THE
WOMAN'S LEADER
AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

Equal Franchise and the Latest Stunt.

The *Daily Mail* came out on Monday of this week with a heading "Votes for all at 25." The article went on to explain that "The question of Equal Franchise is now being considered by a Cabinet Committee, which has been impressed by the apparent folly of adding to the electorate a huge number of girls, many of whom have not the necessary experience of life to record their votes with a full sense of responsibility. The Committee has also considered whether it is in the public interest that boys of this age should be entitled to vote." There are, fortunately, no signs that our contemporary is speaking from any inside knowledge of the Committee's intentions, and we hope that it is merely reading into the minds of the Government Committee that which is obviously in its own. As we have stated over and over again in these columns, no practical politician considers it to be anything but political lunacy to put forward the proposal of taking away votes from a class of voters which has been enfranchised ever since the Suffrage was first granted. As Mrs. Corbett Ashby pointed out at the 1926 Conference of the National Council of Women, in recent years only two countries have disenfranchised any section of their citizens; these are Russia and Italy, neither of whom their best friends could claim to be democratic. The irresponsibility of the man or woman under 25 is surely confined to a comparatively small class of idlers, whether rich or poor. It is ludicrous in our opinion to tar with this brush the whole section of young people who as workers or parents have, before they reach 25, taken on all the other responsibilities of life.

Women and the Secretariat of the League of Nations.

Women's organizations in this country learn with regret that the Secretariat of the League of Nations do not propose to renew the contract of Miss Wilson, the highly efficient and devoted librarian to the Secretariat. Miss Wilson is an American and extremely well-fitted for her job. On two occasions, when experts declared that it was impossible for a given Committee to meet in a little town like Geneva which lacks the resources of big libraries, Miss Wilson had succeeded in a few weeks in collecting all the documents required for the work of these committees. What this meant will be fully appreciated by those who know what an enormous amount of literature may exist for a single legal or scientific subject. It has been put forward in some quarters that Miss Wilson's contract is to terminate on account of her American citizenship. Recently, however, the contract of another American, a man in this instance, has been renewed. In view of the clause in the Covenant that men and women employed by the League should be treated equally, it would be most regrettable if any differentiation were made in a case of this kind. We understand that the only comment which is being made by the Secretary-General to a request that the position with regard to Miss Wilson should be reconsidered is that the Secretariat is fully respecting this clause.

The Abandoned Mental Deficiency Bill.

The eleventh hour abandonment by the Government of the Mental Deficiency Bill, has come as a very serious disappointment to those engaged in Mental Welfare work. Except for the new definition of mental deficiency, the alterations of the principal Act of 1913 that were embodied in the Bill were mainly of an administrative character, and would have gone far to improve and simplify the working of that Act. A new definition of Mental Deficiency has been undoubtedly long called-for. Under the old definition only persons mentally defective "from birth or an early age" come within the Act, and in practice it has been often found extraordinarily difficult to define "an early age." The new definition incorporated in the Bill, was drawn up after exhaustive consultation with medical experts, and was accepted with one alteration. So much diversity of opinion was there as to the date of maturity—some doctors placing it at 16 years, others at 18 years, and some as late as 25 years—that it was decided not to specify a particular age. It was equally important to make it clear that the Mental Deficiency Act was not intended to deal with cases of mental disorder supervening after maturity has been reached, and rightly coming under the Lunacy Act. Hence the definition "a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind whether innate or induced after birth by disease, injury, or other cause." This definition would bring under the scope of the Act the many children suffering from the moral and mental defectiveness associated with the after effects of encephalitis lethargica, who especially need the care and treatment that can be afforded in a mental deficiency colony, and for whom at present no adequate provision is made.

The Rejected Reforms.

Under Sec. 2 of the 1923 Mental Deficiency Act, which specifies those who are "subjects to be dealt with," the new Bill proposed to add the words: "Not under proper care and control." This would very much facilitate the placing of persons and children under guardianship or in institutions, because of the inability of the parent, for one reason or other, to provide proper care and control, where it would perhaps be less easy to prove the defective as "neglected or cruelly treated." Mr. Neville Chamberlain, in discussing this clause, reminded the House that the Mental Deficiency Act was designed for the benefit of the defectives, and must not be objected to as merely an Act for their detention. A very valuable provision of the Bill was the placing of a statutory obligation on local authorities to provide suitable training or occupation for defectives, not only in institutions, but for those who remain in the community under supervision or guardianship. Another provision of the Bill helped to link up the work of the education authority, and the local authority—and one clause in the Bill would have very materially eased some of the difficulties regarding the building of new institutions. In the 12th Annual Report the Board of Control states that only seventeen local authorities out of 124 have actually provided any accommodation. Part of the reluctance to build has been the fact that an authority itself has not a large enough number of defectives under the Act to fill a large institution. The Board's policy is now in favour of colonies of not less capacity than 400 to 500, to allow of proper grading. Under the new clause joint action would have been possible.

Shades of Suffragists!

In last week's *New Leader* Miss Dorothy Jewson gives an amusing account of the recent conference of Socialist women in Brussels. The Belgian Labour party proposed a small committee of five women to be summoned once a year by the Executive Committee of the Labour and Socialist International, *which would draw up an agenda for the meeting*. "Shades of all the Suffragists!" writes Miss Jewson. "Did the Belgians really think that Socialist women in the year of grace 1927, were going to allow the agenda of their women's conference to be drawn up for them by an executive committee composed entirely of men? The Belgians had reckoned without their women, and the biggest cheer of the conference went to Mme Staak, their delegate, who said that the decision of the Belgian Labour party had been made by its executive without consulting their Women's Committee. The Belgian women delegates intended, therefore, to vote against their own party." Needless to say the proposal was defeated, and a resolution in favour of a larger committee of women representatives of organized party women was carried.

Savagery.

Rumour announces the coming of a successor to the Charleston in modern ballrooms. The newest expression of our more joyous moods is entitled the "Heebie-Jeebie", and apparently its six basic steps are representative of the "shivering, hopping, and stamping" of the African witch-doctor in the presence of a human sacrifice. So at least we read in the *Manchester Guardian* of 13th December. In the same issue of our accurate contemporary, we are told of the slaughter of a hunted fox under the shadow of Lichfield Cathedral. A number of citizens attracted by the spectacle succeeded in securing bloodstained portions of the animal's tail after it had been duly torn to pieces by the hounds. Not long ago the inhabitants of Minehead were accorded a similar pleasure, when a stag which had taken to the sea was chased for some distance in a motor boat but considerately brought back to land to be slaughtered, so that no part of the entertainment might be missed by the attendant spectators. We feel that so long as such sport is tolerated in this country there is a certain artistic fitness in the performance of the "Heebie-Jeebie". Dancing is, after all, in its highest sense an expression of spiritual moods. The new dance should therefore prove a popular feature at Hunt Balls.

A Winter School for Health Visitors and School Nurses.

Bedford College is the natural home of post-graduate and "refresher" courses for professional women, and the sixth "Winter School" organized by the Women Sanitary Inspectors' and Health Visitors' Association will be inaugurated under its hospitable roof on Wednesday, 29th December, at 10.15, with a lecture from Dame Janet Cambell. One section deals with "problems of nature and nurture"; a second with problems of school life, and a third with social problems—"building for the future." Under the last heading, it is significant to find lectures on such subjects as factory legislation and family allowances. The whole programme, which continues until 11th January, is so interesting that we are glad to see that the course (either taken as a whole or single lectures) including visits of observation is open to any women who are interested in public health and social work. Full particulars may be had from the Secretary of the Association, 92 Victoria Street.

Women Teachers in Conference.

The annual conference of the National Union of Women Teachers will be held at York from 4th to 7th January. The Lord Mayor (Alderman Oscar Rowntree) will give a civic welcome to the delegates and Miss C. Neal, of Swansea, will be appointed President for the coming year. The agenda covers a wide variety of subjects, which include equal pay and opportunities for men and women with no bar against marriage of women teachers; the reorganization of training colleges; examinations; reduction of staff; school leaving age; continued education, and others which may or may not be reached. We venture to hope that a space of time may be found for the resolution on equal franchise, for an expression of opinion from women teachers, many of whom are themselves unenfranchised either through youth or absence of the property qualifications while their male colleagues in similar circumstances are fully armed with the vote, will carry with it an unusual degree of reality.

A Proposal for Family Allowances.

It is reported in *The Times* that the State Industrial Committee of New South Wales has decided against a rise in the basic wage for males and advocated instead a scheme of children's allowances. The decision as to the basic wage for women has been postponed. According to *The Times* report, the Labour representative of the Committee dissented from this decision. We propose to return later to the discussion of the findings of the Commission.

A Woman Bachelor of Veterinary Science.

Apparently Liverpool is the only British University which considers veterinary science worthy of a degree. Last week Miss Edith Gertrude Knight received its Degree of Bachelor of Veterinary Science, and she is, we understand, the first woman recipient, though there are a number of women practising as veterinary surgeons. Miss Knight had previously qualified for a diploma in Agriculture at Reading University, and she has worked on a farm; it will be interesting to see how she will utilize her double equipment.

Punch and Temperance Reform.

Punch has a reputation second to none for the quality of its advertisements, and it is interesting to learn that it has decided to discontinue "liquor" announcements entirely when existing contracts have expired. In this change it is in good company, as both the *Observer* and the *Spectator* have adopted a similar attitude. This announcement has a special interest to our readers as *Punch's* advertisement manager is a woman, who occupies a high place in the advertising world.

A Woman Mayor for Eastbourne.

We are glad to note that another woman mayor has been elected. Councillor Mrs. Hudson has been elected as first woman mayor of Eastbourne owing to the mayor elect having died suddenly.

Our Christmas Who's Who.

Our Christmas fare includes an article entitled "An Irish Christmas, 1397," contributed by Miss F. de G. Merrifield, whose articles on pioneers in medicine in other lands were a special feature of our paper in 1924 and 1925. The recent death of the French poet, M. Jean Richepin, attaches a special interest to his verses sent us by Dame Millicent Fawcett, translated by Herbert Trench. Our Christmas carol is written by Mrs. Buchanan, who in spite of the fact that she reached the proud age of 87 last May, has been, and still is, a frequent contributor to well-known papers able to spare more space for the arts than ourselves. Mrs. Buchanan has for over twenty years been a member of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship and was a guest of honour recently at a complimentary dinner in Glasgow given by the Society for Equal Citizenship and Woman Citizen Association. Mrs. Buchanan belongs to a literary family, and it takes our mind back a very long way when we learn that *her* mother in advance of her time, worked for peace and woman's suffrage. Our other contributors need no introduction to our readers.

Women in 1926.—Order before 29th December.

We venture to suggest that every woman engaged in public or social work, every woman teacher, in fact every keen woman voter or would-be voter should possess a copy of our issue for 31st December. The contributors include Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Miss Berry, Dr. Martindale, Miss Haslett, Mrs. Marston Acres, Miss B. A. Clough, Mrs. Rackham, J.P., and Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P. Mrs. Hubback will contribute a summary of the political year as it specially affects women's interests. This will give every busy but politically-minded woman an excellent foundation for the activities and interests of the coming year. The London and National Society for Women's Service deal with women and the professions. If you are interested in women's political education, order at least a dozen copies and distribute them among your friends.

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 women'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.*

THE FESTIVAL OF PEACE.

For all housewives Christmas means an intensification of the burden of housekeeping: more food and more elaborate food. For most mothers it means the assumption of an ungracious repressive campaign against over-feeding and excitement. For shop-assistants it means a long period of abnormal stress and strain. For post office officials it is an annual nightmare. For the luxury trades it is an unhealthy and transitory stimulus—it perceptably increases the seasonal fluctuations of the labour market. But for children it is an undiluted joy, and for the inmates of hospitals and workhouses a welcome break in the monotony of existence. And doubtless for most of us, the pleasure of receiving Christmas presents outweighs the burdensome obligation of Christmas shopping. It would be interesting to take a secret census on the subject.

So we continue to celebrate Christmas with unabated gusto: turkeys, plum puddings, crackers, Christmas trees, parties in one another's houses—and for a few, perhaps only for a very few, a religious significance to which all the paraphernalia of Christmas celebrations are a mere top-dressing.

But what is it—this religious significance which sends a fraction of our population to church on Christmas morning or in the late watches of Christmas Eve? In so far as it is not mere habit, it is surely an act of homage to the *idea* that was "made flesh" under such incongruous circumstances on a winter's night 1926 years ago: and to a very definite aspect of that *idea*: to the proclamation of "peace on earth" with which the skies heralded its coming.

Perhaps those who celebrate Christmas in the spirit as well as in the flesh—and their number does not altogether coincide with the congregations in the churches on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning—are able to recapture some of the ecstasy of the shepherds and the kings and the wise men who greeted the first Christmas with the first Christmas gifts; but can it be the same optimistic care-free ecstasy? Perhaps those simple Orientals of the Year One visualized "peace on earth" as a relaxation—a permanent relief from the incursions of wolves, and heretics, and the king's enemies. But they did not know as much as we know. They did not know what kind of a turbulent contradictory spirit smouldered under the seraphic exterior of the new-born child, nor what kind of a peace it was that He was going to offer them. Could they, had they known what we know, have hailed as the "Prince of Peace" a man who made trouble wherever he went: a man who threw up His livelihood, repudiated His family obligations, and roamed the country like a vagrant: a man who associated with prostitutes and tax-farmers, made an uproar in the temple precincts, referred to the king as "that fox", desecrated the Sabbath, contradicted the scribes, took upon himself to amplify the law, and showed himself to say the least of it singularly lacking in respect to an Imperial Pro-Consul: a man who finally died a judicial and ignominious death (which at any moment he could have avoided by an undertaking to keep quiet) because his continued existence was a standing menace to the peace of the countryside which he had disturbed on and off for the space of three years? Yet in the midst of all this turbulence He had at times manifested a kind of peaceableness. At the crucial moment of His arrest for instance—and in the matter of tribute to the Romans: on the very occasions in fact when a normal self-respecting patriotic citizen might be expected to make a fuss. Nor, even after His death, did His topsy-turvy standards cease to play havoc with popular conceptions of order and happiness. He had taught that what the world regards as victories were ignominious defeats; that shepherds while remaining shepherds might be greater, in some spiritual world of His own fashioning, than kings: that the children of shepherds might be wiser than scribes. And in spite of the effective action of His judges He had somehow managed to infect a minority of survivors as irrepressible as Himself with those same disturbing notions—so that they persisted (and some say, under His continuous inspiration) with the dissemination of His subversive teaching—and in His bewildering claim that His notion of peace was the only peace worth having.

Perhaps if the kings and the shepherds and the wise men had known these things they would have withheld their homage—more especially the kings and the wise men. And perhaps it is because we do know, that so many of us withhold our homage to-day. We are content with the kind of peace that we understand—the kind of peace that reigns at last in the coal fields, and in the wider world of armed diplomacy. Must we stretch our thoughts beyond the lights of our Christmas trees and the smoke of our puddings to those unfathomable dangerous regions of the spirit in search of a peace that passeth all understanding, and always with the possibility that we may find there not peace but a sword?

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER.

BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.

As it had begun, the session ended quietly. On Monday, 13th December, we had a day of many Bills. The Palestine and East Africa Loans Bill passed, to the accompaniment of some shakings of the head; the Coroners Bill also; and even the Legitimacy Bill, that measure which has been on the stocks so long, scraped through. It effects a reform long desired—it legitimatizes children born before marriage, provided their parents subsequently marry. But it contains an exception, and around this much discussion raged: it does not apply to an illegitimate child whose father or mother was married to another person when the child was born. Much could be said on both sides, and possibly the House, had it had unfettered choice, would have struck out the exception. But it had not, for it had been inserted by the House of Lords and it was well known that they would insist on its retention, or destroy the Bill. What the House really had to determine therefore was whether they would rather have the Bill with this exception, or no Bill, and they voted for the Bill by a majority of two to one. But let it be noted that Captain Hacking, the Minister in charge, not only left this matter to a free vote of the House, but did much more: he received with more than sympathy the suggestion that, if the Bill were passed now with the exception, the Government might help the passing next session of a one clause Act removing the exception. And there the matter rests.

At other times of the day and night (the House sat till past midnight), the Lords' amendments to the Electricity Bill were dealt with. These were not important for the most part, though one was rejected as being a breach of privilege: some, however, were concessions which even Conservative members objected to. But, in the main, the Bill gets through in the form it left the Lower House.

The Weights and Measures Bill had a surprisingly easy passage through Committee. Sir Philip Cunliffe Lister was adroit and conciliatory, all parties were anxious to help, and differences of opinion were rapidly smoothed over.

On Tuesday, 14th December, Captain Fraser's Bill for supplying wireless to the blind got through, amid general rejoicing, as did the Criminal Justice Bill, both these and other measures racing along so quickly that there was time for discussions both on necessitous areas and mandates.

Mr. William Graham started the first subject, urging that the State should pay some of the cost thrown on local authorities by industrial distress. Mr. Neville Chamberlain refused. The case has been so often stated in the House that the arguments for and against are too well known to require repetition: but Mr. Chamberlain made an interesting announcement when he expressed himself in favour of the block grant system, which would give the local authorities greater liberty.

On mandates Mr. Ormsby Gore made a reassuring statement. Considerable uneasiness has been caused by Sir Austen Chamberlain's attack on the questionnaire. This is a list of questions, drawn up by the Permanent Mandates Commission of Geneva, asking for the information they require to enable them to report whether a mandatory power is or is not fulfilling its trust. Sir Austen Chamberlain called these questions inquisitorial, and rebuked the Permanent Mandates Commission somewhat sharply. Judging from Mr. Ormsby Gore's speech, further reflection has modified the Government's distrust. The new questions differ little from the old. Moreover, the Mandates Commission have a difficult task, and they are entitled to all the information they consider necessary. Above all, we have nothing to conceal. Our administration has never been attacked, and our rejection of the questionnaire gave a most unfortunate impression. However, the decision is now put off till the March meeting of the Council of the League of Nations, and it looks as though our objection would not be pressed hard.

The House adjourned on 15th December until 8th February.

AN IRISH CHRISTMAS, 1397.

Under this title Professor Entwistle gave last December in the *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* some extracts from the account written by Ramon de Perellós of his journey to Ireland. That his aim was to reach the "Purgatory of St. Patrick" and to know if his friend and master, John the First, King of Aragon, was suffering there, need not concern the reader, for as the translator notes, the chapter devoted to the description of Christmas at the court of the Ulster chieftain, King Isuel, is so lively and full of wonder at the strangeness of the customs observed as to bear on it the marks of substantial truth. Perellós relates how he was met by the king's constable with a hundred horsemen "armed after their fashion," how the king sent him a present of food—"beef, in fact, for they eat no bread nor drink any wine, as having none," but their drink is water or, for the great lords, milk or gravy of the meat. He says that of the various kings in Ireland, Isuel is paramount and the rest are of his lineage. There follows a description of the mounted men, saddleless and of their armour in detail, and of how in making war "they whoop in a like manner" to the Saracens. Then we have a picture of the king on Christmas Day, in a mantle descending to the knee and "low cut in a feminine style," without breeches, stockings, or shoes, but with spurs over his bare ankles. "Think of it!" we seem to hear him exclaiming. What, indeed, *could* he think of it who had been the intimate associate of the King of Aragon and a welcome visitor at the Papal Court at Avignon, and who had travelled through the England of Chaucer's time, under royal protection, and been accompanied to Lough Derg by Sir William de Courcy, "who was reputed the greatest man and his wife the greatest lady of the realm of England and she is the daughter of the King of France?"

Not only the king and his knights and nobles were clad in this fashion, according to our traveller, but the clerics, "bishops and abbots." The Queen, her daughter, and sister were "wrapped in green" and apparently not barefoot, for Perillós tells, in shocked accents, that "the queen's damosels, of whom there were some twenty, were unshod." He adds that the common folk "go as they can, poorly clad", though most have "mantles of fleece," both men and women. The good looks of the Irish are noted: "They are some of the handsomest men and fairest women that I have ever seen in the world."

Christmas was the occasion of the king holding his great court. "For all that, his table is no more than a mass of reeds heaped on the ground, but they put beside it more delicate grasses to wipe their mouths with. They carried the viands on two sticks as men carry tubs." Perellós received from the king the gift of an ox and the loan of a cook to roast it, also "a great present" was sent him, viz. "two thin waferlike cakes, as black as coal but very savoury." Questioning his guest closely as to the habits of life at the courts of Aragon, Castile, and France, King Isuel apparently arrived at the conviction that his own "were the best and most perfect in the world," which we read with some pleasure after the amazed comments of his visitor.

After spending Christmas thus hospitably entertained, the traveller entered the Pale and returned to England, where he visited King Richard II and his Queen at Lichfield, came again to London, and so by Dover and Calais, like any modern tourist, to Paris, where he stayed four months before proceeding to Avignon.

F. de G. M.

JEAN RICHEPIN'S SONG.

TRANSLATED BY HERBERT TRENCH.

A poor lad once and a lad so trim,
Gave his love to her who loved not him.

And says she "Fetch me to-night, you rogue,
Your mother's heart to feed my dog".

To his mother's house went that young man,
Killed her and took the heart and ran.

And as he was running, look you, he fell,
And the heart rolled on the ground as well.

And the lad as the heart was a-rolling heard,
That the heart was speaking, and this was the word:

The heart was a-weeping and crying so small
"Are you hurt my child, are you hurt at all?"

THE CHRISTMAS BELLS.

By M. BUCHANAN.

The baby smiles at the Angels' singing;
"Glory to God in the heights be given!"
Down floats the melody straight from Heaven—
The baby smiles and His bells are ringing.
The young star hies through the happy skies,
And the joylight lies in Mary's eyes.

The baby sleeps through the Angels' singing,
"Peace on earth and goodwill to men."
Down fall the harmonies rich again,
The baby sleeps, though the bells are ringing.
The bright star flies through the wondering skies,
And the lovelight lies in sweet Mary's eyes.

The baby stirs, for the Kings are bringing
Gifts of frakincense, myrrh, and gold:—
Down steals a shadow, silent and cold,
The baby wakes, to His mother clinging.
The star-gleam dies in the dawning skies,
And a tear-drop lies in poor Mary's eyes.

A MIXED BAG.

Three new novels, by three eminent women novelists, lie upon our table: *The Black Knight*, by Ethel M. Dell (Cassell, 7s. 6d.); *Crewe Train*, by Rose Macaulay (Collins, 7s. 6d.); and *The Happy Tree*, by Rosalind Murray (Chatto and Windus, 7s. 6d.); and they are all of them well worth reading.

With Miss Ethel Dell we always get what we expect, and we expect a supremely high level of constructive skill, a wayward heroine, an irreproachable moral tone, a very frequent reference to the expressional potentialities of the human eye, and a stirring of emotional interests which, since they avoid any overlapping with the ordinary humdrum experiences of human life, are interesting without being depressing. And in *The Black Knight* we get what we expect to an unprecedented degree. We expected, on reaching part I, chapter i, p. 1, l. 3, that the man therein described as "the White Rabbit," was in truth no white rabbit but a hero of exceptional originality and force of character, and our expectation was justified. We expected, on reaching part i, chapter I, p. 2, l. 8, that the "V.C." therein mentioned was no reputable V.C., but an unimaginable devil, dark-browed and cruel, and our expectation was justified. We expected, on learning a few pages further on that the heroine was mazed with the memory of an unknown man who had snatched a human life from the jaws of death at Monte Carlo, that this anonymous hero was no other than the White Rabbit in his true colours, and that this man she would ultimately marry, and, after the dispersion of certain clouds of misunderstanding, passionately love. And so, indeed, it fell out. Those who are personally unacquainted with the works of Miss Dell (and it is from such that her scoffing critics are habitually drawn) may surmise that this unvarying response to the expectations of her readers may carry with it a certain monotony. Yet this is not the case. Is a cross-word puzzle the less enthralling because we know that the letters of No. 1 across inevitably form the initial letters of Nos. 1, 2, 3, etc., down, and that the words thus conventionally entangled are easy of divination? Is it the less enthralling because the words *adobe, ere, erne, Ada,* and *afar* inevitably recur? Experience teaches us that it is not so. And it is experience (in our own case the experience of all the books that she has ever written) which refutes the suggestion that Miss Dell's works are in any way monotonous. We hope that she will continue in the future as in the past, to write a book of this poignant nature every year, until the passage of time which dims our admiring eye shall have the audacity to cramp her skilful hand.

With Miss Rose Macaulay we get what we expect too, but in less generous measure. We expect a hard, glittering, biting, yet withal somewhat superficial merry wit. And we get it in this last clever tilt at modern talkative, full-fed, cultured literary society. The cast of *Crewe Train* are as far withdrawn from the humdrum experiences of real life as are the cast of the *Black Knight*, though their withdrawing room is very differently furnished. But we also expect a sort of constructive balance, and it is here that Miss Macaulay lets us down. Her theme is the reaction of such an environment as we have indicated upon a savage young woman who is precipitated into it from the fastness of the Pyrenees. So far so good. Here we have all the elements of an admirable study in misfits. But Miss Macaulay has chosen to make her savage dirty, misanthropical, mentally deficient, lazy and bestial. Thus the reader is precipitated inevitably on to the side of Chelsea culture and its elaborate conventions. Had she endowed the creature with one pleasing quality, even with an animal solicitude for the young of its own species, the story might have acquired that vital spark of sympathy which one feels that Miss Macaulay in her heart of hearts desired to kindle. But when the savage out of pure calculated laziness deliberately induces a miscarriage and glories in its success, the game is up, the light fails, and the cup of our disappointment overflows.

With Miss Rosalind Murray we do not get what we expect, for the simple reason that when a promising young novelist has lain fallow for more than a decade, and a decade which covers the experience of war, marriage, and maternity, one does not know what to expect. What we do get is a novel which touches a far deeper level than either of the two dealt with above. It is written in the first person and its contents are summarized by the author herself in her concluding paragraph: "It does not seem worth writing about. I was happy when I was a child, and I married the wrong person, and someone I loved dearly was killed in the war . . . that is all. And all those things must be true of thousands of people." We have said that the works of Miss Dell, in their avoidance of real humdrum human experiences, are interesting without being depressing. It might be surmised that by the same standard *The Happy Tree* is depressing without being interesting. Nevertheless it is interesting because of its reality and because of the mature wise sympathy which its author brings to her work. It has its faults: the character of Cousin Delia is not altogether successfully treated, and there is a certain trick of verbal repetition which develops into a mannerism. But the faults are small and superficial, and the beauty of Miss Murray's variation on a very ancient theme compensates for the veil of sadness which its perusal casts over the reader. There is a lot to be said after all for these long fallow periods—but not in the case of Miss Ethel Dell, of course, and hardly, we fear, in the case of Miss Macaulay.

M. D. S.

STELLA BENSON.

Stella Benson is a young writer, as writers go, and her output to date is not considerable. A volume of essays, half a dozen slender novels, and a very slender book of verse, comprise its total. With this output she has, however, achieved a moderate fame. Her name is known, not to a wide circle of the public, but to all connoisseurs of modern literature, among whom she counts a few passionate admirers. Yet the limits of her popular repute are demonstrated by the fact that her earlier works are out of print and not easy to acquire; nor does her poetry appear (so far as we are aware) in anthologies of the best modern verse. Now this is a state of affairs which we are not altogether content to accept. Indeed we are continually plagued and somewhat haunted by the suspicion that Stella Benson is one of the great geniuses of the age. We are gratified when our literary contemporaries hail her latest products as witty, elegant, incisive, brilliantly humorous, entrancing, sardonic, and the like. Yet with all their reasoned and seemingly adequate appreciation we are left with the feeling that they have not said quite enough. Her work is all these things, but it is something more besides. It is tremendously significant for all its airy elegance—as significant as an Epstein statue. But significant of what?

Let us then seek enlightenment from the latest work of her hand, *Good-bye Stranger*,[1] which appeared last month. It is the story of a changeling fairy. The fact that his creator has cast him for the rôle of printer to a Chinese mission, and married him to an American wife who seeks beauty in gramophone music and godliness in hearty human kindness, does not complicate the essential difficulties of the situation. Complications always arise when human beings develop fairy contacts, whether in Bethnal Green, or in the kingdom of Dalua, or in the mission-field of Yunnan. Nevertheless the peculiar remote setting of her queer tale, and the fine human medley which is woven into it, give Stella Benson all the scope she needs for those qualities of ingenious vivid poetical prose which her reviewers are swift to appreciate. Not that she needs such extra opportunities for their display. Her wit plays as merrily in the Hackney Road or at a C.O.S. Committee as it does among the bamboo forests and temple bells of remote China.

[1] *Good-bye Stranger*, by Stella Benson (MacMillan, 7s. 6d.).

But to resume:—Into the orbit of that changeling fairy there come three ladies, travelling (in search of pecuniary gain) in the guise of a very fourth-rate concert party. With one of these ladies, who is (though the author does not tell us so) a blood relation of Edward, "the Poor Man," he contracts an astonishing love affair—to the great disturbance of his wife and to the scandal of local society. Fortunately for all concerned, his fairy connection is eventually severed and his normal domestic relations re-established. Such is the general outline of Stella Benson's latest novel—or so it appears to us at first reading, for we must confess that we have not yet got, and doubtless never shall get, quite to the bottom of it. One other matter of importance must be noted. *Good-bye Stranger*, like her earlier masterpiece *This is the End*, is furnished from chapter to chapter with short poems, fourteen of them—a very large percentage addition to its author's already published verse. None of these poems achieve the level of her earlier work. We do not find here the lyrical ecstasy of "The Loan of a Fair Day" or the pathetic unearthliness of "The Secret Day." Yet they, too, are pregnant with this same unescapable significance.

Well, well—we have accused Stella Benson's appreciative critics of not saying quite enough. But what have we ourselves said after all, in adequate justification of the profaned word "genius"? And this last story of a changeling fairy's inopportune intrusion, hardly seems to bring us any nearer to a satisfactory analysis. Yet, on last thoughts, perhaps it does. Good Heavens! *Is it possible that Stella Benson herself is*? . . . But no. No, no. Reviewers mustn't say things like that about authors of acknowledged eminence. It would never do. Besides, we have met people who have seen and talked to Stella Benson, and they have never suggested anything of the sort. And yet—if *that* were so, it would explain everything.

M. D. S.

"FROM MAN TO MAN."[1]

Olive Schreiner was a remarkable woman, whose fame, until now, has rested upon her strange book *The Story of an African Farm*, and upon her intense and almost violent personality. The other things she wrote, even *Woman and Labour*, are interesting, but they have no such outstanding merit as to justify her reputation. But this book, produced after her death by her husband, justifies all that has been said by her admirers, and brings her as it were to life again in a most astonishing fashion.

She was writing the book, it seems, all her life long: and it was still unfinished when she died. But, even so, it is a masterpiece, and it stays in the mind as a living whole, and seems to grow only better and more important when one has finished the actual pages.

It is not that it is a literary masterpiece. In many ways it is far from that, being full of dissertations, shapeless and uneven: but, face to face with a human document such as this, one does not ask for literary perfection. It would lose, if it were trimmed in any way, the ruggedness and perhaps also the intensity which make it so powerful a book. It might lack the passionate sincerity with which it rings, we might lose sight of the fierce headlong rage and enthusiasm which must have been its inspiration were the book any different from what it is. To a large extent the book must be autobiographical—not outwardly, as to the setting of life, but inwardly as to its emotion: and its quality, like that of *Wuthering Heights*, escapes definition. The greater part of the story lies in South Africa, and there are descriptions and touches of colour which show how well Olive Schreiner might have written had she paid much heed to the craft. But that was not her object; it was life, cruel life which absorbed her, and she has lifted it and crammed and condensed it into her pages until there is no escape from the conviction they bring.

Cruel though the story is, horrible as the suffering and waste of the lives she depicts, Olive Schreiner was not writing in bitterness or contempt. The message of the book—for it has a most deliberate message—is, after all, wider and wiser than the passion with which she composed it. For if Olive Schreiner suffered, stormed, and raged her way through her life, she also thought and pondered. And she found a quiet moral in the end.

"Perhaps only—" as her heroine says, "Perhaps only God knows what the lights and shadows are."

R. S.

[1] *From Man to Man*, by Olive Schreiner (Ernest Benn, 7s. 6d.).

LORD RAINGO.

Lord Raingo[1] is certainly not the finest book that Mr. Bennett has written. For human interest it cannot compare with some of its predecessors, whether one rummages among memories of the unforgettable studies of the Five Towns, or compares it with more recent triumphs in other settings like *Riceymane Steps*. But never, surely, in his career as a writer has he given a more complete or intoxicating demonstration of his mastery of his craft, of the perfection of his æsthetic gift than in this volume. He is as supreme in his own field among writers of the present day as Mr. George Bernard Shaw is in his. Both writers produce the impression that their choice of a subject is mere caprice: any other would have done just as well; and if there was a reason for choosing this, it was the appeal to pride or perversity made by the most unpromising material within sight. Why should Mr. Bennett spend the best part of a volume on the rather commonplace illness and death of a rather commonplace millionaire? It is true that he sugars his pill by disclosures or conjectures as to the functioning of the swollen departments of the war-time Civil Service, and as to the collision of personalities in the War Cabinet. But for all this we have Mr. W. H. Page and a host of authorities more reliable than Mr. Bennett. It is not by this that the spell is woven. Indeed, if the War Cabinet and the war itself could not be reduced to petty commonplace detail, they would not get on to the canvas at all. It is all commonplace, and it is all enthralling. One more case, in short, of that great truth, "Whatever Miss T. eats, turns into Miss T." This truth is universal, and perhaps self-evident; but few things are more enjoyable than to watch George Bernard Shaw or Arnold Bennett at work proving it once more.

J. L. S.

THE OLD ULYSSES.[2]

Into a world where it sometimes seems that everybody is copying everybody else, Mr. Kipling breaks with a volume that could come from no one but himself. Nor is this merely a copy of his own earlier works, such as some of our contemporary standard novelists delight in. It is quite true that some of the stories in the book seem made upon a pattern which belongs to Mr. Kipling, and which one cannot feel quite sure is the pattern of life. The wonderful conversations which make the substance of so many of his stories, do not seem exactly like any conversations one ever heard. Yet they are real, more real than if they were an accurate repetition of words actually uttered. This is probably because they express real emotions in an intensely concentrated form. These emotions have passed through Mr. Kipling's mind before they come to us, and are set, as it were, in his pattern. But they have not been invented or reflected by him and then attributed to made-up characters. They have been truly felt, and felt with a force which is like the glow of fire in molten iron, and makes much of the sentiment in modern fiction seem like tepid water. It is this strength of emotion that is Mr. Kipling's greatest quality. It is sometimes repellent when the emotion is one we do not share (I feel repelled by the hatred expressed in some of his stories). It is sometimes incomprehensible, it is sometimes overwhelming, but it is always *there* and makes us feel instinctively, those of us who read him at all, that he is on a different plane from most contemporary writers. Of course, it is not his only gift, it is combined with the seeing eye, and the questing mind. The last is what strikes us most in *Debits and Credits*. Mr. Kipling does not grow old, or he grows old only as Tennyson's Ulysses did. He still seeks to understand and to share new emotions or to feel over again old emotions through the minds of different kinds of people, and strange surroundings. The stories called "The Wish Hours," and "The Eye of Allah" are examples of the increasing width of his range. In both there is a woman dying of cancer, but the stories are not more like than the Sussex cottage and the "elderly experienced pensioned cook" in the first one are to the mediaeval Abbey and Roger Bacon's friends in the second. In the really great story of "The Gardener" which closes the book, Mr. Kipling shows profound understanding not only of some of the most universal emotions, but also of one very special feeling which it might seem that only those placed in the particular circumstances there described, could ever realize. From this point of view, the story is almost a miracle.

Less miraculous, but full of charm, are the Stalky stories in this volume. The first is preceded by one of several translations from Horace that together with other poems are scattered among the stories.

> "How comes it that, at even-tide,
> When level beams should show the truth,
> Man, failing, takes unfailing pride
> In memories of his frolic youth?"

This is not so good as the translation of the twenty-second Ode that preceded "The Janeites."

> "Of earth-constricting wars
> Of Princes passed in chains
> Of deeds out-shining stars,
> No voice or word remains.
>
> Yet furthest times receive
> And to fresh praise restore,
> Mere flutes that breathe at eve,
> Mere sea-weed on the shore.

Jane Austen is the flute, and the story is a tribute to her from an author surely as unlike herself as any in the whole range of English literature. The verses at the end of it tell that

> Jane went to Paradise:
> That was only fair.
> Good Sir Walter met her first,
> And led her up the stair.
> Henry and Tobias
> And Miguel of Spain
> Stood with Shakespeare at the top
> To welcome Jane.

When his untired Ulysses does reach the Happy Isles, surely Jane will stand upon the shore to welcome him.

I. B. O'MALLEY.

[1] *Lord Raingo*, by Arnold Bennett. (Cassell, 7s. 6d.)

[2] *Debits and Credit*, by Rudyard Kipling. (Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net.)

THE HOME OFFICE AND THE FACTORIES BILL.

The deputation, which was announced in our columns, representing the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, the Women's National Liberal Federation, and others was received yesterday by Captain Douglas Hacking on behalf of the Home Secretary, Sir William Joynson-Hicks, on the subject of the Factories Bill introduced by the Government last Session. The deputation was introduced by Dame Millicent Fawcett, and included Mrs. Abbott, Dr. Christine Murrell, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Miss C. Macmillan, the Hon. Mrs. Franklin, and Miss Helen Fraser. Lady Rhondda, Lady Balfour of Burleigh, Lady Barrett, Dr. Louisa Martindale, Professor Winifred Cullis, Mr. F. Briant, M.P., and Sir Robert Newman, M.P., were unable to be present.

The deputation urged that the whole tenor of the Bill, in so far as it proposed to continue or introduce restrictive provisions applicable to the adult woman, but not to the adult man, should be changed. In particular, they objected to special provisions as to hours of work, cleaning machinery in motion, prohibition of employment in lead processes, the lifting of heavy weights, and fire drill being applied to adult women unless they were also to men.

While desiring improved conditions in industry, they urged that any necessary restrictions should be based on the type of work to be performed and not on the sex of the worker. They further urged that the International Hours Convention adopted at Washington in 1919 should be incorporated in the Bill, and that the prohibition of night work by women, the subject of another Washington Convention, should not be renewed. While recognizing that the aim of the Bill was to increase the well-being of women workers generally, they felt that all restrictions on industrial employment which were limited to women were wrong in principle.

Captain Hacking, in reply, said that the Home Office had never been hostile to the employment of women in industry. The Bill had been printed and circulated for the purpose of discussion. He valued the expression of opinion they had given, but it was only fair to say that other and completely opposite views had been expressed both to him personally and to the Secretary of State. The views expressed by the deputation would be considered, and he would report the proceedings personally to the Home Secretary.

CONCILIATION IN INDUSTRY—A CONFERENCE.

The arrangements for the Conference on Conciliation and Arbitration in Industry, to be held on 1st, 2nd and 3rd February, are being rapidly pushed forward by the League of Nations Union. Methods of fixing minimum wages are also to be discussed. In addition to the speakers already announced, who included Mr. G. N. Barnes, Sir William Beveridge, Mr. J. R. Clynes, Lord Burnham, and Mr. W. L. Hichens, the League of Nations Union has secured the following distinguished men to take part in the discussions: M. Albert Thomas (Director of the International Labour Office), Professor Gilbert Murray, Lord Gainford, Mr. St. Loe Strachey, Major the Hon. J. J. Astor, the Master of Balliol, Alderman Ben Turner, Captain H. Macmillan, M.P., Mr. W. Citrine (General Secretary, Trades Union Congress). The League of Nations Union intends to follow up this Conference by organizing a party to visit Geneva in May and attend the Annual Conference of the International Labour Organization which is going to discuss the very question of methods of fixing minimum wages in industry.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE PUBLIC PLACES (ORDER) BILL.

MADAM,—In offering you very sincere thanks for the space you have so generously given to the subject of our campaign against the solicitation laws, I ought to make one correction.

Your article gives the impression that Mr. Cecil Chapman supported the Public Places (Order) Bill at our Conference on 30th November. This is a misapprehension. Mr. Cecil Chapman certainly did not speak in favour of the Bill, and I gather that he takes a rather different view to that taken by this Association. On the other hand, as you pointed out, we have had very strong support in pressing for amendment of the existing law from other stipendary magistrates.

ALISON NEILANS,
Secretary, Association for Moral and Social Hygiene.

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SMETHWICK BY-ELECTION.

Mr. Edwin Bayliss, the Liberal candidate, has answered all the questions on the N.U.S.E.C. Questionnaire in the affirmative, with the exception of those relating to information on methods of birth control, the employment of married women, and family allowances, to which he has given no answer. Mr. Mosley stated that he stood for complete equality between men and women in all respects. No reply has been received from the Conservative candidate, Mr. Pike.

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Secret of High Wages	Austin & Lloyd.
In Darkest London	Mrs. Cecil Chesterton.
Factory Legislation and its Administration	H. A. Mess.
A History of Factory Legislation (New Edition)	B. L. Hutchins and A. Harrison.
The Home and the School	A. H. Radice.
Mothers and Daughters	Jessica Cosgrove.
Nature's Law of Birth Control	Mrs. Monteith Erskine.
The Evolution of Woman	G. W. Johnson.
The Health of the Industrial Worker	Collis & Greenwood.
The Health of the Workers	Sir Thomas Oliver.
The Drink Trade and the Nation	Sewell & Barker.
A City Council from Within	E. D. Simon.
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