

# Catholic Citizen

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

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

Vol. XXXI. No. 10.

OCTOBER, 1945.

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.

## Domestic Service in the Post-war World

By CHRISTINE SPENDER.

"Domestic work is the oldest, the largest and the most unorganised form of women's employment." So states the Report on Post-war Organisation of Private Domestic Employment (His Majesty's Stationery Office, Cmd. 6650). This survey has been conducted by Miss Violet Markham, C.H., LL.D., D.Litt., and Miss Florence Hancock, who made use of a Questionnaire issued to organisations and women interested, to collect their material. The Report considers the reasons for the unpopularity of domestic work, what that work involves, and make plans for its reorganisation in the post-war world. The chief recommendation is that a Corporation for domestic workers on the lines of the National Service Hostels Corporation should be established and that this should be entitled "The National Institute of Houseworkers." Roughly the Institute should carry out the work of training domestic workers and placing them afterwards in an "approved household." The workers would be certificated and would fall into three categories, resident, daily or part-time workers employed by one household, and supply workers to more than one household working on a four-hour shift system. The "approved households" would be those employers who would conform to the regulations for minimum rates of wages and conditions adopted by the Institute. In connection with daily workers the provision of hostels, which could be used in training schemes, is suggested.

The chances and changes through which domestic service has passed have reached their climax during the recent war, and it is certain that some drastic reorganisation must be embarked upon if we do not wish the domestic arts to fall altogether into disrepute. Unless something is done to salvage graciousness and leisure in life, the modern family living in town, country, tenement house or flat will be dragged up by an over-tired, over-done mother who is always terrified that the time will come when she is forced to take a day in bed. As for the frills, tasty cooking, crisp curtains, the recipes passed on to us by our grandmothers, these will be things unknown and quite forgotten. Yet it ought not to be impossible to interest the young women of today in what should be a far more rewarding occupation than the monotonous jobs offered to them in factory and office.

At the present time a girl going into "service" has to face various disadvantages—loneliness, lack of space in living conditions, no regular hours, apart from her "afternoon off," no place where she can entertain friends. Individual households have to a greater or lesser extent mitigated some of these disadvantages but there has been no general ruling as to hours, pay or conditions upon which either employee or employed can fall back. Nowadays for the one living-in servant, temperament is of primary

importance, because if the mistress and the single maid clash the result is disaster for both. The lot of the domestic servant is in some ways even more difficult than in the days of grate-cleaning, basements and the attic bedroom. Wages may be higher but, still with the disadvantage of no regular hours, she is cut off from the cultural and social life of her own circle. In days gone by the hierarchy of the kitchen was a social life of its own and, moreover, the scullery maid starting from scratch had the chance of rising to the status of cook-housekeeper when she would rule over quite a considerable kingdom. The higher rungs of domestic service involved much skill. There was the still-room maid with her knowledge of herbs and concoctions, there was the ladies' maid with knowledge of hairdressing, sewing, dressmaking—all trades held in high honour today. The cook herself had to have a degree of knowledge which scientists themselves might envy.

It is a curious thing that though the end of the last war saw the coming of the Domestic Science College, with its B.Sc. and other paraphernalia this had no effect in raising the status of the domestic servant. She is still looked down upon by her contemporaries who go in to shop, office or factory. It is a subtle: "More fool you, putting yourself in someone else's power! Out of working hours we are our own mistresses." Only a definite status and regulation of working hours will prevent the domestic worker from becoming such *rava avis* that she ends by being one of the precious things which are lost. For in the past she has been not only our servant in the best sense of the word but also—how often!—our valued friend.

The White Paper does not neglect the problems of the not-so-rich who have never been able to engage domestic help. It recommends that Local Authorities should be authorised to extend the Home Help schemes to cover general sickness as well as maternity cases, and that this scheme should be obligatory. "A full-time corps of home helpers should be recruited; they should be trained . . . and the service should be uniformed. . . . Such part of the cost as the household is in a position to pay should be recovered on a set scale."

Further suggestions made by the Report are that men and boys should be trained to take their part in the work of the household and thus lighten the heavy duties of the housewife, and that leisure for the mother to go out with her husband in the evening might be secured by mutual aid arrangements between neighbours. The U.S.A. is far ahead of England in these two respects, and in California there is a scheme by which high school girls will come with their study books and sit with the children while the parents go out.

## Notes and Comments

The Annual Mass at St. Patrick's, Soho, for the deceased members, associates and benefactors of St. Joan's Alliance will be at 10-30 on Sunday, 4th November, 1945. We ask as many members as possible to attend.

Now that Miss Christine Spender has been released from her war work she has very generously agreed to resume Editorship of the *Catholic Citizen*.

Parliament reassembles after we have gone to press, with a Government "pledged to the principle of sex equality", surely, with good-will and hard work on both sides, the remaining legal disabilities of women for which we and other women's organisations have worked for so many years should now be swept away. In the words of Mr. Churchill, we "trust that the new Parliament will establish in an effective manner the principle of the complete equality of women in industry and in all walks of life and before the law."

Just before the dissolution of the Caretaker Government, Miss Irene Ward asked the Foreign Secretary about the admission of women to the Foreign Service and was told that a Committee would be appointed as soon as possible to consider the matter. Mr. Bevin has now appointed a committee which is to start work as soon as possible to re-examine the question of the Admission of Women to the senior branch of the Foreign Service. Its members are: Sir Ernest Gowers, chairman; the Countess of Limerick, Miss Ethel Strudwick, Mrs. Arthur Yencken, Miss Dorothy Elliott, Sir Thomas Dunlop, Sir Guy Locock. We eagerly await the Report.

*Opinion*, organ of the Society of Civil Servants, contains an article by Mary Agnes Hamilton on the Marriage Bar. She points out that the Civil Service "strives to set, and does set, a good pattern. There is one major exception—the treatment of women." In the matter of equal pay and in the marriage bar the Civil Service "falls markedly behind the standard set by the good employer, whether public or private, professional or industrial." Mrs. Hamilton points out that divorced women and widows may be employed whether they have children or not—it is only the husband that matters and he prevents engagement in the Civil Service and also causes dismissal.

*Women at Work* records the recognition of women by the Building Industry, and mentions that three women have been appointed to the National House-Builders' Registration Council—Mrs. I. T. Barclay, F.S.I., Mrs. Cecily Cook and the Hon. Mrs. Methuen.

The current *Labour Woman* makes use of a quotation describing the character of an educated gentleman from Cardinal Newman's "The Idea of a University." This they take as a pen-picture of the present Prime Minister. The idea is excellent, but why has the Cardinal lost his title? He is not universally known as "J. H. Newman" but everyone knows Cardinal Newman or just "Newman."

On October 18th the National Council of Women of Great Britain celebrate their Golden Jubilee. At the Jubilee Conference the President of the International Council of Women and other distinguished guests will be present.

We send the Council our greetings and congratulations on their 50th anniversary.

Our member Miss Brigid Stafford will be one of the Irish Government's delegates to the I.L.O. Conference in Paris.

## International Notes

**Belgium.** With pleasure we have received *La Porte Ouwerte*, recording the vigilance of the Belgian Group of the Open Door International as regards equal rights for men and women during the last two years. Tribute is paid to Louise H. de Craene-Van Duuren, founder of the Group, who died in July 1938.

**Canada.** From *La Bonne Parole* (Montreal) we regret to learn of the death of Miss Idola Saint Jean who took a leading part in the campaign for woman suffrage in the province of Quebec. She founded the Alliance Canadienne des Electrices. R.I.P.

**Hungary.** We are very glad to have news of our member Sister Margit Slachta, Founder and Superior-General of the Social Service Sisters in Budapest. We read in the *Universe* that this "most distinguished woman" saved the lives of more than 1,000 persons hunted by the Gestapo during the German occupation. Hundreds of refugees hid in the sisters' houses and Gestapo H.Q. was across the street from Sister Margit's convent, which was raided without success one night by forty S.S. troopers. Sister Margit says that many notable people were hidden, "but we first sought to aid the poor and helpless who escaped from the Ghettos."

In 1938, during the International Eucharistic Congress held in Budapest, we were able to visit Sister Margit and see a little of her work. It will be remembered that she became Hungary's first woman M.P. in 1924.

**India.** A little brochure, *To Women*, by Amrit Kaur (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad; Six annas), written by our friend Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, is primarily for her Indian sisters. Raj Kumari feels strongly that every woman should be brought up to a profession. "Basically it is right that every human being should have the opportunity of developing to his or her full stature in whatever sphere the individual bent may lie." She points out the crying need of trained women all over India in the social services, in medicine and in education. The towns and villages need every trained and willing person they can get, and the opportunities of pioneer workers are endless; if they go forth in a spirit of adventure they will have their reward. C.S.

### A CHAMPION OF AFRICA

We regret to record the death of the Venerable W. E. Owen, Archdeacon of Kavirondo, for many years our friend in our struggle to better the position of African women. The Nairobi correspondent of *The Times* writes: "A forcefully outspoken and crusading champion of African causes, and a caustic critic of administrative policies, Owen lived for 40 years among the natives of East Africa."

The Archdeacon helped us with our Memorandum on the position of African women presented to the League of Nations in 1937, and in January 1939, when we held a meeting in London on the subject of Forced Marriages of African girls, he was one of the chief speakers. The meeting dealt with the Government's White Paper issued on the subject, and it passed a long and comprehensive resolution which was discussed in deputation with the Colonial Secretary when the Archdeacon accompanied the Alliance.

Since then we have kept in touch with Archdeacon Owen and he has sent us several authentic examples of forced marriages one of which he was about to take to the Supreme Court of Justice in Kenya. His was a vivid and inspiring personality and he showed a passion for justice which would brook no opposition. We are grateful and glad to have had him as a friend of the Alliance. We send our deep sympathy to Mrs. Owen in her loss. May he rest in peace.

## Women in Local Government

Councillors for London and Municipal Boroughs are to be elected on November 1st, 1945. Nominations for Metropolitan Boroughs must be received not later than noon on the twelfth day before the day of election, and nominations for Municipal Boroughs must be received at the Local Town Hall not later than 5 p.m. on the eighth day before the day of election. Each candidate must be nominated by two local government electors of his Ward, or Borough if it is too small to be divided into wards, and in addition the nomination paper must be signed by eight other local government electors for the borough or ward as the case may be, as assenting to the nomination.

Local Government has been part of the fabric of our lives from early Anglo-Saxon times, when the Village Moot, the origin of the present Parish Council, was represented at the Folk Moot, origin of the District Council, where each village had a voice in the affairs of the district. The Shire Moot, the origin of the County Council dealt with a still wider area. Now, as in former times, local government reflects the changes that have taken place in the minds and ways of life of the British people. It is more than ever important that women should play their part in these formative post-war years. The new Education Act has been passed but all its proposals have to be put into practice. Women's judgment is needed here. *Houses.* There is no doubt that women are needed on all housing committees of local authorities. *Public Health.* Pure water, pure food, good sanitation, improved refuse collection: *Maternity and Child Welfare,* supervision of midwives, welfare centres for expectant mothers, clinics; libraries, street works, parks, electricity, finance, communal feeding; all these are looked after by local authorities. It is essential that women should deal with some of these problems and

very desirable that both men and women should work out solutions together for the others. Where populations are over 20,000 Councils have the administration of the Old Age Pension Act, the National Health Insurance and Shop Acts. Some boroughs are also responsible for the police force, and the appointment of police women, also the licensing of halls, theatres and cinema premises, swimming pools, public baths, wash houses, prevention of fires and the administration of the drug Acts. One sometimes wonders, on reading this list of the duties of Councils, if a reader of history a hundred years hence will be astonished to discover that the majority of councillors were men and not women, and that there were many councils with no women members.

The White Paper on Local Government (Cmd. 6579) foreshadows important changes in the machinery of local government, particularly with regard to status, boundary and areas, Joint Boards and Joint Committees, the fire service, the trunk road system and public utility services. Local government finance is a subject that needs more of the practical point of view that women bring to questions of finance.

Women are very busy now, and very tired, after carrying on double and sometimes treble jobs all through the war, but it is important that women, even if unable to stand themselves as councillors, should vote at the coming elections and attend local council meetings, forming a rota if necessary to attend meetings and discuss current events. Parliament makes the laws, but the Local authorities have to make them workable.

Edith Gardner, Hon. Press Secretary,

National Women Citizens' Association.

### INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

On the agenda of the Conference now being held in Paris is an item: "Minimum Standards of Social Policy in Dependent Territories."

On this subject the I.L.O. has published a valuable Report which includes a *Recommendation* for adoption by the Conference. One section of the recommendation deals with remuneration. We quote the relevant articles:

*Annex, Section I, article 1 (3).*—"Any minimum rates so fixed by decision of the competent authority shall observe the principle of equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value."

*Article 6 (1)* "It shall be an aim of policy effectively to establish the principle of equal wages for equal work and to prevent discrimination in respect of opportunities for employment and promotion, and of wage rates directed against workers by reason of their race, religion or sex."

(2) "All practical measures shall be taken to lessen any existing differences in wage rates which are due to discrimination by reason of race, religion or sex by raising the rates applicable to the lower paid workers."

In reply to the Questionnaire sent to Governments as to the advisability of providing that minimum rates for wage-fixing shall be equal for men and women, "the Governments of Australia, Chile, Egypt, France, India, and the United States of America appear to indicate approval of the application here of the principle of sex equality. The British Government and the Government of Southern Rhodesia state that they cannot express any view pending the results of the work of the Royal Commission which is examining the subject in the United Kingdom. The British Government reply adds that in any case the local practices and customs of the people of some of the territories might make it undesirable to apply the principle for some time to come. The Government of Burma considers that Burma is not yet ready for the application of the principle. The Netherlands Government, while approving the principle in theory, considers it Utopian to

make it the subject of formal regulations. The Government of the Union of South Africa indicates that very few women are employed except in domestic service and that to attract more women by the principle of equal pay for equal work would produce undesirable consequences in native society."

St. Joan's Alliance has sent to the appropriate authorities resolutions urging the incorporation of the above-mentioned articles in the final Recommendation to be submitted to the Conference.

### SILK STOCKINGS OR EQUALITY?

*The Daily Sketch* in a leading article some weeks ago started up the subject of some reward for women's immense contribution to the war effort. They meant that some gesture should be made by the Government and they suggested this gesture might be a release of fully fashioned silk stockings by Christmas time. For about two weeks they pursued the subject of silk stockings relentlessly, quoting letters from correspondents in their favour and hardly any in favour of any other reward. Then on September 21st another leader appeared summarising women's real wishes as expressed in the letters received from them by the *Daily Sketch*.

"The writers being women," says 'Candidus,' "are naturally not averse from having more silk stockings if they can get them, but they do not regard them apparently as first priority. Now that the war is over, what do women as a sex most of all want for themselves? On the evidence of the letters that I have received there is no need to hesitate over the answer, as the opinion is virtually unanimous. It is that they shall be given genuine equality with men." As one writer puts it—"full equality before the Law . . . equal pay for equal work . . . a Britain in which moral justice and legal justice for women are very much more identical than now."

Please keep Saturday, December 8th, free for our Christmas Sale and think of its needs in the meantime.

## Reviews

**Wrens in Camera** by Lee Miller (Hollis & Carter, 8s. 6d.)

For those who imagine that life in the services consists solely of cooking for vast numbers, or banging a typewriter this book will come as a revelation. Many people have not realised the variety of jobs that are carried out by women in uniform. Some of them offer entirely new and interesting experiences, work that under normal peacetime conditions would never have been open to girls. In this delightful collection of photographs with good explanatory notes, one can visualise the Wrens actually at work; Torpedo Wrens looking very dirty but in their element, happily and efficiently testing intricate mechanism, or Boats' Crew Wrens capably bringing a harbour launch alongside.

There is perhaps too much favouritism shown to the more 'exciting' jobs, but the Wrens look so charming in their bell-bottom trousers and working rig, with the wind tugging at their hair and the sea spray dashing against their small craft, that this is excusable. To set against these there are also some very attractive photographs of those highly valuable people, the cooks and stewards.

The photography is superb; Lee Miller is a genius in her own branch of art, and the finished perfection of each photograph makes this book outstanding.

The Director, W.R.N.S., Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, has written a fine introduction\* in which she hopes this book may teach something of the potentialities of woman power for the future.

Elvira Laughton Mathews, W.R.N.S.

\*It includes as follows: "I believe it (the nation) has no conception of the potentialities of woman power for the future. . . In a militarised world, where violence is the highest ideal, woman can have no equal place, and we have seen the tragic results of such a philosophy. In the Kingdom of God on earth it is the things of the spirit which count, and for the great issues of post-war life, women are needed as co-partners of men."—*Editor*.

**Population Facts and Policies.** By Eva M. Hubback. (Allen & Unwin. 2/6).

A readable clear statement of facts and figures. Having proved that reduction in birth rate in Europe, Dominions and U.S.A. is due mainly to voluntary family restriction and having suggested excellent economic, social and moral remedies, Eva Hubback goes on to ask for education in best methods of birth control. Well, you just can't have it both ways. F.M.S.

Women generally, and Catholics in particular, cannot be too strongly urged to take their proper share in Local Government, and any such loyal citizens will find Dorothy V. Lappage's **Municipal Elections and You** a most useful handbook.

In a few pages (at the cost of 9d.) the plan and work of citizens, candidates, councillors and Council is clearly outlined and sensibly dealt with. We congratulate the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs on their "No. 1" pamphlet. U.P.B.

The 25th Annual Report of the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child recommends the establishment for unmarried mothers and their babies of homes in which the babies might be safely left while the mothers went out to work, and suggests that these homes might also be open to widows and deserted wives who had young children. Their admission would not only, as the report says, render the illegitimacy of the child inmates of the home less conspicuous, but would also prevent the undesirable segregation of unmarried mothers.

The report states that "the Canadian Welfare Council at Ottawa is now engaged, in co-operation with the military authorities, in a scheme for collecting and disbursing voluntary payments from men on their return to Canada, on their discharge, towards the support of their illegitimate children in this country." H.D.I.

**The Women's Social and Progressive League of Ireland** send us their **Annual Report**. They have covered a large area of excellent work, particularly on behalf of children and delinquents. To the Commission on Youth Unemployment the League sent a memorandum stressing the need for fair play for women and girls, especially the need for equal pay and for opening to women all forms of work and training courses. Representatives of the League were invited to an interview with the Commission on points raised in the memorandum. The Joint Committee of Women's Societies have, with the help of an eminent barrister, drafted a Bill legalising the adoption of children which it is hoped may pass into law before long. They have written to the press and interviewed Commissioner O'Donovan about the treatment of boarded out children. Inspection should be done by women, they feel, and in order to secure good homes and proper treatment the foster-parents should be adequately paid. The high standard of practical work undertaken by the Women's Social and Progressive League is well matched by the scope and inspiration of the list of lectures and debates.

### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "*The Catholic Citizen*," October 15th, 1920. *Jus Suffragii* (September) triumphantly prints in full on its front page the text of the proclamation of the American Secretary of State finally ratifying on August 26th, the Amendment to the Constitution conferring on women the right to vote. Thus the great contest ends which has been carried on in the United States by a succession of brave women for over 80 years. Mrs. Husted Harper contributes a vivid account of the final phases of the fight showing how up to the last legislative moment the American "antis" did their utmost to block the reform. *Notes and Comments*.

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### Domestic Service in the Post-war World—continued

The difficulties inherent in any domestic service scheme are obviously greater in country areas, especially where a resident domestic is required. It is suggested that to meet these difficulties local centres of the National Institute should be set up in ten or twelve large provincial towns.

Perhaps, after all, we shall have to resign ourselves to the fact that the day of the resident domestic is over. Do we even want it to come back? Post-war houses will no doubt be streamlined and labour-saving, we are now conditioned to independence, and the burden of our cry is "more leisure and less non-stop drudgery." Surely if the "National Institute of Houseworkers" were set up it could answer our prayer and at the same time give interesting and rewarding employment to many thousands of women?