

THE

# 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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15th OCTOBER, 1935.

Price Twopence.

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 Great Countess

By BARBARA BARCLAY CARTER

The history of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries is dominated by the vast struggle between Popes and Emperors in which the issue was the supremacy of the spiritual order of the Church over the temporal order of the feudal world. In the middle of the eleventh century an Emperor could intervene to depose unworthy Popes; no Pope could be enthroned without his sanction; the right of lay investiture placed the clergy in his dependence or that of other monarchs. If the Church was able to assert her independence, purified of many abuses, with celibacy of the clergy rigorously enforced and henceforth to be uncontested in the Catholic world, this was mainly the work of the titanic figure of St. Gregory VII, who revived St. Augustine's vision of the Church as the City of God, challenging in her defence the whole might of the Empire. And in this superhuman struggle, his comrade and mainstay was a woman—Mathilda of Tuscany, known throughout Italy and Germany as "The Great Countess."

It is strange how little has been written of her; she is far less famous than her almost contemporary Héloïse, to whom the learned Benedictine Dom Luigi Tosti compared her, finding "a sisterly kinship uniting their two souls in a chivalrous abnegation, by which both aided the birth of modern civilisation." It is a great claim. But while Héloïse, like Roswitha and Hildegard and other famous women of the time, sought learning in the cloister, Mathilda, true type of the valiant woman of the Scriptures, held her place in the world till near her end, a great ruler, a great warrior, armed champion

of the Church, and at the same time great in pity and charity and devotion.

It is therefore very welcome to find that a brilliant Catholic writer of America, Miss Helen C. White, (of whom, as a member of the Alliance, we may be proud), has made Mathilda the theme of her latest novel. (1)

In this book Miss White traces the whole dramatic story, up to the death of Gregory VII, allowing her imagination to amplify and interpret, but keeping rigidly to the scaffolding of historical fact. We see Mathilda first as a young girl, in 1068 lord of Tuscany in her own right, and already skilled in arms, fresh from her victory at Aquino, by which her impetuous valour has saved Rome from the Norman invaders from the South. Yet the brutality of her contemporaries revolts her; on her first meeting with Hildebrand she is stirred by his vision of the Church as a light shining in darkness, bringing order into chaos, of princes who should see their duty in keeping the law of God and defending it. She, like all the finest spirits of the Middle Ages, is haunted by memories of the Roman civilisation, the Roman Peace. The book follows her in her life with her husband, Godfrey of Lorraine, in her relations with Hildebrand who, as Pope, holds her as honoured counsellor at his Lenten Synods, in her contact with such men as Anselm of Lucca, Desiderius of Monte Cassino—later, largely through her influence, Pope Victor III—Hugh of Cluny, the greatest minds of the age. When

(1) Not Built With Hands, by Helen C. White. Macmillan, 8s. 6d.



her husband deserts the papal cause for that of the Emperor-Elect, Henry IV, who rebels against Gregory's reforms, the Pope finds in her his chief supporter; under her escort he comes to her castle of Canossa, and there Henry is forced to come as suppliant and penitent.

Henry's repentance was a political move. Within a week, he set an ambush for the Pope, which Mathilda's vigilance discovered. In the renewal of war her lands were devastated, her resources exhausted, the treasures of her house sold for the Pope's need, but in the end, her generalship brought victory. For Gregory it would come too late. He died defeated, driven from Rome which had seen the coronation of Henry by an anti-Pope; but his work would live, and Mathilda's power would enable his successors to carry it on. The end of the book is a masterpiece. Mathilda in her grief for the loss of her beloved friend wanders through the streets of the city of Florence, where the craftsmen are at work who will one day make of it one of the world's great cities, centre of civilisation reborn; she considers the apparent fruitlessness of the toil of the "unregarded generations," and feels that "she too, could labour and could wait, until in the mysterious fullness of God's time, the vision of her dead master would be brought to pass."

The book is full of passages of profound beauty; vivid descriptive touches of admirable accuracy make it glow like an eleventh century tapestry and bring all the life of the period before our eyes. In interpreting perennial emotions such as those of loss and longing, Miss White stirs us as only a poet can. But it must be confessed that this level is not everywhere maintained. The dialogue would have gained by condensation. It is always the crux in historical romances, for the use of modern speech, though inevitable, too often implies concepts and angles of vision alien to the age of the speakers. There was something elemental and concentrated in the figures with whom she deals that grows diluted when their conversations are prolonged. I am not, for instance, wholly convinced by her Gregory. She has chosen to dwell on the gentler, spiritual aspects of his nature, but one misses the fierce fire of the man whom St. Peter Damian called his "holy Satan." But nothing is harder, or indeed, more impossible, than to reproduce completely personalities of an age so distant, and the book, unquestionably, is an extremely fine piece of work.

## St. Joan's at Geneva

Mrs. Laughton Mathews, Miss Flynn (Australia), and later Mlle Lenoël (France), were the representatives of St. Joan's Alliance at Geneva during the Assembly of the League of Nations last month. Although the international crisis naturally overshadowed all other work, yet the ordinary routine work was carried through as usual, and the subjects of the Status of Women and of the Nationality of Married Women were discussed at length in the 1st Committee.

On the subject of Nationality the Committee passed a resolution drawing the attention of Governments to the fact that the Montevideo Nationality of Women Treaty was open to the accession of all States. As our readers will remember under this Treaty the Contracting States declare that in regard to Nationality there shall be no difference in law or practice based on sex.

In regard to the Status of Women, the Committee on the motion of the Irish delegation referred the question of the political and civil status of women to Governments for their observations. In both resolutions appreciation was expressed of the work of the International Women's organisations and the wish that they should continue in close touch with the League. We congratulate the Irish delegation on the prominent part it took in this matter. At the same time we would remind the Irish Government that the right to work is the first and most elementary justice demanded by women, and that the Bill at present before the Dail is one of the most serious attacks on that right yet seen.

During the discussion of Mandates in the 6th Committee, Mme. Ciurlionis of Lithuania drew attention to the position of native women in certain mandated territories and expressed the hope that the Permanent Mandates Commission would continue its investigations.

Both at the meeting for women delegates arranged by the Liaison Committee of International Women's Organisations and at the deputation of women's organisations to the President of the Assembly, Mrs. Laughton Mathews spoke on the question of the position of women in mandated territories. The deputation was held in public in the Council Hall of the League of Nations and chosen speakers, representing millions of women, put forward various aspects of the case for equality of status between men and women. V.L.M.

## Notes and Comments

We welcome the appointment by the Admiralty of three women to help sailors and their wives, in their domestic difficulties. Because the sailor is so often away family complications are more likely to arise in his case. Hitherto machinery has acted too slowly to be of much use, but the new appointments will, as the *News Chronicle* points out, "make it possible to give help and advice more speedily and effectively."

\* \* \* \*

One of the Sessions of the Sea Apostolate International Congress, held recently in London, was devoted to the question of women seafarers. An interesting paper was read by Miss C. M. Buckley, whom we may note is a member of the Alliance. Miss Buckley runs the women seafarers centre in Genoa, which was mentioned in our last issue. In the discussion which followed her paper, Father Desmond Chute, also of Genoa, begged those present not to look upon the adult woman as only in need of protection; she was entitled to all the services and amenities the Apostolatus Maris could offer her. Mr. Gannon, secretary, said that it was fundamental to regard the seafaring woman as a seafarer entitled to the privileges of other seafarers and ready herself to apostolize her fellow-workers.

How refreshing and welcome is this understanding of women's position shown by eminent workers in Apostolatus Maris—an understanding which will doubtless cause their work for women to prosper.

\* \* \* \*

During the recent riots in Belfast the *Universe* reported an illuminating incident concerning the Catholic mill girls of that city. These mill girls had been so terrorised that the majority made up their minds that they could not go back to the mills. At this juncture a priest, the friend of every Catholic mill girl in Belfast, called together about 80 of the girls driven from the mills and factories. He told them that they held the key position in what was an economic war, that if they consented to be turned out the Catholics in every other mill and factory would be cleared out. "You're going back for the Catholics of Belfast," he said. The upshot of it was that these courageous girls made up their minds to go back—"If they tear us to pieces we'll go back."

From a feminist point of view, apart from the human aspect, this is an encouraging incident. The work of these girls was taken seriously; they were told they held a key position and were asked to hold it, not only for their own sakes (the loss of their jobs would have meant starvation to their families) but for the sake of their fellow Catholic workers—in short for the sake of the Faith in Belfast. What a contrast to the usual injunction to go back home and leave the jobs to the men!

\* \* \* \*

We have received from the National Association of Women Civil Servants a pamphlet on the pay of women in the Civil Service which is a refutation of the statements made in the House of Commons by Mr. Duff Cooper during the equal pay debate in June last. This debate was reported in the July number of the *Catholic Citizen*. The Women Civil Servants insist that "most of Mr. Duff Cooper's statements were in many respects misleading" especially with regard to the higher sick leave of women officers. "Despite the fact that the Chairman of the Royal Commission having heard the whole facts of the case gave it as his view that the matter of women's sick leave was negligible and of no bearing on the equal pay issue, Mr. Duff Cooper saw fit to make it one of the outstanding points in his House of Commons statement."

We welcome this pamphlet which will be of much assistance to those speaking in support of equal pay between men and women.

\* \* \* \*

The Women's Freedom League is organising a petition to the King "to ask our Government and the Dominions Governments, to pass the necessary legislation to give women an independent right to their own nationality." We would ask all our members to help to collect signatures. Petition forms may be obtained from St. Joan's Alliance.

\* \* \* \*

We congratulate our co-religionist, Alderman Kathleen Chambers, J.P., on her courageous fight at the quarterly meeting of the Northern Counties Association for the Welfare of the Blind, held recently at Newcastle. Single-handed, she succeeded in having a resolution committing the Association to the proposals of the Central Committee on Voluntary Sterilisation deferred for reconsideration at a further meeting, to take place at Liverpool in December.



## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":

55 BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.1. Tel. Museum 4181

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

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

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MISS CHRISTINE SPENDER, *Hon. Editor.*

## Status of Women

## Memorandum to the 16th Assembly of the League of Nations\*

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance welcomes the inclusion of the subject of the Status of Women on the Agenda of the 16th Assembly of the League of Nations. The Alliance attaches the greatest importance to this question, believing that the raising of the status of women throughout the world is not only a matter of justice but is one of social urgency, in that on it depends the release of the full services of women, half of humanity, for work in solving the problems and sufferings of the world.

Knowing that other International Women's Organisations have prepared, for submission to the League, a detailed statement concerning the disabilities which women suffer in various countries, St. Joan's Alliance has not duplicated such a statement.

St. Joan's Alliance stands for full equality of women, married or unmarried, with men in all matters relating to the enjoyment of civil and political rights, including in particular equal rights of exercising electoral, legislative, judicial, executive or administrative powers and the right of being elected to or sitting on or voting as members of any public body exercising any such powers and admission to all public employment, functions and honours or the exercise of any professions or trades with equal opportunities of advancement and without difference of pay.

\* A. 19, 1935, V, p. 47.

In this way, we maintain, the ideal may best be realised of giving every human being, man or woman, the opportunity of carrying out their own vocation without artificial obstacle.

The Alliance believes that it is possible to raise the status of women by means of an International Convention and it urges that in any International Convention designed to give equal status to women with men, it should be made quite clear that any countries ratifying it accept the principles of equality set out above.

In a further Memorandum to the League on **Nationality of Women** the Alliance hopes that an International Convention may be drawn up incorporating the principle of equality and clearly expressing the right of a married woman to an independent personal nationality on equal terms with men.

Mrs. Laughton Mathews, M.B.E., and Miss Flynn of Australia, recently returned from Geneva, will speak on the XVIIth Assembly of the League of Nations, at a meeting to be held under the auspices of the Alliance at St. Patrick's Club-room, Soho, on Tuesday, October 22nd, at 5-30 p.m. Lady Sanderson will preside. Tea may be had beforehand.

Members and readers will be anxious to attend this interesting meeting and to bring their friends, so they are asked to make a special note of the date.

Franciscan Missionary Nuns  
in Uganda

On October 7th, Mrs. V. M. Crawford, who for many years was Chairman of the Alliance, invited the Committee and other members to tea at her house in Kensington to hear Mother Kevin speak on the work of the Franciscan Missioners of Mill Hill in Uganda. Mother Kevin, who was accompanied by Mother Cecilia, told of the changes that had taken place during the thirty-three years she had been in the mission. There was an urgent need, she said, for educated and intelligent nuns; "mere piety" was not much good without character and the missionary spirit. There was no talent that could not be used for the service of God in mission work. It needed real intelligence to reach the minds of the natives and often a nun could do so more easily than a priest. Since 1931 eight convents had been founded, making eleven in all; the nuns had to build them themselves and each had its chapel and its dispensary; in any sickness the natives came for help to their "white mamma" and every nun had to know something of first-aid.

There was a crying need for doctors. One Sister was a doctor, with her own surgery for which permission had been obtained from Rome, while there was a doctor among the novices. There was also a need for nurses, but unfortunately conditions in Uganda, the isolation of many of the convents in the heart of the bush, where social intercourse with Europeans was utterly lacking made it difficult to employ lay-women, except at Isambi, where the town was near. At Isambi the Sisters had their chief hospital, where already forty native girls had trained as fully certified midwives. Here a lay doctor would be welcomed; indeed, the need was particularly urgent, and Mother Kevin appealed to her hearers to make it known.

A particularly interesting feature of the work of the Sisters was their creation of a native community. Fifty-seven native nuns had already been professed (for the first ten years they took annual vows), while ninety were undergoing their novitiate. They came from the boarding schools of the Order, where children entered at five; the novitiate lasted five years—from thirteen to eighteen. To natives the regular life, the meals at regular hours, meant an immense sacrifice, but rules were

rarely broken. Many of these native Sisters taught in the elementary or secondary schools; forty were certified teachers, while others had been trained as nurses. In spite of the real savagery of their background—they were cannibals fifty years ago—their standard of intelligence was often high; they were skilled in weaving, too, and both boys and girls (boys especially) did exquisite embroidery.

In answer to a question from Mrs. Laughton Mathews, Mother Kevin said that in Buganda, the centre of Uganda, where she came from, the position of women was comparatively good. She had met a good deal of prejudice in early days from those who did not realise that girls should be educated as well as boys. Now the standard of their education of girls was the highest in the country. That of their medical work was equally good; they had a Leper Camp of 150 lepers, costing £1,200 a year, of which £500 represented a Government grant, but all the rest, like all the funds for all the activities of the order, was "begged from the pennies of the poor." It was indeed an impressive picture that Mother Kevin presented, of great work magnificently done, and all her hearers were filled with admiration and gratitude.

B. B. C.

## A BRILLIANT PIANO RECITAL

A recital in aid of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance was given on September 26th by the well-known pianist, Norah Drewett de Kresz. Mrs. Laughton Mathews, M.B.E., kindly lent her house for the occasion.

The Mozart Sonata in D major was rendered with a flawless technique and crystal clearness of tone. The organ-like sonority of the Bach Fugue in G minor (the artist's own arrangement) was greatly admired, as also the gaiety of a sparkling Toccata by Pollini. Norah Drewett is an artist of rare charm and distinction, and unlike so many former "infant prodigies" has reached maturity in her art without losing any of its freshness. She is a most versatile player, and her comments on her varied programme heightened its interest. She included an enchanting "Pastorale" on an old Hungarian Christmas Carol by Dohnanyi, published in Hungary.

The Alliance is greatly indebted to Norah Drewett for her generous expenditure of talents and time.

We are happy to count Madame de Kresz among the members of our Alliance.

D. B.



## International Notes

St. Joan's Alliance is taking an active part in the joint efforts now being made by a number of voluntary organizations in this country to call public attention to the appalling situation of a large number of Russian families in Manchuria and N. China who have been driven into prostitution by sheer destitution and are becoming victims of the traffickers.

We understand the joint Committee is calling a public meeting in Livingstone Hall, Broadway, Westminster, on Tuesday, November 19th, at 5 p.m. Our members are urged to note this date and to attend. Further particulars will be available later.

The Mount Margaret Mission to the aborigines of Western Australia was founded by Mr. and Mrs. Schenk. They send out a pamphlet "Teaching the Aborigines" (S.P.C.K. 6d.) which contains a full quota of photographic illustrations and descriptions of their work. The foreword by M. M. Bennett gives details of the Mission which show what things faith can achieve and on how little.

The aboriginal problem emerges as twofold—the struggle against their own cramping tribal customs and the "colour bar" attitude of the surrounding whites who would deprive the native peoples of land even to starvation point and who do very little to help them by means of education. Add to this the position of half-castes disowned by their white fathers and cast back upon tribal law and the behaviour of the white people does not appear in a very favourable light. Fortunately the law of the land allows native custom to be abrogated and at any rate personal freedom as concerns such things as marriage can be achieved by the aboriginals. Thus we read of girls, native and half-caste, who have been educated at the Mission, bravely marrying the partner of their choice despite the threat of terrifying tribal sanctions.

This is a most interesting pamphlet and the work described merits a full meed of praise.

We learn from "*Le Mouvement Feministe*" (Geneva) that Mlle. Blanche Richard has been elected judge at the Geneva Children's Court. Mlle. Richard's name was put forward by the women's organisations of Geneva and her success is a great triumph for feminists, especially as women were not able to vote and the majority was achieved by men's votes. We congratulate Mlle. Richard on her victory,

which we hope is of good augury for the triumph of women's enfranchisement in Switzerland. S. A. B.

In the Commission for the Reform of the Electoral Law of Chile which is now sitting, a Conservative member, who is also a senator, has proposed that the contemplated reform include the granting of full voting rights to women on the same terms as men. Chilean women already have the municipal vote; the proposed reform would enable all the women of the country who are over twenty-one years of age and can sign their own names to vote in presidential and congressional elections. This extension of the franchise is opposed by the Left who allege that the women's vote tends to be the vote of reactionaries and claim that this contention of theirs has been proved in Spain.

H. D. I.

## Review

**Are Moral Standards Necessary?** By Alison Neilans (Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, 4d.).

This pamphlet is a clear summary of the present position, and Miss Neilans' insistence on the place of sex morality, as a part of general morality, is excellent. At the end of the pamphlet are given reasons, social, personal and spiritual which should lead to a higher standard of conduct. It is interesting to note, that although, among the spiritual reasons, Miss Neilans gives some which might influence non-Christians, she is almost driven to admit that Christianity alone can answer the question asked in her title. Seeking to find words to express the height to which love may rise, she is found quoting the greatest Catholic spiritual classic. This is what we should expect. The power to control and sublimate passions and instincts can come from the supernatural alone. As Miss Neilans herself says, knowing what is right will not necessarily lead people to do the good they know.

Sine tuo numine  
Nihil est in homine  
Nihil est innoxium.

I. M. D.

The Annual Mass for the repose of the souls of members, associates, and benefactors of St. Joan's Alliance will be offered at St. Patrick's, Soho, on Sunday, November 4th, at 10-30. We ask our members to make every effort to attend.

## HON. TREASURER'S NOTE

The annual Christmas Sale will be held at the Caxton Hall on November 15th and 16th, and we shall be very grateful for gifts for the Stall. These should be sent to the office as soon as possible.

The balancing of our accounts depends upon the result of the Sale and we therefore ask members and friends to be as generous as possible in sending us articles for sale. Donations in cash will of course be equally acceptable.

We also need jumbles for the barrow very badly, and any unwanted articles will be most welcome.

P. M. BRANDT.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

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Krez, Me. de, per .. .. .	6 1 11
Lenoël, Mlle. .. .. .	1 6 8
Mocclair, Miss .. .. .	2 6
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## OBITUARY

St. Joan's Alliance regrets deeply the loss of the brilliant young author, speaker and journalist, Winifred Holtby. While not agreeing with all Miss Holtby's views, St. Joan's Alliance honoured her for the active part which she took in the campaign for equal franchise and later for her eloquent championship of equal pay and equal opportunities between men and women.

The Alliance was represented at the Funeral Service at St. Martin-in-the-Fields by the Editor.

We sympathise with the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene in the death of their President, George Grey Butler, the last surviving son of Josephine Butler, founder of the Association (1870). Up to the time of his death at the age of 82, Mr. Butler took the keenest interest in the work of the A.M.S.H.

May they rest in peace.

## TWO MEETINGS

We draw the attention of our readers to two important meetings. One organised by the Westminster Catholic Federation at the Albert Hall on October 29th at 8 p.m., when our Chairman, Mrs. Laughton Mathews, will be among the speakers. (Particulars below.) The other organised by the League of National Life on October 23rd at 8 p.m. at the Central Hall, Westminster. (Particulars on the handbill enclosed in this issue.)



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## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

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Organ—"The Catholic Citizen," 2d. monthly.

### OBJECT.

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

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