

MEN'S SERVICE
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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.

The Cameroons*

BY CHRISTINE SPENDER

Near the end of this book the author says that the great factor which makes for change in African society is the presence of the white man. He further indicates that if this change is to be for the good, missionaries and administrators must co-operate in their work as educators of the black man and that the administration, if it is not to exploit a native people must regard itself as having a mission towards it. We here touch rock-bottom. Was African society satisfactory in itself before the coming of the white man or has the white man his part to play in the evolution of the black peoples? The answer is not absolute. An unawakened people has less possibilities of evil—especially conscious evil—but it also has less possibilities of the highest good. It is because the answer is not absolute that there is so much controversy as to whether it is better to “awaken” the black man or to leave him in his original state, i.e., whether the white man, missionary or otherwise, is the wicked ogre or the good genii. In our opinion he may very well be either but it is his duty to be the latter. It is not, as M. Wilbois points out, our duty to Europeanise the African people, but it is our duty, now that contact between the two races has inevitably been made, gradually to apply to them certain principles of European civilisation which are in M. Wilbois' words “treasures belonging to eternity.” Thus he says: “The equality of the sexes and monogamous marriage are among the finest achievements of Europe.”

Now a great part of this book is taken up with the position of the Cameroon woman. Without going into details as to whether “bride-price” means the selling and buying of wives or how far the systems of wife-inheritance and of polygamy affect her position, one fact emerges plainly and clearly, namely that the

woman is never regarded as anything more than an economic asset. She is of value—yes—but for her working powers, much as a horse is of value, and the idea behind the “dowry” is always one of compensation to the family or “owner” (male member of the family) that has lost her and her potential children. The woman is identified with her services, but this does not mean that she is rewarded. She never owns anything from her cradle to her grave, not even her children, least of all herself, for she may be promised in marriage when still a child. Given that the idea of individuality is different in the Cameroons, that it is the group unit that counts and not the individual, so that marriage is an affair of the tribe, the fact still remains that the woman is little more than a beast of burden, and it is easy to see that unless the idea of her dignity is propagated, her position can only worsen with the coming of the whites; as indeed in many cases it has.

The problems of the emergence of a race seem so difficult that it is with relief that we turn to the achievements of the missionaries—the pictures of monogamous families living quiet honest lives where the husband is faithful and where he labours with his wife for the family's good. It is a peaceful penetration and if it has achieved so much in a few generations what may it not achieve in many?

“The State concedes that inevitably the day will come when the African woman will be the equal of the African man”—when in fact the whole foundations of Cameroonian society will have changed—for it must be frankly faced that if one thing is changed many things that depend on that one thing will also have to be changed. “Only,” says M. Wilbois, “when it is a question of the day these things shall be, the State says ‘sometime’ and the Missions ‘to-morrow.’” Perhaps some of us, remembering that the “night cometh when no man may work,” would like to say “to-day.”

* *Le Cameroun*, by J. Wilbois (Payot, Paris, 15 fr.).

STATUS OF WOMEN IN MANDATED TERRITORIES

The following Memorandum has been sent to the Chairman of the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, which will hold its 28th Session at Geneva this month.

Sir,

The undermentioned Societies of the Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations are glad to note the following passage in the Secretary-General's Report to the Assembly on the work of the League:—

"The attention of the (Mandates) Commission was directed to the position of women in the Cameroons, which, according to various sources, was unsatisfactory in the Cameroons, both under French and British mandates. The missionary societies had drawn attention to many grievances and there was an impression that the Administration was apathetic in dealing with the situation. The accredited representative affirmed that the problem was engaging the attention of the Administration and the Commission noted that it was the settled policy of the mandatory Power to improve the condition of women in the territory."

We further note that in the Report submitted by the Sixth Committee to the Assembly:—

"... the Sixth Committee's attention was drawn to the position of women in certain mandated territories of West Africa. It was noted that the Permanent Mandates Commission and the mandatory Powers concerned were giving their attention to the matter."

The women's organisations feel very strongly on this subject and we ask therefore that when the question of the Cameroons is considered, special attention may be given to the position of native women.

We would urge that in all mandated territories:—

1. No marriage contract be made for any girl under 14.
2. No contract should be made for a girl over 14 without her consent.
3. Christian marriages should be recognised as such in the Courts, i.e. as being obligatorily monogamous, just as Mahomedan marriages are recognised.
4. A widow should be able to dispose of herself and her children as she thinks fit, remain with her husband's family, return to her own family, or remarry.

Another point which we feel calls for investigation is the trade in wives. We do not here refer to the giving of cattle in token of a duly recognised marriage, but to a real trade—something akin to slavery or to the traffic in women for immoral purposes.

The women's organisations wish also to stress their opposition to the establishment of segregated areas or to any form of regulation of prostitution or of traffic in women. In view of the fact that the regulation of prostitution has been condemned in the strongest terms in the recent report of the Advisory Committee of the Traffic in Women and Children, the women's organisations trust that this condemnation will apply also to all mandated territories.

Equal Rights International; International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship; International Council of Women; International Federation of Women Magistrates, Barristers and other Branches

of the Legal Profession; St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; World Union of Women for International Concord; World's Women's Christian Temperance Union.

NOTES AND COMMENTS—Continued

The Council of the League of Nations at its eighty-second session paid a tribute to the memory of Mme. Curie-Sklodowska, Vice-President of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation. M. Barthou said that Mme. Curie, as a worker of the highest ability, had never ceased, since the foundation of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation, to bring to it the inestimable support of her name, of her learning and of her devotion. Thus she had served the cause of peace worthily. Her loss had been deeply felt not only by the Committee of Intellectual Co-operation, but by the whole League. M. Benes, President of the Council, said that he was certain he was expressing the sentiments of the entire Council in associating himself wholeheartedly with the words of M. Barthou. Mme. Curie was not only the shining light of Science in France and Poland—she was the glory of Science throughout the world. He was certain that members of the Council, besides appreciating this fact, profoundly appreciated the considerable services that Mme. Curie had rendered to the League of Nations.

Mme. Joliot, daughter of Mme. Curie, is carrying on the splendid tradition of her mother. At the International Conference on Physics held in London on October 3rd, she and her husband presented a paper describing the discovery of a formula for the production of artificial radium. The discovery is of untold importance in the Scientific and Medical worlds.

By a new regulation of the Metropolitan Police, when it is necessary to call in a doctor in cases of offences against women and girls, that doctor must be a woman, unless a male doctor is specially requested.

We ask the prayers of our readers for the repose of the soul of Lady Fernando, the mother of our members, Mrs. de Fonseka and Mrs. de Silva of Ceylon. R.I.P.

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

Notes and Comments

It is hardly necessary to remind our readers of the importance of recording their votes at the forthcoming Borough Council and County Borough elections on November 1st. Excellent propaganda can be done by questioning candidates as to their views on the various points on our programme. Questionnaires may be obtained on application to the office.

The Hon. Secretary and Editor were present at Geneva during the League of Nations Assembly. They attended the various meetings and Commissions of the League dealing with questions of particular interest to our Alliance, as well as meetings of the Liaison Committee of International Women's Organisations. The Liaison Committee called a meeting at which its members discussed various items on the agenda of the League with the women delegates, and asked for their co-operation and help. Among points dealt with were Traffic in Women by Lady Aberdeen and Madame Avril de Sainte Croix, Russian refugee women by Mlle. Gour, and Slavery by Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, while Miss Barry asked for consideration of the position of African native women. Thanks to the Irish delegation, this last matter was included in the report of the Mandates Commission presented to the Assembly.

A Reception was given by the Women's Organisations, including St. Joan's Alliance, in honour of the women delegates.

During the Assembly a letter was sent on behalf of St. Joan's Alliance to the Secretary-General of the League and published in the League Journal, requesting State Members not to ratify those articles of the Hague Nationality Convention which are in conflict with the principle of equality between men and women, and asking for the adoption of an International Convention which would recognise the married woman's right to her own independent nationality on equal terms with men.

On October 8th Miss Butler-Bowdon kindly gave a Cocktail Party at her flat, at which Miss Barry and Miss Spender recounted their experiences to members of the Executive and Finance Committees.

We congratulate the Government of the Irish Free State on their Citizenship Bill, introduced in Dail Eireann on June 27th and communicated to the League of Nations in September. This Bill recognises the married woman's right to her own independent nationality on equal terms with men. We will deal more fully with the matter in our next issue.

We are pleased to note that in French Equatorial Africa an Ordinance, promulgated in May, deals with the question of Christian marriages. Natives now have the right, when registering their marriage, to declare that it shall be monogamous, and if this agreement is broken, the wife may obtain a divorce with or without repayment of the dowry. This clause will be regarded as law, even when opposed to native custom.

On the other hand we much regret to record that recently the Governor has issued an Order regulating prostitution in the French Cameroons. Syria, another mandated territory, has also the iniquitous system of State Regulation.

We very much regret that at the Conference of the National Council of Women held recently at Edinburgh, a resolution urging the Government to legalise voluntary sterilisation in certain cases of mental disorder or grave physical disability, and one advocating farther facilities for divorce were both passed by large majorities, though a minority were strongly opposed on religious and other grounds.

It will be remembered in this connection that when a resolution advocating "Birth Control" was on the agenda of the 1929 Conference at Manchester, our chairman, Mrs. Laughton Mathews, moved the rejection in a speech which attracted considerable attention in the general press. The resolution was unfortunately adopted, whereupon St. Joan's Alliance decided to withdraw from affiliation to the N.C.W.

Among resolutions passed by the Conference in Edinburgh, with which we are in hearty agreement, were those on Traffic in Women, Maternal Mortality, and one moved by Miss Neilans urging the repeal of the Solicitation Laws and the substitution of a law equal between the sexes.

We offer our congratulations to Dame Laurentia, Lady Abbess of Stanbrook, upon whom the Holy Father has conferred the *Bene merenti* medal in recognition of her work for the liturgy in England. Dame Laurentia has established at Stanbrook a school of plain-song which now holds a position as a teaching and examining body, and she has also written a valuable book "The Grammar of Plainsong." The Holy Father, in bestowing the medal, has granted an extraordinary favour, seldom given to a Religious and very rarely to a member of an enclosed Order.

(Continued on previous page).

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

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MISS CHRISTINE SPENDER, *Hon. Editor.*

Tribal Customs and the Position of African Women*

Paper read by the Rev. J. Thoonen (St. Joseph's Missionary College, Mill Hill) at a private Conference of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, called to consider especially the following points: (1) That there is arising in Africa, among native peoples, a trade in wives which is not merely the giving of cattle in token of a properly arranged and duly recognised marriage, entailing all the mutual responsibilities of such marriage, but is more akin to slavery or to traffic in women for immoral purposes. (2) That the hiring out by men of their wives to other men is a not uncommon practice. (3) That among the native peoples affected by industrial development prostitution is developing and the position of women is worsening.

I. With regard to the first point of evidence, it is worthy of note that due distinction has been made between what looks like, but is not, a trade in wives, and what is indeed a trade in wives. Marriage in Africa does at first sight look like a process of barter and has by many been taken for such a process. Probably in many cases the transaction amounts to buying and selling; but it is not necessarily so. If the man deliberately chooses a girl and she agrees to be his wife, then the paying of a dowry or bride-price merely clinches the betrothal and cannot be objected to. In fact, Colonial governments and the Church not only tolerate the transfer of the bride-price from the groom's family to that of the bride, but insist on this formality. However, before allowing the bride-price to be transferred and the marriage to be solemnised, the missionary has to satisfy himself that both parties marry of their own free choice.

In practice there is comparatively little difficulty on this score among those East African tribes, Nilotic, as well as Bantu and Hamitic, that have been influenced but little by the new conditions. Mr. Driberg ascribes the high conception and practice of morality among the Lango to the fact that with them marriage is the result of individual choice on the part of both parties (*The Lango*, p. 66).

Unfortunately, things are different elsewhere. (See article in *Semaine Sociale de France*, 1930, pp. 311-333.)

Two points here demand our attention: (1) The consent of the girl; (2) The meaning of the dowry or bride-price.

(1) As to the first point, it is certain that according to the rigour of native law or custom, the girl's consent is not required (Cf. *Race Problems in the New Africa*, p. 113, by the Rev. W. C. Willoughby).

* Reprinted from "The Shield" (July 1934) by kind permission of the A.M.S.H.

since the contract is concluded between the heads of the two families. It may be objected that, among the Bantu at any rate, invariably the girl's free consent is obtained by the boy in the preliminary advances. This may be so where monogamous unions are contemplated, as among commoners, or where the parties have already come under Christian influences, but it is certain that nowhere does the thorough-going polygamist trouble himself about the girl's consent, knowing that even if it were given, it would amount to nothing better than her sullen acquiescence in what native custom has taught her to be the inevitable.

Nilotes and a number of West African tribes have the practice of child marriage, simply arranged before the child can consent. In order to understand the passive rôle of the women in many African marriage contracts, let us consider the ordinary cases that may occur:—

Case 1.—The girl, a child of less than ten years old, is in fact delivered up to the family of her future husband.

Case 2.—A bride-price is paid for a little girl; when she attains the marriageable age, the head of her family is unable or unwilling to return the bride-price.

Case 3.—A girl is taken by force and kept in the hut of a friend of the lover until her family agrees to accept the dowry.

Case 4.—That of widows, who become the property of the heir, who disposes of them as he pleases; they are in many cases given a limited choice of a new husband, but always in the family group of the heir.

Case 5.—Where endogamous marriage prevails, the father of a young man simply claims the girl of his choice from her father, on the plea of consanguinity; no one can raise objections.

(2) Except in the fifth case and in the case of exchange of girls, a practice still found in certain regions, the contract is in the nature of a bride-price.

Indeed, it is hard to see how such a contract differs from what we call "buying and selling." It is true that the natives never refer to the transaction as one of "buying and selling," but I am inclined to think that the native word for "marriage" includes in its meaning the process of barter. The Kumam (a tribe of Uganda) certainly seem to betray their real view of the matter when they use the word "Mako" (to seize, capture, hold, catch) of the "marriage" of widows by the relatives of the deceased husband.

As a natural consequence of this system the women are at once the sign and the source of wealth and also of influence. If, moreover, one reflects on the difficulty or even impossibility for commoners of acquiring private property, because of the tyranny of communal life, one understands how it is that restricted polygamy is comparatively rare and that on the contrary the chiefs and elders practise polygamy on a vast scale and "marry" the flower of womanhood, thus forcing many young men to years of celibacy and debasing as many young women to a union which cannot but be revolting.

Does conjugal life and motherhood confer at least some dignity on the native woman (at least in monogamous marriages)? Apart from certain valiant women and daughters, sisters and mothers of chiefs, who have acquired a certain influence, and apart from the much-coveted halo of motherhood, the life of such women is at times so simple and easy as to approach animal nature, so that the nullity of their duties, even more than the nullity of their rights, seems to be the decisive mark of their degradation.

Such a young woman is to do her work, to be pliable to the customs of her husband's family, and to give as little trouble as possible. For the rest she may be capricious, take liberties, run back to her own people at times; her husband will try to correct her, without too much severity, the only other way being to kill her (this is no longer practicable) or to send her away (this he is loath to do in the case of a young woman who has not yet borne him any children—much less when she has borne children, the chief cause of native divorce being sterility). Besides, custom gives the husband a right to loan her to a visitor; she is at times called upon to serve as a go-between her husband and other women. With certain tribes the fine of a cow, goat or even chicken regularises adultery. Wherever polygamy assumes large proportions—some chiefs in West Africa having as many as 500 wives, the enclosures of polygamists often resemble houses of ill repute open to certain favourites. "Theorists sometimes assert that polygamy is at any rate better than the social evil (prostitution); but in practice it is the social evil covered with a respectable garment and taken into the home. Its atmosphere reeks with the miasma of immodesty, duplicity, and intrigue. Paramours are common. . . ." (*Race Problems in the New Africa*, p. 118).

A word on the instability of native marriages. In many tribes, women that have not had, after a few years of married life, two, three, or more husbands, are rare. Who is generally at fault? The return of the bride-price is often an obstacle for the woman, but nevertheless it is the honest impression of many missionaries that the largest number of marriages are dissolved by the will of the woman. However, why allocate responsibility where custom has made valid the most futile reasons for divorce? We may wonder how a woman can leave one husband after another, leaving to each the children she has borne him. It is because custom has lowered woman to such an extent

that it is hard to see how she could still have the consciousness of responsibility towards children that do not belong to her but to her husband. As daughter, spouse and mother she has persuaded herself that nature in giving her her sex, has deprived her for ever of the rights and duties which are the dignity of human beings.

Governments and Missions alike have taken much thought with regard to these deplorable conditions. In passing I must point out that there is a vast difference among the native tribes themselves, and that conditions are by no means everywhere equally deplorable. But the question must be faced everywhere. Now, I do not think anyone dreams of a legislation that will do away with the foundations of the patriarchal system, with the power of the head of the family, with the bride-price type of marriage, or even, at any rate under the present conditions, with polygamy.

On the other hand it would be extremely imprudent to codify ancestral customs, of their nature pliable, unwritten, vague and obscure, as is sometimes advocated by those to whom native customs are sacrosanct.

The best plan of campaign would seem to be that which is being tried in some parts of Africa, viz. to subject matrimonial cases to the jurisprudence of (native) law-courts, subject, however, to certain conditions, without which the administration of justice might easily become, in the hands of fanatics, an instrument of oppression. One such condition would have to be that in certain graver cases appeal to the white administrator be made compulsory or automatic. This double jurisdiction would have the additional advantage of gradually co-ordinating native legal procedure with European legal procedure.

Governments should open to all natives a prudent breach in the native customs, enabling them, if they choose to do so, to evade them in order to approach the Colonial Authorities. The above system of double jurisdiction would open such a breach. But it should rest on a few legislative clauses to be observed rigorously and without discussion, such as:

(1) That there is to be no agreement or contract of any kind concerning a girl under 14 years of age.

(2) That there is to be no agreement or contract of any kind concerning a girl over 14 years of age, without her consent.

(3) That there is to be no flight on the part of the wife of a monogamist, and no repudiation of the wife of a monogamist or of the first wife of a polygamist, without the native court having found that there were grave reasons for such flight or repudiation.

(4) That a widow, whilst remaining free to comply with the native custom, be also made free to marry anyone else and even to keep with her her children who are still minors, provided she remain a widow or marry a monogamist.

(5) That a reasonable limit be set to the number of women which a polygamist may possess.

(6) That a maximum bride-price be fixed for each group or district.

It must be kept in mind that the natives will often be the last to appreciate such changes, but even they will understand in the end. The missionaries of the Lower Congo district of Kisantu, where Christians are now in the majority, have been able to effect such a satisfactory reform of the native customs, with the co-operation of pagans and Christians alike, that the innovations are already spreading to other groups and bid fair to conquer the entire country of the Bakongo.

II. Examining the second point of evidence brought forward in the Memorandum, I do not think that the hiring out by men of their wives should be called a common practice. It may be common enough in parts; but although the population of Central Africa is much more homogeneous than that of Europe, there still is great danger in generalisations. On the other hand it cannot be denied that native custom provides for wives or unmarried daughters to be given to guests. Chiefs, as we have seen, often give out some of their wives to their subordinates. In many tribes the woman is married to the clan rather than to the individual, and the ease with which women are sometimes transferred from one relative to another, makes one suspect that the native mind is not averse to the custom. In West Africa it is a not uncommon thing for married men who have settled at the coast, to call their unmarried sisters from the interior, with a view to finding them a husband. But before this is done, they generally spend some time, now with one man then with another.

I think, however, that it is only fair to the Africans to add that before the advent of the Arab and the low-type European and Indian, many more tribes were free of the stigma of this and other loathsome customs than there are now. Many tribes are still known to value virginity in their brides.

III. Dreadful conditions are developing among the native peoples affected by industrial development, but I am not aware that it is as yet accompanied by a traffic in women in the European sense of the word. I am afraid that the African women flock to the industrial centres of their own accord, because they have got tired of village life, and the lure of the town draws them. Many unmarried women follow their young men to the towns, and once there simply live in open concubinage, now with one man then with another. No dowry is paid; their newly-won liberty, and the bride-price, far too high in many parts and still showing an upward tendency, makes them dispense with marriage even where a marriage could easily be arranged. They contract venereal diseases; they no longer value motherhood, they wreck the homes of the natives who have brought their wives to the towns and industrial centres.

Since, however, the problem is widely different from the European problem, the remedy is not the same. Governments should check the reckless de-trialisation that is going on. The recommendations made by various Commissions on this subject should be made law and rigorously enforced.

For the rest it is hoped that the loyal co-operation between the British Government and the Missions in the matter of Education will not fail to bear fruit also for the African woman. Christianity and Education will give the African woman a new interest in life. We have it on the authority of Sir Harry Johnston that Christianity saved the Baganda from extinction. And after the sleeping sickness, the scourge to which Sir Harry referred, the missionaries, in co-operation with the Government, are combating the even greater scourge of venereal disease, and once more they are well on the way to victory. But for the scourge which is the subject of our present discussion there is no better remedy—side by side with wise legislation—than the moral uplift which only Christianity can bring. As the Commission on South African Native Affairs has stated: "The hope for the elevation of the native races must depend mainly on their acceptance of Christian faith and morals." J. THOONEN.

Review

The Pontificate of Leo XIII. By Eduardo Soderini. Translated by Barbara Barclay Carter. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 7s. 6d.)

The pontificate of Leo XIII is a striking example of the fact that difficulties are the surest stepping-stone to greatness. In 1878 the Church was beset with trouble in every quarter. Questions of political relationships demanded extraordinary discretion; within the Church itself there was faction and discord; above all, the rapid changes of the nineteenth century had produced a new set of social problems.

The Pope destined to shoulder these burdens was an old man of delicate health, seemingly unfitted for so arduous a task. Yet the twenty five years of his reign mark an era exceedingly rich in the social history of the Church.

In this book Eduardo Soderini (who was entrusted with the archives of the Holy See for the purpose) describes how Leo XIII steered the ship of Peter through the troubled waters of modern thought, battling with its evil forces and allying himself with its nobler motives; how he studied with tireless energy and defined the Catholic attitude towards the questions of the time—politics, slavery, marriage, education, Socialism and Communism, how he condemned these latter two and began the great movement of Christian Democracy; how he suffered the accusations of all sects and parties and showed himself so nobly in his life and his work that it was truly said of him that "he had the gifts and merits of a great Pope of old and the characteristic of a great Pope of our time."

Miss Barclay Carter's translation is to be commended. S. G.

BOOKS RECEIVED

To Miranda. By Cecily Hallack. (Washbourne & Bogan, 3s. 6d.)

Fish on Friday. By Leonard Feeney. (Sheed & Ward, 6s.)

A Map of Life. By F. J. Sheed. (Sheed & Ward, Cheap Edition, 1s. 6d.)

To My Son in Confidence. By Miles Mander. (Faber & Faber, 5s.)

Thoughts of a School-Master. By H. S. Shelton. (Hutchinson, 6s.)

As Little Children. By Annetta Howarth Lord. (Washbourne & Bogan, 2s. 6d.)

Back to the Home

The Revd. Père Rutten, O.P., a Belgian Senator, has recently introduced a Bill to restrict the work of women in Belgium. The Bill proposes that married women shall not be employed at all with the exception of agricultural workers, those in the employ of a person exercising a liberal profession which is not that of head of school, hospital or nursing-home, those working where only members of the family are occupied, home workers, domestic workers and also women in supervisory and confidential posts and those who work for persons who do not employ more than three workers. Exceptions may also be made, in the case of industrial workers, if the state of industry seems to indicate that such exceptions are necessary (italics ours) or if the married woman has been able to prove to the Justice of the Peace that her earnings are necessary to her family.

Mlle. van den Plas, hon. secretary of "La Ligue Catholique du Suffrage Feminin" (Belgium) writing on the projected law in "Le Soir" (Brussels) and also in "Le Féminisme Chrétien," organ of "La Ligue Catholique du Suffrage Feminin" points out how illogical, ridiculous and unreasonable the project is, if it has as its avowed object the safeguarding of the interests of the family. She declares that the gravity of the proposal lies in the fact that it is an attack on the liberty of women. It is an abuse to take from the husband and wife the right to decide between themselves in what occupation the wife shall engage for the good of the family. Mothers of families mostly prefer to remain at home, but if for some particular reason they should have to work why should private affairs be dragged before a Justice of the Peace in order to obtain the desired permission? Mlle. van den Plas goes on to quote Mlle. Hélène Burniaux, who says in this connection: "Let everything be done to enable the woman to remain in her home: nothing to force her to stay there." With this we are in complete agreement. Liberty of choice for the individual is as important here as in any other walk of life.

In the projected Bill there is included an additional article which provides that the King may forbid employment to women and girls, without distinction of age, in all occupations which exceed their strength, which are physically or morally dangerous to them or which are recognised as unhealthy. Mlle. Lenoël, writing in "La Revue Ste. Jeanne d'Arc" (Paris) comments: "It is evident

that these reasons for exclusion may, according to necessity, apply to any form of work. All open-air work might exceed the strength of women all sedentary work might cause anaemia and thus be unhealthy. If agriculture becomes an over-crowded occupation its dangers will at once become apparent and it will be considered an occupation incompatible with the feminine constitution. The same thing will happen with regard to morals. If domestic service were less needed it would soon be said that no employment is so dangerous to the virtue of women or so derogatory to the good of the family. And so on . . ."

As Mlle. van den Plas points out, surely it is better to make certain that factories where thousands of young girls must gain their living are fit places in which to work, rather than withdraw these girls from employment. We would add that, again, it is a question of liberty and that in this case conditions should be such that liberty of choice in paid occupation shall be possible for the individual worker.

C. S.

HON. TREASURER'S NOTE

We are very grateful to Miss Butler-Bowdon for the gift of a beautiful new type-writer for use in the office.

The Alliance will have a stall at the Christmas Sale organised by the Women's Freedom League which is to be held on Friday and Saturday, November 23rd and 24th, at the Y.W.C.A. Hall. As our readers know, the finances of the Alliance depend very largely on the proceeds of the Christmas Sale and you are asked to help to make it a success by sending articles for the stall to the office.

P. M. BRANDT.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

September 1st to October 1st

	£	s.	d.
Barry, Miss M.	1	1	0
Challoner, Miss P. C.	1	8	0
Fonseka, Mrs. de	3	0	
Hayden, Professor Mary	5	0	
Morison, Mrs.	2	6	
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