

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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

VOL. V., No. 12.

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

Daughter of the ancient Eve,
We know the gifts ye gave and give;
Who knows the gifts which *you* shall give,
Daughter of the newer Eve?

—Francis Thompson.

THE WOMAN BOROUGH COUNCILLOR.

By VIRGINIA M. CRAWFORD.

(Borough Councillor.)

It is instructive to note how the centre of interest for women's municipal work has changed over from the Boards of Guardians to the Borough Councils. Boards of Guardians, as we all know, offered the first recognised field for women's public activities, for the most benighted anti-suffragist was willing to admit that educated women might help to administer a workhouse nursery without loss of true womanliness. And for well-nigh fifty years women have rendered splendid and devoted service on Boards of Guardians all over the country, so competently indeed that Mr. Sidney Webb declared many years ago that but for the work of the women guardians the Poor-Law, as we know it, could not possibly have survived so long. Meanwhile, until a quite recent date, the number of women councillors remained extremely small; on the old Vestries which survived until 1899 there were but a dozen Vestry-women in the whole of London. Not only was it very difficult for women to secure election, but few felt drawn to work in which drainage and street paving and finance appeared to play the predominating part. To-day all this is changed. Boards of Guardians are dying institutions; no new functions are ever entrusted to them, so strong is public prejudice against them, and it is Borough Councils that administer all the modern forms of public and municipal activity.

Hence more and more women are coming forward as candidates at Borough Council elections, and as all wives of parochial electors now enjoy the right to vote on their husband's qualification, the number of women electors has been largely increased and the chances of women candidates proportionately improved. For though some men are still apt to dwell on women's jealousy of one another,

there is undoubtedly a wide-spread desire among women voters to see themselves represented by other women. "I've always held that women have more sense than men," a remark made to me by a working woman-voter at the recent election, represents a fairly common view when matters under discussion are such problems as housing, municipal milk, baths and wash-houses and so forth.

To-day the many women of all parties who, we are glad to know, were successful candidates at the recent Borough Council election, will find no lack of specifically "feminine" questions into the settling of which they can throw their energies. Housing is the first and foremost of them. Some Boroughs have been lamentably apathetic in formulating schemes and in all there are still grave financial difficulties to solve before any schemes can be carried out. The women councillors can at least press the subject forward with all their sex's pertinacity and give practical advice as regards the type of home needed and the fittings to be provided. Bath rooms, central hot water supply, play grounds, labour-saving contrivances of all kinds should be considered by them in every minute detail. In the matter too of converting large houses into flats a woman's wit could be brought to bear with happy results.

Another matter, scarcely less urgent, is that of the milk supply. With milk at 1/- a quart, and the unemployment benefit come to an end, it is obvious that very few babies in industrial districts will enjoy a sufficiency of milk this winter. Not a few risk having none at all. It is within the competency of the Council, acting in conjunction with its medical Officer of Health, either to provide milk free or at a rate below cost price for all expectant mothers and babies who need it. These

powers should be used to the full this winter and steps taken immediately to ensure that poor women shall know that they can obtain milk by applying for it.

Women councillors should insist that a due proportion of their number should be placed on the Public Health committee of the Council. All questions of local health and sanitation come under these committees and fresh duties are constantly being laid upon them. All the sanitary inspectors, male and female, work under the supervision of the committee; it issues orders for the repair and closing of insanitary dwellings, supervises day Nurseries and Infant Consultations and indeed all forms of Infant Welfare work, deals with Tuberculosis and all infectious diseases, and inspects laundries, workshops and other places where women are employed. Moreover where there is a staff of female officials, such as sanitary inspectors and health visitors, it is most desirable that women should sit on the committees that select them and to which they have to report. Women better than men can ensure that where the privacy of the home has to be invaded by an official it should be done with as much tact and kindness as possible and with a genuine desire, not merely to find fault, but to help and encourage the often much-harassed mother of the working-classes. The whole question of domestic inspection and the giving of advice to parents concerning the management of their homes and their children is a difficult one; the due limits within which it is justifiable may easily be overstepped and women councillors should make it a duty to stand, where necessary, between the parent and the over-zealous and sometimes tactless official. Catholics will appreciate how necessary such supervision might conceivably become.

Among other spheres of activity that come under Borough Councils women will be interested in the baths and wash-houses which, well-worked, should be an immeasurable boon to working-class households, in the Public Library where there is one, in the registration of lodging-houses and in the suppression of disorderly houses, a duty which unhappily in some boroughs to-day has become an urgent and very difficult problem.

All that has been said goes to show that if

it is most desirable to have women councillors, it is even more so to secure women for the job of the right sort. They must be widely practical, free from fads, and with some first hand knowledge of the conditions of life in industrial districts. For women of the upper classes this is often difficult to arrive at, but they should at least realize that the lives and needs of working-class families cannot safely be judged from their own often narrow class standpoint. Every Borough Council would be better for the inclusion of one or two competent working women of the type that the Women's Co-operative Guilds are educating so successfully and who would certainly bring with them specialised and valuable knowledge. For the rest, mothers of families, trained nurses and sanitary inspectors and experienced settlement workers, should all be in a position to contribute a useful quota of knowledge to a Council. It is quite true that there are rows of men councillors with no special qualifications for their job, but the whole country looks to women to help to raise the level of our municipal politics and to shew in practice how essential is our co-operation in the public life of the nation.

INTERNATIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE CONGRESS.

After seven years the International Woman Suffrage Alliance is going to hold its full Convention in Madrid in the beginning of April, 1920. Postal difficulties have delayed the official call of the President, Mrs. Chapman Catt; but this will follow later, and will also be published in the January number of the International Woman Suffrage News. This is a preliminary notice so that friends of the Woman's Movement may be able at once to make preparations for attending the Convention.

The presence of women from all countries, East as well as West, will be an irresistible force, and we appeal to friends of the Woman Movement throughout the world to attend the Convention in Madrid in April, 1920.

Those who wish further particulars should write immediately to the Headquarters Secretary, I.W.S.A., 11, Adam Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.2, England.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

We offer our hearty congratulations to Lady Astor, M.P., whether one is for or against the Coalition, whether one is Conservative, Labour, Liberal or non-party, all women will rejoice that the first woman M.P. and a very able woman—takes her seat at Westminster. The Countess Markiewicz has not done so, and Lady Astor has the honour of being the first woman to sit in the House of Commons. There can be no doubt that she will hold her own.

We note with pleasure that in the debate on the Indian Bill, Lady Astor voted against the Government and for the amendment to confer the franchise on Indian women. The amendment was unfortunately lost.

The Catholic Social Year Book for 1920 (1s. net.) is entitled "A Guide to Social Students," and let us say at the outset that on various social questions students will find it a very valuable guide. But when we turn to our own question, we are forced to the conclusion that the Guild is even at this late hour lamentably ignorant of the strength and importance of the women's movement. For the study of feminism the text-book provided is "Christian Feminism," a book issued by the Guild some years ago, of which there has been a recent new edition. In the opinion of those of us who have taken an active part in the suffrage movement and are qualified to speak, this book is totally inadequate. To other study courses proper attention has been paid, and the student is given an opportunity of judging of outside work, and outside views, it is only the feminist movement which has been dismissed in this summary way. Women who owe their enfranchisement to the labours of others, should at least have some idea of what these other women suffered for them in a fight that lasted over fifty years, and which has been dismissed in a page. If this book is for advanced students, what we may ask is reserved for the elementary classes? The only other book given for this course is Father Cuthbert's "Catholic Ideals in Social Life." We read in the Catholic press many eloquent appeals for support to be given to the Guild. It is quite certain that unless the C.S.G. can show a proper appreciation of the woman's movement, it will get no support

from progressive women. We note that in the introduction to the new edition the writer seems to hope that there will be no women's question now and that the word feminism will drop out of the language. We can hold out no such hope until women are placed on a proper footing of equality with men.

When the Sex Disqualification Bill came up for consideration in the House of Lords, their Lordships, as was expected, cut out the amendment put in by the Commons, which would have enabled peeresses in their own right to sit in the House of Lords—the other amendments were accepted.

We deal with the Bill in another column. In the House of Commons we note that of the Catholic M.P.s, Lord Edmund Talbot and Sir Stuart Coats voted against and J. MacVeagh for women.

The October number of *Le Féminisme Chrétien* (Brussels) publishes a translation of Miss Fennell's article, "The Women Citizen's Association," which appeared recently in the "Catholic Citizen." In the same paper an account is given of the reasons why Parliament has dissolved without conferring the vote on women.

"La Femme Belge" for November gives a detailed account of the work of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society in England, since its foundation in 1911 to the present day, concluding with the Holy Father's approval as expressed to Miss Christitch.

A recent number of "El Debate" (Madrid), likewise gives an account of the C.W.S.S., but our Spanish contemporary, though very kind, gives a rather misleading impression, which we hope to rectify.

We thank the sub-committee and all who helped to make our Dance a success, especially Mrs. Anderson who undertook the catering, which was very successful. Special thanks are also due to Miss B. White, and of course to all ticket sellers. We have also to thank all who helped us at our Stall at the Christmas Fair, and all who sent presents and who came to buy. We made £19 8s. 5d. at the Fair. The profit of the Dance was £6 6s.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

Office: 55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W., I. Tel. Museum 4181.

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Hon. Editor MISS LEONORA de ALBERTI.
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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

THE SEX DISQUALIFICATION BILL.

The Sex Disqualification Bill, the Government's beloved child which was substituted for the Labour Party's Emancipation Bill, has passed both Houses of Parliament, and will shortly become law. The franchise amendment, which was down in the name of the Labour members—Mr. Henderson, Mr. Adamson and Mr. Spoor, was found by gentlemen learned in Parliamentary procedure to be outside the scope of the Bill, since it was a question not of conferring qualifications, but of removing disqualifications. It will no doubt be consoling to the many thousands of young women whom a grateful country is hounding out of industry, and other employment, and who are by this quibble, and the Government's obstinacy, deprived of the protection of the vote, to learn that they are not labouring under a disqualification, they merely lack a qualification. It sounds like a bad riddle. Mr. Lloyd George has a pretty wit; it would be at least entertaining, if the subject were not serious, to hear him juggling with this legal quibble before an audience of young women smarting under this lack of a qualification, which is not a disqualification. But I do not think, though he has courage, that the Prime Minister would face such an audience. The franchise clause has gone, but we look to our friends in the House, and to the first woman M.P., to bring the matter up again at the first opportunity.

The Bill provides that:

"A person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage (the word 'marriage' being inserted at the instance of Major Hills), from

the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to any civil or judicial office or post, or from entering or assuming any civil profession or vocation, or from admission to any incorporated Society (whether incorporated by Royal Charter or otherwise), and a person shall not be exempted by sex from the liability to serve as a juror."

To this was added a sub-clause prescribing the mode of admission of women to the Civil Service, excluding them from admission to the Civil Service in any of His Majesty's possessions overseas or in any foreign country.

It was round this clause that a battle was fought between the supporters of women and the speaker for the Government, still anxious to protect women "in their own interests." What have we not suffered from these kindly gentlemen, with their paternal protection? But the debate shows a marked improvement even in those who do not yet understand. All women should read it. Only Sir F. Banbury spoke of the fair sex, and of those who liked their deliberations assisted by beauty. Decidedly, the House of Commons is improving! Lord Robert Cecil, that true champion of women, was regrettably absent through illness, but other friends spoke eloquently on behalf of women. Major Hills endeavoured to impress upon the Solicitor-General, speaking for the Government, that women were not asking for any protection, for any special privileges, that they demand a free field. "If it should happen that free competition hurts women, they have said over and over again that they will suffer

that hurt, and do not want these special privileges and special examinations and special terms differentiating them from men." And again in the debate on women jurors, Major Hills told the House that women ask to share the duties of citizenship on equal terms with men. "Jury service is an obligation which they do not ask to escape. As the world now stands, it is their duty to take their share in whatever unpleasant work has to be done. . . . It may be said that women should be kept more apart, that they should be kept from contact with rough and brutal phases of life. But bear in mind the general trend of things in these days. Bear in mind the insistent demand of women for equality with men—equality of opportunity, equality of sacrifice, equality of duty. That demand is sweeping over the whole world." Would that the Government could understand the position as Major Hills, Sir Samuel Hoare, and others of our friends have understood it. What infinite trouble it would save! For the women's demand will be conceded in time, in spite of obstructing Governments.

Two new clauses introduced by Major Hills, were added to the Bill, one concerning the admission of women as solicitors, the other making it possible for the universities to admit women to membership and degrees. As amended, the sub-clause restricting the admission of women to the Civil Service now runs:

"Provided that notwithstanding anything in this Section His Majesty may by Order in Council, authorise Regulations to be made providing for, and prescribing the mode of the admission of women to the Civil Service of His Majesty, and the conditions on which women admitted to that Service may be appointed to, or continue to hold posts therein, and giving power to reserve to men any branch of or posts in the Civil Service in any of His Majesty's possessions overseas or in any foreign country. Any Order in Council made under this Section shall be laid before each House of Parliament forthwith, and if an address is presented to His Majesty by either House of Parliament within the next subsequent twenty-one days on which that House has sat, next after the Order is

laid before it, praying that the Order or any part thereof may be annulled, His Majesty in Council may annul the Order or that part thereof, and it shall henceforth be void, but without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done thereunder."

That is not equality, nor will learned gentlemen, however well versed in quibbling, be able to prove that the fact that a man is qualified at twenty-one for a vote, and a woman is not qualified till thirty does not constitute an inequality existing by law between men and women. The Government, therefore, have not redeemed their pledges.

L. DE ALBERTI.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A NEW NAME FOR THE C.W.S.S.

We have received the following suggestions for a new title:

Catholic Women's Society for Equal Citizenship.

Catholic Women's Political Union for Equal Citizenship.

Catholic Women's Society.

Catholic Society for Study of Civics.

Catholic Women's Citizen Society.

Catholic Women Pioneers.

Catholic Women's Society for Social Amelioration.

Society for Promoting Catholic Women's Political Interests.

Daughters of Joan of Arc.

Other members prefer to retain our present title, amongst whom is Miss Isabel Willis, who sends the following letter.

To the Editor of THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN.

Dear Miss de Alberti,—

I was surprised to see amongst the "Notes and Comments" in this month's CATHOLIC CITIZEN, one mentioning that many members had been asking whether it was not time that our Society should change its name. I should say, myself, that the time is certainly not yet ripe for that change, and will not be so long as the Suffrage continues to be denied to women on the same terms as it is granted to men. Even when it is so granted to us in this country there will, I think, still be some reasons why our present name should be retained. By far the most important of these is that we should, by changing it, appear to be unlinking ourselves from that chain of sympathy and interest which should bind together all women in other countries all over the world. It seems probable that women in other countries will still be struggling for their emancipation when we shall have gained ours, and the importance of our showing them

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THE REPORT ON OLD AGE PENSIONS.

Last April a Committee was appointed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer "To consider and report what alterations, if any, as regards rates of pensions or qualification should be made in the existing statutory scheme of Old Age Pensions."

This Committee has now issued their report. The chief recommendations of the Majority Report are:

(1) The amount of the Old Age Pension should be increased to 10/- a week.

(2) The means qualification should be abolished.

(3) The qualifying age should remain at 70 pending enquiry as to the possibility of extending the scope of the Insurance Acts.

(4) Out-door relief should not be a disqualification.

(5) Aliens should become eligible for pensions 10 years after naturalization if they have been resident in the United Kingdom for at least 20 years, and the possibility of reciprocal international agreements should be considered. British-born wives of aliens should be eligible for pensions.

(6) Disqualification for any period following a term of imprisonment should be abolished, save in the case of *habitual* inebriates.

Though the number of women pensioners far outnumber male pensioners, according to the statistics for 1919, the Government appointed only two women on a Committee of eighteen. Both women, Miss Cecile Matheson and Mrs. Baker, have signed the Majority Report with reservations. Miss Matheson calls for prompt action, and says that if any delay should occur in the establishment of a system of universal pensions the present means limit should not be allowed to continue for a day longer than is essential for the passing of the necessary legislation. She considers that the present means limit should at least be doubled, though she is of opinion that this is inadequate even as a temporary measure.

An important reservation is signed by Mrs. Baker, Mr. Devlin and Mr. Walsh. "Though signing the majority report," they say, "because we believe that the case for abolishing the means limit has been fully established, and because we agree with the greater part

of the principles enunciated, we differ from it on several points.

"It seems to us of so much more urgent and immediate importance to increase the amount of pension, and to lower the age at which a pension should be payable that we should be glad to see a bill embodying those points introduced this autumn, even though (in order to get an agreed Bill passed immediately the means limit were merely doubled so as roughly to meet the devaluation of money.

"At the same time we hope the more controversial question of universal pensions may be dealt with without undue delay.

"It does not appear to us that an increase of pension to 10/- would meet the needs of the pensioner (as shown in the Budgets we have had presented, and the evidence taken) or comply with the wishes of the nation in this respect.

"Accordingly as we agreed with the majority that "it is our duty to recommend what we believe to be the best system, "we urge that less than £1 a week would not really meet the needs of the case, and that as an immediate measure of relief the pension should at once be increased to not less than 15/."

The Minority Report is signed by seven Commissioners, and deals mainly with the proposal for universal pensions, to which the signatories of this Minority Report are opposed.

On the whole the Report marks a step forward, and is certainly a document of great interest. But the Committee did not sit to provide interesting reading matter, the question is what action is the Government going to take, and how long must the country wait for the amelioration of the lot of the old age pensioners.

L. A.

(Continued from page 95.)

in every possible way our practical support can scarcely be over-estimated. Especially this is true, of course, as regards Catholic feminists, who in Belgium, Italy and other European countries, are coming out so bravely and in such increasing numbers. Another reason for retaining our present name, though far less important than the first, is that the general public gets accustomed to a name and is very slow to recognise a new one as belonging to the same Society, and therefore it seems unwise to risk causing confusion of this kind unless it is absolutely necessary.

Truly yours,

December 3rd.

ISABEL WILLIS.

THE NARROWNESS OF MOTHERHOOD.

To many a surprising, and to most, a disconcerting title. And yet, indisputably, the point of average motherhood is narrow; especially in regard to daughters, for the love of a son is a thing apart, and sacrifices are made willingly for his education and for his future. If a good training cannot be provided for all the family, it must be secured for the son; his way, at least, must be made clear and definite, and the spirit of abnegation rises high in the mother soul as she schemes and saves for him. That spirit does not fail her when she has to see him go far from her, and when as so pitifully often of late, she gives his young life to the needs of his country. Proudly and sadly she twines in memory the unfading laurel wreath round his name, and bears her sorrow as a crown.

Few, if any, daughters rise to these heights in maternal pride and selflessness. The majority of mothers are content with a superficial education for their daughters; they are not taught any trade, they receive no special instruction to benefit them in the future; their very gifts are allowed to lie fallow. Therefore life strikes hard on the unmarried daughter of a woman of a certain social status.

The daily round is assuredly all she needs to ask, and as her parent ages, so the daughter, now a woman with her own yearnings and aspirations, if unmarried, becomes an appendage, necessary and unquestioned to the older woman. She must share the domestic trials, must fill the lonely hours of her mother; from her childhood upwards, she is to be moulded, twisted often, into the mother's own lines. The growing difference between generations is ignored, and yet that difference was never so marked as now and will become increasingly so.

The parent wonders what she would do without her child; does she ever wonder what the latter will do when left alone, and when no longer young or resilient enough to start afresh?

The holiness, the sacrificial side of true motherhood is absent, and so the elder life preys on the younger, and the daughter shinks from the reproaches which any assertion of independence would call forth.

There we have the narrowness of motherhood in its most aggravated form.

Undoubtedly the bond between mothers and daughters would be drawn closer by liberty freely given and taken.

Motherhood ideally is beautiful past words, but in present reality it is often a benevolent tyranny, and like all tyranny of the affections is narrower and harder to resist than the more impersonal tyranny of the strong over the weak.

Girls have learnt to do much in this war; unknown forces and gifts have been revealed to their owners, and now the war is over and the special work is done, they cannot be expected to fall back into the conventional groove. They have expanded and must not be forced back, and the essence of motherhood which is sacrifice must develop too. The give and take must be on both sides; it must be in equal proportion. Old ideas have to give place to new, and age must give way to the claims of youth. Parents must allow the unmarried daughters to stretch themselves spiritually and materially, they must allow them to come into their own, and motherhood must distribute in fair proportions that love so often reserved for the son, and the respect for his independence must be equally granted to that of the daughter. Then and then only, shall the narrowness of motherhood be stamped out.

EVERILDA MOORE.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Annual Subscriptions to the C.W.S.S. and the "Catholic Citizen" fall due this month. If subscribers would kindly remember to send these in at once it would be a great saving to the Society. We have no balance at the bank with which to start the new year, and the money is urgently needed NOW. It is greatly hoped that Santa Claus will not forget our office this Christmastide.

G. JEFFERY.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

Office—55, Berners St., Oxford St., London, W.
Patron: Blessed Joan of Arc. Colours: Blue, White & Gold

Organ—"The Catholic Citizen," 1d. monthly.

OBJECT.

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

METHODS.

1. Strictly non-party
2. Active propaganda by political and educational means.

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