

# MONTHLY NEWS of the Conservative Women's Reform ASSOCIATION. NEW ISSUE.

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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
OUR WORK ... ..	21	HOW IS IT WITH THE DRAMA? ... ..	22
THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF WOMEN ... ..	21	MISS GERTRUDE KINGSTON	
LADY LLOYD GREAME		CHRISTIAN INDUSTRIAL FELLOWSHIP ... ..	24
		MARY SANDARS	

### OUR WORK.

With October, the real work of our year begins, and 1922-23 promises to be one of quite especial importance. We particularly recommend our members to read Lady Lloyd Greame's article on the political future of women, which she thinks depends on their capacity to co-operate with men in Imperial and National questions. They have achieved much in the present Parliament by their influence on questions peculiarly affecting women and children, but now they must develop on wider lines of comprehensive citizenship.

This view was also expressed at the Meeting of the National Council of Women last week.

**Lectures.**—It is one which the Association has always supported, and the lectures given under our auspices have covered a wide field. The one with which we open on October 13th, is of very exceptional interest. Lord Eustace Percy has very kindly promised to speak on the VERSAILLES PEACE TREATY, and Lady Selborne will preside.

We hope to follow on with addresses on FINANCE and the SEPTEMBER MEETING OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AT GENEVA. But we are not yet able to announce particulars.

**Debates.**—It has been arranged to hold debates once a fortnight in private houses with the double object of helping the participators to acquire readiness and fluency in speaking, and to gain fresh members for our Association. The hostess in each case will invite the guests, but any member is entitled to apply to the office for an invitation, on that condition that they bring with them a friend who is likely to join the C.W.R.A.

The subject of the first meeting, which will be held on October 18th, at 3 o'clock, is: "Shall the Voluntary System of Hospital Support be Maintained?" Miss Sandars will open, and Mrs. Alfred Bucknill will oppose.

**New Premises.**—We greatly regret to announce that our lease comes to an end at Christmas, and can only be renewed at a steeply increased rent, which we are not in a position

to pay. We therefore require one good room, in a suitable neighbourhood, such as Victoria Street, or, of course, Mayfair, and should be very grateful if any of our readers could help us to hear of it.

**Borough Council Elections.**—The Borough Council Elections take place on November 1st, and the need of workers, both clerical, and still more for canvassing, is acute. We hope all our members will volunteer help to their local Associations. If anyone is in doubt, where and how to help, will they please write to our Secretary for advice.

**Monthly News.**—Mrs. Scoresby Routledge has written from "somewhere . . . in the South Pacific" to the late Editor, and the present Editor, and they cannot resist the pleasure of publishing some of her nice words of encouragement. "The paper is a great pleasure to me here, keeping me in touch with the C.W.R.A., and most capitally with outside things. I try to skim it, but I can't. It is so interesting, I have to read it all through. . . . "I think the paper of 'our Parliamentary Correspondent' ought to be recommended to all dwellers in the ends of the earth who want to keep an intelligent grasp of home things . . . I hear from outside that the C.W.R.A. is going strong with very interesting lectures."

### THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF WOMEN

**The Past Session.**—At the conclusion of the fourth session of the present Parliament it is interesting to take stock of women's present position in the political life of the country and the possibilities of the future. The achievements of the present government with regard to those measures of a peculiar interest to women have been fairly numerous; though it would be untrue to say that there do not still exist many anomalies which we would like to see swept away. In the past session the Criminal Law Amendment Act has received the King's assent, as has also the Infanticide Act and the Law of Property Act. The Guardianship of Infants Bill is under consideration by a

Committee of both Houses which will meet again in the Autumn, and a select committee of the Commons is considering the British Nationality Bill with a view to the alteration of the law of nationality for women who have married aliens. There remain also two noteworthy bills which have become Government measures, the Legitimation Bill and the Separation and Maintenance Bill.

This is the good page of the copy book. On the other side we find the refusal of the Prime Minister to introduce legislation for equal franchise, the reversal of the decision of the Committee of Privileges upon the eligibility of Peeresses in their own right to sit in the Upper House, and the continued underpayment of the lower grade women clerks in the Civil Service.

The Future.—It will be seen, however, even in this rapid summary, that our labours of the few years since our enfranchisement have borne a fair crop of fruit. And this can but mean that through our organisations we have made our pressure felt. We have been working on the right lines or we could not have won so much. It is only by organisation that electors of either sex can shout loud enough for their votes to be heard in St. Stephen's and their demands acceded to. But now arises the question of the future. Are we justified as Conservative women electors—and possible members—to continue to work mainly for issues which have come to be regarded as peculiar to our sex? Or, now that the foundations of that equality which must always be our aim are well and truly laid, ought we not rather to enlarge our political horizon by turning our attention to questions of greater dimensions. And here, as I see it, members of our Association have a special privilege; we are not handicapped by being members of a non-party organisation. We are all of us keenly interested in the future of the Conservative party: that party towards which so many eyes are turning at the moment. The future for us, as I see it, lies not so much in the question, how can we help our sex, as how can we help our party, which by its principles of wise legislation for all sections of the community cannot fail to benefit women equally with men?

To any student of political history it will appear that England does not love Coalitions. Sooner or later it would seem that we must return to that system of party government which for some hundred years has given to the politics of our country its truly representative character. Of the Labour party it has been said with truth that its principles are fundamentally opposed to ours because it would legislate upon class lines. If we Conservative women refuse to take the broader view, might it not be said of us by our own party that we had failed then when they most needed our help and support because we only cared to legislate upon sex lines?

We shall not lose by contact with bigger issues. Now in many constituencies Conservative associations are shy of adopting women

candidates, even when good men are hard to come by, for this very reason!

If in a few years time we go again to those associations with as good a record from our party as we now have from our sex: if we can shew ourselves to be as well organised in the interests of the country as a whole as we have been for our sex, we shall find that we have gained, not lost, political weight. And, when all is said and done, when all existing anomalies in the law as between men and women are removed, what then? There will still remain the problem of affording adequate opportunities of employment to women. How are we to give opportunities to women equally with men without a great development in industry? How are we to develop industry with Europe in chaos? If the present unhappy state of Europe prove difficult to handle, how can we best develop our other, our imperial markets? How above all, can we help to keep the peace of the world without which no industry can flourish and no sound social reform be given a fair chance. These are all women's subjects, of equal importance to them and to men. Politics cannot be pigeon-holed into "women's politics" and "men's politics." Their interests are identical, and re-act upon one another in much the same way as foreign and domestic policies react upon each other. Above all, whatever the future may bring, do not let us lose our sense of proportion. We have made a good start, but we must go on, realising that we are as yet but in our novitiate. Men know infinitely more than we do of the science of politics, and for many years their knowledge will be superior to ours. But we are keen, and willing to learn, as well as to help: we shall never learn and never help unless we broaden our view. M. LLOYD-GREAME.

#### HOW IS IT WITH THE DRAMA? AT HOME AND ABROAD.

On my return from Zurich, where we had been playing at the invitation of the Directors of the Stadt Theater, I paused for a day or two in Paris, and from a long list of attractions selected a visit to the Théâtre Des Arts for one evening and to the Vieux Colombier for the next. At both it was possible to "book at the door," so I presume that the old vice of selling all the best seats to the ticket agents and leaving them to plunder the unwary traveller has died out or the supply of entertainments now exceeds the demand.

At the Vieux Colombier the following night I saw a play on the subject of Maximalist Revolution written by two Frenchmen, but I must frankly admit that fluent as I always imagined myself to be in the Gallic tongue, unless the argument had been printed in the programme I should have been at a loss to know what they were saying. In their desire to escape from the traditions of rounded periods and classic accentuations, the

players spoke their lines so rapidly and in so conversational a tone that it certainly did not reach me halfway across the orchestral stalls.

At the Vieux Colombier the following night I looked mainly for novelty in accoutrement and arrangement of scene. I found instead only good elocution. For the stage constructed with steps leading from a lower narrow platform was an adaptation of the pseudo-Elizabethan with which William Poel has long made us familiar, while the raked auditorium has been seen in the Kunstler Theater at Berlin these many years; on the stage the built up scene was more or less in the style of the architectural "set pieces" that Reinhardt has popularized, but missing in that science of outline suggestive of time and place at which his artists were adepts.

The play was "Twelfth Night" but the staircase and balcony that remained standing throughout were more reminiscent of the vestibule of an ultra-modern block of flats than suggestive of Illyria, while the Chinese note of screens and wall hangings completed the resemblance. Malvolio was costumed and made up something like a traditional Shylock albeit played with an effort of knock-about farce. The analysis of the play by John Masefield printed in French in the programme can indeed never have been read by the actors themselves, for there was apparently so grim a determination to give a markedly new reading of the comedy that the smile died on my lips as I witnessed the buffoonery.

Disappointed with my Paris experiences, I hurried to the International Theatre Exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum on my return to London. As I came away I met Gordon Craig hastening in to give a belated lecture to a waiting band of enthusiasts, the real lovers of the Drama who are stamped on the verbal journalistic coinage as "high-brows." Gordon Craig like all real pioneers never arrives anywhere in time for his era. He is always too early or too late: too early for his era to understand him: or too late for his era to adapt him. And yet the simple fact that he is about to arrive, or that he has just left, has influenced the last twenty years of the International stage. He has probably had his fill of what George Moore, the writer who invariably selects the exact word for every state of mind, has so wittily described as "platonic congratulations." The type of sympathy I used to meet with when I invited collaboration in my initial experiment of the Little Theatre which I planted in the Adelphi and which has spread all over the English-speaking world: it runs much like this:—  
"Splendid idea . . . feel sure it is needed . . . will be a success if . . . (then follow good advice) . . . wish I could help but . . ."

In the case of Gordon Craig, Reinhardt and his crew said:—"Splendid idea . . . feel sure we need it . . . will be a success if . . . we help ourselves to your ideas . . . but sorry we can't help you . . ."

At the International Exhibition Craig outshines his disciples in sheer massed simplicity. His imitators have not the courage to abandon realism and produce something that for the most part resembles in miniature the Pennsylvania Railway Station in New York or some sanitary wash-houses.

The conventions of the Unconventionalised are more monotonous, more dreary than the old striving for accuracy. Just as at the Paris Salon amid all the triangles, spirals, cubes of night-after-tomorrow-artists, our countryman Munnings shines by clear record of truth and dexterity of brush, so among all the straining to found a new art, the late Lovat Fraser by his application of historical research with elimination of unnecessary impedimenta holds his own against all nations.

Yet while Great Britain may lay claim to most of the great inventions in science, literature or art, we must mournfully admit that as a nation we have neither the wit to acknowledge nor the enterprise to apply nor the energy to utilize these inventions until they have been appropriated and elaborated by other nations.

To keep strictly to my subject of the Drama, we find that Shakespeare and Shaw are played in every theatre in Europe. In London we have to cross the Thames to see Shakespeare and to climb the northern heights to see Shaw.

There is nothing the matter with the Drama in England. We have players, playwrights, scene-painters, producers. But we have no public. It is a safe thing to say in print of a pronounced success, that "a good play well played will always draw"; it is equally safe to say of a master-piece that has failed to please that "it was not good enough." These paradoxes are echoed and re-echoed by a chorus of journalists who have done nothing to safeguard the standard of the Drama in their columns, but have merely written to the order of the Advertising Editor.

Let there be no mistake in the spiritual application of my statement. I do not mean that the critic literally receives an order to praise or blame according to the weekly budget of the theatrical advertisements. But I have always observed that the critic worships material success. If he thinks a management is struggling to do good work on a narrow financial margin, he is not tenderer to that house. On the contrary, he is unconsciously irritated that a management that cannot afford to spend money on advertisements should demand the same amount of attention as those that can.

Where is the public to come from to support the really sound enterprises? The Classes who have cultivated tastes have only the narrowest limit of time at their disposal for the theatre after their profession, their duties, their race-meetings, their games, their sport, their social entertainments have been disposed of. The education of the Masses has never leaned in the direction of the Drama as in all other countries.

Authority always puritan by habit and tradition has determinedly left the Theatre as an educational factor out of the school curriculum. Even the modest sum set aside by an awakening enlightenment for Shakespearean performances for children was cut down by the Geddes axe.

Where then is the patron of the Drama to come from?

Meanwhile the Cinemas with their exciting incentives to crime, spectacular exhibitions of niggers and nudites, revues with their appeal to the eye, all leave the brain at rest in its sheath. And when there are any extra sixpennies that might go to the young people's "treat" at the playhouse, the trades unions destrain them from the working-man, and what is left is seized by the Co-operative Societies for political propaganda.

If I were Prime-Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Minister of Education, and a few other Officers of State of that kind, I should spend a couple of millions on a free theatre for the People. It would save the country many thousands of millions in the prevention of strikes and revolutions.

GERTRUDE KINGSTON.

#### THE INDUSTRIAL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

As the Women's Conservative Reform Association takes an interest in all societies having the welfare of mankind at heart, however divergent their views may be from its own, its members may like to read a short account of the Industrial Christian Fellowship.

Embodying the opinions of the Committee of the Lambeth Conference on Church and Industrial problems, and those of the Archbishop's Fifth Committee of Enquiry, the aim of the Industrial Christian Fellowship—with which the Christian Social Union is incorporated—is to introduce Christianity into the conditions of present day Industrialism so that the inspiring motive of employers and employed may not be rivalry and greed for gain, but co-operation, fairness, and breadth of outlook.

From its headquarters at 4 The Sanctuary, Westminster the I.C.F.—to give it the name it generally goes by—endeavours to bring Christianity to the masses, and wages war on the terrible belief of Materialism—a belief surely impossible except to those in want—that a man's sole happiness consists in the abundance of his possessions.

Though non-political, the tenets of the I.C.F. are to a great extent those of the moderate Labour Party. Opposing ca-canny, strikes—unless absolutely necessary—and favouring the establishment of Whitley Councils, the Society strongly approves of government by Trades Union, and is thoroughly democratic in its tendencies.

Its principles include not only religious instruction in all schools but "the speedy and full application of the Education Act of 1918 to the whole country." Workmen should share the profits and be admitted to responsible participation in the conduct of the industry in which they are engaged, and the spirit of the covenant of the League of Nations should govern our foreign policy. Stress is laid on the necessity for better housing conditions for the working classes, an equal standard of morality for men and women is required, and the Criminal Law Amendment Bill is supported, as well as all legislation to promote temperance.

Eighty working men form part of the staff of the I.C.F. Some of them hold permanent posts in important industrial centres such as London, Chatham, Birmingham, Leicester, Manchester, and Liverpool, while others help with Crusades in different towns, or travel to collieries, mines, factories, and other centres of industrial life to preach the Gospel to the workers.

(continued at foot of next column.)

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The Society also possesses eight clerical directors who speak sometimes in churches and sometimes in Chambers of Commerce and Rotary Clubs. Their efforts are often extremely successful.

In Cardiff, one of the many towns where a Crusade has been conducted, the Stock Exchange was held up for four hours while a large crowd listened to the preaching of the Rev. G. H. Studdert-Kennedy, known during the War as "Woodbine Willie."

Considerable attention is given to the ever varying conditions of the labour market, and some months before the present state of unemployment became acute a deputation was sent by the Society to the Prime Minister to suggest that some scheme should at once be devised to prevent the approaching distress. Failing in this endeavour the Society did its best to help the unemployed by opening halls in different towns where they could at least find shelter and read the newspapers in warmth.

Whether or not we agree with all the views of the I.C.F. we must certainly allow that we have here a "live" society with whose principal aim, that of Christianising the people of England, we are all heartily in sympathy.

Those who wish for more information on the subject than can be given in this short article should apply to the Rev. P. T. R. Kirk, General Director of the Industrial Christian Fellowship, Church House, Westminster.

MARY SANDARS.