

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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

VOL. VII., No. 8.

August 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.

THE NEED FOR WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT.

NANCY STEWART PARNELL.

(A speech delivered at a public meeting under the auspices of the C.W.S.S.)

I am afraid my only justification for speaking on this subject at all is that people have said that the woman's movement only appealed to middle-aged women and did not interest young people and so I was asked just to give my ideas, such as they are, upon the need for women in Parliament.

I would like to say straightway, that I am afraid there are still people who think that politics and religion should be kept apart but, as Cardinal Gasquet made clear at the Catholic Congress, nowadays they cannot be severed. After all every question dealing with man is a human question and every human question is, primarily, a moral question. Indeed in Catholic countries, like Italy and Belgium, one must be either Catholic or anti-Catholic in politics and this may soon be the case in England, for as it is, Catholics can have only one opinion about divorce and education, only to mention two obvious examples. It is up to us Catholics, therefore, to begin to take a really serious interest in politics.

I think everyone now acknowledges the need for women on most *administrative* boards, like the Town Council, but I do not think that everyone quite grasps the genuine need for women in Parliament, the supreme legislative body. Yet every day urgent problems arise concerning women, where a woman's criticism and advice would be peculiarly valuable. Some of these bills have been shelved, because men are not sufficiently interested in them. Sometimes indeed, our reputation suffers, because there are no women to represent our views. For example, a handful of animal lovers in the House of Commons tried for a long time to

get the Plumage Bill passed, to put an end to the wanton cruelties of traders in birds' feathers, but certain other members were able to block the Bill, and the newspapers, instead of blaming them, who had the power to put an end to the trade, blamed instead the thoughtless woman who bought and wore the feathers. It is only just that there should be a fair proportion of women in Parliament to represent women.

The women in industry want women to represent them. Why? Because, if there are no women in the House, men will make all the laws and one cannot remember too often that men and women are not exactly the same, nor have they the same needs, nor are their interests identical. Therefore legislation concerning women, yet made without their co-operation, is bound to be imperfect. For example, many attempts have been made to exclude married women from work in factories and the professions, and though this may be ideal in theory, yet in practise it would prevent a woman, whose husband is ill, or out-of-work, or lazy, from keeping the home together by her own efforts or a childless woman from having some occupation. Nor is sweating, or at least very ill-paid work for women, quite a thing of the past. Many girls have felt also that they have not the same freedom of choice or the same chances of rising as their brothers. Just these few instances I have quoted will give a little insight into how the woman in Parliament could help the woman in industry. Our one woman-member, Lady Astor alone, cannot supply the need, since so much of the work of Parliament is done by committees.

How can one woman serve on every committee, be always in the House, and also attend to her enormous correspondence and lastly, and perhaps, most important of all, how can she adequately represent the views of the millions of women in the United Kingdom? Lady Astor herself appeals for comrades in her truly great work.

She wants women to help her to help all the mothers of the country. For example, how hard it seems that when a poor man dies his widow should have to leave her children, perhaps babies, and go out to work for them! Indeed, many widows have had to put their children into institutions because they cannot earn enough to keep them! I think everyone will agree that it is only just and much better for the children that a pension should be given to that mother. This is a bill which women in Parliament could urge on. One hears, too, of very sad cases, where the father has been imprisoned for some offence and the mother is left to fend for the family. By paying that man for the work he does, and by allowing him to give some of it to his family, and to keep the rest for his own rehabilitation, much suffering might be avoided. It is not just that an innocent family should suffer for the fault of one member. It only seems natural also, that a mother should have the same rights over her children as the father, but legally a man can do what he likes with them without even consulting her. These few instances are but samples of how the woman in Parliament could help the mother in her home.

Surely also a woman's views on Housing, Health and Education are worth hearing and would add considerably to the working value of a bill. Every woman has her ideas on these subjects, because they come largely within her province, and if there were women in Parliament, these ideas could be brought to the notice of the authorities, and if good, included in the clauses of a bill. If a law is to change the lives of a great many women, surely women have the same right as men to see that these laws are good and just.

Lastly, we should always remember that many great things have been wrought by the return of the right people to Parliament. Just ninety-two years ago, the return of Daniel O'Connell at the famous Clare election meant Catholic Emancipation for us. To vote for Daniel O'Connell at that Clare election meant eviction for those poor Irish peasants, but they understood that upon their persistency in returning him to Parliament

hung the fate of Catholicism in the United Kingdom. Three times they sent him to Westminster to be three times rejected, but the voice of the people was the voice of God, the Government gave way, and Daniel O'Connell entered the House of Commons, the first Catholic Member since the Reformation. Many women in England have struggled that women also might sit in the House of Commons, because they felt, like those poor peasants of Clare, that great spiritual issues were at stake. They believed that thus women might help to make the world a little better and the sum of human suffering a little less, for the woman's movement though constitutional in form was always spiritual and human in aim. They are opposed to vice and intemperance on religious grounds as they are to war on humanitarian grounds. They cannot and will not say with one of our politicians, after the most awful war in history "I will sacrifice six million men before I will give way." or with a Catholic general "Force must rule the world." In striving to bring the kingdom of God upon earth, women will remember that that kingdom is not of this world and that we as Catholic lay-men and lay-women can only labour to make straight for others the stony path and leave the rest to God and His ministers.

The Catholic Reading Guild.

The Catholic Reading Guild, whose motto is "The Conversion of England by Books," has its Central Office, Reading Room, and Lending Library at 17, Red Lion Passage, Holborn, W.C.1. We learn from its Report, lately issued, that it has fifty branches all stocked with good books to help the enquirer. It has over 15,000 volumes of all kinds from the simplest legends and stories for children to weighty philosophical and theological works. The Guild wants help of all description including books and service. All who can spare the time should call at the Central Office, it is a curious and pleasant oasis, its charm being enhanced by its unattractive surroundings.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill which received its second reading in the House of Commons on July 5th has now passed through Committee and received its third reading. The thanks of all women are due to Major Farquharson who had charge of the Bill, for his untiring zeal in watching an opportunity for bringing the Bill forward. The Home Secretary made a strong stand for the Bill. A few changes were made in Committee: to the clause raising the age of consent and indecent assault from 13 to 16, an addition has been made providing that the party consenting, if 15 years of age, shall be guilty of misdemeanour. A more serious change, perhaps, is the deletion of the clause which extended the time limit in which proceedings may be taken from six to twelve months after the offence. The Bill is a step forward, and as such had the backing of the women's organisations.

The Catholic petition against increased facilities for divorce signed by 140,208 Catholic women was presented by Lady Sykes on July 14th to Lord Birkenhead, deputising for the Prime Minister. The collection of signatures was the work of the Catholic Women's League, and the Prime Minister had consented to receive a deputation from the League, but owing to pressure on his time was unable to do so. The Lord Chancellor, who, as our readers are aware, is a keen supporter of the Bill, administered consolation to the Catholic deputation, for he was able to tell Lady Sykes and her colleagues, Mrs. James Hope and Miss Margaret Fletcher, that the Government gives no facilities to controversial measures; that this Bill had proved highly controversial and that the strong organised opposition of the Christian Churches had proved that the country was divided.

We record with pleasure that the University of Wyoming, and the University of Iowa are to confer on Mrs. Chapman Catt the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

Representatives from twenty-one women's societies, including the C.W.S.S., met in the Caxton Hall on July 15th, to discuss the need of Women Police, and the recent Home Office Committee's report. Resolutions in favour of the extension of the Women Police

Service, the proper training and status of women police, etc., were carried unanimously.

Miss Eleanor Rathbone, C.C., J.P., who presided, paid tribute to the work of the late Miss Emily Davis, L.I.D., and moved the following resolution, which was carried in silence, all standing:—

"That this Conference of Women's Societies, met to discuss the need for Women Police, has learned with deep concern of the death of Miss Emily Davies. They recognise that in Miss Davies they have lost one of the oldest, ablest, and most devoted pioneers of the cause of women's enfranchisement, and of the cause of the higher education of women. In the name of their own Societies, and of all who desire to secure the fuller use of women's capacities in the service of the community, they desire to record their profound gratitude to Miss Davies for all that she did for women, and through women for the nation."

We read in the Tablet that Mrs. Strong, Vice-Directress of the British School in Rome, has been notified by Cardinal Gasparri that she has been numbered among the corresponding members of the Pontifical Roman Academy of Archaeology. Mrs. Strong is the first woman to enjoy this honour.

The Plumage Bill has received the Royal Assent, thus a blot on the humanity of the Nation is wiped out. It is now the turn of the horses. Good luck to those who are fighting their battle, and that of the performing Animals.

The Consultative Committee has issued an appeal to women who did their bit in the war, to join one or other of the fifty-seven organisations, (including the C.W.S.S.), which the committee represents, and help in the work of reconstruction. Help is needed for improving health and housing, for moral and social progress, for getting better conditions in industry and the professions, and for every other good cause. In fact there is interesting work of all description waiting to be done, and all the organisations are wanting recruits. The appeal is signed by the Chairman, Lady Astor, and the Vice-Chairman, Miss Picton Turbervill.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

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

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THE TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

It is greatly to be regretted that the British Government did not see fit to send a woman representative, or at least an alternate delegate, to the Conference on the traffic in women and children, convened by the League of Nations, and which has just concluded its sessions at Geneva. Two countries had the wisdom to send women—South Africa sent Lady Phyllis Ponsonby and Denmark sent Miss Henni Forchammer. Miss Forchammer, our readers may remember, was the only woman to address the Assembly of the League of Nations, being given the status of a delegate to enable her to do so. She made an impressive appeal to the Assembly on this very question of the traffic in women and children. Denmark showed its wisdom in appointing her as delegate. France, Norway and Sweden sent women technical advisers in Mme. de Witt Schlumberger, Miss Elsie Sen, and Mrs. Wicksell.

Thirty-four nations took part, and a number of international organisations sent representatives to attend the conference to hold a watching brief. The conference is undoubtedly a milestone on the road to the suppression of this abominable traffic.

Questionnaires had been sent to the various Governments, and we are glad to see that the International Women's Suffrage Alliance was asked to submit proposals to the conference. The memorandum of the I.W.S.A. is printed in full in the July issue of *Jus Suffragii*. The Alliance singled out the official regulation of prostitution as an important contributing factor to the traffic in women. Resolutions on this point were passed at the International Suffrage Congress held in Geneva in June, 1920, when the Congress urged the League of Nations to adopt the following policy:—

(a) To recommend to its constituent states

the abolition of the State regulation of prostitution.

(b) To grant mandates for the administration of undeveloped countries, subject to the condition that within the mandatory territory there shall be no regulation, segregation or official toleration of prostitution.

The Alliance also calls the attention of the Conference to the practise of selling girls into service which prevails in the British Colony of Hong Kong. It is contended that these children and girls are being used as slaves, and not as adopted children or domestic servants, and that under this system they are bought and sold into prostitution, and to supply the licensed brothels of the Colony.

The presence of women at this Conference, even in an unofficial position, was of great utility. The best evidence of this is the striking manifesto drawn up jointly by the International women's organisations and presented by Madame de Witt Schlumberger. It was called forth by the proposal put forward by Great Britain and Canada that passport regulations when discontinued for men should be continued for women up to the age of twenty-three. Against this Denmark protested; and the women's manifesto states that all possible protection should be accorded to women and to young girls, but points out that long experience has taught women that protection may be a hidden form of slavery, a masked tyranny, and their wish is that in no country should any law or regulation exist which does not apply equally to the male sex.

We are confident that all women of any experience will agree with this manifesto. We resent the fact that this proposal should have been brought forward by Great Britain; Mr. Shortt may be satisfied with the British delegate, women are not!

The resolution condemning state regula-

Correspondence.

S. Margaret's Day, 1921.

To the Editor of the CATHOLIC CITIZEN.

Madam,

As you have been so charitable as to publish more than one article describing the work of the *Alma Redemptoris Mater* (A.R.M.) Association, may I be allowed, through you, to bid your readers farewell. "When you've heard the East a'calling, you will never heed aught else," and I return gladly to the Missions this month. This time circumstances bid me seek a climate drier and a place nearer home, and my address, if anyone cares to correspond with me, will be Colonial Medical Service, Uganda, B.E.A.

I must thank you very much for your championship—help at the beginning of a movement is worth ten times the same amount when the movement is well established.

Some people want to know why two or three medical movements have sprung up and why they cannot amalgamate. Well, some people think the best way is to select one *place*, and work it, and we get the Rawal Pindi Hospital—others prefer one *country* and one *race* of missionary, and we get the American and the Irish Missions to China. Now I have been "up to the neck" in medical missions since 1875, and I can retrace the way of the various Protestant medical missions and I find that many have tended to amalgamate, but that a few have held out, either on account of religious principle, or of some kindly association with a foundress, or because "blood is thicker than water," and people of the same nationality sometimes get on best. In looking over the three medical mission movements mentioned—with all of which I have had a good deal to do in the past, and even a little in the present—I perceive (1) that Africa is entirely left out, and also South India, Persia and Mesopotamia. (2) that the French and Latin Missions are entirely left out and as they have the honours of martyrdom and of pioneer work under the most deadly conditions prevailing even one century ago and still more 200 or 300 years ago, this hardly seems fair. In time, no doubt Italy (which has produced Dr. Montessori); Spain which produced such a mind as S. Teresa's, France which gave Dr. Agnes McLaren a University training and medical degree, before she could obtain it

(Continued on page 6c).

tion of vice was brought forward by the Dutch representative Mr. de Graaf, who is President of the International Abolitionist Association. The majority he secured was not sufficiently large for the resolution to be adopted by the Conference. The chief opposition came from France and Italy; on this point the Latin countries are in sore need of conversion. The men still hold the accursed and erroneous notion that state regulation is the lesser of two evils, the women have been kept in ignorance of what state regulation means not only to women, but to men. Once let the women realise all that official fostering of vice entails, and state regulation will be doomed in the Latin countries, as it has been doomed in England, mainly through the agency of women.

L. DE ALBERTI.

DEPUTATION FROM MOTHERS' DEFENCE LEAGUE.

The Mothers' Defence League whose President is Mr. G. K. Chesterton, sent a deputation to the Ministry of Health on Tuesday, July 12th, in an endeavour to represent and redress certain grievances suffered by working mothers. The members of the deputation included: Mrs. Nevinson (Woman Justice of the Peace and member of the Hampstead Board of Guardians), Miss Nina Boyle, Mrs. Pratt (late Poor Law Guardian), Dr. White (medical woman), and Miss Agnes Mott (Secretary of the Mothers' Defence League).

The points brought forward for discussion were (1) The adoption of children by Boards of Guardians without the parents' consent and the refusal to permit parents to see their children until they are 18 years of age. (2) The inquisition of working mothers by Health Visitors and Infant Welfare workers in matters of a private and confidential character and the manner of keeping records of the replies upon official forms which are the property of the public authorities. (3) Certification and detention of children alleged to be mentally defective. (4) Methods employed in medical inspection of schoolchildren.

Mr. Stutchbury asked the Mothers' Defence League to report any cases of tyrannical treatment which came to the notice of the League and promised to give them his consideration. He said that the local authorities had control in all these matters, interference from the Ministry not being always advisable.

International Notes.

We much regret to learn that our esteemed correspondent, Frau Hildegard Burjan, has been compelled by ill-health to resign her seat as a Catholic deputy in the Austrian Parliament. She is devoting herself instead to developing the Caritas Socialis, a new lay organisation for women which the special needs of post-war Austria has called forth and which provides at once definite training for workers and a very wide sphere of social activity.

As regards the representation of Catholic women on Austrian elected bodies we learn that there are two women members of the Christian-Social party in the Bundes-rat or Senate, one on the National-rat (House of Commons), three on the Land-tag (County Council), one on the Vienna Town Council and five on the Communal councils. This shows considerable activity among Catholic women; on the other hand it appears there are already seven Socialist women in the National-rat.

Recent debates in both the House of Lords and House of Commons concerning Hungary brought us unexpectedly some interesting correspondence from the Hungarian Catholic Women's Association, begging us to convey to those speakers who had advocated Hungary's rightful claims the grateful thanks of their members. We had much pleasure in conveying the message to Lords Bryce, Newton and Phillimore, as well as to Colonel Wedgwood and Commander Kenworthy.

As in Austria the position of Hungarian Catholics would seem to be one of great difficulty. The settlement imposed by the Peace Treaties has compelled the transference of over 2,300,000 Catholics to the tender mercies of the Orthodox Church whether in Roumania or Servia. To help to remedy the general disorganisation, both religious and moral, that the war has brought about, a number of Catholic women's Societies have affiliated into the Women's Association and they would appear to conduct an active propaganda which is certain of good results.

Le Féminisme Chrétien (June) carries on its propaganda in favour of the Bill for giving the Provincial vote to women, a Bill that has unhappily since been thrown out by the Belgian Chamber. Belgian legislators would seem to be as illogical over Woman Suffrage as our own proved themselves to be. The actual position in Belgium is that women

possess the Communal vote on the same terms as men, that certain categories of war widows enjoy the parliamentary franchise but that no women at all are allowed the Provincial vote. Why?

La Femme Belge now issues a "social edition" which contains a great deal of useful information from all countries on women's industrial conditions. Its attitude remains, however, rather regrettably anti-feminist. Thus in summing up the "Christian" point of view it urges the entire exclusion of married women and mothers from paid work! However desirable this might be as an ideal state the only possible way to work for it without grave injury to women's interests is by a tremendous levelling up of men's wages supplemented by a generous measure for the endowment of motherhood. Unfortunately our contemporary proposes to arrive at it through special restrictive legislation. We must strongly protest against this attitude being accepted as in any way specifically Catholic.

For the last two years the French Senate has delayed voting on a Resolution in favour of Woman Suffrage sent up to it from the Chamber of Deputies. In May, however, we read in *La Française*, it suddenly discussed the subject but only to declare that it could not pronounce upon it with so much precipitancy! The matter therefore stands indefinitely adjourned until our active French Suffrage friends manage to force a decision. Frenchwomen are beginning to feel very bitterly the state of inferiority in comparison with other European women in which their menfolk persist in keeping them.

The same sort of dilatory tactics are being practised at Cape Town, so that no decision on the Woman Suffrage Bill has yet been reached there. Even the constitutional *Woman's Outlook* begins to lose patience—and no wonder, for South Africa and Newfoundland are now the only self-governing Dominions within the Empire where women enjoy no political rights, and it solemnly warns the House of Assembly that the patience of the women may be strained to breaking-point by this "obstinate opposition."

The *Bollettino* of the Italian Unione Femminile Cattolica announces that the next congress of the International Union of all Catholic Women's organisations will be held in Rome next May. V.M.C.

(Continued from page 67).

in her own country, and gallant little Belgium, with its numbers of missionaries out of all proportion to its size—will have doctors, both men and women, on the Missions from among their fellow countrymen. Belgium indeed has, I believe, by now sent two medical men to its Schent Mission in Mongolia, where it has been losing 40% of gallant young priests in the flower of their age from typhus; Holland has also sent a medical man (who takes the A.R.M. movement as his inspiration) to the Dutch Indies. But, on the whole, the Latin countries are conservative, and though several French and some Spanish, Belgians and Italian, missionaries have urged me to go on with what they call my "crusade," and though my first *imprimatur* is due to a French Bishop in India, still it must be years before it becomes common for French and Italian Catholic women to study medicine and go to the Missions. They look on us as stronger-minded. When they have watched our work for a few years, there will probably be a rush to follow suit. One pamphlet of mine and two articles have been published in France and Belgium, and Italy led the way with not only the Holy Father's blessing, but a Protocol of approbation of our A.R.M. Association, from Propaganda, which you kindly printed last autumn.

The Rev. Fr. Arthur Day, S.J., of 114, Mount Street, W., (Farm St. Church) is our Spiritual Director, and will answer enquiries, and gladly receive contributions. I do hope that my departure will not stand in the way of the necessary second year's scholarship (and third, fourth, and fifth year's after that) of the one and only woman student in Great Britain who is studying medicine expressly for the Missions. Fr. Day has also some 20 or 30 books on an A.R.M. bookshelf, which anyone who has the grit and good-will to read up this movement can borrow free. He has also special lantern slides of China, India, etc., and a reading, which he will gladly lend to anyone keen to arouse a much-needed interest, even if it should not be possible to take up a collection. We must educate the Catholic public up to a realisation of the necessity of sending doctors, before we can expect them to give as Protestants do for this object. Dr. McLaren was apt (as do our devoted missionaries, and as do the Protestants) to emphasize the need only of the pagan women. Our Native Christians and fellow Catholics are just as badly off, as poor or poorer, and as much neglected by us. But

our missionaries also badly require medical aid, of both men and women. I will write if I may from the African Equator, where I hope to see Dr. Evelyn Connolly, who recently went out. I may say I think we have found at last a woman doctor for St. Anne's, Kumbakonam. I may say that what is badly needed is a woman of some education and some free time, an open mind and a kind innately motherly heart, who lives practically all the year round in London, and who would place herself in communication with our A.R.M. Spiritual Director, and help him in such ways as it is not fair to ask a busy priest to help. For example, I have had to leave a quantity of missionary books (Protestant and Catholic about medical and other mission works) with him, some to lend and some for distribution, a set of slides and reading, etc. Now it is far more fitting work for a laywoman to answer letters dealing with these and send off packets by post, etc., that for a priest. I do not ask every woman to study medicine and come to the Mission. But I have done that myself, and am returning to work. The home organisation I must leave with others. Is there no fresh convert free to do such work? and to correspond with me in Africa? *Let her speak now.* MARGARET LAMONT, M.D.

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