

WOMEN'S · SERVICE

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Catholic Citizen

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

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

—Francis Thompson.

Gaps in the Social Defences

By H. R. WALMESLEY, M.A.

As society advances its civilisation, it places behind, barriers of demarkation, between it and the more primitive stages through which it has developed, in order that the progress it has achieved may be protected and defined, and that the trespassing of any of its members backwards may be done with due warning as an act of depraved choice, or at least with full knowledge of the penalties involved.

We may call these barriers what we will, merely convention or custom or, better, social experience or moral tradition or, better still, religion; but whatever they may be termed in popular language they are conterminous with the limits of social conscience and are identical with the boundaries of the moral order.

Why then do not the standards of the moral and social order coincide and why is there so much disharmony in the realm of avowed pioneer thought?

We are living in a century when, at one and the same time it can be said truthfully that civilisation is in possession of more general knowledge, has command of more material, and controls powers of higher speed and greater capacity in wealth production than has ever been the case before: and yet never has any former civilisation trembled more precariously on the edge of a precipice reared by its own efforts, down which it can be sent crashing headlong, should the vibrations of its own activity intensify ever so feebly. We search painfully for the cause and prayerfully for the cure, but only with courage and the help of Divine Wisdom shall we identify either.

Somewhere in our barriers of defence against the primitive we left gaps, and those gaps we must realise are the cause of our present disruption, for through them have come two impulses, masterly and devastating, cumulative in their strength which threatens to be overwhelming. These are Fear and Jealousy, which have expressed themselves, and are still expressing themselves, first as a thirst for War, secondly in the dysgenic relationships of men and women which have created those anomalies in the social order for which this Alliance exists to find the remedy.

Primitive man had an excuse for War; it found him occupation and adventure; it increased his material goods, and he knew these results as beneficences, having not the sensitiveness for, or knowledge of, what a "blessing" might be.

Modern man has no excuse for War. He has both the sensitiveness and knowledge to appreciate the nature of a "blessing"—or he should have both, acutely, and he knows there is nothing blessed in War. It devastates what is fertile, destroys the possessions of aggressor and defender alike, debases knowledge, renders its victors desolate, and is a desecration of the Divine in humanity. The heritage of chaos in the moral and social order handed on to the succeeding generation is the best reason, perhaps, why all positively thinking humanity, and particularly women, abhor war.

Because women pay so dearly for life and value this thing of which they are specially the custodians, thinking women are determined

that this gap in the barrier shall be made good now; they are morally pledged to oppose those systems which breed and nurture war.

Christianity expressed in Catholicism can and should fill the gap.

The materials to mend the breach were left by the Founder, and their use clearly indicated. As the Host of the Guest-chamber He bestowed His two gifts: Himself and Peace. "Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you." And some hours later He spoke His last word to St. Peter—the Shepherd of those Sheep and Lambs with whom the Lion was to lie down—that word was an almost stern command: "Put up thy sword in its scabbard, for all who take the sword shall perish by the sword." The last miracle was a healing of the damage done by the sword.

They are not difficult to understand, these messages, and by reason of them Catholics should be the greatest Peace Propagandists in the world, for they are the Sheep and Lambs with whom the Lion must lie down.

The second disruptive force in the social order, the expression of Fear and Jealousy in the relationships of men and women while responsible for much of a general nature is specially responsible for the social and economic limitations and injustices under which women find themselves labouring in a wrongly organised society to-day.

Unfortunately the operation of these two vices can masquerade in the guise of a spurious virtue.

Quite good people will chorus the dictum of those Rip Van Winkles of Politics whose refrain is "Woman's Place is the Home." "Whose home?" we might ask.

Quite equally good people visualise a married woman in her Utopian homestead, jam making or pickling, weaving or spinning, tending her garden or singing ditties to her children, until the evening hour brings home a tired but contented husband to share a mutual happiness in leisure.

It is poetical no doubt, but it is a pathetic travesty of practical reality. And its falsity offers no solution to the vastly difficult problem of the Woman Worker in a mechanical age.

Quite good people will pronounce a woman's price "to be above pearls and rubies" ideally; actually it must be appreciably less than market rates, and they will hesitate to demand that she should have her standard wage as a

worker, in order that her price may be set above barter of the bargain hunter, as an employer, or her virtue saved as a trading commodity for Governments in their Maisons Tolérées or White Slave Traffickers in the free ports of the world.

We falsely assume that women need protective legislation for the dangerous processes of Industry. What they do need is to be liberated from the operation of the dangerous sophistry of a social order which allows spurious claims of possession or the operation of the equally dangerous rivalries or jealousies in its economic systems.

Once again the gap must be filled and once again the material is to hand. No Laodicean indifference can excuse our inaction, and we do not look to the cloisters for a fugitive virtue as Milton erroneously indicated we might so do.

The expression of Christianity for us is in a Church of whom we speak proudly and affectionately. *She* is Eternal and *She* stands as the Eternal testimony of Her Divine Founder. In giving mankind into the custody of His Mother, He made it abundantly clear what should be the standards of relationship, characteristically Christian.

For those who follow "in spirit and in truth" there is no room for any but equalitarian standards.

Extract from letter to Miss Barry from the Rajkumari Aurit Kaur, prior to her departure for India:

"May I on behalf of myself, Mrs. Hamid Ali and Dr. Reddi, as well as on behalf of the organisations which we represent, send to St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance our grateful thanks for the kindness, courtesy and sympathy which they have shown us personally during our visit to London, and also for their strong and active support of our demands regarding the position of Indian women in the New Constitution about to be framed for our country.

"We are very touched by the sympathy of all the Progressive Women's Organisations of England in our struggle for freedom, and we not only thank them all, but sincerely hope that they will do their utmost to help to convert the British Government to give us what is our birthright."

Notes and Comments

The Annual Report of the Ministry of Health shows once gain that while the death rate from tuberculosis, and infant mortality decreases, the maternal mortality rate still remains high. It has been demonstrated that a very large percentage of deaths in childbirth are preventable. The Maternal Mortality Committee has circulated widely a leaflet setting out the various ways by which Local Authorities have power to assist the Maternity Service of their respective districts such as by the appointment of Health visitors, the establishment of Ante-natal and Post-natal clinics, the appointment of Home Helps, the provision of milk or food, etc. Our readers are asked to ascertain that their Local Authorities are using the powers given them, and where they find that these powers are not properly operated to inform the Maternal Mortality Committee (13 Chester Terrace, S.W.1.), or themselves to bring pressure to bear in order that an adequate maternity service may be established.

A recent number of the *Universe* reports that an Englishwoman lately returned from Vera Cruz, Mexico, gave an account of religious conditions there, which is of much interest. Vera Cruz, at the heart of religious persecution had, or has only one church open, and that schismatic, but there were forty secret chapels in the houses of the faithful. One priest only serves the city since by law there may be one priest only to 100,000 people. This Englishwoman was taken by the manager of the hotel where she was staying, to one of these secret chapels, where, with other women, she received Holy Communion from the hands of the mistress of the house, being first asked whether she would like to give herself Holy Communion. The priest goes about incognito and says Mass whenever possible; the children receive instruction, and so the Faith is kept alive as in penal days in England. The chapels in this case, a bedroom, can be dismantled at a moment's notice.

We offer our very good wishes to Father Arthur Hughes, of the White Fathers, for his work in Uganda.

We offer our heartfelt congratulations to our very good friend, Dom Gilbert Higgins,

C.R.L., who celebrates in October his Diamond Jubilee in the Priesthood.

We are glad to note that Governor Murphy, in his first message to the Philippine Legislature, says that it would be an act of wisdom and fairness to extend the full right of suffrage to the women of the Philippines, who have given ample proof of their capacity for unerring appraisal and energetic capacity in the treatment of problems involving personal and human relationships. Governor General Murphy is a distinguished Catholic layman, who stands high in the esteem of President Roosevelt. We hope his words will bear fruit.

We offer congratulations and good wishes to our co-religionist, Miss May Holman, on her re-election to the Assembly of Western Australia, as reported in "The Dawn." We had the pleasure of meeting her when she was in London a few years ago.

Nearer home, we offer our congratulations to Miss Edith Midgley, who has opened offices as a stockbroker in Bradford, in spite of the fact that the Stock Exchange of Bradford has refused to accept her as a member. Miss Midgley has had twenty-one years' experience in the offices of stock and share brokers, and has actually trained two members of the Bradford Exchange.

OBITUARY

We ask the prayers of our readers for the repose of the souls of Mrs. Beaufort, Mrs. Brady, Mrs. Hodgson and Miss Hope Malleson, members of St. Joan's S.P.A., who died recently.—R.I.P.

We much regret to learn—from Senator Frau Rudelz—of the death of Dr. Hildegard Burjan, whom we had the pleasure of meeting at the I.W.S.A. Congress at Geneva some years ago. She was then an M.P. She founded later the great work of "Caritas Sociales," in which she received great help from the late Monsignor Seipel.

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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The Traffic in Women

During the meeting earlier in the year of the Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children, a proposal was brought forward by the French delegate, which from the abolitionist point of view, is highly dangerous.

In the words of a circular letter issued by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, if adopted it will have a very serious effect in nullifying the efforts made since 1927 to obtain an International Agreement that all traffic in women ought to be a punishable offence. This new proposal will, in fact, have torpedoed our efforts if it is signed by the various governments.

Students of this question will remember that when the Advisory Committee of the League of Nations expressed the following opinion, afterwards confirmed by the Assembly of the League in 1932: "that the traffic in women is always and in all circumstances a profoundly immoral and anti-social act, and that this traffic should be punished, even if the victims are over age and consent."

This opinion, supported by women's societies and others, was hailed as a triumph for abolitionist principles, since if embodied in a Protocol it would make it a punishable offence at all times and under all conditions to procure a woman for immoral purposes in order to gratify the passions of another person. It would strike a death blow to licensed prostitution, which has been proved to be the root of the traffic in women. At present, by the Conventions of 1904, 1910 and 1921, traffic in women is only a punishable offence when the women concerned are under the age of 21. France holds to the system of licensed houses,

and with other countries similarly situated could not sign such a Protocol since it would mean the abolition of licensed brothels. The French delegation at Geneva last March produced a draft Protocol which makes it possible for regulationist countries to sign it and yet take no action against the procurement of women for the licensed brothels within their own territory at home or abroad. It is as follows:

"Whoever, in order to gratify the passions of another person, has procured, enticed or led away, even with her consent, a woman or girl of full age for immoral purposes in another country shall be punished notwithstanding that the various acts constituting the offence may have been committed in different countries."

The A.M.S.H. points out that the words in another country mean that if a French woman, for instance, is procured for a brothel in France, or in any French territory abroad such as Morocco, Cochin, China, Madagascar, etc., that will not be an offence because she has not been taken to "another country," but has remained on French territory.

It is thought that the Protocol will be presented for signature during the next Assembly, and voluntary organisations are asked to urge the British Government not to sign the Protocol, but to propose that signature be postponed, and the question of the abolition of the age limit be further explored. If postponement of signature is not accepted, then the British Government should be urged not to sign the Protocol. Enough has been said to show that the Protocol is a retrograde step, and the danger imminent.
L. DE ALBERTI.

"A Far Voice"

By ANNA T. BRENNAN (Melbourne, Australia)

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN (April 15th, 1933) has just come to hand (May 2nd). It contains a review of the book "The Framework of a Christian State," by the Rev. E. Cahill. The review deals only with that part of the book which relates to the position of women in the community.

Some remarks on this subject from one of the overseas dominions may be not without interest to your readers. Let me however at the outset stress the fact that the book has not come to my hands, and I rely wholly on those extracts quoted in the CATHOLIC CITIZEN.

Fr. Cahill believes that women's influence should be felt in public life, and therefore she does not need a parliamentary vote! Her opinions should dribble through the conduit of a husband or father. The influence of women is useless and may be harmful if it is not an intelligent and well-instructed influence. If it is, and if they have that "peculiar talent" which the writer attributes to them (and frequently they have not—many women are fools and worse) why then should they not exercise the talent directly? The father of the family may be a sot or a libertine. He may cast his vote to the provider of free whisky or the slick communist orator. On the other hand if he has intelligence and a sense of fair play, he will do what the woman could as efficiently and more justly do for herself.

Some years ago an Australian bishop (Irish born) publicly stated that in Great Britain during the suffrage agitation, he repeatedly heard from Catholic sources of the evils that would follow the granting of the suffrage to woman. "I got sick of this nonsense," he remarked tersely. "I wrote to the press pointing out that Australian experience had quite disproved it."

The assertion that men and women should not be employed in the same factory also seems strangely belated. It is not clear whether the objection is economic or moral, but whichever it is it cuts women off from almost every form of industry—from office and business life as well as from the factory.

They are to be excluded by law from occupations "dangerous or unbecoming to modesty." But since women, by hypothesis, are to have no voice in the making of laws, it rests entirely with men to decide what is "dangerous or unbecoming"—which seems to give very little

scope to women's "peculiar talents for safeguarding the interests of women and children."

The difficulty of deciding what occupations are dangerous to modesty is exemplified by the result of inquiries confidentially conducted in Australia some years ago by a body of women social workers. They found that of the women who become the mothers of illegitimate children by far the greatest number are drawn from the ranks of governesses and domestic workers. These are almost the only occupations which would remain to women under Fr. Cahill's ideal state. But it would appear that monotony, drudgery and poor wages do not necessarily conserve a woman's virtue. It is to be questioned, too, whether idleness—either the idleness of poverty or the idleness of wealth, is a preservation of the higher morality.

And it may seriously be asked who is to support this army of women whom these exalted ideals cast into the ranks of the unemployed? The labourers, shop keepers and small farmers who form the bulk of every community have usually enough to do to support their children up to adolescence without being faced with the indeterminate sentence of maintaining large families of girls until death or marriage do them part. And we doubt if they will be reconciled to the responsibility by the knowledge that the girls are contributing "beauty to the home by . . . the fine arts . . . music and painting." Contributions of this kind by the incorruptibly ladylike Kathleen or Matilda to his home might pardonably be regarded by the harrassed artisan as adding insult to injury. And who will supply the instruments to the music makers? or the prints of Michael Angelo's masterpieces? And if these latter were brought into the house might not the good mother throw holy water on them?

That anyone should object to women sharing the life and work of the University seems almost incredible to-day. It is about fifty years since the University of Melbourne (Australia) admitted women to its lectures. Unfortunately Catholic women suffered long from cramping prejudices now happily defunct in this country. Many years passed before they began in any significant numbers to take advantage of the opportunities given them. The Catholic body is to-day reaping the harvest of

(Continued on page 71)

The Open Door International Conference at Prague

There could be no more fitting moment than at present for an international conference to discuss the question of woman's economic problems, when the liberty of the woman worker and, in particular, that of the married woman, is being everywhere attacked.

The Third Open Door International Conference was held in the Senate House, Prague, from July 24th to 28th, under the presidency of Miss Chrystal Macmillan who, in her opening address, drew attention to the attacks now being made on the right of the married woman to sell her labour for gain—a right everywhere recognised as one which distinguishes the free-man from the slave.

Fourteen European countries were represented, as well as Australia. There were also present, as observers, representatives of the Governments of Ecuador, Greece, Czechoslovakia, Great Britain and Uruguay. We regretfully learned that circumstances prevented the German delegate, Frau Gertrude Baer, from attending. Madame de Craene van Duuren from Belgium came with her husband as co-delegate; Mademoiselle Lenoël represented France, and was elected to the Board of Officers; while one of Denmark's delegates was Madame Julie Arenholt, who had acted as Adviser to the Danish Government at the International Labour Conference this year. It was my privilege to represent St. Joan's Alliance together with Mademoiselle Lenoël.

The main business of the Conference was to plan the work of the O.D.I. for the next two years. The first day was occupied with reports of work done by the various national branches and affiliated societies, including that of St. Joan's Alliance. It was interesting to note that the main difficulties had been those with regard to the attacks made on the work of the married woman.

Discussion centred round the International Labour Organisation's attitude to the woman worker, as this body deals largely with subjects to which the policy of the O.D.I. is applicable.

Subjects discussed included the right to physical development of women and girls and the modern tendency to confine them to sedentary, indoor and less health-giving occupations; the exclusion of women from paid work in mines; unemployment and the forty-hour week; the injustice of prohibiting night work to

women manual and professional workers; the tyranny of imposing celibacy on the woman wage-earner, urging equal contributions and benefits in any Convention on Unemployment Insurance, and urging that any Convention on Night Work should be the same for men and women. On all these subjects resolutions were passed unanimously.

A special resolution was drafted (to be sent to Herr Hitler) regarding rumours about the dismissal of women from their jobs, and against the general lowering of the status of women in Germany, and authorizing the Board of Officers to condemn such action if the rumours were ascertained to be true.

There was a most successful and crowded public meeting, at which the speeches were mainly confined to the subjects of the "Tyranny of the World Economic Situation and the Woman Earner" and "The Woman Earner's Right to Marriage," and at which Mademoiselle Lenoël was one of the speakers. The audience was largely composed of young women.

Among the many social functions were the reception and dinner at the Societies' Club, and a reception by the City Council of Prague at the Town Hall, at which we were entertained to luncheon. After the dinner of Adieu given by the National Council of Women of Czechoslovakia, there was a delightful recital of Czech songs.

The beautiful city of Prague has many ancient palaces, handsome bridges and other stately buildings, which speak of its great traditions and culture. It also possesses the oldest university in Central Europe.

Of special Catholic interest is the miraculous statue of the Holy Child of Prague in Notre Dame de la Victoire, before which the St. Joan's delegates prayed for the good of the Alliance; also the tomb and chapel of St. Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia, in the Cathedral.

We took away with us the memory of the gracious hospitality of our Czech friends; the impression that the success of the Conference lay in the united determination of women all over the world to fight for—and to win—their economic freedom; and the increasing need of the Open Door International.

E. BUTLER-BOWDON.

"A Far Voice"—(Continued).

this neglect. All around us are middle-aged University women—doctors, teachers, social workers, who are exercising an enormous influence upon the community. In social questions such as divorce, birth control, medical ethics, and care of the mentally deficient they do much to shape the thought and even the legislature of the country. For years hardly a Catholic voice was heard amongst them. Things are better now, Catholic women are particularly well represented in my own profession, the law.

Of the small body of Catholic pioneers in the University one, a member of a religious Order, is doing an almost superhuman task as a medical missionary in India.

"We could find work for forty-five Catholic women doctors if we had them," she writes, and steadily she prays for the help that does not come. Another Catholic graduate is doing much unrecorded apostolic work as a government medical officer. And one is writing this article—and perhaps confirming one Rev. gentleman's worst suspicions.

One thing must be squarely faced—the state of society advocated by Fr. Cahill can be sustained only on the assumption that girls as soon as they reach the age of fifteen or sixteen shall be "given" in marriage by their parents; the seclusion which he advocates would preclude any chance of marriage based on mutual knowledge and mutual love.

From the pages of a missionary magazine comes this poignant sentence: "What we anathematize is the refusal of all liberty of choice (in marriage) to these poor victims."

The state of society which Fr. Cahill is advocating would take from the European girl those rights which heroic missionaries (including many of his compatriots) are struggling to obtain for the Kaffir.

The major fallacy which underlies Fr. Cahill's treatment of the women question is his assumption that in no circumstances and at no period of her existence is she a free agent directing her own life—that she must live always in subservience to some men in private life and to men in public affairs. There is no justification whatever for any such assumption. An adult woman is a perfectly free agent—subject to the laws of morality and the dictates of conscience—in the ordering of her own life. To deny this is to impose on her the status of slavery.

The essence of slavery does not consist (as popular speech suggests) in toil and ill-usage. A slave may live in luxury and be a paramount influence over her possessor. Its essence consists in her absence of freedom, in complete subservience to another's will.

"It takes all sorts to make a world"; all schools of opinion will find expression. But it cannot be too strongly emphasised that opinions like Fr. Cahill's, from however distinguished a source, must be clearly differentiated from the solemn teachings of the Church.

TREASURER'S NOTE

The office is still eager for "jumbles" for sale on the barrow, and will gratefully welcome anything you choose to send.

We are also badly needing some more donations to the Rent Fund. Although several members have helped generously with this, we are still £8 short of the amount which we are due to pay next month. Any contributions will be most thankfully received.

P. M. BRANDT.

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