

THE
Catholic Citizen

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

Vol. X, No. 5.

MAY 15th, 1924.

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.

Mr. Bernard Shaw's "St. Joan."

BY CHRISTOPHER ST. JOHN.

Mr. Bernard Shaw has such a paradoxical way with him when he brings idolized historical characters into the theatre, that the announcement that he was writing a play about Saint Joan, made me rather uneasy. The uneasiness was increased by a rumour that he had told Romain Rolland at a Pen Club dinner that he regarded the Saint as the First Protestant. I felt that the quality in Mr. Shaw which makes him stand up to Shakespeare and refuse to bow the knee with Bardolaters (in which upright position he has, let it be admitted, given us some very illuminating criticism), might not seem so admirable when his subject was sanctity. I did not relish the prospect of Saint Joan being guyed, even if in the process she should come to life, and with Shaw's Napoleon, Shaw's Cleopatra, and Shaw's Adam, force me to acknowledge that the Shavian live dog is to be preferred to the historical dead lion. After the curtain had fallen on the first scene of *Saint Joan* at the New Theatre. I heard a voice rebuking me: "Oh, foolish one, and slow of heart to believe!" I was ashamed of having doubted that the Saint would be stronger than Mr. Shaw. Whatever his intention, he has not been able to break her to bits and remould her in his own image. Anyone who expects to find either originality or perversity in his treatment of her character, will be disappointed. We recognise at once the honest, simple, straightforward girl, whose perfect faith in her mission and in her revelations gave her a superhuman

tenacity of purpose. We feel, as Guy de Laval felt when he met her at Selles, that she is "something wholly divine." It is a portrait which makes us forget the artist altogether in his subject. This is why people have said with some justice, that the play is less creative than any of Mr. Shaw's works. He has allowed Joan to speak for herself, and has reproduced the salient incidents of her career with as much accuracy as the exigencies of the theatre permit.

While from one point of view this fidelity is welcome, from another it may be reckoned extremely dangerous. Because Mr. Shaw's facts are reliable, it is possible that many will assume too readily that what he deduces from them is to be trusted. For instance, his deduction from the historical records of St. Joan's trial, that it was perfectly fair and just, and her conviction a genuine act of faith and piety. Has not Mr. Shaw's conscious, or subconscious, intention to represent Joan as the martyr of private judgment in conflict with authority, been the motive for his taking this view of the trial? He claims in a note in the programme that "nothing essential is misrepresented." But essential things have been suppressed. It is essential to know that the Court put itself in the wrong at once by continuing its work after the prisoner had appealed to the Pope and a Council, and that the legality of its proceedings was further compromised by its illegal detention of Joan in a secular prison. The whitewashing of Cauchon would not have

been so easy if Mr. Shaw had admitted these things. They are of much more importance than the political bias of the Court, and the probability that the "faith and piety" of the judges were stimulated by Warwick's influence and English gold.

Leaving this element in the play on one side, which, after all, detracts more from its value to the theologian and the historian than from its dramatic merits, one readily concedes that it is a notable piece of work, though curiously deficient in what Mr. Shaw himself has called the "unbearable brilliancy" of his prime. The scenes which Joan dominates are conceived and written with an admirable and beautiful simplicity, and the homely accent Sybil Thorndike assumes helps to give Joan's speech a racy colloquialness which I believe is far less anachronistic than is generally supposed. The actress must also be credited with a big share in the impression that there is something miraculous about the character which she impersonates, something not to be explained by reason. It is a great triumph to make an audience feel in the space of a few minutes that her conquest of Baudricourt at Vaucouleurs, and later of Charles at Chinon is both incredible and true. Another triumph is to make her gay confidence in her divine mission seem devoid of all vanity or pert self-conceit. The incidents of these two conquests, spread historically over a long period of time, are condensed with the masterly skill of a great dramatist. The next scene, which introduces the miracle of the Loire, when the wind changed, and convinced Dunois that Joan's plans for raising the siege of Orleans were practicable, is less successful. A glimpse of Joan as soldier, and we are plunged into a long colloquy in Warwick's tent between Warwick and Cauchon. Nationalism, miracles, heresy, protestantism, feudalism, are discussed as well as the detested ascendancy of Joan. It is in this scene that one gets most genuine Shaw (perhaps because the Maid is not present). The character of Cardinal Beaufort's chaplain, John of Stogumber, is an authentic Shavian creation. Here the dramatist was not hampered by history, for nothing is known of John except that he accused Cauchon of favouring Joan too much at the trial when her recantation was accepted. On that

foundation has been built a wonderful study of a bigoted and narrow Englishman. "No Englishman is ever beaten fairly," is one of John's priceless sayings. It is he who takes the view of Joan which prevailed here for several centuries. It is he who exults most frenetically over her condemnation, and after witnessing her execution, is most horror-stricken at the deed, most clamorous in protesting her innocence and sanctity. Yet his remorse does not drown his national prejudices. He thanks God it was an *English* soldier who made the little cross of two pieces of a staff which she embraced on the scaffold! Mr. Shaw's invention is less proliferous when he is dealing with characters whose histories are better known. La Tremoille, although played by a clever actor who is physically well suited to the part, does not come to life. The Archbishop of Rheims is a colourless individual (for this I fancy his interpreter may be blamed, as the archiepiscopal speech about miracles has plenty of character), and La Hire is the "stock" rough soldier of the theatre. The difficulties of developing character in a chronicle play are obvious, but I had expected Mr. Shaw to tackle them more successfully. I could not believe in the sincerity of his Cauchon, although everything possible has been done to make him out an estimable ecclesiastic, and he puts the case against heresy with marked ability. "The Inquisitor" (by whom I imagine Mr. Shaw means the Dominican, Isambart de la Pierre, as he wears the habit of the Order), is beautifully played by Mr. O. B. Clarence, who must have had some difficulty in memorising the enormously long speech with which the Trial Scene opens. The character of Charles VII has been the subject of so much dispute that few will venture to assert that Mr. Shaw has either flattered or maligned him. Brilliantly played by Ernest Thesiger, he appears to be an odd mixture of ability and imbecility, an indolent poltroon with a flippant tongue. After Joan herself, he is the best drawn character in the play.

The epilogue in which the characters in the play, some still in the flesh, some risen from the grave, appear to Charles in a dream, with Joan as the central figure, and are visited by a priest of to-day, who announces

(Continued on next page.)

Notes and Comments.

In reply to Mrs. Wintringham's question as to whether the Government would introduce an Equal Franchise Bill of their own, or expedite the passage of the Representation of the People Act (1918) Amendment Bill, the Prime Minister replied that "the Government are in entire sympathy with the principle of equal franchise, but in view of the pressure upon Parliamentary time, they cannot undertake to introduce legislation at this stage." As regards the private Bill, which passed its second reading so triumphantly, Mr. Macdonald could add nothing to what had been said on that occasion.

Sympathy from a friend who is sincerely anxious to help, but honestly cannot, is always acceptable, sympathy from a person who could remove a grievance, but will not, is merely exasperating. We do not wish for the Government's sympathy in this question of equal franchise, we ask Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and his colleagues to be true to their principles and to redeem their pledges. To do so would increase their prestige and add to their popularity.

* * * *

The Government have also, we are told, great sympathy with the principle of Equal Guardianship of Infants, and propose to bring in a Bill of their own instead of Mrs. Wintringham's Bill, which passed its second reading on April 4 without a division. But whereas Mrs. Wintringham's Bill does actually make the mother equal guardian, the proposed Government Bill does not, as under it the father would remain, in law, sole guardian. Organised women stand for equal guardianship, and are solid in support of Mrs. Wintringham's Bill: they do not want a measure such as the one outlined by Mr. Rhys Davies on behalf of the Government.

* * * *

The Home Secretary, in accordance with his statement to the deputation organised by the National Council of Women, has appointed a committee to review the experience now available in regard to the employment of women police, and to make recommendations as to their future organisation and duties.

The chairman is Mr. W. C. Bridgeman,

former Home Secretary; Mrs. Eleanor Barton and Dame Helen Gwynne Vaughan are the two women members. Other members are Sir Leonard Dunning, Home Office Inspector of Constabulary, Sir William Gentle, formerly Chief Constable of Brighton, and Alderman R. H. Millican. We trust that the appointment of this committee brings us nearer to the firm establishment of women police throughout the country.

British Empire Exhibition.

St. Joan's S.P.A. will be in charge of a Pavilion at Wembley on each Saturday throughout the period of the British Empire Exhibition. This pavilion has been erected by the British Overseas Committee of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, as a centre where information may be obtained on women's activities throughout the world.

The British Overseas Committee is composed of representatives from the Dominions and from the three Suffrage Societies in this country affiliated to the I.W.S.A., viz.: the N.U.S.E.C., the W.F.L., and ourselves.

We hope all our members and readers will make a point of visiting the pavilion, which is in the eastern section, North, site 30.

Members who will volunteer to be on duty any Saturday between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m., or for the half day, are asked to send in names at once to the Office.

We call the attention of our readers to the meeting at Wembley on Women Police, which appears on our advertisement page.

Mr. Bernard Shaw's "St. Joan" (cont.)

her canonisation, seems to have left an offensive impression on some who admire the rest of the play, but as with all its incongruities and flippancies, it reminds the audience that Saint Joan has been vindicated and glorified, I am not inclined to quarrel with it.

I fear I have paid a very inadequate tribute to Sybil Thorndike for her sincere, moving, and, when occasion offers, humorous impersonation of Saint Joan. What other actress on our stage could give such a *selfless* performance? There are moments when Miss Thorndike becomes so completely identified with Joan that we forget the actress and see a saint absorbed in prayer. Her service to the play comes first. But Mr. Ricketts has served it well, too. His settings and dresses are superb.

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.

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Christianity and Feminism.

Abbé Sertillanges' book, "Féminisme et Christianisme,"* shows clearly that the Abbé has realised both the absurdity and the danger of pretending, as some anti-feminists do, that Christianity is antagonistic to feminism. He tells us to pity those highly placed dignitaries who spoke against feminism, to respect their memory because of their good faith, as their contemporaries respected their persons and their authority. But they were mistaken, and by the power of facts they have been vanquished. The same power he reminds us, will vanquish those who to-day invoke the name of religion and go to sleep, as though religious principles were a narcotic. These principles should be a guide, an impetus to progress, if sometimes they are a check, it should be a prudent warning only, but never degenerate into stagnation.

Abbé Sertillanges has examined the true principles and ideals of feminism, and finds them good. In his opinion the movement was the result of the economic crisis following on the industrial revolution, that is to say, it was the outcome of the change which took place in the means of production, of exchange, circulation, and consumption. Women claim, therefore, the right to lucrative employment, in order to fight with greater advantage against the difficulties of modern life. He would put no obstacle in the way of women's work, he would see all professions open to them—why not? A woman has the same right as a man to choose her vocation, man has no right to erect artificial barriers.

* J. Gabalda, Paris.

Woman was not made for man, she has her own destiny, nor was she made for the family. If we say that woman was only made for maternity, why not say that men were only made for paternity? No human being, says the Abbé, is sex only, each one has personality, a personality which, even in the most perfect union, should reject absorption.

When he turns to the political field, Abbé Sertillanges is equally broad-minded. To any one who troubles to think, he tells us, political government by men alone, represents an inferior state of civilisation. It is as bad as government by the nobility only, by the military only, by the landed gentry only—that is a régime of castes, and all will agree in these days that the principle of caste is a retrograde principle. To exclude women as women from politics, is simply to uphold the caste system. A woman has the same right as a man to a full life, to full development. Christianity has nothing to say in opposition to women's political rights.

Again, when he turns to the organization of the family, Abbé Sertillanges goes just as far as any reasonable feminist would wish. He reminds his readers that the Apostle who said: Wives obey your husbands, also said: Slaves obey your masters; nevertheless, in course of time Christian civilisation abolished slavery. He finds no immutable decree decree barring the prospect of equality between husband and wife. Authority belongs equally to both parents, they are both heads of the family. When a decision relating to

the family has to be made, if the wife is the best judge of the question, she should decide; if the husband is the best judge, he should decide. Authority and responsibilities should be divided.

All these good things and many more are to be found in the Abbé's book, which is published with all the glory of the ecclesiastical imprimatur.

We are grateful to this distinguished son of St. Dominic for his admirable exposition of the case for feminism.

International Notes.

We have received various interesting cuttings from S. Africa—thanks to our friend, Miss Dorman—describing in detail the splendid woman's victory of February 15, when the S. African House of Assembly passed the second reading of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill by a majority of six, *i.e.*, 54 to 48. Unhappily the high hopes that women justifiably built on this auspicious event, have been dashed to the ground by the sudden dissolution of parliament, and our S. African sisters—like our French sisters—have to endure once more, we believe for the last time, the humiliation of having to stay at home while their men-folk crowd to the polling stations. * * * *

The monthly organ of the Australian Catholic Women's Social Guild now enjoys a new cover and a new title, *The Horizon*. We hope the change holds the promise of a wider scope of public usefulness than the Guild has hitherto adopted. An excellent article in the February number points out the urgent need for Catholic women to overcome their apathy where public work is concerned. * * * *

Equal Rights quotes the testimony of various well-known men of science in America to the effect that women are in no sense physiologically inferior to men, neither is it proved that they need special protection and consideration in their work. As *Equal Rights* truly says, it is "mainly when paying jobs or other desiderata are the issue that this alleged frailty on the part of women assumes such momentous proportion." * * * *

The *Bulletin* of the National Catholic Welfare Conference makes an urgent and much-

needed plea for more study of the broad principles of Christian sociology. Catholics, it asserts, still keep their faith too much apart from their public and business life, and it lays the blame very largely on our spiritual books, which are too often written only for monks and hermits, and do not supply men and women in the world with "a living and truly social doctrine."

In much the same spirit Bishop Schrombs, of Cleveland, has been urging members of the N.C.C.M. to spread the Catholic view of things. With this object we ought, he said, "to establish relations with other societies doing social and welfare work. . . . We want to work with these other societies of non-Catholics and show them that we are as keenly interested in aiding mankind as they are. . . . If we do, bigotry will soon die out. We Catholics alone often are to blame for the prevalent spirit of bigotry. We do not mingle enough with the other side." * * * *

Jenski Glas, the organ of the Union of Bulgarian Women, is publishing a series of letters from leading men and women of Bulgaria, discussing whether women should be barristers or not. * * * *

Political-minded French women, led by *La Française*, are naturally taking what part they can in the French general election. They are widely recommending that at the moment women should neither ally themselves definitely with any party, nor attempt to make a woman's party of their own, but that they should use every effort to put their claims before candidates and appeal to all their friends to support only such politicians as pledge themselves to work for the political equality of the sexes. * * * *

La Française is rendering good service by continually dwelling on the importance of the work of the League of Nations for everything that women hold dear, and on the influential rôle that they themselves are being more and more called upon to play at Geneva. * * * *

The Union des Travailleuses Catholiques de Genève has just held a successful annual meeting, and in spite of difficult times is able to report steady progress. The Union now possesses its own house, in which all its various activities are concentrated. * * * *

V. M. C.

Women at Work in the League of Nations.

(By D. M. NORTHCROFT. 6d., Page and Pratt.)

When women succeeded (for it was due to their own efforts), in getting a clause inserted in the Covenant of the League of Nations recognising the equality of the sexes and throwing open all offices of the League to women as well as men, it was a great achievement, but it would have been a dead letter had it not been followed up by further work to make the clause effective. In Great Britain a Council of National Societies was formed under the title, Council for the Representation of Women in the League of Nations (to which St. Joan's S.P.A. is affiliated), in other countries other steps were taken, the International Women's Suffrage Alliance lent aid; and governments were constantly reminded that women expected that some of the representatives of nations should be women. The result of these years of work

may be seen in this unique pamphlet, *Women at work in the League of Nations*. Mrs. Northcroft has been at pains to collect biographical notes of all the women who have held, or who hold, positions in the League, whether as alternate delegates to the Assembly—as yet there has been no full delegate—or on the Commissions, or in the Secretariat, and in the International Labour Office or Conferences. For the small outlay of sixpence one can obtain this useful information, which may well serve as a spur to further efforts to obtain the appointment of more women to Commissions, and of women delegates to the next Assembly.

Mrs. Corbett Ashby contributes a foreword, and says very truly that the pamphlet is just what is needed.

L. de A.

Statement presented by the National Council of Catholic Women (U.S.A.) against the Equal Rights Blanket Amendment at the hearing before the Senate Judiciary Sub-Committee Feb. 6, 1924.

The term "Equal Rights" as used by the advocates of this amendment is a palpable misnomer.

If the term is interpreted to mean "identical rights" (and this is the interpretation put upon it by its friends), then the amendment flies in the face of fact, science, and philosophy. Men and women can have identical rights only on the supposition that they are identical beings from every point of view. Such a conception of womanhood contradicts all the facts of physiology, psychology, economics, and social science. The physiological differences between men and women, besides the obvious ones, are so many, so deeply

laid and so persistent, that no law can wipe them out. These differences of function, the result of natural law, imply essential differences in rights and duties. Woman, because of her structure and consequent functions, has acquired in fact and in law certain definite rights. It would be silly to argue that men should have the same rights, as it would be unjust not to recognise that woman must have them both for her personal protection and for the preservation of the race. What has been said of physiological function must be repeated of psychological, economic and social. These differences are innate, natural, the result of factors over which neither sex

has any control. To say they make woman the inferior of man is foolish; to contend that they make woman different from man is to talk both common sense and science.

Woman, therefore, should have in law certain definite, specific rights as nature has conferred on her definite specific duties. It is neither justifiable nor reasonable to level down these rights for the attainment of a purely theoretical identity.

The history of civilisation, especially in modern times, is the record of the fight of womankind to have recognised in law these fundamental differences which divide her from man, by the passage of legislation which will protect her in the peculiar functions which she possesses and which are so vital to the welfare and the continued existence of society itself. The Equal Rights Amendment would wipe all this out at one stroke of the pen.

That woman has been discriminated against we are ready to admit. That her full place in society has not been recognised we are ready to acknowledge. But that identity of rights will spell for her, in the last analysis, equality of rights, is purely chimerical. Such an amendment negatives all history, science and philosophy. It erects into a principle the philosophy of extreme feminism. It is false precisely to that extent.

[We are pleased to publish the above statement, which we have received from the President of the N.C.C.W. (U.S.A.) St. Joan's S.P.A. stands for Equal Rights, but we do not consider that equality necessarily means identity.—Editor.]

The Screen or Quid Pro Quo.

The Under Thirty Section of the Alliance is giving a performance of the above play on Friday, May 30, at 7-30 p.m., at 15 Grantham Road, Stockwell (by kind permission of Mrs. O'Connor). The play is a three-act farcical comedy by Norman Forbes-Robertson, who has kindly allowed the play to be performed. The "Under Thirty Section" promise us an amusing evening. There will be a silver collection for the funds of St. Joan's S.P.A. Please send a card to the Office to say that you will be present. Grantham Road is a 1d. ride from Victoria (alight at the Swan).

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HON. TREASURER'S NOTE.

I must again appeal most earnestly for the present financial needs of the Alliance. The office rent has not yet been paid for this quarter and there are other substantial debts that cause the committee grave concern. While thanking those members who have already sent donations this year, I feel sure that many others would gladly come to the help of the Alliance by sending some small additional sum, did they realise the seriousness of the situation. We want many more promises of 1/- a month towards the office rent. Who will help?

G. JEFFERY.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Hon. Sec., Miss N. S. Parnell, B.A. 91 Bedford St, Liverpool.

The Branch held the third of its drawing room meetings this session on April 7th, at 78 Huskisson Street, by kind permission of our member Miss Sevenoaks, when Miss Emily Chubb opened an interesting discussion on "Widows' Pensions." A resolution was passed urging the Government to introduce this very necessary reform and was sent to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the local Members of Parliament. It is hoped to hold the next meeting on May 26th.

Readers are asked to apply, as soon as possible, to 55 Berners Street, for Tickets for the Women Police Conference at Wembley (see advert.). These tickets include entrance to the Exhibition at a reduction of 6d.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

NON-PARTY.

Office—55, Berners St., Oxford St., London, W.
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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.

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All Catholic women are eligible as Members, who approve the object and methods, and will pay a minimum annual subscription of 1s. Men are invited to join as Associates, on the same conditions, with the exception that they may not elect or be elected to the Executive.

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British Empire Exhibition.

A Conference on

Women Police

organised by the British Overseas Committee of the I.W.S.A. in conjunction with the Women's Auxiliary Service will be held on

Saturday, June 14, 1924

3 to 5 and 7-30 to 9-30 at WEMBLEY in

Conference Hall 4 in
the Palace of Industry.

SPEAKERS:

Commandant Allen,

Mrs. Corbett Ashby,

Dame Helen Gwynne Vaughan,

and others to be announced later.

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from the Hon. Secretary,

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