

THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST

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

VOL. III., No. 4.

April 15th, 1917.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

—Francis Thompson.

WOMEN IN INDUSTRY.

By D. J. COLLIER.

The most recent returns of the Board of Trade show that from the beginning of the war to October, 1916, 850,000 women have come into industry; in addition to these women who are "gainfully occupied" for the first time there has been a somewhat extensive removal of women from domestic service, from small workshops and work-rooms in the dressmaking trade, so that it would not be too much to say that nearly a million women have entered actual industrial employment since July, 1914. With these facts before us it becomes necessary to review the position which women hold in the industrial world in order that we may be ready with some solution for the dislocation which will arise with "the outbreak of peace."

There can be no doubt that many of the additional women whom necessity or patriotism have brought into industry during the war will elect to remain gainfully employed when the war is over. On the one hand there will be the women whose menfolk have been killed or injured, widows with inadequate pensions, girls who have lost their fathers, and who but for this would never have entered industry, and women who are faced with the necessity of helping to support disabled relatives, whilst many of those who have appreciated the independence which wage earning brings will decide to remain in the labour market.

In pre-war days there were two bodies of opinion diametrically opposed to one another who debated this problem with heat and bitterness—the dear old-fashioned sentimentalists who reiterated the formula that woman's place is the home, and who honestly believed that the race would suffer if women had any part in industry. Then as a reaction from this group we had the extreme feminists with their catchword: we take all labour for our province, these would open all industries and occupations to women regardless as to whether the industry was unsuited to women's physical capacity, or of the fact that the entry of unlimited numbers of unorganised women would undoubtedly lower the standard rates. Theoretically anyone who believes in the equality of the sexes must desire that entry into any trade or occupation shall be free and unrestricted, and certainly no feminist could for one minute tolerate that men alone should decide what industries shall be open to women qua women, but it must be remembered that we are dealing not with the ideal state of the future, but with the profit-seeking industrial world of to-day, where conditions are for the most part not conducive to the well-being of the worker. One cannot help feeling a glow of pride when women succeed at skilled work in factories or workshops from which they have hitherto been excluded, but there can be little advantage

either to the individual women or to the woman's movement if the conditions of work are adverse and rates of remuneration below subsistence level. With so much insistence, both in the press and elsewhere on the high wages earned by women munition workers, it is difficult to convince the public that large wages are earned only by a small minority, and then only as payment for long hours of physical toil, amounting sometimes to over 60 per week, probably at night or in the "danger zone" of an explosives factory.

That the war has brought some improvement in those trades whose record a few years ago was a veritable scandal cannot be denied, as in the case of women and girls working in the metal trades in the Midlands, who are now getting 16s. to 25s. per week where previously they would have earned 6s. to 8s., but it must be remembered that food prices are more than 80 per cent. above those of 1914, so that the increased rates are not excessive. As recently as last December Miss Mary Macarthur drew attention to the abnormally low wages paid to many thousands of women engaged directly on munition work—women receiving only 2½d. per hour for work on which men were paid 1d. per hour. Scottish munition workers getting only 8s. 9d. to 13s. 3d. per week, London makers of ammunition boxes getting between 3d. and 4d. an hour.

A few weeks ago Mr. Kellaway announced in the House of Commons that of the 400,000 women engaged in Government munition factories 373,000 were now governed by the various orders made by the Ministry of Munitions in regard to their wages. The lowest rate paid to these women was 18s. and the average wage was 20s., while many who were on piece rates were entitled to 33½ per cent. above that rate of 20s. This is an undoubted improvement, but it does not include as many as 27,000 women in actual Government employment, while it leaves almost entirely unregulated the many thousands of women engaged on work for Government contractors—an extension of these Ministry of Munition orders to all women employed on the production of war material would certainly effect a considerable improve-

ment in the welfare of large numbers of women workers.

But at the root of women's inadequate pay is their lack of organisation, and indeed the difficulties of forming strong trade unions amongst women are almost insuperable; the reasons for this are not far to seek—in the first place it has been asserted on the good authority of Miss Mary Macarthur that the low wages earned by the majority of women workers constitute the chief obstacle to their effective organisation, so that whilst women are badly paid because they are unorganised, they are unorganised because they are badly paid. The securing of an adequate minimum wage for all women by direct Government order would do much to facilitate the successful organisation of women's trade unions, just as the Trade Boards Act has proved itself a powerful ally in the organisation of women in sweated trades. Here indeed is a grand opportunity for the new Ministry of Labour.

Before the war the uncertainty of a woman's industrial future was another great obstacle to the organisation of female labour. Because the majority of women expected to leave the industrial world on marriage they were frequently willing to accept low rates of pay and to put up with inferior status, consequently it was exceedingly difficult to convince them of the advantages of strong trade union organisation. But with the changed social and industrial conditions which will result from the war this difficulty ought to be overcome. Miss E. D. Proud in her book on Welfare Work has some interesting comments on this aspect of the problem:

"Women are inferior in the industrial world because they have not decided (except individually) that they desire to be otherwise, or that they desire to pay in training the price of efficiency."

And again:

"If girls and women could be convinced that efficiency was essential for their future whether married or not, and that industrial efficiency in no way impaired their value as wives and mothers . . . the nation would reap the benefit."

(Continued on page 35).

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

There is a certain poetic justice in the fact that it should have fallen to the lot of our old enemy, Mr. Asquith, to plead the cause of Woman Suffrage on occasion of the recent debate on Electoral Reform. Mr. Asquith re-affirmed his conversion; his former opposition, he said, was not based on principle, but on public expediency. Woman Suffrage, then, is no longer "a political mistake of a disastrous nature," but the problems of reconstruction demand the immediate enfranchisement of women. Mr. Long, though not converted, realises that the controversy must be cleared out of the way, and is prepared to support a measure of Woman Suffrage.

* * * *

On the day following the debate the Prime Minister received a deputation of representatives of twenty-seven Suffrage Societies, including ours, and a number of other societies of women. The deputation was led by Mrs. Fawcett. Mrs. Pankhurst was present and spoke for her followers. Woman Franchise, though included in the Government Bill, will be left to the vote of the House, but in view of the temper of the House the Premier is of opinion that the majority in favour will be overwhelming, and the minority quite negligible. Mrs. Fawcett said suffragists hoped the Prime Minister would improve the proposed scheme in a democratic way, as far as was consistent with the safety of the measure. Mr. Lloyd George said he had always been in favour of a democratic measure, the restriction of age was unjustifiable and illogical, but it was the utmost that would be passed by the House for the moment. Indeed, the distinction of age is so absurd, that it is bound to die an early death, if only of its own stupidity—and we shall hurry its departure.

* * * *

We greatly regret that Mr. Dickinson's amendment to raise the age of consent was defeated in the Standing Committee which dealt with the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, but if pressure is brought to bear this may still be altered on the Report stage. It is the more unjustifiable in view of the new clause pressed through at the last moment.

Under this clause a magistrate may make an order to have a girl under eighteen, accused of soliciting "or of offences of a like nature," detained in a home until she reaches the age of nineteen. The girls will be dealt with under the *Children's Act* of 1908, but as far as consent goes they are treated as adults.

* * * *

It is said on all sides that many of the harpies preying on our gallant men are mere children. We should like to remind our readers in this connection of the protest made by ourselves and others in the early days of the war with regard to the kind of appeal made to young girls to stimulate recruiting. One enterprising journal summed up its appeal briefly with the words: "No khaki, no kisses." Another enterprising person appealed for Lady Hamiltons to come forward to manufacture Nelsons. Then there was the famous poster: "Is your best boy in khaki?" And now the cry is changed into stone the harpies.

(Continued from page 34).

It is impossible in a short article to touch on the many other sides which must be taken into account when reviewing women's position in the industrial world. The question of equal pay for equal work—the relations between men and women workers, with particular reference to the after-war problems, the need for increased technical instruction for girls, and the difficult question of the married woman in industry, all demand special consideration. The controversial point about the effect of industrial work on the health and physique of women cannot be settled without much careful and widespread research, so that here more than anywhere dogmatism must be avoided.

Real improvement in women's industrial position will be effected in the long run by increased consciousness of the women themselves, and this will be attained only by improved education, higher wages and stronger organisation.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY,

Office: 55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON.
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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

THE SOCIAL EVIL.

Among the enormous mass of literature dealing with Prostitution and its concomitant evils, one is glad to welcome a book* coming from a Catholic Society, and consequently based on Catholic principles. But in reviewing a book of this type it is the critic's seemingly ungracious task to draw attention, not so much to the many excellencies, which any reader is capable of discovering, but rather to point out the passages which may be open to misconstruction, or upon which conflicting views will be held.

For instance, in dealing with the problem in mediæval times when, in contrast to the periods of savage persecution of prostitutes, states and municipalities grew rich on the proceeds of brothels, the writers suggest that to the people of the middle ages the profits of this trade may have come to be regarded as a penitential fine (p. 61) to be used for the common good. The suggestion is not only open to grave misconstruction, but happily there appears to be not the slightest foundation for it. On the contrary they were logical enough in the middle ages, if brothels were to be tolerated they must also be protected, consequently elaborate regulations were drawn up in connection with the charges to be made for the use of the rooms and so forth. Moreover it was held, we are told, that a man had no right to defraud the woman of her wages, even though they were the wages of sin. There could have been no question, then, of penitential fines.

* "Prostitution: The Moral Bearing of the Problem." By M. F. and J. F. With a Foreword by the Archbishop of Liverpool. London. Catholic Social Guild. P. S. King and Son. 2/- net.

Again on p. 182 in speaking of the system of regulation existing in some European countries and of its failure in decreasing disease, the writers say: "On the Continent there has been an increasing consensus of opinion that the attempts to protect the public health through police agency has been a failure. Nothing but success could justify its existence. . . ." They mean us to understand, of course, that only success could justify it even in the eyes of the pagan-minded supporters and promoters of it. We all know that success cannot justify a system which is in itself immoral. The aim of regulation is not to eradicate vice, its sole aim is to make it safe for men to indulge in vice. The iniquitous system was denounced by Pope Pius IX. as a traffic in human flesh patented by the Government. Indeed the writers themselves have put forward the view that regulation is a direct incentive to vice (p. 86, 181), but an unwary reader or an unscrupulous opponent, might easily take this phrase alone, overlooking the earlier paragraphs.

On p. 111 we are told that we "must disabuse our minds of the illusion that hunger and starvation are the determining causes in the making of a prostitute. First hand investigators have always denied this, but platform speakers have found it too useful a theory to abandon when working for various political ends." It is to be hoped that readers who have not studied the matter for themselves will not take this highly controversial statement too seriously. First hand investigators are by no means agreed on the point. In saying that economic pressure and sweat-

ed wages are closely connected with prostitution, one does not necessarily mean that the woman had not the price of a loaf of bread, though it may mean that, but one does mean that a very large number of girls in the heyday of youth are condemned to a life of unceasing toil and drab monotony for a miserable pittance barely sufficient to keep body and soul together, and that from this class large numbers drift into prostitution. After all, we who hold this view are in excellent company; when Dr. Agnes MacLaren, working for the abolition of State regulation, sought the blessing and advice of Pope Leo XIII., this was the answer he made to her: "While working for the abolition of State regulation the other sides of the question must not be forgotten. The principal cause of the demoralisation of our day is that woman is not respected as she should be, therefore one must work to raise the status and dignity of woman. . . . The demoralisation is also due too often to the miserable wages paid to a woman, wages so scanty that it is impossible for her to live honestly on what she earns. Every possible effort should be made to remedy this great evil. Moreover, more generous help should be given to women who are in need, that none may say that she was obliged to do wrong to earn a living."*

The writers of this interesting text-book would be the last to suggest that the Pope could have had any political motive in giving this advice. Catholic suffragists are naturally gratified to find how closely their own views coincide with those of the great Pontiff.

Again, not many people will accept the theories put forward, pp. 107-8, in connection with girl mothers, whom the writers describe as for the most part unattractive girls, grasping at any proffer of affection. On a subject like this generalizations should not be attempted.

For the rest, the book contains, among other items of interest, a valuable chapter on venereal disease, by J. F., formerly medical officer of a Lock Hospital. The Archbishop of Liverpool states the Catholic position in a Foreword, and the text of the Criminal Law Amendment Acts of 1885 and

* The words are quoted in a pamphlet issued by the Fédération Internationale Abolitioniste: Réponses données etc. à un Appel fait par Agnes MacLaren.

1912 is given in an Appendix. This book is a welcome sign that another Catholic Society besides our own has realised that the policy of silence in connection with the appalling evils which surround us has been a disastrous failure.
L. DE ALBERTI.

OFFICE RENT FUND.

I offer my most grateful thanks to those who have subscribed to the Office Rent Fund. I have received £12 12s. 6d. and £3 more is promised, making a total of £15 12s. 6d. towards the necessary £40.

One of our Members has again this year undertaken to send 1/- a month, and I commend her example to others. The Wimbledon Branch promises help as in former years. More subscriptions are urgently required. I feel sure that, now that events have taken a favourable turn, the Members and Friends of the C.W.S.S. will be anxious to mark the occasion by a donation to the Office Rent Fund.

B. GADSBY,
55, Berners Street, W.

Donations received up to 31st March, 1917.

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THE SUFFRAGE IN IRELAND.

A largely attended public meeting of Irish Suffragists was held at the Mansion House, Dublin, on March 14th, organised by the following leagues:—

- Irish Catholic Women's Suffrage Association.
- Irishwomen's Reform League.
- Irishwomen's Suffrage Federation.
- Conservative and Unionist Franchise Association.
- Belfast Suffrage Society.
- Irishwomen's Franchise League.
- Church League for Women's Suffrage.
- Munster Franchise League.

Mrs. Stephen Gwynn, who presided, said that the speakers represented every shade of opinion in Ireland, Catholic, Protestant, Unionist, Nationalist, Militarist and Pacifist, but all were united on one object, demanding that women be given a voice in the government of the country. Women from the Colonies are indirectly represented at the Imperial Conference, which we hear is to settle the Irish question, and Irishwomen will be voiceless. Irishwomen protest against such an absurdity. With Dublin in ruins, hungry children begging in the streets, wages insufficient to support workers, food prices rising every week, women teachers paid miserable salaries and retiring on pensions that are an insult to educated women; there is reason enough to maintain that Ireland cannot prosper till women have a voice in the making and the administration of laws.

Mrs. de Burgh Daley (Church League) moved the following resolution:

"That in the event of the Irish question being considered at the Imperial Conference, the unanswerable claim of Irishwomen to the franchise should form an integral part of any settlement to which the Conference gives its support, and in the event of a Government measure being introduced to enfranchise the women of

Great Britain, we demand equality of treatment for the women of Ireland."

Mrs. Kingston (Suffrage Federation) seconded the resolution, and Mrs. Connery (Irishwomen's Franchise League) said she asked for the vote because she was a human being. The housing problem in Dublin was a disgrace to civilisation and to Great Britain, but if it was a case of horses, dogs, pigs, whisky, or potatoes, men would have settled it long ago.

Miss Perry (Conservative and Unionist), Miss Mellone (Belfast), and Miss Mary Hayden, I.C.W.S.A., also spoke in support of the resolution which was carried unanimously. Copies of it have been sent to the members of the Imperial Conference, the Prime Minister and all Irish M.P.'s. A further outcome of the meeting has been the formation of a Joint Committee of Suffrage Societies for Political Action, Hon. Sec., Mrs. Stephen Gwynn. This committee has sent to the Prime Minister and to the Irish leaders a resolution demanding that the enfranchisement of women be included in the Electoral Reform measure, and that Irishwomen should receive equality of treatment with the women of Great Britain. As soon as Irish questions come before the Conference, or whatever body may be set up to consider them the Committee will demand that a deputation be received. As things stand our case is most complicated. For fear of touching on Irish questions, ministers would leave us out of the Electoral Reform measure and confine that to Great Britain—and in hopes of conciliating Irish members they are equally prepared to leave the question of women's enfranchisement to be dealt with whenever a new legislature shall be established in this distracted country. But at least they shall not say that politics divide us too sharply for a united demand to be made. Whatever the future may bring, we women who love our country are determined to get the right to work for the glory of God and the honour of Ireland.

LONDON AND BRANCHES.

Office, 55, Berners Street, London. Hours, 3-30—5-30. Saturdays, 10-30—12-30. Library volumes 2d. per week.

Holy Mass will be offered for the intentions of the Society at St. Patrick's, Soho, at 10-30, on Sunday, May 6th.

Brighton and West Sussex Branch. Hon. Sec., Miss Busse, Colonna, Old Shoreham Road.

The Annual Meeting was held on February 12th, at the Sussex Pioneer Club. The chair was taken by Mrs. Chapman. The Annual Report having been read, Mrs. Daly was declared elected Member of the Committee, in place of Mrs. Temple, resigned. Mrs. Chapman made a short speech, giving an account of what had taken place at the Annual Meeting in London. Miss Abadam then gave an address, emphasizing the fact that there were still comparatively few Catholic feminists.

There was a very successful Bread and Eggless Cake Competition, the bread and cakes being afterwards sold.

A large number of the members remained for tea.

Hastings and East Sussex Branch. Hon. Sec., Miss Isabel Willis, Mount Lodge, The Mount, St. Leonards.

On Monday, the 2nd inst., a meeting was held of the Hastings and St. Leonard's W.S. Propaganda League, to which our members were invited. The meeting was called to consider the position with regard to the expected new Franchise Bill, and some interesting discussion took place. Our Hon. Sec. spoke of the great injustice to the younger women of the proposed age limit—30 to 35—on the ground that it is they chiefly who are employed in all the great fields of industry at the present time, and that their help would be therefore most valuable in settling difficult labour problems after the war. She proposed a resolution to be sent to our friends in Parliament, urging them to do their utmost to get the age limit removed. The resolution, however, on being put to the meeting, was lost, the general opinion being that the opponents of women's enfranchisement were still so active in Parliament that the least imprudence

on our part might lead to disaster, and therefore that it was advisable to leave the conduct of the affair absolutely to our supporters in the House, who could be trusted to obtain the best terms possible.

It was agreed that another joint meeting of the Propaganda League and the C.W.S.S. should be held very shortly, to consider any fresh development of the situation as it may affect women's franchise.

THE IRISH TREATMENT OF LAPSED GIRLS.

Parish Priest writes:—Our Lord did absolve (go in peace) and make the woman's conversion permanent. *Sin no more* were no idle words from Him.

The moral leprosy must be treated differently, as a matter of precaution, where girls are concerned, inasmuch as domestic servants have more intimate relations with a family. The danger is more remote where boys are concerned. The girl's character is gone and known to the public. It is very difficult to prove the guilt of a boy. Whenever it is proved he receives notice to quit from his Parish Priest, as well as from his Catholic employer. Irish girls shun boys of an immoral tendency. Boys are not such a centre of contagion in a parish. When a girl's character is lost a certain class of boys continue to tempt her. She may be a centre of corruption and bad example. After over 50 years' experience, I would rather have a dozen bad boys to deal with than one bad girl. Their nature appears to be more corrupted. *Corruptio optimorum pessima*. Irish mothers require a certificate of good moral character before taking any girl into their households, even for the sake of preserving the good name of their husbands and sons. They are quite justified. I cannot imagine how a priest could give a good moral character to a lapsed girl. She was and may continue to be an occasion of temptation and sin in virtuous Irish homes. I never met one of them who did not continue keeping dangerous company after repeated warnings. Irish priests do not wish to have any of them in their parishes. The Irish Parish Priests and the Irish mothers have a long Catholic tradition to guide them. It has been a great success in the past. It is not in the least opposed to the teaching of our Lord. And it will not be changed. "On our side is virtue and Erin." We should know our own business best in these matters.

Seemingly the wretched girl becomes a target for the persecutions of the dozen bad boys, so much less corrupt, so much less dangerous, than herself.

In reply to the above letter I need only recall to the readers of the CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST the sentence which gave rise to this correspondence. It ran: "Have not Catholic social workers told us that the harshness shown to an erring girl in Ireland not infrequently brings her to the streets of our northern cities?" Every word which Parish Priest has written in refutation of this statement has painfully confirmed it. And I end as I began—for this harshness, shown to an erring woman in all countries, there is no sanction in the example of our Lord, who was contemptuously called the Friend of publicans and sinners. And the Gospel teaches me that, so far from driving it out, the Good Shepherd went Himself to find His lost sheep and bring it home.

L. DE ALBERTI.

VOTES FOR WOMEN.**A MASS MEETING**

will be held in the
CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER
SATURDAY, APRIL 21st,
At 3 p.m.,

To urge the House of Commons to pass the widest possible measure of Woman Suffrage without further delay.

Speakers—

Mr. W. H. Dickinson, M.P.	Mrs. Despard
Miss Evelyn Sharp	Miss Eva Gore Booth
Mrs. Swanwick	Miss Slieve McCowan

Admission Free; Tickets for Reserved Seats, 2/6 and 1/-, from the Women's Freedom League Offices, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1

The Women's Freedom League.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

AT CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER,
WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS, at 3 o'clock,
will be resumed on

- April 18th.—Mr. Holford Knight: "Women in the Legal Profession."
April 25th.—Mrs. Nevinson, L.L.A.: "Our Glorious Liberties."
May 2nd.—Miss Lind-al-Hageby: "Women's Part in Promoting Moral Hygiene"; and Mrs. Despard.
May 9th.—Dr. Armstrong Smith: "How some Ideals in Education work out in Practice."
May 16th.—Mr. Laurence Houseman: "Peaceful Slumbering."

Admission Free. Collection. Tea can be had at 4-30 (6d.)

**WOMEN'S WORK AND WAGES:
STUDIES IN DISPLACEMENT.**

- I. A Comparative Study of the Occupations of Men and Women, with special reference to their Mutual Displacement; from the Census Returns 1861-1911, with diagrams by Miss DOROTHY HAYNES.
- II. Women in the Furnishing Trades in London, by Mrs. H. G. HALE.
- III. A Bibliography, by Miss IRENE HERNAMAN.
Price 6d., postage 1d.

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11, ADAM STREET, ADELPHI, W.C.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.**A PROTEST MEETING**

CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER,
MONDAY, APRIL 16th, 8 P.M.
against Clauses III. and V. of the above Bill.

Speakers—Miss ABADAM, Mrs. DESPARD, Miss ESTHER ROPER, Miss MAUOE ROYDEN, Mr. GEORGE LANSBURY, & Commander WEDGWOOD, D.S.O., M.P.

Admission Free.

Doors open 7-30.

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