Catholic

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

Vol. XXVI, No. 9.

15th SEPTEMBER, 1940.

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.

The Still Mirror

ALICE MEYNELL: POET (1847-1922)

BY CHRISTINE SPENDER

"Many years ago," writes Walter de la Mare, "I had the curious pleasure of reading a little book, and one in small print, too (Alice Meynell's lovely 'Flower of the Mind') by glowworm light. The worm was lifting its green beam in the grasses of a cliff by the sea, and shone the clearer the while, because it was dur-

ing an eclipse of the moon."

In a world eclipsed by war it is a curious pleasure to read the poems of Alice Mevnell (now collected in a new and cheap edition1) by the glow-worm light of past peace and hopes of peace to come. As we read, this glow-worm light shines clearer, for we are infected by the calm, peaceful personality of the writer. Even Alice Meynell's early poems show a mature selfdiscipline which curbs exuberance of feeling and foreshadows her later more austere expression of form. Yet in the Last Poems, equally as in her early work, there still shines the light that never was on sea or land. The terseness of the trained thinker and philosopher is there but the pure poet can still write:

The wind is blind. The earth sees sun and moon; the height Is watch-tower to the dawn; the plain Shines to the summer; visible light Is scattered in the drops of rain.

And it is the poet, no less than the poet's insight, which makes the greatness of such poems as "To a Certain Rich Man." We may regret the early dream, the dewy April, but we welcome the original turn of phrase, the unexpected thought which are part of the poet's ripeness. Peculiarly fastidious and independent even in her youth, her poems, in any analysis, show distinctly the logical flowering of these qualities. Her thought becomes increasingly clothed in economy of expression, that thought itself could never be anyone's but her own.

²Much of Alice Meynell's early work owed its inspiration to sacrificed love, perhaps also to frustrated ambition. Given by her father the education generally accorded to a boy, no effort seems to have been made to follow a logical sequence and give her some form of training parallel to that given to a youth. In her sister's case the problem was solved by such overwhelming artistic talent that training in drawing and painting was the obvious road to follow. In Alice's case no such obvious route showed itself and at the age of 18 she writes: "Mama and Mimi have found beautiful things to paint, and are therefore contented. I, on the other hand, have no interest here." She compares her own dependence on moods and feelings to the happy state of the young man occupied with study and business. "Of all the crying evils in this depraved earth . . . the greatest . . . is the miserable selfishness of men that keeps women from work." Later she writes: "I must try to cultivate that rhyming faculty which I

1 Collected Poems, 1940. Alice Meynell. (Burns,

Oates & Washbourne, 4s.).

² For much of this article I am indebted to Viola Meynell's Memoir of her Mother, published by Cape in 1929. The appreciation of the poems is, however, entirely my own.

used to have, if it is not quite gone from me." And this she did. In 1875 many of those early poems were published in "Preludes." "Renouncement," however, though written before 1875, was reserved for later publication. In point of fact "Renouncement" gathers up all

the vague heart-break which runs through this early work, crystallising it in a sonnet of amazing power. Though Alice Meynell in her later days was inclined to wish the poems of "Preludes" could be condemned to obscurity, she was never heard thus to condemn "Renouncement." Its technical achievement alone makes it one of the finest sonnets in the English language (much finer than any of the "Sonnets from the Portuguese") and it is the perfect exnote the influence of Catholic theology even in referring directly to sacrificed love: this poem of parting from the best-beloved:

And all my bonds I needs must loose apart, Must doff my will as raiment laid away. . .

This thought is echoed, long afterwards, in one of the Last Poems, "To Sleep":

. . . But this fulfil Thy work, thy gifts about thee-Liberty, liberty, from this weight of will.

Few would agree with Alice Meynell in her wish to suppress her early work. Many fine poems were included in "Preludes." Of the poems of parting, "Parted," "The Visiting Sea," "Thoughts in Separation" are beautiful examples. There are also the two outstanding Sonnets, "The Garden" and "A Poet of One Mood," and the poet's capacity for writing arresting poems on religious themes already shows itself in "Advent Meditation," "The Young Neophyte" (written on her own conversion to the Catholic Faith) and "San Lorenzo's Mother." Of the Juvenilia for the first time printed in this edition of Collected Poems, "Wind Song" is an example full of lovely images:

Say, shall I come with wings from plains of flowers

Where poets' thoughts make a rainbow wilderness?

Shall I bring songs from where the diamond showers

And grev skies mix the sun with tenderness? And shall the souls of many larks be ours?

"A Study," an early poem printed here for the

first time in its entirety, contains a most poignant description of early morning wakening to

Among the first to wake. What wakes with me? A blind wind and a few birds and a star. With tremor of darkened flowers and whisper of birds.

Oh, with a tremor, with a tremor of heart-Begins the day i' the dark. I, newly waked, Grope backwards for my dreams, thinking to

Back unawares to dreams, in vain, in vain,

This edition of Collected Poems is divided into chronological sections. In the small section from poems printed in 1893 we find, bepression of all unfulfilled love. It is curious to sides "Renouncement," "After a Parting," still

Swift are the currents setting all one way When night gives pause to the long watch I They draw my life, my life, out of my heart.

After this, direct reference to a painful parting ceases altogether till at the end of the 1896 (privately printed) section we find the perfect "At Night: To W.M." and feel the poet has found her heart's home at last. In this section are the well-known "The Shepherdess," "I am the Way," "The Lady Poverty," all showing a growing originality of thought and expression.

The 1902 (Later Poems) section contains notably "November Blue," and "Unto Us a Son is Given." When we reach the section from the 1913 Collected Poems we find religious poems which show a still fresher and stronger diction than heretofore. "The Unknown God,"
"The Crucifixion," "Christ in the Universe," these are in the metre peculiarly Alice Meynell's own, used henceforward again and again both in secular and religious poems:

Of His earth-visiting feet None knows the secret, cherished, perilous, The terrible, shamefast, frightened, whispered,

Heart-shattering secret of His way with us. There is one beautiful descriptive poem in this section, "The Rainy Summer" with the memor-

Bees humming in the storm, carry their cold Wild honey to cold cells.

Another descriptive poem, "A Thrush Before Dawn," starts off the next section, which contains "Easter Night" with its breathless glance at the Resurrection and also two poems

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Notes and Comments

of Pensions, stating that Article 20 of the new Personal Injuries (Civilians) Scheme, 1940 been amended and that "in any case in which the circumstances justify it, the Minister now has power to make the payment granted in respect of an injured house-wife direct to that house-wife instead of to the householder." The Women's Freedom League to whom the letter was sent, organised the deputation of Women's Organisations which demanded among other things that the pension be paid to the injured house-wife direct.

The Amalgamated Engineering Union has turned down a proposal to amend their rules so as to allow women to become members, by 25 votes to 14. So though women are to work shoulder to shoulder with men in order to win the war, the advantages of a Union are to be denied them.

"Opportunity" reports the signal success of representations made by the N.A.W.C.S. to the Treasury as regards the billeting of women civil servants who have domestic responsibilities. Their proposal that such should be treated as married officers was accepted and the paragraph in the official regulations reads as follows:

'Unmarried officers who have domestic responsibilities equivalent to those of a married officer, e.g., those who normally live with parents and are mainly responsible for their support, may be treated as married officers in the matter of billeting and removal."

We regret that "Opportunity," organ of the National Association of Women Civil Servants finds itself obliged to suspend publication "for the duration of the war." This paper has always been in the forefront of the fight for the equality of the sexes, particularly of course in the Civil Service, though not confined to this boundary. The CATHOLIC CITIZEN has countless times been indebted to "Opportunity" for useful information and we are also indebted to it for publicity for the work of St. Joan's Alliance. It is sad to bid our contemporary farewell, but we hope there will be no permanent disappearance.

There is much talk at the present time of the establishment of a Christian Social Order. One detailed programme has been published by Cap-

A letter has been received from the Minister tain T. W. C. Curd "Towards a Christian Social Pensions, stating that Article 20 of the new Order." In any of these programmes we maintain that the woman's personality should be (Statutory Rules and Orders, 1940, 1307) has respected and her human rights recognised. Captain Curd kindly sent us his manifesto for our consideration. In reply, we stated that "members of the Alliance hold differing views on many of the points" but two points on the programme impinged on our work. We wrote:

(i) "We should like a specific declaration that throughout the programme the word 'man' is taken to include woman.

(2) "In the Section FAMILY we welcome the statement regarding Equal Pay but we should like the words Equal Opportunities added to this. We think where division of work is concerned it is a matter for the members of the Christian family themselves to decide, according to their conscience, what is the most satisfactory division of labour within that family. In considering exploitation it is surely irrational to class adult women with children as being equally in need of special protection. We believe the conditions of work of adult men and women should be safeguarded and that children and young persons

should have special protection.'

"I have heard several little indications lately that women are at last beginning to take an interest in the wider interest of politics," remarks an editorial in the Catholic Worker under the heading, "Are Women Waking Up?" It ends severely: "If women only made enough fuss about things in their own province, e.g., houses, I am sure the slums would have been half way to being cleared by now."

We are sorry that the Catholic Worker does not appear to read the CATHOLIC CITIZEN although we send them an exchange copy. We feel their staff needs a little "waking up" to the fact that women are, and have been for a very long time past, worried about politics ("I think it is essential that women should worry about politics," remarks our contemporary) and a reading of our paper would assist their awakening and perhaps remind them of the sixty years' fight for Votes for Women. However, to do the Catholic Worker justice it dwells on St. Thomas More who "was certainly no believer in women having no say in affairs." But we do not think that St. Thomas More would have limited women's interests to what the Catholic Worker designates their "own angle." He regretted too much the accepted inferiority of women not to wish to give them the widest possible outlook on human affairs.

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ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":

55 Berners Street, London, W.I. Tel. Museum 4181 Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

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Abolition of Slavery in Brazil

The Sir John Harris Memorial number of the Anti-Slavery Reporter and Aborigines Friend contains an account of the abolition of slavery in Brazil, broadcast during the abolition celebrations in May last.

The struggle against slave trading and slave owning began about 1830 and took 58 years. There were more than 1,200,000 slaves in Brazil and the Brazil anti-slavery leaders were determined that under no circumstances should compensation be paid to slave-owners.

In 1831 the Brazil Parliament declared that all African slaves landed on Brazilian believing this was possible fixed a sliding scale shores were to be free men. But the slave of payments (£90 for slaves under thirty down traders managed to defeat the preventive officers and between 1831 and 1888 more than 350,000 negroes were sold by the slave traders to the planters. The anti-slavery leaders continued their campaign till in 1863 the emancipation of slaves by Abraham Lincoln made a profound impression on Brazilians and an abolition party was formed which persuaded slave owners to set their slaves free or to bequeath them their liberty in their wills; and raised funds to free individual slaves. Several Brazilian planters set their slaves at liberty and re-engaged them on free labour contracts and the Countess of Nova Friburgo bestowed freedom on more than 1,000 slaves while the Brothers Prado did likewise. In 1869 a decree was issued which prohibited the sale of slaves by public auction and the separation of families.

In 1871 the law declaring all children born of slave mothers to be free was passed. But this process proved to be too slow as all such children had to serve the masters of their mothers until they were twenty-one.

In 1880 the province of Cerea gave an official lead to abolition and the people of the city of Rio de Janeiro started to liberate their slaves. It was about this time that the name of Joaquin Nabuco became connected with the cause. He was the first to win the right to represent Pernambuco in the Chamber of Deputies. Although denied this right he was triumphantly elected a few weeks later in an adjoining constituency. His accession to Parliament led immediately to the formation of a Parliamentary committee whose objective was emancipation without compensation. The Government not to \$20 for slaves between 55 and 60).

The final step was taken by the Princess Regent, on behalf of the Emperor Dom Pedro II who was sympathetic to the abolitionists, and introduced an instrument of emancipation containing only two sentences: "Slavery in Brazil is extinct" and, "All dispositions to the contrary are revoked."

When the first vote was announced the spectators loudly applauded and when utimately the Bill was passed with only nine dissentients they invaded the Chamber and threw flowers over the Members of Parliament.

The then Brazilian Minister in London wrote: "Instead of commotion which some people apprehended, the abolition was received with the greatest enthusiasm, the late slaves offering their old masters to continue work so that no crisis occurred. All Brazilians must be proud to have realised so great a revolution without spilling a drop of blood, solely by pacific means, showing to the world the spectacle of purest patriotism."

Notes and Comments

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To celebrate the anniversary of Mrs. Pankhurst's birthday in July, together with other representatives of Women's Societies, St. Joan's Alliance placed flowers on her statue in Victoria Gardens. Afterwards at an informal gathering there was tea and short speeches. On behalf of the Alliance Miss Barry paid a daughters: tribute to the work of Mrs. Pankhurst.

We were glad to be associated with the dinner in honour of Mrs. Virginia Crawford. organised by the Plater Dining Club in July. Representatives of the many societies in which she has played a prominent part replied to Mrs. Crawford's speech recalling her experiences in Catholic and Social life over many years. On behalf of St. Joan's Alliance Miss Barry paid tribute to Mrs. Crawford's work for St. Joan's Alliance of which she was at one time Chairman. Mrs. Crawford was one of our delegates at the Berlin and Paris I.W.S.A. Congresses.

Mrs. Genevieve Rewcastle, M.B., Ch.B., has been granted the relative rank of Surgeon-Lieutenant attached R.N.V.R. She is the first woman appointed a British Naval Surgeon.

Members of the W.R.N.S., the A.T.S., and the W.A.A.F.s have received an increase of 4d. a day. Rates of pay are two-thirds of corresponding ranks of the men's services.

We congratulate our member, Miss Ruth Barry, on her marriage to Dr. J. O. E. Apthorp, M.B., Ch.B., M.R.C.O.G., of Cape Town, on July 19th, and wish them all happiness in the

Miss Tommy Townsend has been granted a license for racehorse training in South Africa. She is probably the first woman to obtain such a license. Though many women have applied for one to ride or train racehorses they have always been refused. This has not hindered some women from attaining a very high standard of work and organisation in racing stables though the Jockey Club prevents them from holding official positions. One woman runs a stable and trains the horses, though the training license is held in the name of the head lad,

The Still Mirror

(Continued from page 78)

directly inspired by the Great War-"Length of Days" and "Summer in England, 1914." In the 1917 section we have the distinctly feminist poem "A Father of Women," in which is expressed the thought that though war robs men of their sons, fathers may still pass into their

The crippled world! Come then, Fathers of women with your honour in trust, Approve, accept, know them daughters of men, Now that your sons are dust.

Among the poems now first collected (1940) is the extraordinarily modern "The Girl on the Land," which might have been written to-day.

From this analysis, "Saint Catherine of Siena'' (in the section from the 1913 Collected Poems) must not be omitted. It was "written for Strephon who said that a woman must lean, or she should not have his chivalry":

And will the man of modern years-Stern on the Vote-withold from thee, Thou prop, thou cross, erect, in tears, Catherine, the service of his knee?

Perhaps it is not generally known how near her heart was Alice Meynell's interest in the Vote. She served on the Committee of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society for many years and wrote the first leader for "The Catholic Suffragist." And this was only a part of her work and thought for the cause of women, the "dream" of her youth:

"O my dream, my dream! When will you be realised to gladden my soul, to redeem my trampled and polluted sex?"

To end this inadequate appreciation of a poet who makes steadying war-time reading, I shall quote the beautiful and satisfying 'Aenigma Christi," now gathered for the first time into a collected edition of Alice Meynell's poems:

None, can be like Him, none! In love? In grief? Nay, man's capacity, Rifled unto its depths, is reached, is done-Christ's, an unfathomed sea.

None, can be like Him, none! Not she who bore Him. Yet I saw the whole Eternal, infinite Christ within the one Small mirror of her soul.

International Notes

condolence from an African member, Mr. I. Obeng-Blankson of the Gold Coast.

Dear Members,

I am extremely moved with shock to read the irreparable loss St. Joan's Alliance has sustained by the death of her main pillar-Miss Gabrielle Jeffery.

In fact there is no adequate word to express my sore and deep feelings towards the death of Miss Jeffery who has done much for women and was proposing to do greater work for the benefit of every woman. Although she is out of sight yet she shall live and work with us spiritually.

Let us hope that our Alliance has already found a fresh worker who is working even harder than our departed Miss Jeffery. I extend my undivided condolence to the Society, her family and her personal friend Miss Barry. May she rest in peace.

Yours fraternally, J. Obeng-Blankson.

We note that the International Women's News is henceforward to be edited under the auspices of the Women's Publicity Planning Association with a full-time editor. This will ensure the paper's continued existence in difficult war-time circumstances.

We should like here to say how much gratitude we feel to Mrs. Katherine Bompas, the late editor. We are loth to say good-bye to her regime though we wish "Jus" all success in new hands. We hope that its old policy will be maintained and that it will still give us news of women in other lands.

From the Standard (New South Wales) we learn that on April 23rd a deputation including representatives of the United Associations of Women and Teachers' Societies waited on Mr. Drummond, Minister for Education. The subject of protest was the Married Women Teachers and Lecturers' Dismissal Act and Mrs. Jessie Street representing the Australian Federation of Women Voters declared that the Act infringes two fundamental rights—the right to marry and the right to work and that women forced into late marriage are subject to unnecessary temptations.

The following letter was sent to each Member of Parliament:

"The passage of the Married Women Teachers and the Catholic Gazette.

We have received the following message of Lecturers' Dismissal Act in 1932 was vigorously opposed by all women's organisations and many sections of the public.

We consider this Act a blot on the Statutes of

New South Wales.

It infringes the democratic rights and liberties of the individual. It deprives women teachers of the right to marry, as under this Act any woman teacher who marries is automatically dismissed from the service. It also deprives a woman teacher who marries of the right to work.

In this time of national emergency, when we are fighting for liberty and democracy in other countries we consider it an anomaly that an Act which deprives a section of the public of what should be regarded as two of their natural and inalienable rights (namely the right to marry and the right to work) should remain on our Statute Books.

We appeal to all Members of Parliament to press for immediate consideration of the repeal of this Act, and the restoration of full civil rights to women

Mrs. P. A. Cameron, representing the Feminist Club, declared that teaching is a vocation for which married women are particularly suited and that the standard of living of a family is raised by the earnings of the mother.

"The White Sisters" reports that recently in Mugera (Belgian Africa) four novices of the Native Sisters of Saint Teresa were the first to pronounce vows. One of them was Sister Maria Antonia, daughter of the big chieftain, Antoni Nyanama, who at her birth was consecrated to the devil. On her parents becoming Christians she was sent to the White Sisters and thus her destiny was reversed.

The first South African nun was the lady who founded the Assumption sisters in Grahamstown. She was a Miss de Hensingen, and a book has been written about her called "Notre Mère." She must have been a remarkable woman for she rode about Grahamstown on horseback to the scandal of the then parish priest, who reported her to Rome and was much upset when the reply from the Holy City arrived. It seemed that the Pope had always understood that horses were intended to be ridden! When, during the numerous Kaffir wars, Grahamstown was threatened with attack by the natives, Notre Mère used to lead her nuns to the safety of the town church, marching in front of them wielding a huge cavalry sabre, which had belonged to her brother, an officer in the Norwegian army.-Dorothea Rudd in

Reviews

Something You Ought to Know: Facts About Prostitution. (A.M.S.H., Id.)

This pamphlet is written for the ordinary young man or woman and puts in popular form nformation on the difficult subject of prostitution, not generally grasped by the public as a whole. The idea that the blame for prostitution rests wholly with the woman is pulled to pieces by the simple statement of the law of supply and demand: the evils of medical inspection and other "hygienic" measures for the prevention of V.D. are examined as also are the evils of the tolerated House. There are notes on what the author calls "Affairs" (somehow rather an unhappy word, though it is difficult to think of a substitute) and these show a high moral tone, excellent in a time of changing values. The author finishes by quoting from -St. Thomas à Kempis to show the upward path to which real love should lead. She ends: "In these difficult and strained times it would strengthen our better selves to use an inward prayer such as this: 'Set me free from evil passions and heal my heart of all disorderly affections, that I may be made fit to love, courageous to suffer, steady to persevere."

In April, 1940, the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene issued a document, widely circulated to M.P.s and others, on "The Problem of the Maisons Tolérées and the B.E.F. in France (and elsewhere)." In May the War Office circulated to M.P.s and others a reply to this document and July saw the issue of the rejoinder of the A.M.S.H. Although the problem of the Maisons Tolérées in France no longer exists as far as our troops are concerned, as the A.M.S.H. points out it still exists in certain parts of the Near East, and may at any moment become intensified in these districts. Therefore all who are in any way concerned with the welfare of our troops should obtain this latest publication from the A.M.S.H., Livingstone House, Broadway, S.W.I.

We regret that owing to the loss of material in the post not only is the CATHOLIC CITIZEN late in publication but an important article on Women Police has had to be held over. This article contains the information that the Home Secretary has sent a circular to police authorities throughout the country asking them to consider afresh, in the light of war-time conditions, the appointment of women for certain police

Gabrielle Jeffery Memorial Fund

The Memorial Fund will remain open till December 8th in order that any friends who still wish to do so may send donations. It is hoped by the closing date to raise £100. Readers will remember that it was decided to apply the fund to the provision of regular clerical assistance in the office, after devoting a part to a small portrait or drawing. This portrait is now being painted by the artist Mr. W. Lee Hankey.

GABRIELLE JEFFERY MEMORIAL FUND

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LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH Hon. Secretary: Miss Bowden, 22 Fern Grove, Liverpool 8.

By the kindness of the Misses Barry, a very successful garden party was held at Birkenhead on Saturday afternoon, August 17th. The subsequent informal meeting was opened by the Chairman, Mrs. McCann, asking all present to stand and say the De Profundis together for Gabrielle Jeffery. Mrs. McCann gave a review of the work done by the Branch during the past year. Miss Florence Barry then moved a resolution calling upon the Government to make it compulsory on all Watch Committees and Standing Joint Committees to appoint an adequate number of fully attested policewomen.

This was passed unanimously and sent to the Home Secretary and the local M.P.s. Mrs. Laughton Mathews and Miss Helen Douglas Irvine, who were the guests of the Alliance, then spoke, Mrs. Mathews about the interesting and important work which, as director of the W.R.N.S. she is now doing for the country. She mentioned that the W.R.N.S. had assisted in the Dunkirk evacuation, and that an Admiral at an important base after a bad raid had stated in a letter that they had fully upheld the traditions of the Service. She was glad that St. Joan's continued to be watchdog for women's interests and indeed for those of humanity. Miss Douglas Irvine in a few words recalled the gentle, sympathetic and courageous personality of Gabrielle Jeffery who so singularly combined constancy of purpose with entire disinterestedness, accurate judgment and charity. Miss Douglas Irvine referred also to the debt the Alliance owes to Liverpool for its valiant secretary, and she drew a parallel between the cause which St. Joan's has championed for a quarter of a century and that for which the whole nation is fighting to-day—both are defending "the sacred precincts

Miss Mary Hickey moved a vote of thanks to the Misses Barry and the speakers, which was seconded by Miss Bowden, the secretary of the Branch.

The meeting had a very good Press especially as regards the resolution concerning women police.

Twenty-Five Years Ago

Leonora de Alberti in the Catholic Suffragist, September 15th, 1915:

The Daily Mail has rendered a rare service to womanhood by publishing an article on "The Beauty Destroyers, or How Good Looks Are Lost." We are to avoid all unpleasant thoughts and feelings. Anger and worry, irritability, fear, envy, malice, anxiety, and melancholy all these work havoc on the face. Grief and sadness, too, though not always to be avoided, rob the skin of its bloom and eyes of their lustre. We are advised to make a searching examination of conscience and to make solemn resolutions morning and evening on these points, also when in a temper or irritable to fly to a mirror (that really might be a wholesome deterrent). All this is for physical beauty—were we to speak of the beauty of the soul, probably the writer would think we were suffering from chronic dyspepsia, than which nothing could be more disastrous to the complexion. If some of our journalists were to cultivate a sense of humour what treasures of amusement we should lose.

THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S NEWS

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OBJECT.

To band together Catholics of both sexes, in order to secure the political, social and economic equality between men and women, and to further the work and usefulness of Catholic women as citizens.

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