

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
"THE IRRELEVANCY OF SEX"	115
THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING BILL. By Edward Unwin	115
PROGRESS OF THE DISARMAMENT CAMPAIGN REVIEW :	116
"The Delicate Situation." By M. D. S.	117
EQUAL CITIZENSHIP IN POLAND. By E. J. B.	117
CORRESPONDENCE :	
Equality in Oxford Scholarships	119
Trapping	119

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NOTES AND NEWS.

The Council of the League.

One of the most delicate meetings that the Council of the League of Nations has ever had will have begun by the time this is in the hands of our readers. It is uncertain at the time of writing whether France will be represented by M. Briand. Should he have been chosen President of the French Republic on the day the Council opens, it is hardly likely that he should continue to be France's Foreign Minister. A very heavy load of responsibility will rest on Mr. Henderson as regards the lead given by this country on the vitally important matters which will be before the Council. These are, of course, the Austro-German Economic Union and questions affecting the protection of minorities. The peace and prosperity of Europe will surely depend on the solutions arrived at.

Unemployment Insurance.

Last week the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance was faced with two conflicting doses of evidence from what must, we fear, be described as conflicting sides: the Trades Union Congress and the Confederation of Employers' Organizations. Yet perhaps evidence is an unsuitable word to apply to the material submitted, since "evidence" is generally assumed to relate to a record of immediate experience from which conclusions may be drawn by persons other than the witnesses. In the schemes under consideration we have not so much a record of experience as two full-blown proposals for the treatment of the unemployed which may or may not be constructed on a foundation of special personal knowledge. Indeed, let us frankly confess that at least one of the schemes, that submitted by the T.U.C., seems to us to bear so strong a stamp of unreality that it is difficult to believe the T.U.C. can regard its own production very seriously. Can it be that by submitting a scheme very far removed from anything that is likely to take concrete shape the T.U.C. hopes to divest itself of all moral responsibility for what the Commission may subsequently recommend? Briefly, the T.U.C. proposal is to scrap the insurance basis altogether, together with the contributory principle and the present attempt to discriminate between covenanted and uncovenanted benefits. All the unemployed are to receive benefit and on a substantially increased scale, bringing up the rate of a married man with three children to 45s. a week. For this, the necessary funds are to be provided, not through industrial channels, but by a direct

percentage levy on all incomes. From one point of view the proposal is economically sound. In so far as unemployment is a national problem outside the control of any particular industrial concern, it is desirable that its cost should be widely distributed on a basis of ability to pay rather than on a basis of labour costs as between industry and industry. But is it true that unemployment is so intractable a problem? Evidence is accumulating in support of a sinister picture of industrial parasitism: firms adjusting their short time arrangements and their waiting periods in such a way as to make maximum use of the Insurance Fund's obligation to finance as large a reserve of intermittently employed labour as they may choose to attach to their particular type of work. It is here that the T.U.C. plan seems to reflect so airy a view of the problem under consideration.

Relief and Wages.

Meanwhile, what of the T.U.C. proposal to increase benefits to a point at which, in the case of married men with families, they exceed the existing wages of unskilled labour? To some people this might appear as a proposal directly calculated to extend the evil whose results the scheme is designed to mitigate. If a man is in a position actually to benefit his family by becoming unemployed, can he be blamed for an inclination towards a state of unemployment? But this is no new state of affairs. Relief scales are, in many areas, already considerably in excess of the full weekly earnings of unskilled men—in cases, that is, where the men in question are entitled to relief on behalf of five dependent children. It is true that such relief is given in combination with an unpleasant degree of personal investigation which would not be in question under the T.U.C. scheme; often, too, with the threat of prosecution in cases where the man becomes chargeable by reason of voluntary or culpable loss of employment. The T.U.C. scheme might therefore somewhat intensify this disastrous competition between wages and public maintenance. It would not, however, initiate it, for it is already there. Yet oddly enough the T.U.C. has so far failed to see that the only practical third alternative to the impossible social implications of its own scheme and a restriction of relief or benefit which it does not choose to contemplate is a system of family allowances.

A Mui-tsai Debate in Parliament.

Those readers who have been following the situation with regard to the system of Mui-tsai in Hong Kong will have welcomed the serious attention given to the subject in the House of Commons on Monday of this week, when Sir John Simon raised it in the debate on the Colonial Office Vote. Sir John's convincing speech made a deep impression on the House. He quoted from the Hong Kong daily Press words that surely put an end to the excuse that the Mui-tsai is an adopted child with the privileges of an adopted child. "There is no disguising the fact that the Mui-tsai is a slave." Speakers from different sides of the House, including Mr. Amery, a former Colonial Secretary, Miss Picton Turbervill, and Sir Donald Maclean, took part in the debate. The reply of the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies was most disappointing. As Miss Picton Turbervill pointed out, for ten years such debates have taken place in the House, and the evil is still rampant. In view of the gravity of the subject we propose next week to devote some space to a summary of Sir John's speech and the useful discussion which followed.

The Wills and Intestacies Bill in Committee.

Evidence was given this week by Mr. May, sent by the Law Society, but speaking only on his own behalf, by Mr. Holmes, representing the Liverpool Law Society, and by Mr. Scott, M.P. The two lawyers stated that they had never come across any case of unfair wills, and that they had never known a testator exclude his spouse or children except for a good reason! This

happy innocence can, no doubt, be accounted for by the fact that neither solicitor had had any experience with regard to separations or other matters affecting unhappily married people. Questioned by Miss Rathbone as to whether the large number of separations was not a presumptive evidence of a large amount of marital misfits bound to find expression in disinheritance, Mr. Holmes had to admit that it was so. Mr. Scott—a practising Scottish lawyer—gave evidence as to the comparatively easy working of the Scottish law under which a definite share in the estate is provided for spouses and children. He would have preferred the Bill under discussion to approximate nearer to the Scottish model.

The Case of the Uncertificated Teacher.

Very few people who read the criticism on women members of Parliament by the Secretary of the National Union of School Teachers (no doubt over-emphasized by the popular Press) at a conference in Manchester, realize what particular body of teachers she represented. The National Union of School Teachers is, we understand, composed of uncertificated and supplementary teachers, nearly all women who have a definite grievance in so far that they do the same work as other teachers for less pay. The resolution, which drew forth the strictures on women Members, called upon the Government to institute an inquiry into their position. We do not know what efforts this organization has made to bring their case before Members of Parliament of their own sex, or why they have met with discouragement. But we think no other women's societies will be found to agree with them that women M.P.s only champion a popular cause. From Lady Astor's entry as the first woman to take a seat in the House of Commons down to the present time, women Members almost without exception have regarded themselves as doubly representative—representative not only of their own constituencies but of women's interests. Were there no women on the Committee of the House of Commons composed of members of all three parties, and if not, why? We understand this Committee recommended an inquiry and, if so, surely now when the Burnham Committee is sitting is the right time.

Canteen Work for Mill Girls.

The Stalybridge protest against the stoppage of unemployment benefit to women textile workers who have refused to accept work in Army canteens has now spread to the neighbouring town of Ashton-under-Lyne, where similar decisions have been made by the Court of Referees. The Ashton Trades and Labour Council has decided to address a protest to the Minister of Labour and to its newly-elected Conservative M.P. We cannot believe that much change will be received from either of these persons.

A Malthusian Situation.

A correspondent, writing in the *Manchester Guardian* on 8th May, makes uncomfortable play with contemporary figures of Indian population. India, it seems, has now a population of some 351 million, as compared with approximately 319 million at the time of the 1921 census. This represents a rate of increase considerably in excess of that recorded during the years immediately preceding 1921. Moreover, this further increase is not, it appears, being absorbed, as was the case with the English increase during the nineteenth century, by the cities and by industry. The large cities are increasing at a rate no more than proportionate to the general rate of increase; and the yearly absorption of population by industry, though it may represent a fairly rapid industrial expansion, comprises a meagre fraction of the increase in the agricultural districts. Thus, what might be described as a Malthusian situation arises. India possesses, according to the *Manchester Guardian's* correspondent, a cultivable area of some 300 million acres—much of it of poor quality. Irrigation, which has already been pushed far, might add, in the course of the next twenty to thirty years, a bout 50 million acres more. Meanwhile, the agricultural population, notoriously immobile as between more and less congested areas, is pressing heavily on the land, and the depredations of famine and pestilence have been somewhat restricted, and are likely to be further restricted in the future by organization, transport, and the improvement of the medical services. The situation is not unlike that which confronted the imagination of Malthus in the England of 1799, though already in his own day one of the two large factors were operating which eventually shelved the practical implications of his population problem for at least a century. Those two factors were rapid industrialization and, later, the deliberate limitation of the family by large sections of

the population. It may be that India has the same path to tread.

Cross Bench.

The weekly Parliamentary notes from our most regular contributor, "Cross Bench," do not appear to-day, but will next week be brought up-to-date as usual.

A Catholic Maternity Hospital.

We learn from the *Catholic Herald* that tentative proposals have recently been made for the establishment of a Catholic General Hospital in the Diocese of Salford. Opinion among doctors appears, however, to be inclined towards the more limited proposal of a maternity hospital. It is felt that in this branch of medical treatment there is peculiar need for Catholic handling, especially in view of the recent Papal Encyclical on Christian marriage, in which, as the *Catholic Herald* reminds us, "His Holiness condemned birth prevention and like evils which, it is said, are often taught in maternity hospitals." It is true that to a growing extent birth prevention is, in cases of medical necessity, taught in maternity hospitals, and it is likely to be so to a still greater extent in the future. It may be argued that such teaching need not be received or acted upon by Catholics, but in fact, as the experience of voluntary birth control clinics shows, many hard-pressed Catholic mothers are very ready both to receive and to act upon it. When it comes to the "like evils" referred to by our contemporary, we are on less clearly defined ground. Yet a perusal of the Encyclical in question will suggest pretty strongly what it is that the promoters of the suggested maternity hospital are anxious to avoid. There is in the first place the possibility that in certain cases involving likelihood of future dangerous pregnancy sterilization may be recommended and, with the consent of the patient and her husband, performed. There is in the second place the possibility that, where the life of the mother is at stake, the life of the unborn child may, in a non-Catholic hospital, be deliberately sacrificed. This, of course, is forbidden by the Catholic order, "however much we may pity the mother whose health and even life is gravely imperilled in the performance of the duty allotted to her by nature."

Votes for Spanish Women?

According to *The Times* of last week, the Cabinet of Republican Spain has issued a decree embodying certain principles for the election of the new Cortes. The basis of the franchise is not mentioned beyond the announcement that the voting age shall be reduced from 25 to 23 years. Eligibility for parliamentary candidature is, however, to be extended to priests, women, and civil servants. This seems to suggest that women will receive the parliamentary vote under the new régime. But we should like to be perfectly sure!

Florence Nightingale.

Last December it was decided by the British Red Cross Society to celebrate Florence Nightingale's birthday each year as Red Cross Day throughout the Empire. On 12th May, therefore, wreaths were placed on her statue in Waterloo Place, and a pilgrimage was made to her grave in Wellow churchyard, near Romsey. Although Crimean veterans were invited to be present, we were informed by a Chelsea pensioner that the last died two months ago at the age of 90. An appeal has been issued by the Red Cross to celebrate the birthday asking for help in carrying on missions and work initiated by this mighty pioneer. We are looking forward to reading the *Life of Florence Nightingale*, by I. B. O'Malley, well known to our readers as a former editor of this paper.

Miss Gertrude Tuckwell's 70th Birthday.

Miss Gertrude Tuckwell, one of the first women magistrates in London, and who, it will be remembered, was made Companion of Honour by this Government, will be the guest of the National Labour Club to celebrate her seventieth birthday in June. It is interesting to remember that twenty-five years ago Miss Tuckwell initiated the *Daily News* Sweated Industries Exhibition, which did so much to prepare the public conscience for the Trades Board Act of 1909, the Act which to-day protects over three million people. Miss Tuckwell was also honorary secretary and subsequently President of the Women's Trade Union League, which did so much for women workers before its absorption in the National Federation of Women Workers. Of recent years she has devoted most of her energies to rousing public opinion on the question of maternal mortality.

"THE IRRELEVANCY OF SEX."

Last week Miss Susan Lawrence resisted an amendment moved by Mr. Isaac Foot on the Standing Committee, which is considering the Town and Country Planning Bill, which provided that any members co-opted on joint committees set up under the provisions of the Bill should include at least two women. The opposition to this amendment by several members of the Committee, including the Parliamentary Secretary herself, was based on the startling grounds that while co-opted members did useful work on Committees dealing with child welfare, mental treatment, maternity or education, they were not concerned with the question of town or country planning. Miss Lawrence not only opposed, she poured scorn on the proposal—a silly amendment she called it, riding the principle of sex equality to an absurd length. Mr. Foot, ably supported by Miss Picton Turbervill, held his ground valiantly, and only withdrew on the understanding that he should be satisfied before Report stage that there was some guarantee of the representation of women. It is hardly necessary in these pages to discuss whether or not women are concerned with the wise planning of towns and country districts. As Mr. Foot said, the arguments of those who thought differently hardly deserved an answer. We are, however, more interested in Miss Lawrence's admirable *obiter dictum*: "In matters of pure intelligence, sex is irrelevant." Incidentally we might point out that Hansard made the following hash of it, "that the pure intelligence of sex is absolutely and completely irrelevant" (fortunately Press reporters were quicker to catch her meaning). Her words are so *relevant*, so true, that they will be cherished in our memories; they well deserved the place they achieved among the great sayings of the week. Miss Lawrence is herself a witness to their truth. By her own unquestioned intellectual merits she has attained office rank in spite of her sex. But her own political and well deserved success has perhaps blinded her to the struggles of other less fortunately placed women.

Has she forgotten the small percentage of women on local authorities—in some places none at all? Hardly, because she recognizes that the meagre numbers must be supplemented by special provision for co-opted women for certain social services, but for town and country planning any form of security for the

representation of women is "silly." Mr. Foot pleaded that he was trying to provide safeguards until the time had come when the public mind had been educated to the proper place of women on local authorities. He might, indeed, have said that he wished for safeguards until the public were educated up to Miss Lawrence's principle—the best person irrespective of sex. Does Miss Lawrence really think that in matters of pure intelligence sex is irrelevant? Is pure intelligence the criterion in the teaching profession? How many women hold Professorial chairs? How many women heads are to be found in mixed schools? What about the enforced retirement of married women? In law, in the church, in medicine, in the Civil or municipal service where intelligence is looked for, can it be said that sex is irrelevant? The *Manchester Guardian*, commenting approvingly on Miss Lawrence's sentiments, says women in all departments of public life are no longer a curiosity but a normal part of the machinery of administration. They ought not to need the kind of protection that was proposed in the Amendment. They can now stand or fall on their own merits.

What utter nonsense this is every woman knows. Not a single woman was appointed to the British delegation of the Round Table Conference, though it seemed only fitting that the two able Indian women delegates should have had the companionship and support of their own sex. The Committee now sitting on Shop Assistants, of whom far the larger number are women, had not a single woman member until, after considerable pressure, advantage was taken of a vacancy to appoint *one*. There are County and Town Councils responsible for the well-being of thousands of homes entirely run by men. There are hospital boards without a single woman member. We don't want protection or privilege. Women must run their chances at the polls equally with men. But we do claim that there are certain public services on which special points of view, otherwise likely to be overlooked, can be secured by the method of co-optation on special Committees. We therefore believe that until the question of sex is as irrelevant as it ought to be, and women have their full share in public life, we must put up with the expedient of some form of statutory guarantee of their representation such as Mr. Foot proposed.

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING BILL.

By EDWARD UNWIN.

The Bill now before Parliament should, if adequately used by the Local Authorities, be the beginning of a new era of really effective town planning. This Bill remedies the most serious deficiencies in existing legislation and gives most of the extra powers that Local Authorities and town planners have been asking for.

The main provisions of the Bill can be divided into three categories. First, it increases the matters which can be dealt with by town planning. Secondly, it widens the area over which town planning powers may be exercised to include both the built up areas and the rural areas not likely to be developed in the near future, but where ribbon development along the main roads and other evils have been going on unhindered. Thirdly, it enables planning authorities to recover a larger proportion of the cost of carrying out a scheme from those directly benefiting.

Under the first category the most important is the power to zone land against development, either temporarily or permanently. Land not yet ripe for development may be temporarily zoned against development without compensation (the position to be reconsidered every three years), and anybody wishing to develop will have to submit a scheme which must be approved, and obtain a development order before building may take place. Permanent reservation against development may be applied without compensation to any lands that would be unhealthy to develop; where development would entail very serious damage to amenity; or where the provision of essential services such as water supply or drainage would entail undue difficulty or expense on the Local Authority. This clause will mean that the preservation of open areas in the low-lying Thames Valley, or on the tops of the downs, will become a comparatively simple matter, and should in many cases reverse the whole method of planning; in the past it has only been possible to plan an inadequate pattern of open space on a background of potential development. This method of designing the voids and assuming that the rest of the land will become the solids is contrary to the whole principle and method of proper design.

The new provisions should make it possible to approach the matter in the logical method of planning the areas for development on a sufficient background of open land.

One other power which should be mentioned is that County Councils and Local Authorities are in this Bill empowered to purchase land adjacent to any main road for the purpose either of restricting development or securing proper development of the frontages. This power, if adequately used, would effectively preserve our main highways for traffic and prevent ribbon development. When we examine the provisions as to compensation it will be seen that they also greatly facilitate the application of this clause.

With regard to the widening of the area over which town planning can be applied, the most important provisions are, first the extension of town planning powers to built up areas, and secondly the power to make statutory joint town planning schemes or regional planning schemes without depriving the Local Authorities of power to make their own detailed planning scheme within the regional scheme. This has been one of the most difficult problems in the past and effective regional planning has been hampered by the fact that if a statutory joint committee was formed, the local authorities joining that committee had to hand over to it the whole of their town planning powers. This they were in most cases rightly unwilling to do. For while the bigger problems of main communications, allocation of development and regional open spaces can only be effectively dealt with over a fairly large region, the detailed planning needs an intimate local knowledge which the regional committee seldom possess.

Under the new procedure, where the regional scheme comes first, as in the normal case it should, the provisions of the regional plan will have the protection of law until the details are filled in by the local town planning schemes, and the local authority will be expected to include the provisions of the regional scheme as they affect the area in their local schemes when made. In most rural areas where urban development is not taking place the power to enforce the provisions of the

regional scheme would, in most cases, be sufficient to control any building taking place.

Finally, in regard to betterment there are two very important clauses. The town planning authority can in future levy betterment from owners whose land is improved in value by the scheme up to the full amount of such increase in value; it is anticipated that this will not be fully done in practice, but it will at least be a very valuable power in negotiating with owners. A later clause gives an alternative method of levying betterment which will probably be of even greater value. Where the planning authority expends money, as for example in the purchase of open spaces, they are empowered to levy betterment on all the owners benefiting by the expenditure up to the amount of such expenditure. Again, it is doubtful if this will be used up to the limit of the powers granted, but in the matter of open spaces there is a proportion of this betterment which the larger landowners themselves agree to be right and reasonable. The greater part of the value of land is often its prospective building value. When the land is acquired for open space, the public do not acquire this building value, neither do they reduce the total building which will take place. The building that would have taken place on the lands reserved for open space is definitely transferred with the building values it creates to neighbouring lands, and it is fair that the owners of such lands should contribute towards the cost of the open space this extra value that they have gained.

The good reception that this Bill has had from all parties in the House indicates the general awakening of opinion in regard to the unsatisfactory development now going on and gives reasons to hope that much of the spoilation of the countryside will be effectively checked in the near future.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

A Woman Auctioneer.

We offer congratulations to Miss Margaret Price, of Oxted, on her emergence as second in a list of 698 candidates for the annual professional examinations of the Auctioneers and Estate Agents Institute. It is in her case no mere ornamental qualification. She has already worked for two years in an auctioneer's office, and proposes to continue to do so, as a fully qualified auctioneer.

Miss Loretta Turnbull, of the United States, one of Kay Don's chief rivals for the D'Annunzio Cup, recently won the Fascist Cup for outboard motor boats on Lake Garda.

Miss Lilian M. Thomas is the only woman to get into the Honours List in the final examinations of the Law Society.

Under the Portuguese electoral law, married women and widows are entitled to vote. The age limit is 21 for men and women.

Mustapha Kemal Pasha, President of Turkey, and his party, at a recent annual conference, passed a resolution in favour of votes for women and giving them power of election as deputies to the National Congress.

Mrs. M. A. Pickering, of Thurlaston, has been Clerk to the Parish Council and Assistant Overseer for the last twenty-two years.

(Continued from next column.)

Council of National British Women's Total Abstinence Union unanimously passed a resolution on 7th May pledging itself "to co-operate with other bodies in the education of public opinion (regarding Disarmament) and in obtaining signatures to the International Disarmament Declaration."

The International Declaration is now in circulation in eighteen languages, including Chinese, and in over thirty countries.

POLICY.—The sole policy of THE WOMAN'S LEADER is to advocate a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women. So far as space permits, however, it will offer an impartial platform for topics not directly included in the objects of the woman's movement but of special interest to women. Articles on these subjects will always be signed, at least by initials or a pseudonym, and for the opinions expressed in them the editor accepts no responsibility.

PROGRESS OF THE DISARMAMENT CAMPAIGN.

RECENT NEWS.

The campaign in Birmingham is being run by an influential committee, presided over by the Bishop of Birmingham, supported by the Lord Mayor and the Archbishop of Birmingham. Sunday, 3rd May, was observed throughout the city as Disarmament Sunday, and all the Church of England clergy and Nonconformist ministers were asked to preach special Disarmament sermons and to collect signatures to the Declaration. Extract from the Bishop's letter to the clergy in his diocese: "I am sure that, in view of the Disarmament Conference next February, we ought to take exceptional steps to ensure that, whoever may then be our Foreign Minister, he shall go as representative of a strong desire from our people that the present waste of money on competitive armaments shall be brought to an end."

The Eastern Section of the Scottish Liberal Federation is issuing a letter to Scottish constituencies similar to the National Liberal Federation letter, recommending the Declaration to them, and enclosing copies.

The Scottish National Council of the League of Nations Union, in Glasgow, has passed a resolution recommending the District Councils and individual branches "to co-operate with the W.I.L. and to arrange branch meetings where advisable in order to obtain signatures to their Declaration, and also to have a house-to-house canvass."

The North of Scotland League of Nations Union branches are taking up the Declaration enthusiastically, and are asking the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes to join with them in collecting signatures.

In Caermarthen (South Wales), 2,300 people have signed out of a total population of 10,000; 1,300 of these were collected during three days at performances of the film "All Quiet on the Western Front."

At the annual meeting of the National Federation of Women's Institutes, at the Albert Hall, London, on 19th and 20th May, the Declaration is to be referred to and explained from the Chair by Lady Denman, and forms will be available for signature.

The Manchester W.I.L. Branch is to hold an open-air meeting in Manchester Park in June, and is planning a tour into country districts in June and July.

House-to-house canvassing has started in Harpenden.

A number of meetings are planned in the mining district round Newcastle.

Out-door meetings with cars, posters, etc., to be held in May, round Newcastle.

Barnet W.I.L. has printed 10,000 leaflets for use in house-to-house canvassing.

Over fifty organizations now co-operating in Great Britain.

The Chief Rabbi has circulated a letter to all Rabbis in the British Empire, recommending their support of the Declaration.

171,000 Declaration forms have now been sent out. This would mean three and a half million signatures if all were returned filled.

Recent important signatures: Dr. Louisa Garrett Anderson, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Episcopalian Bishop of Edinburgh. From Canada: Hon. W. L. Mackenzie (Liberal Leader in the House of Commons, Ottawa), Hon. Ernest Lapointe, Premier Brownlee of Alberta. From Germany: Herr Colmann, formerly Director of the Zeppelin works at Friedrichshafen.

(Continued in previous column.)

"THE DELICATE SITUATION."

When Miss Naomi Royde-Smith followed up *Summer Holiday* with *The Island* we held our breath in suspense, because it seemed to us that her arithmetical progression of increasing excellence was interrupted. The book was no better than its predecessor. It was not so good. Now, with the publication of *The Delicate Situation*,¹ we draw breath again. Miss Royde-Smith is once more marching from strength to strength. Yet that abstract noun has a misleading ring. Strong in its precision and economy Miss Royde-Smith's newest novel may be. Nevertheless, its haunting quality is that which is suggested by its singularly appropriate title; its delicacy and its grace. Thrusting back into the eighteen fifties, Miss Royde-Smith is able to assume all the reserves of that chastening period, and to apply to them seemingly without incongruity, the cool judgment of the twentieth century. It sounds, on the face of it, a terrible thing to do. Yet Miss Royde-Smith is sufficiently skilful—and shall we say sufficiently humane—to do it without disaster. And the doing of it carries her well out of the rut of modern fiction.

The "delicate situation" of which she writes is a sufficiently conventional one to emerge without much dignity from a bare recital in outline. It concerns a girl whom we are allowed to see only, as it were, in reflection, as the embodiment of youth and loveliness. We see her through the perception of her aunt, upon whose personality the story is strung out. Having turned from the prospect of an easy marriage, this same aunt, Miss Lena Guibell, settles down to a régime of personal freedom, salted with the memory of an unfulfilled youthful love affair. Its fulfilment comes later, and vicariously, through the niece who is at the same time a child of the lost lover. The niece's love affair takes, however, the Victorian course of flight, betrayal, public shame, and death. In that shame the domestic affairs of the aunt and of the elderly friend with whom she lives are mildly involved. There is something approaching a village scandal, through the tribulations of which there emerge triumphantly and unforgettably the qualities of the elderly friend: Miss Martin, of Chantrey House. Miss Martin is one of Miss Royde-Smith's finest creations. Perceptive and infinitely tolerant behind her conventional rigidity, she rings true through every phrase that she utters. For Miss Martin's sake alone the book would have been worth writing and worth reading.

Yet there is one point at which Miss Royde-Smith meets her limitations. Time, she can surmount. Space gives her more trouble. She is the child of an urban civilization, and somehow with all her skill, the remote, East Dorset countryside of which she writes, never quite comes to life. She tells us of its changing seasons, yet their change is only skin deep. Her mastery is in the world of men and women; among the harmonies and frictions of their personalities. In the world of nature she is an observant visitor rather than an intimate participant. She visits *Thrae* for love of *Mr. Nahum*, remaining merely on bowing terms with its mistress, *Miss Tarune*.

M. D. S.

EQUAL CITIZENSHIP IN POLAND?

The current number of *La Femme Polonoise* gives an interesting account of the position of women in present-day Poland. In theory, under the Polish Constitution of 1921, men and women enjoy equal rights and opportunities; in reality the Polish woman finds her "equal" citizenship has the substance of a shadow. Though she has the vote, and is eligible for election, it is almost impossible for a woman to enter upon a Parliamentary career, and the present seventeen women members among the 500 odd deputies and senators only gained their seats after great difficulty and much bargaining with political parties. Paragraph 96 of the Constitution declares that "in the eyes of the law all citizens are equal, and all public appointments are open to them . . ." A fine sounding phrase, but one that must ring somewhat bitterly in the ears of the Polish woman civil servant. Nearly all the higher posts are reserved for men, and the majority of women employees never reach the higher grades. Thus in 1929, among the 2,909 women employed in the various Ministries, only twenty-five held higher grade posts. The Ministry of Labour employs 130 inspectors, responsible for some 820,000 workers, of whom 25 per cent. are women and young persons, but there are only ten women inspectors attached to the Ministry. In commerce and the professions there is the same inequality of status and opportunity, according to our contemporary. There are some 1,000 registered medical women

¹ *The Delicate Situation*, by Naomi Royde-Smith. Gollancz, 7s. 6d. net.

in Poland, but only very few hold public appointments. In the teaching world the women students outnumber the men, but the better posts are closed to them, and it was not until 1929 that two women were appointed Professors for the first time. There are only thirty-three schools for girls, as against 196 for boys, excluding some "mixed" schools, and the problem of higher education for girls is a costly one. As *La Femme Polonoise* points out, it is the women themselves who are as much, if not more, to blame than the men for this state of affairs. They are still too self-conscious, too passive, and in many cases too ill-equipped professionally to assert themselves, or press for a more equal reorganisation of society. But there is a strong and growing conviction among Polish women that not until they have broken down the hampering restrictions of prejudice and tradition and share equally with men the responsibilities of full citizenship will Poland take a place worthy of the struggles of the past.

E. G. B.

MRS. UNDERHILL AT THE GUILDHOUSE.

From a Correspondent.

Mrs. Underhill is better known, perhaps, by her former title of Mrs. Starr. Her name has become a household word in England, because of her heroic rescue of Mollie Ellis when the latter was captured and carried across the border by the wild Afghans a few years ago. Many people do not know, however, that Mrs. Starr was a nurse in a Mission Hospital where her husband was the doctor-in-charge. Some Afghans came over the border and murdered him, because a relative of theirs had become a Christian when a patient in the hospital. Mrs. Starr saw her husband stabbed to death, and yet she continued to nurse in that hospital where the patients belonged to the same tribes as her husband's murderers. That, surely, shows even greater heroism than her rescue of Mollie Ellis.

On 7th May, Mrs. Underhill addressed a representative and very keen audience at the Eccleston Guildhouse. Her subject was "Religion behind Social Reforms in India To-day," and she stressed especially the great part which is being played by women. Miss Maude Royden, C.H., was in the chair. In a brief introductory speech she remarked that she felt Christianity had lost much in the past by refusal of Christians to recognize in any way the great truths inherent in other religions, but yet she was convinced that Christianity had more than any other religion to teach the world to-day.

Mrs. Underhill began by saying that there were great opportunities and correspondingly great dangers in India to-day. Both these were due to the impact of Western civilization. Britain had done much for India, especially by ruling her with splendid impartiality and justice. Railways and irrigation schemes have done a great deal for material progress. But, on the other hand, we have taken much away. Railways have done more than anything else to break down the caste system. Indian girls are now growing very keen on education, and when Hindu girls are sent to college they often leave it believing in no faith at all. This is partly because when their minds are broadened Hindu superstitions fail to retain a hold on them, and partly because in the busy college life the girls have no time to perform daily their lengthy religious ceremonies, and when the outward observance goes everything seems to go. But is this a good thing? Indian women are now demanding and getting much more liberty; there are anti-purdah leagues, and public opinion is slowly beginning to turn against the Child Marriage System. But what is to prevent liberty from degenerating into license? Can reforms control? There is not the power behind them to make them work. Is education enough? Not when it is divorced from character-training and religion. The authorities are so convinced of this, that in a large girls' college in Madras every girl may be instructed in her own faith, which is an absolutely new thing for India. Is Nationalism enough? The Cawnpore riots are the answer to that.

Mrs. Underhill went on to say that India is now demanding the results of Christianity without Christianity itself. Though the Christian community is numerically small, yet 97 per cent. of the social workers in India are Christians. This is partly because the Christian women do not suffer from the purdah system and partly because in the Christian communities the girls are given as good an education as the boys. Also the authorities, both Hindu and Moslem, prefer Christian workers, because they feel they can trust them to be fair to the adherents of all the other religions.

Mrs. Underhill ended with an impassioned plea to us to remember that Christianity is not a Western religion—it was

COMING EVENTS.

B.B.C.

Monday, 18th May. 7 p.m. "New Books." Miss V. Sackville-West.
Wednesdays, 10.45. "The Week in Westminster." 20th May: Miss
Lloyd George, M.P.
Tuesdays, 7.25. Sir William Beveridge: "Unemployment."

"CATHERINE OF SIENA."

20th May. 8 p.m. King George's Hall, Great Russell Street, W.C. 1.
A new historical drama by A. M. Allen.

DIVORCE LAW REFORM UNION.

21st May, 7.30. Caxton Hall, S.W. 1. Annual Meeting.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELFARE.

May 27-28-29. Central Hall, Westminster. Conference on Mental
Health. Inaugural Meeting, Thursday, 27th May, 8.25. Chair: Miss
Susan Lawrence, M.P.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN.

15th-20th June. Aberdeen. Annual Conference.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES.

19-20th May. Royal Albert Hall, S.W. Annual Meeting. Sessions
10.45-12.30, 2-4.30 p.m.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.
Acton W.C.A.

21st May, 3 p.m. Visit to Curzon Laundry, Avenue Road.

North Kensington Townswomen's Guild.

20th May, 2.30. The Venture, Portobello Road, W. 11. Mrs. Horn-
brook: "A Day in the Home." Discussion on school-leaving age.

NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN TEACHERS.

15th May, 7.30. Central Hall, Westminster. Mass Meeting to urge for
the representation of the N.U.W.T. upon the Standing Joint Committee
on Salaries of Teachers in Elementary Schools.

ROYAL ACADEMY.

9 a.m.-7 p.m. Summer Exhibition. Admission 1s. 6d.

SAFETY WEEK.

To 16th May.

SAINT JOAN.

8 p.m. "Saint Joan": Haymarket Theatre. Matinees, Wed. and
Sats., 2.15. With Sybil Thorndike.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

4th June, 4.30. Minerva Club, Brunswick Square. Miss Grace Ellison:
"The Women of Jugo-Slavia and Turkey."

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would secure admission for her visitor to the
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Publications, Periodicals, Newscuttings. In-
formation given to non-members 10-8 (except
Saturdays).

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse,
Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 17th
May. 3.30: Mr. A. Rea, "Value and Influence
of Theatres in and around London." 6.30: Miss
Maude Royden, "The Secret of Joy."

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