

THE
CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST

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

VOL. I., NO. 12.

December 15th, 1915.

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 CAROL OF THE THREE BEASTS.

BY VERNEY CAMERON TURNBULL.

I.

I am a silly Sheep;
I lay upon the ground
What while the night was deep,
My masters sitting round.
When lo, the Angels bright
(*Our Lord and Our Lady safely sleep*)
Came singing through the night,
(*Ox and Ass their watch do keep*).
They sang the Shepherd Good,
They sang the Blessed Lamb,
Who saveth by His Blood
Bell-wether, ewe and ram.

*Old Covenant Priests, your reign is o'er;
Go, wash your altars that drank our gore!
For Him have we died from days of yore:
He cometh to die that we die no more—*

Alleluia!

II.

I am a foolish Ass;
I stood within my stall;
Sore my back with beating was,
The heart in me was gall.
When lo, the Mother-Maid
(*Our Lord and Our Lady safely sleep*)
Near me the young Child laid,
(*Ox and Ass their watch do keep*).

Then in the Shepherds ran,
And worshippèd the Lord,
Who saveth beast and man,
And is by both adored.

*Manger of mine Lord Christ shall share,
For whom my masters no room can spare,
And foal of an ass my King shall bear
When He to Salem in pomp shall fare—*

Alleluia!

III.

I am a patient Ox;
Amid the stable throng
I mused: "Life's goads and mocks,
How long, O Lord, how long"
When lo, a radiance fair—
(*Our Lord and Our Lady safely sleep*)
Our little Lord was there!
(*Ox and Ass their watch do keep*).
Between my horns the star
Left by His baby hand,
And where my hoofprints are
The nightly Angels stand.

*Come prick o' the goad, come blow o' the fist,
Yea, butchering axe will I not resist,
Lips of our Lord have my dewlap kissed,
And I figure His Third Evangelist—*

Alleluia!

SUFFRAGE NOTES FROM IRELAND.

By MRS. STEPHEN GWYNN.

We have often heard that Women's Suffrage has not been demanded by Irishwomen, and as an impression seems to exist that the movement is a novelty there, it may be of interest to English suffragists to hear of the speech made lately at the Irishwomen's Franchise League by our oldest suffragist, Mr. Thomas J. Haslam, who has just celebrated his 91st birthday, and who, with his wife, Mrs. Anna Haslam, founded the first Irish Suffrage Society forty years ago. Their names are honoured by all who care for the women's cause; in the sixty years of their married life they have worked steadfastly and untiringly to remove the constitutional disabilities imposed on women. Together they worked for the Married Women's Property Act, the Local Government Franchise, University Degrees for Women, and their society has organised innumerable petitions sent to the House of Commons demanding the Franchise for Women. Our Parliamentary leaders are not inclined to remember that Charles Stewart Parnell himself presented one from the citizens of Dublin in 1887. Irish Nationalists would do well to remember the fact.

Looking back over fifty years of work, Mr. Haslam gives us his opinion that the vote has not yet been granted because so far the majority of women have not demanded it. That, I think, is the justification for forming new Leagues, and as Hon. Sec. to the newest League, and a very late comer in the movement, I feel bound to speak of the friendly sympathy extended to it by Mr. and Mrs. Haslam, and to express my hope that they may live to see the triumph of the cause they have so devotedly and unselfishly worked for.

All Women Suffrage societies agree on the main point, each appeals to a different type of mind. To some the ideal of justice comes before all. They believe that the State exists to safeguard the rights of the citizen, and that it is bound to safeguard the rights of woman as well as of man. In the modern state, the vote is the only safeguard for either. Modern legislation regulates even private life, the feeding of children, housing, home-workers, education, marriage laws, in all which women are as deeply concerned as men.

Justice demands that women should have a voice in these decisions. If injustice is prevalent, Christian women should fight against it.

Others are moved by the idea of progress. They hold that Women's Suffrage is a step in the march of progress. Progress is a debatable word. I think what each generation calls progress is merely a change made necessary by changing conditions. Present conditions undoubtedly call for democracy, and Women's Suffrage is a democratic movement, not a revolutionary one; a movement which can claim all the idealists on its side. With the men alone voting, there is no true democracy, and what is best in democratic ideals gets no chance. To quote a witty Dublin professor, "Democracy is often accused of leading us a strange dance, but then, Democracy has been dancing without a partner."

Some have persuaded themselves that women are by nature angelic and that women's franchise will establish the kingdom of Heaven. The World Union of Women states that women are created to love and not to hate. Most true, but true also of men. Women as well as men must fight under the banner of Christ. If by gaining political power we can further His cause, we may indeed rejoice, but being a woman is no safeguard against temptation. Freedom, justice and charity are great ideals, and men and women must work together for them, just as, alas! men and women will always work together against them.

Countless reforms are calling out for women's work, and the suffrage movement cuts clean across political parties, appealing to all who have justice at heart. Women may belong to Conservative, or to Liberal Franchise Leagues, but on questions that appeal to women they will work together. We shall undoubtedly form into parties when we have the vote, for all women are not bent on social reform, nor agreed on what constitutes reform. But that should be a strength, not a weakness, to the cause.

Ireland has not been affected by the war in the same way as England. Our distance from

(Continued on page 103).

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

We thank Mr. V. C. Turnbull for his beautiful reminder that the great Christian festival approaches, when through the tumult of war, we may hear again the message of peace promised to men of good will.

* * * *

We print in another column a copy of the letter which has been sent to the Prime Minister, signed by representatives of almost all the Suffrage Societies, owing to the apprehension which has arisen that the Government intend to alter the present franchise laws by their Parliament and Registration Bill. If the Government are counting upon taking advantage of a desire for national unity in order to confer more votes on men, while ignoring the claims of women, they may find that this is the most effectual way of disturbing national unity.

* * * *

We have much pleasure in publishing the following letter, which we have received from the Hon. Secretary of the British Dominions Women's Suffrage Union:—

DEAR EDITOR,—On the last day of this year very many women in the Dominions Overseas have planned to lift up their hearts in prayer for enlightenment in the present fearful World Crisis. A similar effort was made last year. This time special attention is being directed to the words of Nurse Edith Cavell:—

"Standing in the view of God and of Eternity I see that Patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone."

May I venture to ask you to place this matter before your readers, in order that they may have the opportunity of uniting with their sisters Overseas on New Year's Eve in the cry for Light for ourselves and for our beloved country, the mighty Commonwealth which we call the British Empire.—Yours, etc.,
Nov. 15th, 1915. (Signed) HARRIET C. NEWCOMB.

As the best possible answer to Miss Newcomb's appeal, Holy Mass will be offered at St. James', Spanish Place, at 8 o'clock on December 31st, by the kind permission of his Lordship Bishop Butt, at our request, for the intentions indicated in her letter. We hope all members who can will attend, or if that is not possible, that they will endeavour to hear Mass elsewhere on the 31st, or at least to join with us in spirit. At his Lordship's suggestion an early Mass was decided upon, in order to enable those who can to receive Holy Com-

munion. We sincerely hope that as many as possible will follow his Lordship's advice.

* * * *

We have had occasion to complain before of the kind of appeal addressed to women and girls to stimulate recruiting. The "Irish Citizen," in a report of a recruiting meeting, held in Dublin, gives the following interesting note:—

"The wives and mothers present were urged to get sons and fathers to fight for their 'honour' and protection, and at the same time they were reminded of Nelson's Lady Hamilton, and were informed that 'if we had more Lady Hamiltons there would be more Nelsons!' Women (especially wives and mothers) may be pardoned for thinking that it would be too high a price to pay for a Nelson."

But perhaps the good orator had some vague remembrance of Nelson's victories and knew nothing of his defeats, but his speeches might be censored with advantage before being delivered.

* * * *

Prison statistics recently published show a decrease of 7 per cent. in convictions of women for drunkenness. Nevertheless, as though women were the drunken half of the community, a Special Committee has been appointed to enquire into the alleged increase in drinking among women. What sort of evidence is going to be submitted to this Committee? In a recent issue of the "Daily News," which paper had stated that the testimony of most workers who had investigated the problem was that it had been a good deal exaggerated, the Rev. H. Carter, Secretary of the Wesleyan Temperance Committee, supplied figures of persons seen entering public houses in certain districts. The figures quoted gave over five thousand more men than women, but the paragraph was headed, "Drinking Among Women, Some Startling Figures," &c. Let it be clearly understood, we would welcome any measures, however drastic, to check intemperance among both men and women, but any step which seems to imply that women are the chief offenders can only be regarded as a piece of impertinent hypocrisy.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY,

Office: 55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON.

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THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST.

Monthly, post free, 1s 6d. per annum.

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

KNIGHTS AND LADIES.

A GEM FROM STELLA MARIS.

Of all disguises assumed by anti-suffragism, the cloak of pious chivalry is, I think, the most ill-fitting. Of this false chivalry, the following extract from Stella Maris is a fair sample.

"Woman must not be brought down to the level of our equal; she must always be a queen. She will be either looked up to or looked down upon. There is danger in the vulgarizing struggle to be treated as an equal. It is not so much votes as crowns for women that are needed to-day. We do not wish to see her judging in the County Court the sordid sins of the borough. We fear for her royalty if she is seen 'stumping' the country at election booths. We are not anxious to see her soiling her fingers or her soul on the 'problems' of an unclean day. We want to do her homage; to fight for her and not *with* her; to worship at her shrine and not to meet her at the Stock Exchange; to climb *up* to her balcony and *not* to walk with her in the gutter of life."

The writer then speaks of Blessed Henry Suso, who revered all women for the sake of Our Lady, and continues.

"So you, my young Soldalist and K.B.S., do homage to the gentle sex, the Child of Mary, whether she be great or lowly, for she is the 'handmaid of the Lord.' Life must be a children's game of 'Lords and Ladies.' And you, my Child of Mary, keep your place; do not come down when we love to look up to you."

I like that keep your place. We will not ask the writer to define what that place should

be (should the Queen be in the parlour, eating bread and honey?)—but keep your place has a true British ring. It is preferable to misty talk of crowns and royalty. For those among us who think well know that, politically and economically helpless, woman in the fight for existence is likely to wear no crown, unless it be a crown of thorns, and no purple, but the royal purple of Calvary.

Again, many of us think that if there were a few women on the Bench, or at least serving on juries, the sordid sinners who prey upon women and children might not find the path of sin made smooth for them. But all this is by the way, for were it not for one phrase in this paragraph we might dismiss it as a piece of anti-suffrage bluff, and that even though it comes in the guise of advice to a confraternity of men, because if these good knights cannot see for themselves that the writer has allowed political bias to warp his judgment, we need not mourn in sack-cloth and ashes the loss of their superficial reverence. But, we have a right to ask, what is the meaning of the phrase "We are not anxious to see her soiling her fingers or her soul upon the 'problems' of an unclean day?"

As suffragists we are eager to grapple with many an unclean problem, and upon whose authority does the writer tell us that we are thereby sullyng our souls? For instance, Lady Fingall recently denounced the evils of the Dublin streets before the Catholic Truth Society, did she sully her soul in so doing? Last year when the Plymouth Town Council

were to discuss the revival of the Contagious Diseases Acts, the Suffrage Societies, ourselves included, sent resolutions of protest, and demonstrations of women were held to protest against it. Did we do wrong? If the danger was averted, it was due to the action we took, for complaint was made that protests had come mainly from women—"women who do not understand." Where, then, we may ask, were our Christian voters, where were the men in whose keeping the honour of womanhood is so safe?

But to return to the point. Does the writer really mean that this was not work for women—for no problem can be so unsavoury—did we soil our souls? If he really means this, he finds himself in disagreement with at least two Sovereign Pontiffs, and an innumerable list of Catholic ecclesiastics (I am speaking of Catholics only), for it was precisely through a woman, Dr. Agnes MacLaren, that the Apostolic Blessing was conveyed to the Society that works for the abolition of the State Regulation of Vice, and it was Doctor MacLaren who collected the opinions of Catholic ecclesiastics on this question, receiving from them the warmest encouragement.

But I do not believe that the writer really means what he says, what has happened, I think, is that, in a flow of anti-suffrage rhetoric, he has forgotten to analyse his words, but seeing that he purports to be giving sound Catholic advice to a confraternity of men, and incidentally to women, that seems a little disastrous.

L. DE ALBERTI.

(Continued from page 100).

the battlefield is one reason. We have not the countless hospitals and convalescent homes, nor the munition works which have so lessened unemployment in England. We have not the same temptation to lose sight of the fact of misery and starvation around us. When we are told of the separation allowances we remember that in Ireland among women workers before the war every eighth woman was a widow. How many girls are taking a miserable wage that scarcely keeps body and soul together. The biscuit makers have obtained a war bonus, and their wages have risen to six shillings a week, but no other women

workers have been so fortunate. Most others are paid 4/6 or 5/-. Our small industries were already so struggling that the war has meant bankruptcy or reduced employment for many, and it is an interesting fact that now, in spite of the mourning and anxiety which the war has brought to all hearts, it has been found possible last month to hold in Dublin a Conference on the Present Position of Women in Industry in Ireland. All shades of opinion were represented at it. Some of the promoters were suffragists, and some were not, and Catholic women, Protestant women, Conservative women, democratic women, pacifists, and militant suffragists all met to hear papers or to give expert opinion on present conditions, and to consider how women are meeting the demands made on them from day to day and what help they must give to build up a new civilisation after the war.

Surely there can be no more hopeful sign of the women's movement in Ireland. Not only can the suffrage societies claim that they have not been side-tracked or snowed under by the war, but the women who have not yet come to see the need of the vote are discovering the need of constructive work, and the problems that are waiting to be solved.

Last year an Emergency Council of Suffragists was formed in Dublin, and all the constructive schemes that were helped by the Mansion House Relief of Distress Fund were originated by it. The lesson has not been lost and the suffragists' cause has gained many adherents.

Ireland has a greater need of the women's vote than any country. The old state of things is crumbling away. There is little left to pull down, and everything to be built up. The age of competition is past, and the age of co-operation has come. Domestic reform is untouched, and women must give their minds to it. In that spirit the Irish Catholic Women's Suffrage Association has been founded. We believe that all social work must be based on some theory of life, and the better the theory, the better the work. In no country is there such devotion to the Mother of God as in Ireland. We hope to enlist Irishwomen to work for her honour, and helped by her good counsel, to establish in Ireland social conditions worthy of a Christian land.

A VOICE IN RAMA.

In times of national calamity and general stress there is always great danger that a nation may lose its sense of values and forget, in a conflict of loyalties, the aims and ideals which were foremost in days of peace.

Before the war the campaign against infant mortality had reduced the death rate of children under one year of age from 145 per 1,000 births in 1904 to 109 in 1913, and it is encouraging to find that the Local Government Board has no intention of relaxing its efforts in this direction, for in reality the war has increased the importance of work directed to secure the welfare of mothers and their infants. This view was emphasised in the Board's circular letter sent out in July of this year, and the introduction by Dr. Newsholme to the recently published Report on Maternal Mortality in connection with Child-bearing, lays further stress on the special urgency of the work at the present time.

Doubtless, however, there are many people who, though alive to the importance of studying the problem of the conditions of working class motherhood, are nevertheless, appalled by the mass of statistics and the formal style of Blue Books and Government reports. To such the book* recently published by the Women's Co-operative Guild will serve as a more than adequate introduction to the problem. Here for the first time we have working mothers describing their own experiences, and, what is even more important, suggesting remedies and approving schemes whereby other women may be saved the appalling suffering and unprofitable anguish generally attendant on child-birth among the working classes. For if there is one point which stands out more than another on reading these living documents, it is the fact that the greater part of the sufferings are unnecessary and due to remediable causes. Ignorance, lack of sufficient nourishment, care and rest, account for nearly all the martyrdom undergone by working women in the discharge of a perfectly natural function. Letter after letter testifies to the evil effects during the latter

*"Maternity: Letters from Working Women." With a Preface by the Right Hon. Herbert Samuel. (Bell, 2/6 net.)

part of pregnancy and after confinement, of heavy household duties, not work in factories, mark you—for by the law a woman may not be employed in a factory within four weeks after she has given birth to a child—but the ordinary incessant drudgery of domestic labour. As one of the women says: "No woman can stay in bed very comfortably knowing things are going on anyhow while she is in bed."

The remedy is suggested in many of the letters, and the national scheme put forward by the Women's Co-operative Guild will do much to enable women to get proper rest and nourishment. Thus it proposes that in addition to the 30/- maternity benefit, which should be taken out of the Insurance Act, and extended to all women under the income tax limit, every mother should receive £3 10s. in weekly payments of 10/- for three weeks before, and four weeks after, confinement, and that during pregnancy she should be entitled, if her health requires it, to benefit varying from 2/6 to 7/6 a week, subject to the recommendation of a maternity centre or a doctor. In this connection a quotation from the excellent introduction to the book will not be out of place:

"It should be noted that the essence of the Guild scheme is that municipal not philanthropic action is wanted. It is not charity but the united action of the community of citizens that will remove a wide-spread social evil. The community is performing a duty, not bestowing a charity, in providing itself with the bare necessities for tolerable existence. That is why the end at which the Guild aims is that the mothers of the country should find themselves as free to use a Municipal Maternity as they are to use a Council School or a Public Library."

That this is recognised by the women themselves is shown in many of the letters: "The child is the asset of the nation and the mother the backbone. Therefore, I think the nation should help to feed and keep mothers and so help to strengthen the nation by giving birth to strong boys and girls," and again, "I do feel most strongly that women should be able to get advice and help during pregnancy. Our children are a valuable asset

LONDON AND BRANCH NEWS.

Office: 55, Berners Street, London, will be closed for the holidays on December 19th.

Mass will be offered for the intentions of the Society at St. James', Spanish Place, on Friday, Dec. 31st, at 8 o'clock; and at St. Patrick's, Soho, at 10-30, on Sunday, January 2nd. The Annual Meeting will be held on January 29th, at the Catholic Association Rooms. Christmas cards of Blessed Joan of Arc on sale at 1½d.

We offer our congratulations to Alderman H. A. Leicester (an associate of the C.W.S.S. from its early days), who has been elected Mayor of Worcester for the third time.

Members are asked to pray for the repose of the soul of the Rev. P. J. Dowling, of St. Vincent's, Sheffield. Fr. Dowling was a supporter of Women's Suffrage, and made a very eloquent speech at our meeting at Sheffield in 1913. He spoke from experience of the good results of woman suffrage in Australia.

N.B.—Branch Reports must reach the Editor not later than the 5th of the month.

CARDIFF.—Hon. Sec., Miss Bryan, 1, Moorland Place. At a meeting of the Cardiff Branch, Miss O'Sullivan, of the London Committee, gave an account of the Society's work during the war, and congratulated the Branch on the efforts of the Secretary, Miss Bryan, who has been indefatigable in giving expression to the aims of the Society and has represented it on local committees, principally the Central Women's Advisory Committee, and the Committee now organising the Cardiff Patriotic and Child Welfare Exhibition. She has also helped to form a detachment of the Red Cross and obtained comforts which she sent from the Society to the Welsh Hospital at Netley.

An associate of the Cardiff Branch, Mr. Harold Turnbull, has been appointed a Chamberlain of the Pope's Household.

A resolution was sent to Mr. J. H. Cory, M.P. for Cardiff, expressing the hope that he would continue the Suffrage pledge given to the women of the constituency by the late Member, Lord Ninian Crichton-Stuart. Mr. Cory has expressed himself in favour of woman suffrage on the basis of the Municipal Register.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.—Hon. Sec., Miss T. M. Browne, M.A., University Hall, Fairfield, Liverpool. We hope to hold our Annual Meeting some time in January. Early in the year there will be a Jumble Sale. Miss Barry has kindly allowed things to be sent to 66, Park Road, South Birkenhead. Members are asked to send to this address anything they can collect in the way of clothes, etc. (Hats do not sell easily).

Several of our members were present at the opening of the Liverpool Women's Suffrage Club by Miss Nina Boyle, on November 18th, and our paper was well in evidence. The club will meet at 7-30 p.m. on the last Thursday of every month, at 18, Colquitt Street. Members are asked to attend in order that our Society may be well represented.

The activities of the Burlington Street Club were suspended during the general mission, and have been taken up again by the organisers with the same untiring energy as before.

A Christmas Tree and entertainment will be provided for members of the Club on December 20th. Gifts for this purpose would be very welcome and may be sent to Miss Cooper, c/o Rev. Father O'Brien, Our Lady's, Eldon Place, Liverpool.

to the nation, and the health of the woman who is doing her duty in rearing the future race should have a claim upon the national purse. Ample provision should be made so that she could give of her best."

It is noteworthy that in cases which report "nothing unusual," or "I really did not suffer much during that time and always had good confinements," the financial aspect has always been favourable. Thus in the last quoted example the woman was fortunate in having a small private income, so never felt the pinch, and in practically all the other satisfactory cases the husbands' wages have ranged from 36/- to £4 per week.

In addition to the bad conditions resulting from inadequate wages, lack of knowledge regarding maternity is shown to be responsible for much of the suffering undergone by women in child-birth, and the awakening of a new spirit amongst the women themselves is a hopeful sign for the future. Women are beginning to realize that education and knowledge are of great importance in saving the lives of the children, and will do much to prevent other women from enduring useless suffering. Many of the letters expressly state that the writers have described their own experiences in the hope that they may thereby help their younger sisters.

In spite of the many heart-rending letters printed in this book, it is impossible to put it down without a feeling of optimism—the sufferings recounted are for the greater part remediable, and there is every hope that the women intimately concerned are becoming alive to the evil conditions which beset the working class mother. True education is spreading and the work of organisations like the Women's Co-operative Guild is rendering the solution of the problems infinitely easier. The wonderful grit of the working woman shows itself clearly on every page.

The value of these human documents and the arduous work of the Women's Co-operative Guild cannot be clearly recognised until the remedies suggested have been adopted by the Government. All women must take their share in helping to bring about this end, but Catholic women in particular should be foremost in this, as in any other movement to alleviate the sufferings of their less fortunate sisters. D.J.C.

REVIEW.

"THE ROMANTICISM OF ST. FRANCIS." In his too modest preface Father Cuthbert, O.S.F.C., describes his book (*The Romanticism of St. Francis, &c.*, Longmans, Green and Co., 6/6) as "an attempt to gauge the real value of the life and genius of the Franciscans in relation to the human spirit itself." It is indeed the tender human note in the Franciscan spirit, that heavenly offspring of a Christ-like embrace exchanged between St. Francis and a leper, which explains the strong fascination which the Seraphic Saint exercises upon an increasing number of idealists outside the Catholic Church. If they yearn for realization of the fundamental brotherhood of all mankind, "where will they find it more beautifully expressed than in St. Francis and his followers, at one with the hearts of men," exulting "in the presence of human nature and in its conflicts and achievements?" Do they crave attainment to the "cosmic consciousness?" They will find in these pages how completely St. Francis has forestalled the modern prophets in this: "The Franciscan was conscious of Nature not so much as something outside and apart from himself, but rather as the world in which he had his being: it entered intimately into his very consciousness of himself: it was, so to speak, his larger self. . . Hence it was with simple sincerity that St. Francis would speak of "Brother Wolf," of "our sisters the birds," of "Brother Sun," of "our mother Sister Earth," Nature to him was a vast brotherhood and he fel himself borne upon the stream of universal life." Father Cuthbert shows how the Franciscan spirit had its psychological affinity with the spirit of the age, and was in fact but the celestial counterpart of that spirit of chivalry which had laid its spell on Europe. The wandering knights and minstrels went forth to right the wrong, to rescue the oppressed, to sing of love and war and ladies fair. The friars went forth armed but with faith and love, to rout the powers of evil, to rescue souls, to preach the love of Christ, their mirror of perfect chivalry to minister to the sick and suffering, and to chant the praises of their Lady Poverty; making their gift of song the handmaid of the Lord and enriching the crown of their Queen Mother the church with such priceless jewels as the "Stabat Mater," and the Canticle of Sir Brother Sun.

Most skilfully does Father Cuthbert show that most of the later developments or the Franciscans were but the inevitable result of the law of growth to which all

things must conform or die. The day of the troubadours is past and gone, their successors are the modern poets who keep alive the sacred flame of poetry in a utilitarian age. The dear "knight errants of the Poor Christ," the "minstrels of the Lord," who walked in the fair fields of Umbria, have also passed away, but the great family of St. Francis and the Lady Poverty are as a countless legion, and while his sons can so eloquently show forth his spirit, and lead such lives of ministry and service as Father Alphonsus, the subject of Father Cuthbert's fourth study, there is no fear that their Father Francis shall look in vain for the legitimate successors of his first knight errant, or fail to claim them for his own.

**THE CATHOLIC COMMITTEE OF THE
WOMAN SUFFRAGE PARTY,
Brooklyn, New York.**

Mrs. W. Rorke, Chairman of the above committee, sends us further proof of the courteous good-will extended to Catholic Suffragists by the Catholic clergy of the States. Mrs. Rorke has been given an opportunity of addressing many societies of men, and the priests, directors of these societies, write in the most appreciative terms of her lecture. The extracts she sends testify not only to the common-sense and good will of the clergy, but also to the eloquent logic of Mrs. Wm. Rorke. The vigorous manner in which American Suffragists have begun another suffrage campaign is sufficient proof that though victory has been deferred, the cause is bound to win.

CATHOLIC FEMINISTS IN CUBA.

Members will be interested to hear that we have received a letter from the President of the Partido Nacional Feminista of Cuba, who wishing to give a Catholic tone to her society, asks us to send our rules and details of our work. In complying with the President's request we have asked her to convey to her members the cordial greetings of their English colleagues.

Our readers will be glad to see by Mrs. Gwynn's interesting article, how steadily the suffrage movement progresses in Ireland.

CORRESPONDENCE.

IRISH MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

BY CANON MURPHY.

During this gloomy time it is a pleasant and easy task to overcome an assault directed against Catholic Suffragist claims by W.H.K.'s fireworks discharged from *Cork* cannons.

(1) He fires off a number of harmless rockets in order to prove the propriety and antiquity of giving brides away. The antiquity of legal sanction for a feudal custom does not prove that it is reasonable or suited to the present age. Slavery or serfdom of any kind is now an anachronism. The statement extracted from one of W.H.K.'s *Cork* canons that the marriages of daughters in Ireland are chiefly arranged by their parents, without any reference to the inclination of the parties concerned, is not correct. It does not represent Irish life as I know it. During the past fifty years I met only one such arbitrary case in my ministrations. Eventually, I succeeded in having the *Colleen* married to the young man of her choice.

I always like to see the love light of love's young dream glancing from the eyes of the young people at whose wedding I happen to be assisting. Affection and sympathy have been ever the determining element in the majority of Irish marriages, from the time of Cucullin to the days of Robert Emmet and of Willie Reilly and his colleen bawn. They make a better foundation for the preservation and increase of the special grace granted to the worthy reception of the sacrament than the feudal custom which handed over poor Catherine of Aragon to the English Bluebeard, at such a fearful cost to the Church.

(2) W.H.K.'s statement, fired off from another *Cork* canon refutes itself. Gold rings must have been very scarce in Ireland 70 or 100 years ago.

From my own knowledge, I can assert that they were not in general use at Irish weddings in the middle of the last century. And many bridegrooms had no endowments to bestow, save a donkey, a goat, or, mayhap, a pig's head for the wedding dinner.

The giving of gold or silver, then, and the other endowments, would be a mere make believe, unworthy of a place in a sacramental rite. It came from Sarum, and does not appear in the beautiful and almost prophetic simplicity of the Roman Ritual.

(3) It is an insult to one's common sense to assert that this make-believe custom tends to edification, especially when the endowment is advanced by the bride, or that there is no degradation in giving a bride away by any other person save herself. The brother would regard it a very great degradation to have to pass from a state of subjection to a still greater one by being given away. He would certainly feel *de-graded*. With or without the consent of his parents, he leaves them to be united to his bride till death: God gives the bride the same privilege. She cannot be given away to be married in any true sense except by herself.

That is the true type of marriage from the Garden of Eden to our own times—the marriage of affection and harmony, which secures abundant graces to the married faithful till their death separation.

COPY OF LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

Dear Sir,—The statements which have appeared in the Press with regard to the Parliament and Registration Bill, taken in conjunction with Lord Lansdowne's announcement in the House of Lords, on November 4th, of a Government measure to revise the electoral register, give Suffragists grave reason for apprehension as to the intention of the Government so to deal with the franchise as to bring in large numbers of new male electors. We, the signatories of this letter, representing large bodies of Suffragists, feel that any attempt to touch the franchise for men without granting the franchise to women would be a dishonour to men as well as an injustice to women, and would create a grave situation. We therefore beg for a definite assurance from you, as the Head of His Majesty's Government, that, if such a measure is drafted, women, whose claim to enfranchisement has been, not lessened, but intensified by the war, and all that it entails of suffering and service, shall be included in its provisions on equal terms with men.

We approach you in this way, being fully aware of the great pressure upon your time. But, failing a definite and satisfactory assurance from you upon the grave matter in question, we should feel obliged to ask you to be good enough to receive a deputation on the subject from representatives of our organisations—or to depute a Member of the Cabinet to receive us on your behalf.

We are, yours faithfully,

Barbara Ayrton Gould, Hon. Sec., United Suffragists; E. Sylvia Pankhurst, Hon. Sec., East London Federation of the Suffragettes; C. Despard, President, Women's Freedom League; Jane Strickland, Chairman, Free Church League for Woman Suffrage; Edith R. Mansell-Moullin, Hon. Sec., Forward Cymric Suffrage Union; M. Arncliffe Sennett, President, Northern Men's Federation; May Whitty, Chairman, Actresses' Franchise League; B. Gadsby, Chairman, The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society; Susan A. Villiers, Chairman, The Church League for Women's Suffrage; J. Beanland, Hon. Sec., Manchester Men's League for Woman Suffrage; H. M. Swanwick, Hon. Sec., Women's International League; Rosa M. Barrett, Hon. Sec., Irishwomen's Franchise Federation; Anna M. Haslam, President, Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association; Esther G. Roper, National Industrial and Professional Women's Suffrage Society.

The Prime Minister has replied that the bill in question will not modify the existing franchise in any way.

Miss Sylvia Pankhurst asks us to state that at a general meeting of the East London Federation of the Suffragettes, on June 21st, 1915, it was resolved "That it is no part of the policy of the Federation to interrupt the meetings of other women's organisations, even though the views of such organisations may differ from our own."

THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST.

We appeal to our readers to support our paper in the coming year, and to send in their subscriptions as soon as possible. The first volume of the CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST, bound in blue, will be on sale early in January, price 2/6.

WOMEN UNDER THE MUNITIONS ACT.

In a recent issue of the *Daily News*, Miss Mary Macarthur gives a very lucid account of the effect of the Munitions Act on women. Many of the clauses press most heavily on women. A man may be prevented from seeking or accepting higher remuneration, but is assured of his standard rate—there is no standard rate in the case of women, and the Fair Wages Clause is but little protection. "If the State intervenes to prevent the worker from improving her position as her skill improves, the least the State can do is to guarantee her such a minimum rate of wages and such standards of hours and conditions as will ensure her the necessaries of decent livelihood and maintain her in physical efficiency." The proposed amendment of the bill therefore is of vital importance to women, and Miss Macarthur calls on friends of working women in the House of Commons to see that women are properly safeguarded. Another crying need, to which many have called attention, is of a woman assessor in the Munitions Court, to help the women and girls who come before that Court. Already a case has been reported in the Press of girls desiring to leave a certain factory, because of the unspeakable conduct of the foreman, and being refused permission. The girls were naturally shy of speaking plainly to a tribunal of men, and though they ultimately got their certificates, Miss Macarthur tells us that they had lost a week's pay and had incurred expenses amounting to several shillings in attending the Courts. "In view of these facts," the writer concludes, "it is not surprising to find a bitter and rankling sense of injustice in the minds of many workers at the present time, and nothing could be less conducive to that wholehearted co-operation of every section which is so desired."

FREE CHURCH LEAGUE FOR WOMEN SUFFRAGE.

On Friday, November 12th, the Free Church League for Women Suffrage held a public meeting, at which the following resolution was passed: "That in the opinion of this meeting women have a right to be consulted and have a voice in the determinations of the conditions of peace." The Rev. C. Fleming Williams was in the chair. The speakers were Miss Eva Gore Booth and Mr. Pethick Lawrence, who replaced his wife absent through indisposition. Mr. Lawrence spoke of the tragedies of peace, the grinding poverty, destitution and unnecessary destruction of child life, and said we must never have such a peace again, and never such a war. He graphically described what a war of attrition means to the women and children of the belligerent nations. Men, said Mr. Lawrence, had held a number of Hague conferences

during peace time to discuss not how war should be avoided, but how it should be waged, and yet when war came most of their rules had been swept aside. What would the world have said if women had been responsible for such a failure? (We remember in this connection that a British admiral declared, some time before the outbreak of war, that if a European war were to take place nations would be fighting for their existence, and to talk international law would be about as effective as singing a hymn to stop a dog fight.) Men alone were incapable of forming a lasting peace.

WOMEN AND THEIR WORK.

The Exhibition of the Arts and Crafts of the Women Worker, which was held under the auspices of the *Daily Express*, at Prince's Skating Club, Knightsbridge, in November, was a great success. There were the old industries to which we are accustomed, hand-made lace, tapestry, embroidery, leather work, miniatures, jewellery, painting, &c., &c., side by side with professions which are more of a novelty. There was the Lady Consulting Engineer, Miss C. Griff, and exhibits from the Ladies' Automobile Workshop and School of Driving, of which the Hon. Gabrielle Borthwick is principal. There was Miss Fuller, the advertising expert, with her stall of literature, books, &c., pamphlets written by women, suffrage literature, of course, our own included, and, for Miss Fuller goes far afield, a sample of the "Nassau Guardian," owned, edited, printed and published by a woman. There was also a special stall for Irish Decorative Art, which was particularly fascinating, and this stall contained, also, samples of Mrs. Coleman's hand-made jewellery. The display of the Studley College for women was of great interest; students are taught Horticulture, Agriculture, Household Management, Bee-Keeping, Carpentry, Practical Mechanics, Fruit and Vegetable Preserving, Colonial training, etc. The Women's Reserve Ambulance supplied the guard of honour when royalty visited the exhibition, and women police were also in attendance at the exhibition. The women police have rendered great service during the war, and it is to be hoped that the work will continue, when peace is restored.

PETITION TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

We are asked to make known that a petition is being presented to the Prime Minister demanding emergency legislation to enable Englishwomen married to Aliens to be re-naturalized. It may be signed at our office, 55, Berners Street.

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