

THE WOMEN'S SERVICE
COPY

Catholic Citizen

Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society), 55 Berners Street, London, W. 1.

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

—Francis Thompson.

The Woman's Movement in India

BY I. M. DICKINSON

The Duke of Wellington wrote in 1805: "it is not possible to interest the British public in any Indian subject." If this were not to a large extent true to-day, the amazing growth of the woman's movement must have attracted far more general attention than it has done. But readers of the "Catholic Citizen" are among the honorable minority who are keenly interested in Indian affairs. They know the whole-hearted response which the progressive women of India have made to the call to service of their country.

An age-long discipline and a selfless devotion to the ideal of woman's vocation in the small group of the family have prepared the women of India for the wider field of activity now open to them. Individual women have for long distinguished themselves in all the careers open to them. That this should be so does not surprise the West as much as the conspicuous ability to organise, and, still more, the determination to surmount all barriers of community and caste and creed which the woman's movement has called forth during the last decade. This organising ability and unity of purpose is manifest in the work of the three great All-India associations of women, the Women's Indian Association, the National Council of Women in India, and, most representative of all, the All-India Women's Conference. All these have branches in all parts of India and thus link up all the activities of the woman's movement.

The last of the All-India Women's Conferences held in December was an outstanding event. Delegates were present from all parts of British India and the Native

States. During the days the Conference lasted, Hindus, Mohamedans, Sikhs, Christians, the high caste and the untouchable, met together not only in consultation, but in close social intercourse. For the first time in its history delegates from the Harijan (low caste) women spoke at the conference.

One of the first resolutions these representative women passed was the following: "This Conference reiterates its demands regarding franchise and the status of women in the future constitution of India as placed before the Joint Parliamentary Committee in London, by elected representatives, and fully endorses the statements made by them before the same committee."

The progressive women of India have thus once more repudiated communalism. Believing as they do in equal citizenship, they still oppose the proposal that wives and widows should be given votes on the grounds of their husband's property.

They adhere to their former proposals that both men and women passing a literacy test in any vernacular should be enfranchised, and that there should be adult franchise in urban areas. They again demand that the principle of equality of the sexes should find a place in the "Declaration of the Fundamental Rights of Citizenship" in the Constitution Act.

When we remember that the proposals for enfranchisement of women have been whittled down from the proportion of one woman to two men, first made by the Simon Commission, to one woman to twenty men for the Federal Assembly and (nominally) one to seven for the Provincial Legislature, which is the proposal

of the White Paper, when we also remember that their delegates have returned from London empty handed, we can feel the just indignation beneath their final resolution on this subject, which was that a special session of the Conference should be called after the publication of the report of the Joint Committee to determine what shall be their attitude should their demands be ignored.

The Report of the Statutory Commission said that "the movement among Indian women . . . is one of the most encouraging signs of India's progress and we believe that the movement would be strengthened by increasing the influence of women at the elections." These words must surely seem a mockery to the women of India when compared with the insignificant position now offered them.

Communal minded reactionaries would have us believe that the Muslim women are less anxious for enfranchisement than their Hindu sisters. That this is untrue is shown by a recent happening in the Punjab. A woman member of the Punjab Council moved a resolution asking for the enfranchisement of women in regard to local bodies. This was defeated by the help of Government votes. The reason given for the opposition was that Muslim women being in purdah would not use their votes, and that this would cause inequality and prejudice the chances of the Muslim candidates for election. The anger of the Muslim women of the Punjab has been aroused by this as even in Lahore they were all in favour of the resolution.

The social resolutions of the Conference show in what ways the progressive women will use their power if they succeed in their demands for a just representation. They have fought for the protection of the child wives of India, and are consequently horrified at the proposal to repeal the Child Marriage Restraint (Sarda) Act. Their resolution to this effect is opposed to the exemption of any section or community from the provisions of the Act, and calls upon the Government not only to enforce it stringently, but also to amend it so as to make child marriage impossible. In connection with this resolution members of St. Joan's Alliance will recall the good work done by their late member, Dr. Mary O'Brien Beadon, who served on the Age of Consent Committee. Another important resolution concerns the removals of the disabilities of women in Hindu law as regards inheritance and marriage.

Catholics will regret that the Conference expressed an opinion in favour of the spread of

knowledge of artificial birth control through clinics.

The question arises, why do we hear so little of any part which Indian Catholics are taking in the woman's movement? The reason is not far to seek. Catholic women who are conspicuous in the professions of teaching and medicine, are, for the most part, in Government employment. They are thus debarred by the very service they are rendering their country from any open expression of opinion as to its political future. Even the wives of Government servants are not allowed to take part in any public meeting or assembly of a political nature.

Since the Conference was held, the appalling calamity of the earthquake has overshadowed all other events. Women were not slow to respond to the appeal from the stricken areas. A call to the women doctors of Bombay to come to the rescue of the injured Purdah women of Bihar, resulted in a contingent of seven doctors, equipped with the necessary funds, setting out from Bombay within less than twelve hours from the receipt of the message. Yet it is still said that the East can only move slowly!

Another recent report from India says that the All-India women's organisations are preparing for a campaign in favour of the New Factories Bill which embodies reforms long over due.

Indian women have shown their belief in the equal moral standard by supporting all measures for stopping the traffic in women, especially by making brothels illegal. It is largely owing to their determined efforts that the disgraceful brothel areas of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta are now a thing of the past.

The appointment of an Indian woman to the League of Nations Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young Persons has been urged by the All-India Organisations. The recent appointment of Mrs. Raddhabai Subbaroyan is therefore very good news.

The progressive women of India have a tremendous task to perform. On the one hand to struggle without ceasing until they attain their rightful place in the councils of their country; on the other to work for the uplift of those dumb millions in the villages of India until adult suffrage, which is their ultimate aim, can be reached.

We women electors of Britain must not rest content with admiring their courage. We have to use all our influence on behalf of their just demands for a fuller citizenship.

Notes and Comments

We offer our respectful congratulations to His Eminence Cardinal Bourne on the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of his Priesthood. Members of the Executive Committee were happy to send a donation to the Jubilee Fund to be presented to His Eminence.

* * * *

By the passing of the Dickstein-Copeland Bill, which was signed by President Roosevelt on May 24th all discriminations against women in the U.S.A. Nationality laws have been removed. By the Cable Act of 1922 women already had the right to retain or change their nationality on marriage to an alien. The present Act grants the mother equal power with the father to transmit citizenship and it allows men equal rights with women in the matter of renouncing citizenship on marriage with an alien, a right hitherto granted only to women. It also equalises the law with regard to the transmission of citizenship by naturalised citizens and the time required for an alien marrying an American citizen to acquire citizenship.

This victory is a big step forward in the cause of Equal Nationality Rights between men and women. We congratulate our American colleagues who have worked so hard for the passage of the Bill.

* * * *

During the debate in the House of Commons on the Unemployment Bill the Minister of Labour accepted an amendment, moved by Lady Astor that at least one member of the Unemployment Assistance Board should be a woman.

* * * *

At the Conference of the Post Office Controlling Officers Association at Southampton on May 15th, a vigorous protest was made against the present policy of the Post Office in reducing supervising posts for men and handing over such work to women "in the name of economy." It was a "wicked scandal" and "in Victorian Times woman's place was by the fireside." Woman's place has long been extended to other spheres than that of the fireside and it is time that this was recognised and that the "wicked scandal" of paying a woman less for the same work as a man was abolished. A man might incidentally find it better for himself if this were done, for then he would not be undercut by a woman "in the name of economy," and the policy of promoting women in preference to men could only be pursued on the merits of individual work.

During its session in April 1933, the League of Nations Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young Persons discussed the report of the Commission of Enquiry into Traffic in Women and Children in the East (C.T.F.E. 613). Among the comments by Private Organisations on the Report, is the communication of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. The Sacred Congregation in putting forward its point of view points out that the Missions were requested through the Delegates Apostolic to afford all possible aid to the Enquiry. We regret to note that though the Missions would have undoubtedly afforded valuable information the Commission only consulted a very small number of Catholic institutions and hardly any ecclesiastical superiors of mission territories.

* * * *

The Cardinal Archbishop, in his Trinity Sunday Pastoral announced the opening of an Oratory at 1 Woburn Square, W.C.1., which is to serve "as a centre for the numerous students of both sexes attending the University of London." The Oratory was opened on June 1st and Father David Mathew, D.Litt., M.A., is the resident chaplain. We are glad that, as in the majority of the universities, the chaplain is appointed for the benefit of both men and women students. It is a pity that Oxford and Cambridge should be notable exceptions.

* * * *

We have received from the Catholic Shop Assistants, Warehousemen's and Clerks' Guild the copy of a resolution passed at a meeting of the Guild on May 29th protesting against the unjust distinction made by an Act of Parliament passed in 1886, whereby religious freedom is not given to children in the Warehousemen's, Clerks' and Drapers' Schools, and deprecating a position which makes it impossible for any Catholic child to enjoy the charitable and good work of those institutions without losing the teaching and practice of its own religion. We wish success to the Guild in its efforts to obtain justice.

* * * *

We congratulate Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell, B.A., formerly Hon. Secretary of our Liverpool Branch on having been elected to the Court of Manchester University.

* * * *

We ask the prayers of our readers for the repose of the soul of Dr. Morgan Finucane, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., J.P., Associate Member of our Alliance, who died recently.—R.I.P.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,

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

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State Regulation of Vice

The thirteenth Session of the League of Nations Traffic in Women and Children Committee was held in April, the most important item on the Agenda being the Report* submitted by the Secretariat on the Effects of the Closing of Licensed Houses in 15 European towns and certain towns in the British Empire.

After a careful study of the Report, the Committee adopted a series of resolutions in the first of which attention is drawn to the fact that "according to the information obtained by the Committee" the licensed or tolerated house system "is one of the main incentives to the traffic in women; and that . . . there is no evidence that any increase in the incidence of venereal disease has resulted from the closing of licensed or tolerated houses or that public order and decency have suffered because of their abolition." The Committee then stated that henceforth in its view, the arguments formerly advanced could no longer be quoted in favour of licensed houses, and it requested the Council to invite Governments to maintain the abolition of the system wherever this has been realised, and to consider the desirability of abandoning it where it still exists. The Committee further pointed out that abolition in itself cannot be fully effective unless it is supplemented. It desired "to emphasise the value of all preventive measures, such as social assistance and education to be applicable equally to both sexes." (The italics are ours.)

We regret to note that "certain countries and certain towns that have abandoned the licensed house system have retained the system of compulsory registration and medical examination of professional prostitutes."

Josephine Butler affirmed towards the end of the last century that "what is morally wrong

cannot be medically right." It cannot be too often repeated that if it is assumed that an equal moral standard is impossible, the assumption will go far to mould public opinion in the wrong direction. State Regulation implicitly assumes that there is a demand for prostitutes; supply creates demand and thus a vicious circle is set up. Nor must we forget the women concerned. The Report** on the work of the Thirteenth Session truly says "the importance of respecting human personality must be fully recognised." Pope Pius IX stigmatised State Regulation as a "merchandise of human flesh" and in view of the iniquity of the system and its bad results both morally and materially, it is discouraging to find that so many Catholic countries still adhere to it. A Catholic women's paper on the continent recently expressed wonder that at a women's conference the demand for an equal moral standard was put forward as a modern achievement. "This is no modern achievement, it is age-old Christianity." So it is—but the "demand" in some Christian countries does not seem to have been strong enough to bridge the gap between practice and precept. On the other hand we find many Catholics doing excellent work for the abolition of State Regulation. In France there is notably Professor Gemähling and Monsieur Delamare. Dr. Agnes MacLaren, whom we were proud to number among the earliest members of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, obtained the Apostolic blessing of the two Sovereign Pontiffs Leo XIII and Pius X for the work of the International Abolitionist Federation. She also obtained the encouragement and sym-

* C.T.F.E. 612

** [C.T.F.E. 638 (1)]

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR
CONFERENCE

Sir Francis Floud, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, received yesterday on behalf of Sir Henry Betterton, a deputation from the Open Door Council in regard to four items on the agenda of the eighteenth session of the International Labour Conference, which is to meet next week.

The Council was supported by the Cambridge Standing Committee for Equal Citizenship, the National Union of Women Teachers, St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, Six Point Group, West Bromwich Equal Citizenship Society, Women's Freedom League and Women's Guild of Empire.

Mrs. Le Sueur referred to the proposal to revise the convention prohibiting the night work of women by excluding from it women holding responsible positions of management and not ordinarily engaged in manual work. She urged that a revised convention should not be adopted, as it would not release these women from the present prohibition. That could only be done in each country by the Government denouncing the existing convention and altering its own legislation.

She also urged that a convention reducing hours of work should not be adopted until such time as the restrictions on night work applied equally to men and women. Otherwise such a convention would be to the disadvantage of women because they would be more difficult to fit into any necessary scheme of reorganisation.

Miss Chrystal Macmillan, in connection with the proposed convention on unemployment insurance, said it was the duty of the conference to give effect to the seventh general principle of its own constitution—the principle that men and women should receive equal remuneration for work of equal value.

Any convention adopted should make it necessary that men and women should pay equal contributions and receive equal benefits, and that the married woman should not be required to satisfy more onerous conditions than other persons.

Sir Francis Floud said that a careful note had been made of the arguments, and that these would be brought to the notice of the Ministers concerned, and borne in mind when the instructions to the Government delegates were being drawn up.

pathy of many French ecclesiastics of note. Among the reports of the voluntary organisations examined by the Traffic in Women and Children Committee during its Thirteenth Session are those of the International Catholic Associations for the Protection of Young Girls and the International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues. Readers may remember that Dame Rachel Crowdy, late head of the Opium Control and Social Questions Department of the League of Nations, speaking at our 21st Birthday Dinner, said that St. Joan's Alliance had been the first organisation of Catholics to co-operate with the League in the suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children.

Throughout the world feminist organisations, following the lead of Josephine Butler, have been foremost in fighting State Regulation of Vice and it is as well to note that in most of those countries where State Regulation flourishes, women are unenfranchised. May the day soon come when Governments will universally adopt the policy of abolition.

CHRISTINE SPENDER.

ST. JOAN'S FEAST

On May 30th, the feast of St. Joan, Father Martin D'Arcy, S.J., kindly offered Mass for our Alliance. A wreath tied with our colours was placed on the shrine of St. Joan in Westminster Cathedral.

On the eve of the feast of St. Joan Miss Fedden gave a delightful party in aid of the "Catholic Citizen" at her house in Hampstead. Miss Fedden made a very amusing speech on some of her memories of old suffragette days and Miss Spender made an appeal for further efforts in organising paper selling. A most enjoyable evening was spent and £1 10s. was made for the cause. Our thanks are due to Miss Butler-Bowdon and Miss Radclyffe for helping by character delineations.

On May 30th, Miss Eleanor FitzGerald kindly entertained a few members at her flat. She gave an interesting account of a valuable cameo portrait of Michelangelo, which she had had presented to the Holy Father during her stay in Rome. The Holy Father had sent her his special blessing and in token of his gratitude a "little book" stamped with the papal arms, His own copy of the "Life of Gemma Galgani," which was presented to His Holiness on the occasion of the saint's canonisation. The cameo has since been placed in the Vatican Library.

International Notes

The International Council of Women will hold its Council Sessions in Paris from July 2nd to 12th. Among the subjects under discussion will be Peace, Child Welfare, Cinema and Broadcasting, Equal Moral Standard, etc. On July 5th at the Sorbonne there will be a Joint Demonstration of International Women's Organisations, in which St. Joan's Alliance will co-operate, to uphold the right of a woman whether married or unmarried to obtain or retain work and to condemn any attempt to deprive her of this right. Mlle. Lenoël will represent St. Joan's Alliance. On July 10th there will be a public meeting presided over by Dr. Ogilvie Gordon, which will bear on some aspects of slavery, the subject being the "Individual Rights of Men, Women and Children among Native Races."

The March number of "L'Action Sociale de la Femme" (Paris) has an interesting report on the position of native women in French Central Africa, which confirms us in our opinion that there is much room for improvement in this direction. It is clearly stated in this article that the general rule is for the woman to be unable to dispose of herself—her person is disposed of by the "chef de famille." Law is applied with an eye to native custom and without regard to the fact that Christianity brings with it moral obligations which must necessarily affect such customs. For instance Christianity cannot recognise polygamy or the putting aside of the rights of the individual. African society has already changed through contact with civilisation; those customs which Europe considered most barbarous have been stamped out but these measures must be completed by a more comprehensive recognition of the rights of the African woman.

In the recent number of "L'Egyptienne" (Cairo) appears an article by M. M. J. Beyhum on the development of the women of Iraq. The majority of these women still have no education and no rights whatever and are considered merely as property by the men. There is no companionship between husband and wife owing to the wife's lack of education and the latter can do nothing without her husband's permission. But there is a small section of the community which is more progressive, the men realising that they cannot leave the women behind in their march forward and the women

themselves wishing for education and freedom. This group has to struggle continuously against the mass of public opinion, but they are gradually making headway. Schools for girls are being opened all over the country and more are being demanded. When the author of the article in question gave a lecture in Bagdad on Women's Enfranchisement the number of women who attended was enormous and a considerable stir was created in the press, women themselves writing to the newspapers. These things, though small in themselves, mark a change when it is considered how rigorous the seclusion of Iraq women has been.

We congratulate the Swiss Association for Woman Suffrage, which will celebrate its Silver Jubilee on June 17th. We send our Swiss colleagues our best wishes for the speedy attainment of "votes for women on the same terms as men."

S. A. B.

"THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN" MEMORIAL FUND

Miss de Alberti's Memorial Fund has now reached the sum of £25. We thank all those who have so kindly contributed.

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HON. TREASURER'S NOTE

Many thanks to those who have sent donations and subscriptions.

At the risk of being tedious may I again remind readers of our need of cast-off clothing and any other articles for the barrow?

P. M. BRANDT.

REVIEW

Contre l'Esclavage de la Femme. By Marcel Delamare. (La Jeune République, 15 Rue Las Cases, Paris, 2 fr.)

M. Delamare brings to the investigation of social problems that love of justice and fair play which has made him a good feminist. We are glad to count M. Delamare a member of both the English and French Sections of St. Joan's Alliance. In this small volume M. Delamare describes the Regulation-system of prostitution as at present in use in France. The fairness of his description is devastating. He gives full credit to the originators of the system for their good intentions and shows how the system has achieved none of the aims which recommended it to its promoters. It has acted neither as a deterrent to solicitation nor as a preventative of criminal assault. It has even failed to relegate vice to appointed hours and places. It has not diminished the incidence of venereal disease and has tended to delay recourse to early medical treatment. The sordid inefficiency of compulsory periodical medical inspection is told with a wealth of convincing detail. Our own short national experiment under the Contagious Diseases Acts is retold and a parallel is drawn between the evils which it engendered, and those now existing in other countries which are not yet abolitionist.

M. Delamare is an ardent admirer of Josephine Butler and of the work now carried on by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene. He draws attention to the success achieved in this country by the voluntary treatment centres for venereal disease and the encouraging results obtained by the establishment of similar centres in France. Constant efforts to educate public opinion and the whole-hearted adoption of an uncompromising abolitionist programme should be the lines of action of those who are discontented with regulation and who are appalled to find that a system devised to promote the good health and well-being of the community is instead an instrument of suffering and degradation—a law which enslaves.

F. M. S.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH

Hon. Sec.: Mrs. A. Stewart Mason, B.A., "Brinsworth," Grosvenor Road, Birkenhead. A meeting was held on May 15th at 146 Upper Parliament Street by kind permission of the chairman, Miss Wylie. We were delighted to welcome an old friend of the Alliance in Miss Chubb who gave us a very interesting address on "Indian Women and the Franchise."

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