

# THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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

VOL. IV., No. 6.

June 15th, 1918.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

—Francis Thompson.

## WHY I SHOULD VOTE ?

By D. M. HUGHES, B.A.

What is a vote? It is an expression of opinion, a judgment on some disputed question, and both in public or private matters, settlement by vote is held to be the most just and fair method of decision. A vote confers power and dignity. Dignity—because the right to vote is a tacit acknowledgement that the voter is a being capable of thought whose judgment is worth considering both in public or private matters great or small. Power—because in this country most questions of public interest are decided by vote, either directly or indirectly. Indeed the material advantages attached to it and its latent possibilities are enormous. It is a handle, a key, a crowbar in the last extreme, which will open many doors: not alone and of itself of course, but side by side with the vote of thousands of other men and women. For of votes it is literally true that "every one counts." Each one may help to win or lose a cause. The knowledge of this fact makes canvassers at elections so eager to seek out the most insignificant elector, thinking no trouble too great if it can secure their candidate another vote. It matters not whether the voters be men or women, provided they vote honestly for the cause they believe to be right; they are helping things forward, and are public benefactors. That brings us to this consideration, "In what way can a woman with a vote benefit herself and others?" The answer is three-fold and shows the power of a citizen,—a woman citizen,—a Catholic woman citizen.

### AS A CITIZEN

a woman will find much the same uses for a vote as a man. It will help to secure good and capable representation in Parliament, and on the other hand to get rid

of those who have proved themselves inefficient or who have betrayed the trust reposed in them, thus indirectly the vote gives to its possessor a voice in the making of the laws. Such a position, all will agree, is much more satisfactory than submitting blindly or unwillingly to laws made for us by others, with little or no reference to our wishes.

Then it is the possession of the vote which gives to organised bodies of workers, guilds, unions and societies, their weight and importance, and which makes them a power to be reckoned with. This is an age of syndicates of limited liability companies, of co-operative societies. Men have found that co-operation and combination in the production and distribution of commodities is a sound and profitable system. The same spirit has been applied with success to politics and in conjunction with the vote has secured the workers a hearing which they would never have been accorded under former conditions. Whether they seek reform of existing abuses or resist harmful innovations, the member who would obtain the support of these hundreds and thousands of united voters, *must* pledge himself to take up their cause, and so, in time, it is brought before Parliament and receives attention.

But, to consider some of the special interests of

### A WOMAN CITIZEN,

and the numerous questions which concern women either wholly or in part in which a woman's point of view is of paramount importance. For instance, women's wages (to use a well worn example) have not in the past and do not at present receive a fair share of attention; for the same work they are almost everywhere lower than men's and

often shamefully inadequate. True, there have long been unions and societies for working and professional women, but their demands in the main have remained unheeded. This has been due partly to the fact that women were slow to organise, but more especially to the fact that they have had no political importance and consequently could be disregarded with impunity. Experience shows that numbers of voteless citizens, however energetic, rarely or only with great difficulty obtain their demands. We see this in the long struggle for woman's suffrage itself; there was no time to attend to a voteless section of the community, and again and again the question was shelved. But to-day if only women voters can be persuaded to join hands and organise, their societies and unions, because of their women electors, will be able to achieve many new reforms, and the question of a living wage must be in the forefront; for the value of a living wage is often that of a human soul. Want of the necessities of life is only too frequently the driving force behind the woman who joins "the submerged tenth." Is it an exaggeration to say that a vote may even save a soul?

Then comes the problem of infant welfare, with all its attendant schemes of mothers' schools and pensions, clinics, day nurseries, pure milk supply. All these surely need a woman's point of view. And that is what her vote can help her to express. Or, there are the laws relating to institutions of all kinds, hospitals, schools, orphanages, workhouses, asylums which include women and children as well as men. Laws affecting these have been made by men from a man's point of view; their work has left room for improvements and might not women be able to suggest a few? Indeed there is no end to the valuable reforms, which await the awakening touch of the woman's vote. Perhaps it is looking rather a long way ahead to contemplate the possibility of women in Parliament, sent there by their fellow electors to look after the interests of men and women alike. But that the country will gain by the entrance of women into legislation is certain if we are to judge by recent reports from Australia and America. The application of their thought and experience, hitherto confined largely to home, husband and children, to the wider

sphere of politics, will, we may reasonably hope, help to build up, not an Utopia, but a State nearer the ideal than man alone has been able to create.

Lastly, for

#### A CATHOLIC WOMAN CITIZEN

there is the extremely important duty of guarding the most precious possession of all,—the faith. Here Catholic women can help Catholic men to fight the opposing forces, for in school and home they share with men the guardianship of Catholic souls.

Again, let us remember that the education of the young has always been considered woman's special province, and of course for us Catholics the education question is bound up with that of religion. We have had to fight for it always, but our position will be undoubtedly strengthened by the addition of a large number of Catholic women to the voters of this country, and laws which menace our schools will have small chance against such an united body of opinion.

So much for the usefulness of the vote summed up in a brief and somewhat superficial manner. It is the bounden duty of every enfranchised woman to use her vote in the interests of some or other of these causes. Results will not show themselves at once, nor can we always hope to be on the winning side. Still that is no reason why we should despair with the lady who would never vote again, because "she voted once and nothing came of it." Rome was not built in a day, neither is a new state of society. The thing to do is to use the vote if you have it, and use it well. The war has called women out of their homes in the cause of patriotism. It has widened their horizon and ought to have given them some knowledge of the nation's needs. It remains to be seen what use they will make of their new knowledge, their larger freedom.

Miracles will not follow the mere possession of the vote. It has been said of the Reform Bill of 1832 that "the chief thing about it was that it did not reform." The newly enfranchised people were at first little more than tools in the hands of the party in power. Men were easily persuaded to refrain from voting, so that members were returned with

(Continued on page 45).

#### NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The new Register will not be ready on June 15th, but it is hoped that it may be ready on June 29th. We remind our readers that the list when completed will be posted up outside all churches, chapels and public buildings. Every woman entitled to a vote should ascertain at once that her name is on the Register, and if not she should apply to the Town Clerk without delay. The last day for receiving claims is July 17th.

\* \* \*

A correspondent asks whether nurses living in a Nurses' Home, or renting cubicles, will be able to vote. We fear there is no way in which nurses or other professional women living in hostels (unless renting an unfurnished room or rooms) can qualify. Perhaps the worst defect of this bill is its unfairness to unmarried professional women, but we hope they will not be deprived of their vote for long.

\* \* \*

The new Criminal Law Amendment Bill and the Sexual Offences Bills which have passed the House of Lords and been referred to a select Committee of both Houses present a very difficult and complicated problem. There are clauses which many of us would desire to see passed into law, others which the women societies will combat. But upon the clause making the transmission of venereal disease a penal offence, progressive minds are divided. Some persons who formerly opposed it have withdrawn their opposition believing that the law will be equitably administered now that women are enfranchised. In normal times that might be true, but to-day even Parliament is shorn of its power, and we are left to the mercy of the Defence of the Realm Act. Women and men of all shades of opinion are conferring together in order to discover the best policy to pursue. Meanwhile, we beg our readers not to be stampeded into the belief that any Bill is better than none, for there is grave danger that some Bill may be passed into law, which while seeming to present a remedy will officially lower the moral standard of the nation, and by increasing the volume of immorality (by a false sense of security) increase also the volume of disease.

A Bill of this description should be considered in a calm and judicial atmosphere. We have instead on one side an atmosphere of panic, and on the other the military authorities acting as though convinced that men must be immoral, and concerned only in preserving the health of the soldier, no matter by what shameful means. In spite of the lessons of other countries, many people in authority still believe that it is possible to make vice safe. It is impossible and the sooner that is understood the better.

\* \* \*

Miss Nina Boyle recently expounded the programme of the new Voter's Council to the members of the International Women's Suffrage Club. Miss Boyle opened her address with an account of her experiences at Keighley. She was anxious, she said, to ascertain whether the nomination of a woman would be accepted. It had now been proved that the Returning Officer at Keighley would accept the nomination of a woman and she intended to stand for that constituency at the general election. Miss Eunice Murray is standing for a Scottish constituency, and Miss Mary Macarthur has been adopted by the Labour Party as their candidate for Stourbridge.

Miss Hughes' article "Why I should vote," is published by us in pamphlet form, and can be obtained from the office, 55, Berners Street, price 1d. The pamphlet will also contain the qualifications for the parliamentary and local Government votes.

(Continued from page 44).

such farcical totals as seven votes! So to-day valuable time will be lost unless women try to understand their own necessities and the importance of the vote. This they can do by taking an intelligent interest in social questions, by attending meetings of the societies of which they are members and by making themselves acquainted with the details of our voting system. Then, with their eyes open and their minds made up, they can vote when the opportunity offers. For a vote, like a talent, is given for use, hidden in the earth, it produces nothing and calls forth the anger of the Master. Used in His interests, and these are surely the interests of His creatures, it will gain an everlasting reward.

## THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

Office: 55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W., 1.

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## THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN.

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

## SUBSTANCE AND SHADOW.

With the attainment of even a limited suffrage for women one definite link between the many and varied sections of the feminist movement is gone, but they are still united by a burning desire to complete the work of liberation, and by setting woman free to develop freely, make it possible for the whole human race to develop on saner and more wholesome lines than hitherto. It is inevitable, however, that one section will see salvation in one line of work and another in something quite different. At the moment there are many who would wish to see all feminists working for the endowment of motherhood. This was particularly noticeable in that remarkable book, the "Making of Women" (George Allen, Unwin, 4/6 net), in which five different writers made an attempt, in many ways successful, to restate the foundations of feminism. Miss Rathbone sees in the endowment of motherhood the first necessary step towards the goal of equal pay for equal work. Mr. Ralph Rooper declares that without it "any real solution of the problem of women in industry is impossible." Mrs. Elinor Burns tells that for the woman whose work is motherhood economic independence can only be secured by the endowment of maternity, the editor, Mr. Victor Gollancz likewise puts it in the future programme of the woman's movement, and Miss Maude Royden pleads to the same purpose with eloquent sympathy. Now even supposing we were to grant that the endowment of

maternity would have all the beneficent results its promoters expect, and many who are keen on the welfare of women see objections in the proposal, does it come, we may well ask, within the scope of practical politics at the present day? It might very well be possible at the end of the war, while the State is paying separation allowances, to get Judge Neil's scheme of Mothers' Pensions established, but in working for the wider proposal may we not lose all chance of the lesser? That the matter is urgent no one can doubt. We hear of a new charitable scheme to save the child life of the nation, the object of which is the care and education of the orphan babes of the soldiers and sailors who have fallen in the war, and whose mothers cannot look after them, whatever that may mean. The babies, according to the account in the *Daily News*, will be taken when two or three days old, and kept and educated until the age of 17, when they will be given a trade. I have nothing to say against the motives of the promoters of this "charity," but surely there is a better way of showing our gratitude to the dead, our sympathy for the living, than by tearing these infants from their mothers? Have we the right to deprive the mother of her children, as well as of her husband; having deprived the children of a father, shall we deprive them of a mother also? Judge Neil has shown us a better way, why not adopt it?

L. DE ALBERTI.

## THE PENAL REFORM LEAGUE.

The above League has sent the following letter to the Home Secretary:—  
Sir,

The Committee of the Penal Reform League have requested us to bring to your notice certain urgently required reforms in prison administration and court procedure which probably could be effected by administrative action without waiting for any alteration in the law, namely:—

1. *Prison Commission.* Our Committee recommend that either
  - (a) at least two women be added to the Prison Commission; or
  - (b) the Prison Commissioners appoint a special Committee of Women to act as Directors of Women's Prisons and the womens' portions of H.M. Prisons.
2. *Women Governors.* That the Governors of Women's Prisons should invariably be women.
3. *Medical Officers.* That the Medical Officers in charge of women prisoners should invariably be women.
4. *Nurses in Prison.* That specially selected Nursing Sisters be employed in all prisons.
5. *Court Procedure.* That steps be taken to bring before Judges and Magistrates
  - (a) the advisability of allowing responsible persons, especially women, interested in child welfare to attend Juvenile Courts, even if not parties to the case being tried;
  - (b) the undesirability of asking women to leave the court when men unconnected with the court or with the case under trial are allowed to remain;
  - (c) the desirability in Juvenile and other Courts, where a woman or girl is a party to the case or called as witness, of securing the presence of a woman to stay by the side of such woman or girl.

We have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servants,

(Sd.) HENRY BENTINCK,

Chairman.

(Sd.) ARTHUR ST. JOHN,

Hon. Secretary.

The Executive of the C.W.S.S. sent a resolution on the lines of the above letter to the Home Secretary.

## REVIEWS.

MADAME CURIE. By Marion Cunningham. (The Saint Catherine Press, 1/-) As Lady Muir Mackenzie points out in her Foreword, this book is the first attempt in England to give the life story of the brilliant scientist, who, in discovering radium, made the greatest discovery of the century. The material for the story has been gathered partly from Mme. Curie herself, partly from her devoted pupils, and partly from M. Debeirne, of the Sorbonne, who collaborated with Mme. Curie in her work. In describing the characteristics of this great daughter of Poland, Mrs. Cunningham has painted a portrait, a true one we have no doubt, of a very gracious woman, a devoted wife, and a devoted mother. Most feminists will have noted how in England, at least, the fact that it was Mme. Curie who discovered radium, is generally slurred over. The discovery is attributed to her husband; this error Mrs. Cunningham again refutes, as indeed Professor Curie himself did. The author tells us that she has merely given the outline of a great life. It is nevertheless an outline well worth reading.

THE SCOTTISH WOMEN'S HOSPITAL AT THE FRENCH ABBEY OF ROYAUMONT. By Antonio de Navarro. (George Allen and Unwin. 7/6 net.)

Mr. de Navarro had a brilliant inspiration when he decided to give the story of the hospital at Royaumont a historical setting. The Abbey of Royaumont, the beloved foundation of St. Louis of France, has had a romantic and chequered career. Mr. de Navarro brings us by pleasant paths from the early history of the abbey to the present day, and describes the wonderful work of the Scottish women for the French wounded with enthusiasm. The description of the gigantic task performed by the sisters in transforming the ruined abbey into a modern hospital fills us with pride in these worthy daughters of Florence Nightingale, and as we read of the success which has crowned their dauntless energy and skill we echo the words of their grateful patients: "Vivent les Dames Ecosaises. Vive Royaumont."

## JUMBLE SALE FOR "CATHOLIC CITIZEN" FUND.

We urge our members and friends to send up their contributions for this sale as soon as possible. All articles of clothing, boots, &c., are useful. We have now as many hats as we can dispose of. Parcels should be addressed to Miss Whately, 55, Berners Street (room 22), London, W.1.

## MRS. MEYNELL'S ESSAYS.\*

It is a witness to the supremacy of poetry as a form of literary utterance that our poets, when they choose to utter themselves in the "other harmony," almost invariably do so with distinction. The greater includes the less. The poet descends a king from his mountain top to annex the lower slopes. Often indeed the two regions melt into each other with an admirable harmony of general effect, the poet passing from one to another with the surefootedness of intellectual integrity. It was so with Shelley: it is so with Mrs. Meynell. With the latter, indeed, the singleness of her double achievement is so marked that the infrequency of her appearance as a poet is not merely explained, it is also excused, by the comparative abundance of her utterances in prose.

Poetry, says Matthew Arnold, is criticism of life. The definition is inadequate, as all definitions of poetry must inevitably be; but the poetry of Mrs. Meynell illustrates its truth. This writer, as someone recently observed—doubtless not for the first time—is essentially a critic, whether she elects to utter her criticism in prose or in verse; and in these essays—with one slight exception—the object of her fine and delicate criticism is not life but literature.

Tennyson and Swinburne, Dickens and Charlotte and Emily Brontë are the objects of her special scrutiny, and her method will profoundly interest those who are moved to wonder if anything new can be said concerning these much discussed writers. Mrs. Meynell settles the question in her own manner. She approaches her authors largely through their language. With her *le style c'est l'homme*, and we begin to understand as we read what a sacred thing language is to this most conscientious of literary artists. One sees her putting pen to paper with a circumspection that explains the slight irritation felt by some at this extreme precision and deliberateness of utterance. Mrs. Meynell is of all our essayists the most wary. As soon will you convict her of bad grammar as of any confusion of thought or hastiness of utterance.

Such a writer is eminently fitted to apply the test of language, style, diction, to other

\**Hearts of Controversy.* By Alice Meynell. (Burns and Oates.) 5/- net.

writers. By virtue of it Mrs. Meynell will divide you the Tennyson style from the Tennyson manner as they lie "locked together . . . in a single stanza"; by the same token she "places" Dickens as a man of letters having a thousand felicities of diction, but "no body of style"; while against Swinburne she brings this "grave charge":—"I believe the words to use and hold his meaning rather than the meaning to compass and grasp the word." Swinburne, she adds, has "ransacked" the language, effecting "a temporary laying-waste." Of Charlotte Brontë, as a mistress of English, she has much to say, and she is especially felicitous on that great writer's alternate love of imagery and emancipation therefrom, and on Emily Brontë's utterances on "the yonder side of imagery."

There is much more, however, in these essays than the registered results, however illuminating, of the application of a single test. The essay on Tennyson, for instance, is specially welcome as a well-balanced appreciation of a poet who of late years has endured much ungrateful disparagement. "He is," writes Mrs. Meynell, "one of the few fountain-head poets of the world." This, though it ignores Tennyson's own debt to his predecessors, is eminently true, and might profitably be laid to heart by many a critic and poet of the day. Touching Dickens too, our author is with the little band of sane critics who have rescued that great master from the clutches of the later Victorian "sniffers." She surrenders delightfully to his humour, thus permanently refuting—if such refutation were necessary—the charge of over-absorption in literary niceties. Not for her does Traddles' hair stand up in vain! Mrs. Meynell's own humour, indeed, is something in the nature of a delightful surprise. The title of her last essay, "The Century of Moderation," is an example, for it exposes the immoderate absurdity of much "Augustan" writing. Therein, too, we find the writer quoting Pope's "Is there no bright reversion in the sky?" and making the electrifying response (demurely fathered upon a supposititious "reader"):—"Yes, my boy, we may hope so."

From humour to pathos is but a step, and

the Brontë essay reveals in very few words a poignant sense of the tragedy that underlay so much of the Haworth legacy. Many pens have dwelt on that "sorrow inconsolable," but nowhere shall one find a truer sense of its far-reaching effect, at once devastating and creative, than in Mrs. Meynell's brief and reticent reference.

Style, however, is, as we have said, largely the inspiration of these essays. Mrs. Meynell's own style, with its delicate severity, its costly simplicity, its grace, its purity and its unflinching lucidity, mirrors one of the most sane, sincere and penetrating "forces" of letter-day criticism. V.C.T.

## OFFICE RENT FUND.

Many thanks to those who have subscribed to this Fund during the past two months, but further support is required in order to complete the sum of £40.

I am anxious to close the subscription list as soon as possible and to feel that our rent is assured until next Christmas. Will you help in this by sending a donation or a promise?

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## THE CHURCH LEAGUE FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

In their interesting paper *The Church Militant*, the Church League publishes this month the Memorandum adopted by the League at their recent Council Meeting. The Memorandum sets forth the aims of the League, its primary duty being to secure and safeguard for women their rightful status and unrestricted opportunity in the life of Church and State. The C.L.W.S. can see no reason,

apart from the witness of Catholic usage why women should not be admitted to Holy Orders, but considers that the whole subject should be regarded as a matter, not for controversy, but for prayer. As regards the State the League "lays it down as its basis principle that no artificial restrictions should be allowed to limit the service of women to the community of which they form a part or debar them from the exercise of their faculties in any sphere in which they desire to employ them. . . ." The Memorandum concludes with an emphatic declaration against divorce, and states that in the view of the C.L.W.S. it is impossible for the Church to give its blessing to a remarriage after divorce on the part of any of its members during the lifetime of the divorced partner.

The July number of the CATHOLIC CITIZEN will contain a report of the Conference of women of the Empire, which met in London during June, convened by the British Dominions Women's Suffrage Union.

## LONDON AND BRANCHES.

55, Berners Street, London, W.1. Office Hours, 3-30—5-30; Saturdays, 10-30—12-30. Other times by appointment. Holy Mass will be offered for the intentions of the C.W.S.S. at 10-30 at St. Patrick's, Soho, on Sunday, July 7th.

The Poplar Branch of the Catholic Federation has asked us to send a speaker to explain the qualifications for the parliamentary vote. Our member, Miss Rochford, has been appointed to the select Sub-Committee to assist the Staff Investigation Committee at the Ministry of Munitions. Lady Mackworth is chairman, and Miss Strachey, Miss Lawson and Miss Beachenton have also been appointed to this Committee.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.  
Hon. Sec., Mrs. Murphy, 12, Anson Street, Liverpool.

A Debate on "Equal work, equal pay," was held at 18, Colquitt Street, on May 15th. The speakers in favour of the motion, which was carried almost unanimously, were Miss I. M. Collier, and D. M. Hughes, B.A., whilst the opponents were Miss Irene Curwen (Scottish Women's Hospitals) and Miss Eileen Hughes, B.A. Miss Irene Curwen has kindly consented, later in the season, to give a Lantern Lecture on "The part played by the Scottish Women's Hospitals in the war."

## Why I should Vote?

By D. M. HUGHES B.A.

Published by the C.W.S.S., 55, Berners Street, W. 1.

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#### 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.

#### METHODS.

1. Strictly non-party.
2. Active propaganda by political and educational means.

#### MEMBERSHIP.

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