which one keeps for one's private life, and then that bolder, more reckless imagination one reserves for social problems. How exciting it would be! What a change it would make! No more superfluous women, that is the first obvious notion which jumps even into the feminist head. No women at all, perhaps, or none to speak of, and the few there were set on pinnacles, able to do what they like, sought after, highly prized—but then, no nurses, no domestic workers, no wives, or very few; and of course the rapid decline of the population in the next generation. A thinly inhabited world after that, and presumably drastic attempts at family legislation, a swing to the other extreme, and so on. One could speculate for hours upon this theme.

But would it really mean that there would be no more girls, or very few? Mrs. Erskine, whose book on this subject has set going the above train of thought, states that in her long and detailed experience there are five mothers who want boys to three who want girls, and two who are indifferent; but an examination of the evidence she herself brings forward does not quite bear this out. The mothers wanting daughters are mostly found to have three or four sons already, and she herself has had, as she says she wanted, four boys and one girl. Moreover, we all know how the matter stands among our own personal friends. A boy, if there is only one, a boy and a girl if there are two, and another boy for the third, and perhaps for the fourth also, that is how the wished-for family runs, and only the oddest of us can deny it. With the world as it is for women, even to-day, the boys have a much better chance; and think what our daughters would say to us, when they knew whose fault it was they were not boys! Not one girl in a hundred prefers her female lot. Rightly or wrongly, the most of them wish to change, and it is unpleasant to think of the reproaches they would heap on their mothers' heads.

If we assume, then, as we honestly must, that the power of choice would immediately involve a rapid increase of boys, what would the social consequences be? Family by family we can imagine it, against the background we know; but how would it be with that other background, the superfluous males who would be the result of this selection? That is a different affair.

We have only to look at the middle western States of America, or at our own Dominions, to see how it would be. Hard, hard grinding work for the women, and rough and rather crude living for the men, that is how it would be all the world over, unless the old tradition of men's and women's work broke down. The women would be much respected, of course, they would be much sought after, and greatly valued; but for all that it would be less and less desirable to be a woman. To carry it all on, all the "women's work," would be a heavy task for a minority of the population, for indeed it is hard enough as things are now; and the women of that next, scanty, generation might be too compassionate to have any daughters at all. And where would the world be then?

Of course the tradition might break, and then it would be better. Men might take to home making, to the women's work of to-day. If it was no longer *infra dig*, some of them might find they were good nurses of the sick, good cleaners and cooks (as indeed they so often secretly are). Driven by the shifting of the population they might take their share of the care of the aged, and the education of the young. Why not? The world would be a nicer place for both sexes if only that would happen, and the nonsense of the past be wiped out. But somehow, even to the feminist imagination, this seems a Utopian dream.

Perhaps, instead of all this, the State would step in and try if it could regulate the affair. It would have to penalize parents for the wrong sort of children, which would be a difficult affair. But of course there would be the family allowance plan waiting for use. Endow the sex which was wanted, tax the other, and perhaps the trick might be done. But it would take some settling down to!

And then war, what about that? Presumably, if Mrs. Erskine's theory is correct, the races which practised it could breed for conquest if they so desired. Armaments of a new sort, that is a dreadful line of speculation, and shall be abandoned.

But, after all, is the theory true? That is perhaps the most immediate matter. The medical world should have much to

¹ *Sex at Choice*. By Mrs. Montieth Erskine, Christophers, 7s. 6d. net.

say about it (if it is not too conventional, and stick-in-the-mud to look at the book), and on that aspect we can give no opinion. To the lay woman the first impression will be that it is exceedingly interesting. "Yes," she will say, "well—and perhaps—quite possibly—anyway well worth trying—I must tell so and so." That is the normal reaction. For there is nothing impossible, nothing distressing, nothing in the least repellent about either the book or the theory; it is rather like an old wives' tale, as the author herself remarks; but it may not be the worse for that. Old wives have had a good deal of experience, one way and another, and life is a complex affair.

One thing, at any rate, is very clear, and that is that the thing should be investigated further. The superstition and the horror which have surrounded the business of childbearing for centuries are breaking down; modern science and modern surgery have begun to bring light into the dark places of women's secret suffering, and the light must go further still. If more is to be known, we must know it. Why should we be afraid?

A MESSAGE FROM MRS. CORBETT ASHBY.

We welcome the delegates to the International Council of Women in Washington back again and are glad to give our readers some of Mrs. Corbett Ashby's impressions of America:—

"May I through the friendly pages of the *WOMAN'S LEADER* send my heartiest greetings to my colleagues and friends who have been working so hard during my, to me, long absence? I feel much impressed and inspired by the organizing powers and enthusiasm of the women of the American Universities and of the League of Women Voters and immensely thankful that our difficulties do not include wrestling with 48 different legislatures for every inch of advance in legislation or with the general indifference and indeed suspicion of political action which one finds there among the mass of people. On the other hand, the women give most generously to their organizations, are ready to pay for first-class expert help and good offices and for most impressive papers. Nearest to their hearts lie education and hygiene in the widest sense. They share with the men of their country a suspicion of centralization in Government and are robust individualists except as regards protection for the child and protection for the mother and the woman industrial worker. There, as in other countries, there is a distinct cleavage of opinion as to the value of special protection.

"The League of Women Voters is most keen too on efficiency in government and has made, and is making, elaborate surveys of the whole field of administrations in order to present documented suggestions for improved working. These surveys as a field of work are splendidly characteristic of their thorough methods. Pious resolutions on inadequate information are strongly discouraged. The I.C.W. has laid down most interesting subjects of research during the next five years—motion picture reform, League of Nation teaching in schools, treatment of married women in industry, education for the exceptional child, home economics, as a subject for university research. I hope the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship and the other auxiliaries of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance will see that such studies include the point of view of equality between men and women.

"It is lovely to be home again, though the kindness, hospitality, and friendship I have met in the States and Canada will remain a great inspiration. I think I now understand better the great gifts of our neighbours overseas."

MARGERY CORBETT ASHBY.

HOLIDAY HOME FOR MOTHERS AND BABIES.

The Women's Holiday Fund, Denison House, 296 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W. 1, is making a special appeal for funds to buy a house so as to start a permanent holiday home for mothers and babies. The house at St. Leonard's, which has hitherto been used for that purpose, was always full, and it is because the need is a pressing one—for there are not too many places which will accept babies as well as mothers—that the public are asked to give generously. The Committee feel sure that they will not appeal in vain to readers of this paper, who are among those who know only too well how difficult it is for the working mother to get the rest she needs. Donations may be sent to the Secretary, Home for Mothers and Babies, at the above address.

THE LAW AT WORK.

MORE ABOUT THE CARLISLE SYSTEM.

It is not only in Carlisle itself that the public-houses are publicly managed and publicly owned. For an area of about 400 square miles round Carlisle extending over both sides of the Border the same system prevails. In the district as a whole many different types of houses are to be found. There are one or two first-class golfing hotels and several fishing inns: these last are just the kind of place that the traveller often seeks in rain under ordinary conditions. These inns (though they also serve as village public-houses) welcome the tourist and are organized for his comfort whether he desires to stay for a visit or only to take a passing meal. In some quite small inns there is a comfortable tea room with a very moderate price-list displayed showing for what sum non-alcoholic refreshments can be obtained.

Some mention must be made of the particularly valuable experiment at Annan. This small town has an interest for the traveller as here can be seen the room in which Edward Irving was born and the Academy at which he was a pupil and Carlyle a teacher. The inn, called Gracie's Banbing, is approached through a garden with a large putting green on one side and a bowling green on the other. The buildings comprise a cinema, a large restaurant used daily by boys and girls from the local schools as well as by travellers, a billiard room with four tables and an open bar. Each has a quite separate entrance, and there is no need to pass through the bar to reach any part of the house. To this place any villager can come in the evening to have a game and a smoke without any inducement whatever to drink unless he has a mind to. The memory of this place of real recreation must come to the minds of those who saw it when they think of the many villages in which the rather squalid public-house—containing nothing but a bar—is absolutely the only place of public resort.

Some general impressions were gained at Carlisle besides what was actually seen with the eye. One was that great skill and energy have gone towards providing in every case, whether in city, town, village, or golf resort, the best and most convenient thing—not with a sole regard as to how the largest profits can be made. "What the public wants" has been the main consideration. Another impression was that of the pride and keenness which those concerned in the scheme show in its welfare. The Government officials who are in actual control, the managers and manageresses of the houses on whom so much depends, the local advisory committees which assist the officials—all seem to be working with a faith in the scheme and a determination to make it succeed. This faith is needed, for the scheme has many enemies. When one realizes that State management was started during the war and entirely owing to war conditions, that it has met with unceasing, and not always scrupulous, opposition from prohibitionists, from brewers, and from those who oppose on principle all State control, the wonder is that the scheme has survived and is so successful. But after all, a thing is better known by its friends than by its enemies. The Carlisle experiment is best judged, not by statistics of drunkenness, important though these are; nor by the reduction in the number of public-houses to one-half, but by the fact that not an individual of public importance in the place wants to see the old conditions back. The contrast is too plain. As has been said on good authority, "Every Chief Constable in the land, if he saw the change that had taken place in Carlisle, would beg to have State management in his own town or county." The police no longer have to spend time getting particulars of houses to be referred, Carlisle is a soberer city, the public-houses are fewer and better, and at an election they are absolutely out of it.

"Does it pay?" is a question which will rise to many lips. It does—so well indeed that in another two or three years the whole of the purchase money will be paid off and many thousands of pounds will accrue annually to the State as profit. How to spend this money will be a problem. Perhaps it would be best spent on the provision of alternative attractions to drinking, both indoor and outdoor, in Carlisle and district, so that it might work slowly but surely towards its own extinction.

C. D. RACKHAM.

WOMEN CITIZENS' ASSOCIATIONS OF KENT.

By E. ELISABETH NEAVE HOBBS.

The history of the Women Citizens' Associations of Kent dates from July, 1917, when Kent became the home of fifteen Associations. Unfortunately the first enthusiasm in some places was but the froth and bubble of emotion called up by the Representation of the People Act, and in the short space of six years three associations have died a natural though lamented death.

Women Citizens' Associations work on somewhat similar lines. The usual committee and general meetings are held. At times of general and local elections, candidates' meetings are organized which are usually extremely successful, and associations during local elections frequently support a woman candidate, who must be independent of a political or party label; it is interesting to notice how often an independent woman is successful at the polls on these occasions.

Members receive their general education in the form of lectures on subjects covering a wide range; not many associations as yet seem to realize the value of a series of addresses on one subject, and the resulting more thorough knowledge. Some of them have joined the League of Nations Union as corporate members, and several associations interest themselves in, and send delegates to, local Copec Continuation Councils. There are many matters of local interest in which Women Citizens' Associations help, e.g., an offer to tend a much neglected war memorial; suggestions of town improvements to local councils, such as mirrors at danger points, adequate provision of public conveniences. Organized excursions to places of local interest prove of great educational value, and often lead to members taking an active part in the social work of the district.

Social life is not ignored by associations, and most hold gatherings during the year such as garden parties, whist drives, musical evenings. One enterprising Association (Gillingham) has a successful choral class, and concerts are given by the members; the same Association holds each month all-day working parties (9 a.m.—9 p.m.) for the relief of local distress; garments are made or re-modelled from gifts of clothing, and these are distributed through the agencies of head teachers, women Poor Law Guardians, and the school nurse. This Association had a successful stall at a fête last summer on behalf of local charities. An amusing and most instructive special meeting was arranged, when the Mayor attended and replied to six foolscap pages of questions on town affairs which had been sent to him beforehand by Association members. One Association gave considerable help during a recent League of Nations Campaign Week when 1,150 new members were obtained, and it is now contemplating further activity in citizenship in the town on wider lines than heretofore. Average attendance at meetings might be improved though consideration must be given to the fact that Women Citizens' Associations in their very *raison d'être* make their appeal to the rank and file of the women electorate, who presumably have to be educated to the need of working together with united effort, as well as to the regular attendance at association lectures. Added to this is the effect of the somewhat enervating air of Kent. Some committees seem so afraid of doing the wrong thing that they do almost nothing, forgetting that "he who never made a mistake never made anything else either." The one shining example of energy and activity is the Association whose members live on the altitude of the North Downs and show by their alive organization the alert minds of the members.

General activities of Women Citizens' Associations in Kent are gathered together each year and co-ordinated by means of a conference held in different towns; the seventh annual conference has recently been concluded at Folkestone.

Public lectures of general interest are arranged after the business meeting, and usually a mayoral reception is given. This year the conference included such subjects as: Bills before Parliament, Careers for Women, Family Endowment, Prevention of Crime, the Spirit behind Work, and among the speakers were numbered Miss Picton-Turbervill, O.B.E., Mrs. Hubbard, Mrs. Ivan Sanderson, Colonel Josiah Oldfield, M.D., Ph.D., and Dr. Tyson.

The oldest of the Kent Associations has for its motto "None for party, all for the State," a worn-out, hackneyed line, but none the less true, for it embodies the very spirit of the work of Associations throughout the country, which may also be summed up in the words of Marcus Aurelius, "Be always doing something serviceable to mankind."

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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Telephone: Victoria 6188.

SUMMER SCHOOL FOR MAGISTRATES AND CITIZENS, St. Hilda's Hall, Oxford, 25th August to 8th September.

The following is a complete list of lecturers up to date:—

I. *The Status of Women.*

- Convener Mrs. Hubbard.
 (a) Rights of Citizenship
 (b) Status of Mothers with regard to:—
 (1) Legitimate Children Mrs. Hubbard.
 (2) Illegitimate Children Mr. W. K. Horne.
 (c) Protective Legislation Mrs. Abbott, Miss Constance Smith (Chief Woman Inspector of Factories), Miss Helen Ward.
 (d) Family Allowances Miss Eleanor Rathbone, J.P., C.C., Professor Carr Saunders, Mrs. J. L. Stocks.
 (e) Birth Control Dr. Marie Stopes, Dr. Isabel Pulteney.

II. *The Administration of Justice as it specially affects Magistrates.*

- Convener Miss Margery Fry, J.P.
 (a) Laws affecting the Social Evil Mrs. Bethune-Baker, J.P., Mrs. Rackham, J.P.
 (b) Treatment, Classification and Psychology of Criminals Dr. Hamblin Smith, Mrs. Le Mesurier, Mr. R. Roper.
 (c) The Criminal Justice Act (including Probation) Mr. W. Clarke Hall, J.P.
 (d) Penal Reform and Experiments in other Countries Miss Margery Fry, J.P., Mrs. Barrow Cadbury, J.P., Miss Irene Wall (Home Office).
 (e) Maintenance of Wives and Children Miss Eleanor Rathbone, J.P., C.C., Mr. W. Clarke Hall, J.P.
 (f) The Licensing Laws Mr. G. A. Bryson, J.P. (Chairman of the Birmingham Committee on Licensing).
 (g) *The Abolition of Capital Punishment.* Debate Miss Margery Fry, J.P.

III. *Problems of Urgent Importance of Interest to Social Workers.*

- Convener Miss Macadam, M.A. (Hon. Secretary Joint University Council for Social Studies).
 (a) Housing Capt. Reiss (Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association.)
 (b) Social Insurance Mr. J. L. Cohen.
 (c) Smoke Abatement Miss Marion Fitzgerald.
 (d) Money Lending Miss Caton.
 (e) Social Training Miss Macadam, M.A.

IV. *League of Nations and International Affairs.*

- Convener Miss K. D. Courtney (Chairman of the Women's International League).
 (a) Protocol Pact and Security Miss K. D. Courtney, Mrs. W. T. Layton.
 (b) Work of the International Labour Office Mr. H. B. Butler, C.B. (Deputy Director of the International Labour Office).

- (c) The Right to Private War Mr. W. Arnold Foster.
 (d) Reparations and the Dawes Report Mr. M. T. Layton (Editor of the *Economist*).

V. *Political Party Ideals.*

The ideals and programmes of the three political parties:—

- (a) Conservative Dame Helen Gwynne Vaughan, D.B.E.
 (b) Labour Mr. Brailsford (Editor of the *New Leader*).
 (c) Liberal Mr. W. T. Layton (Editor of the *Economist*).
 (d) The Function of Parties under Representative Government Professor J. L. Stocks.

Group II will be dealt with during the first week.

Early application is desirable, and should be made to the Secretary, 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE LAW AT WORK—CARLISLE PUBLIC-HOUSES.

MADAM,—Your correspondent, "A. Scott," raises three points in connexion with the above. She says that Carlisle heads the list of convictions of women for drunkenness in the county of Cumberland. May I remind her that Carlisle is quite unlike the rest of the county? It is an industrial centre, and an important railway junction with a density of population of 12 persons to the acre. The rest of the county is made up of Petty Sessional Divisions, with large rural areas with an average density of one person to every 4½ acres. It is obvious that no comparison between the two is of any value. It is easy to exaggerate the importance of convictions for drunkenness as the test of the sobriety of any town; many other factors must be taken into consideration; but the fact remains that last year the number in Carlisle was the lowest known in the city since records have been kept.

The second statement is that the visits of the women magistrates were to "selected" houses. I can only state in reply that the houses visited were chosen haphazard and with no reference to the authorities. I do not deny that it is difficult for women to "mingle freely with the ordinary throng" in public bars which it is not the usual custom for women to enter at all, but it was quite clear that the visitors were unexpected, and they managed to notice a good deal in a short time.

Thirdly, with regard to finance. It is acknowledged that considerable profits are made. It is not to be supposed that to avoid this "A. Scott" would wish that beer should be sold more cheaply than in other places or of a greater strength. The closing of so many houses, sale of corner sites, cessation of advertising, have all helped to build up the profits. The point is that these are no longer enriching private individuals, but can be, and when available, I hope, will be, used to provide counter-attractions to the consumption of drink.

C. D. RACKHAM.

MADAM,—The articles by Mrs. Rackham which have appeared in the last two numbers of THE WOMAN'S LEADER will, I am sure, have roused the interest of your readers in the Carlisle and District System of State Management of the Liquor Trade.

We are anxious to spread knowledge of this admirable effort in the direction of Constructive Licensing Reform, and urge women's societies of all kinds to study the question. We shall be glad to send speakers, free of charge except for travelling expenses, to address meetings on the subject.

Applications should be addressed to Mrs. Renton, Organizing Secretary, Temperance Legislation League, Parliament Mansions, Victoria Street, S.W. 1, who will be glad to give any further information.

JANE WALKER,
 Chairman of Women's Section, T.L.L.

[This paper has no specified editorial policy on temperance questions, but we ourselves think salvation is to be found on the lines of the Bishop of Oxford's Bill, in a democratic system of Local Option which includes disinterested management as one of the options. We welcome discussion from those genuinely interested. ED.]

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COMING EVENTS.

LONDON SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE.

JUNE 9. 5.30. 35 Marsham Street, Westminster. The Right Hon. The Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, K.C., on "The Foreign Office."

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN AND SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND.

JUNE 11. 3.30 p.m. Central Hall, Westminster. Public Meeting to Sign the Declaration of Geneva.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

Exeter and District S.E.C. *JUNE 5.* 3.30. Annual Meeting at the Deanery, Miss Picton-Turbervill on "Women and Citizenship."

Kensington and Paddington S.E.C. *JUNE 15.* 3 p.m. Concert at 11 Vicarage Gate.

St. Pancras S.E.C. *JUNE 15.* 5.30 p.m. Drawing-room Meeting at 20 Gordon Square, W.C., by kind permission of Miss Martin. Miss Helen Fraser on "The Work of the N.U.S.E.C."

TEMPERANCE COUNCIL OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

JUNE 9-12. Temperance Summer School at High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Herts.

WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE GUILD.

Eitham. *JUNE 16.* Miss Whateley on "The Work of the N.U.S.E.C."

Greenwich. *JUNE 9.* 7 King William Street. Miss Whateley on "The Work of the N.U.S.E.C."

WESTMINSTER HOUSING ASSOCIATION.

JUNE 9. 5.15. Public meeting in Great Hall of Westminster School (by kind permission of the Headmaster). Chairman: General Sir Leslie Rundle. Speakers: The Rev. C. S. Woodward, Capt. R. L. Reiss, Mr. Morgan J. Finucane, and Mrs. J. C. C. Davidson.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE.

JUNE 18. 3-5. Garden Party at Aubrey House, Aubrey Walk, Campden Hill, W.8. (by kind permission of the Misses Alexander). Speaker: C. Roden Buxton, Esq., on "The International Situation." Chairman: Lady Parmoor. English Folk Dancing and Madrigals, etc. Tickets 1s., from Mrs. Johnson, 22 Westbourne Park Villas, W.2, or at the door.

WOOLWICH LABOUR PARTY.

JUNE 12. 3.30 p.m. New Street, Woolwich. Miss Whateley on "The Work of the N.U.S.E.C."

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ANNOUNCEMENTS.

LONDON SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE, 35 Marsham Street, Westminster. Secretary, Miss P. Strachey. Weekly "At Homes," Tuesdays in June at 5.30 p.m. See "Coming Events."

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 7th June, 3.30, Music; Lecture: Mr. J. H. Freeman, "Ideals in Sporting Journalism." 6.30, Maude Royden, "The Leadership of the World."

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