

# THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

Organ of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, 55, Berners St., London, W 1.

VOL VI., No. 8.

August 15th, 1920.

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.

## MOTHERS' PENSIONS.

BY KATHERINE TYNAN.

I can remember a time, before the War, when the possession of children by the poor was made a curse instead of a blessing. Children were "encumbrances"—one can imagine how the Devil smiled at that word—and the possessors of them were penalized everywhere they went. A compassionate woman told this anecdote one day. A cousin of hers, a very rich woman, had expounded to her the deceitfulness and ingratitude of "the lower classes."

"Just think:" she said, "I have discovered that my new coachman who came to me as a single man, has actually a wife and five children living in the village. Of course I had him up; told him what I thought of him, and gave him a month's notice. The wretched man actually burst into tears. "It's not the first place those children have cost me," he said.

In another case the employer of a man and wife permitted the existence of a baby, so long as it remained in the village and was not brought into the house. It can hardly be believed that the ungrateful parents, during an absence of the generous employers, *entertained the baby in the kitchen one Sunday afternoon!* thereby proving themselves not only ungrateful but hypocritical and untrustworthy.

That was a world which was getting rid of its babies or refusing them. The children of the poor especially were often a rank offence to the well-to-do, because they came in such numbers and there was so little provision for them. It was indeed a cheerless world they came into. If the mother had to go out to work for them, if they were "nameless" children, as the phrase goes, there was always the baby-farmers to starve and neglect them till they died. There was also a monstrous system of insuring young childrens' lives, when the

Tempter came to the door in the shape of a man with a little book, and it was made worth while to let the child die. The poor children! God must have been very angry in Heaven. Perhaps the world had to lose its children to purge its hard heart.

"Not a sparrow falleth." God took count of the children. Individual benevolence had done little good. A recent terrible book, "The Child She Bare," by a girl who was brought up at the Foundling Hospital; to which it is the thing to go in London, to hear the beautiful singing, and to gaze at the children who had inspired a great poet and a great painter, —shows what may happen in the best-conducted of institutions.

The State, in America, had its own system of farming-out children whose mothers were unable to support them, herding them all together in barrack homes. By this system the State took away all the rights of the mother. She was not allowed to see her children. After they had been taken from her keeping their tracks were carefully covered up. This system encouraged adoptions, and with a view to adoption, the mother and child were as dead to each other. It was perhaps more inhuman than our Poor-Law system. It may possibly have been more efficient. It was, at all events, enormously expensive. The system of de-naturising a child and turning it into a miserable little machine with possibilities of evil unknown to the inanimate machine, cost a very big sum to the State, and to the private individual who supplemented the State grants.

All over America, those great heartless buildings sprang up, housing each from 200 to 2,000 children. Just imagine 200 or even 2000 children without a mother to them!

But God did not forget the children. He

put the spirit of fatherhood, which is so much rarer than the spirit of motherhood, into the heart of Judge Neil, a Chicagoan of a most unique personality. A great novelist might do justice to this quaint Yankee Saint, the Apostle of the Children and the Mothers. He is extravagantly American in looks and speech. No other land could possibly have owned him. He is the most engaging mixture of shrewdness and simplicity. When he sits down to repeat to you the only poem he wrote, beginning:

"Who said, 'Hitch you wagon to a star?  
Who needs inspiration from afar?  
God Hitched my wagon to my star,  
My Mother."

you love the man. He has told himself the beginning of his Mothers' Pension scheme. He must always have been a lover of children; and he tells us that visiting those barrack institutions he found that when he asked a child, "Where is your mother?" the child's eyes would fill with tears and the mouth begin to twitch. He began to feel that something was wrong and his next visit was to one of those so-called "Childrens' Courts."

The first case that came up was that of a mother of five children. The father having died three years previously, the mother had kept the home going, working all day as a charwoman, coming home at night to do what was to be done for the children and the home. She had broken down under the strain and the landlord had turned the family out on the street.

The Court decided that the children were to be sent to institutions and the mother left to shift for herself.

Judge Neil, with that plain-spokenness which must be so annoying to the official mind, looked at the despairing face of the woman who was to be robbed of her children and said:

"Wouldn't it be more humane to shoot her before she realises her children are to be taken away from her forever?"

The question reminds one of Swift's bitter "Proposal" that the Irish children should be cooked and eaten by their hungry parents.

Judge Neil then went on to ask who paid for the children and how much, and being told, he asked the Court the next question:

"Why not give the money to the mother and let her keep the children?"

The answer was that it would be against the law.

"Then" said this Great Heart, "Let's alter the Law;" and immediately he set about doing it.

Common sense, plus heart and devotion to the cause of the Mothers and Children triumphed. On July 1st, 1911, the Mothers' Pension law came into effect in Illinois. By the end of 1917 thirty-five out of the forty-eight States had adopted it; and by 1918 more than one hundred thousand children had been kept out of the soulless institutions and kept in their mothers arms.

Judge Neil carried the Fiery Cross from America to Europe. Having destroyed the horrible thing known as "Institutional Life" for children with good mothers in America, he came to England to do the like for Great Britain. His methods are not at all of the Pussyfoot order; there is no peaceful penetration. The Judge infects every one he meets with his persuasive enthusiasm. When he talks to you about Mothers' Pensions you've got to hear and to agree; the torrent of his passionate conviction sweeps you over.

He is certainly a thorn in the official side. There is a story of his going to see a big Poor Law school in London and when the superintendent was blandly explaining the methods and aims of the school the Judge interrupted with "Tell me what you teach those 300 boys." The worthy man, rather nettled at the interruption, answered,

"We don't teach them to be Prime Ministers, but we teach them to earn an honest living."

"Oh," said the indomitable champion of the Mother. "If those three hundred boys were left with their mothers there might be one among them who might learn to be a Prime Minister as well as to earn an honest living."

The course of Judge Neil's crusade seems to have been a fairly easy one in England. He enlisted all sorts of people, including that scound and sweet hearted cynic, George Bernard Shaw. In the English House of Commons the cause was entrusted to a young soldier member, Mr. A. Baldwin Roper, whose picture, in the uniform of the Air Force, shows a strong brave young face, which has a suggestion of St. George mingled

*Continued on page 65.*

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

We are very pleased to publish Mrs. Katharine Tynan's article on the important question of Mothers' Pensions. We note that the writer says that Judge Neil "is up against the usual stupidities, urged one grieves to say rather by women than by men, and very often by the spinster woman." We do not know what evidence there is for the statement, it seems to us that the women's organisations in England, which include as many spinsters as married women, have taken the question up very warmly. Several Societies, including the C.W.S.S., have put Widows' Pensions on their programme; it was also adopted by the International Women's Suffrage Congress at Geneva, and is now on the programme of the International Suffrage Alliance. We cannot help feeling that if our politicians had taken it up in the same way Widows' Pensions would now be the law of this land.

We give a report in another column of our sectional meeting at the National Catholic Congress at Liverpool, when Miss Fennell's paper on this subject of Widows' Pensions was read. We greatly regret that Miss Fennell, who recently met with an accident and broke her arm, was unable to be present at the meeting. We hope she is now on the high road to recovery.

We are very grateful to our Liverpool Branch for their strenuous work in organising our public meeting on "The Need of Women in Parliament," which we report in another column, and also for their gallant services in paper selling during Congress week, and indeed throughout the years.

The gentlemen who killed the Plumage Bill by the simple means of absenting themselves from committee and so making it impossible to obtain a quorum, will no doubt be among the first to accuse women of being responsible for this revolting trade. There are 67 members of this Committee, yet on five occasions it was impossible to get a quorum of twenty. Do the absentees really take their duties so lightly, or are they friends of the feather trade?

Among the 234 new women Magistrates appointed by the Lord Chancellor upon the advice of the Advisory Committee many are well known suffragists. Every suffragist

will be delighted to see Mrs. Henry Fawcett's name in the list. The Advisory Committee are to be congratulated on the list they have presented, for not only have the women selected rendered themselves conspicuous by distinguished public service, but they have been drawn from all parties, all classes, and all creeds.

We congratulate the 377,337 women who find themselves for the first time on the parliamentary register. The increase is largely due to the number of women who have attained the age of thirty. We can now congratulate our women friends when they turn the third decade.—Autre temps autres moeurs.

The greatest obstacle to mutual understanding is ignorance of America and misconception of Britain, said Lord Grey at the opening of the first Conference of the International Federation of University Women last month. "The cure for ignorance," he continued, "is knowledge; the cure for misconception is truth." It is to achieve this end that the Federation has been started by the organisations of University women in Britain and America, and at this first Conference, in addition to America and all the British Dominions, eleven other countries were represented—Spain, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Czecho-Slovakia, Italy, Uruguay and India. The opening meeting, held at Bedford College, in its enthusiasm and inspiration augured well for the success of the new organisation. Lord Grey was the speaker of the evening, and other speakers were Dean Virginia Gildersleeve, of New York; Professor Caroline Spurgeon, of Bedford College, and Professor Winifred Cullis, of the London School of Medicine. On the following days meetings were held when different aspects of the Higher Education of Women in various countries were discussed.

As a result of the passing into Law of the Sex Disqualification Bill, women are being now impaneled as juries in Great Britain. Both the women concerned and the general public have accepted the new situation simply and naturally.

## THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

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

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## CHRISTIAN AND CATHOLIC?

I did not intend treating the readers of the CATHOLIC CITIZEN to a review of Dr. Arabella Kenealy's book "Feminism and Sex Extinction." It has been lying on my desk for some months, but to speak plainly I have not considered it worth powder and shot. My opinion of it remains unchanged, but since the extraordinary article in the *Catholic Times* in which Canon Barry thought fit to boom the book, to ignore it now might be attributed to fear rather than to contempt. Hence these remarks. Let me say from the outset that in her conception of feminism, Dr. Kenealy reminds me of nothing so much as of a frightened child whimpering in the dark at a bogey, the creation of its fevered imagination. Where do the hybrid monsters depicted by her exist? But Canon Barry recommends the book to trained minds as a source of inspiration and knowledge. I have no fear in saying that a trained mind, unless blinded by prejudice, could not read half-a-dozen pages of the book, without seeing that it is wholly unbalanced, that Dr. Kenealy's biological theories are non-proven, her statements contradictory, her wild charges unsupported by any evidence. She so exalts the physical side of maternity, common to all mammals, that she can write: "In the altruistic yearning of the mother to her babe, whereat her blood transforms itself to milk, Human Love first sprang and functioned consciously. *This is my Body which is given for you. . . . This is my Blood which is shed for you.*" Or: "The first woman who, of her free-will, gave her breast to her babe was the Mother of all the Humanities. She it was who prepared the way for the coming of Christ," pp. 23-24.

She attributes to feminism any evil she has come across, from the increase of sick-

ness and disease to the decline of British Commerce, and can solemnly write such nonsense as this: "The extent to which over-worked women may impair the health and constitutional vigour of men associated with them in work was strikingly shown during the changed conditions of war. Surrounded by overwrought girls and women, who kept themselves going by stimulus of nervous excitement, of strong tea or more dangerous drugs, many men, co-workers or heads of departments, became neurasthenic wrecks. Others lapsed to the condition of infirm old men. The like was seen in fathers and husbands of such overwrought war-workers. And nervous depletion occasioned by working wives has doubtless much to do with the inanition and depression now crippling our industrial output," page 276. This does not prevent her from saying on p. 180: "The deplorable decadence in masculine regard for and bearing toward women, which has resulted in direct proportion as the sex has substituted male efficiencies for womanly ineptitudes, serves for one of many other valuable object lessons of the war." She does not tell us though why we should bewail the decay of a regard, which took its root in ineptitude.

But, says Canon Barry, granted all this her conclusions are Christian and Catholic. Are they? True she argues against too facile divorce—she would allow divorce in a number of cases—but what has she to offer those unhappy couples who are debarred from divorce? She offers them the joys of re-incarnation: "Having one life only, we might be justified in claiming for it the joy of the best love available. An unhappy or a less than happy marriage is only one, however, of the many expedients for the evolution of faculty. . . . in our in-

numerable pages (of a life serial) and innumerable episodes, we must resign ourselves to sundry matrimonial vicissitudes," p. 185. So, as the vast majority of the peoples of the West do not believe in re-incarnation, according to this line of argument they would be entitled not only to easy divorce, but to any other gratification to which they considered themselves entitled in one short life. Canon Barry must surely know that a right conclusion based on false theories and muddled reasoning is worse than useless. Her belief in re-incarnation crops up again and again in her arguments. She has conceived the silly notion that feminists deery old age. She rebukes them in these terms: "Yet the truth is, Age is a natural beautiful phase. . . . Calm and stately as the snows of Nature's winter, as Nature's winter shows us, old age does not presage death—because there is no Death. That we call Death is but a temporary Recession from the Outer and Terrestrial to the Inner and Celestial Zone of Being. . . . The stream of life runs stilly for the reason that it runs more deep, centring again to that Within and Spiritual, whence it issued in Birth, and will issue again in re-Birth" p.88. So inspiring and useful to a Catholic.

To turn to her treatment of the feminist demand for an equal standard of morality what has she to offer us? "Lapses in the other sex," she tells us, "are in no way comparable, as regards moral, biological, or sociological significance with kindred lapses in woman. . . . Man being less complex of psychology, moreover, that which in him is merely biological is vice in woman." p. 169. As to the fantastic theories with which her book is crammed, may be I lack a scientific mind, but I must confess that in dealing with the complex problems of feminism, the tantrums of the Queen bee, the megalomania of the green fly, the pangs of the female oyster as through starvation it is transformed into a male, all this leaves me uninspired and unperturbed. I can see, of course, that the following illuminating passages would be inspiring to a breeder of cattle: "The great bull is sire of a great cow—because he was son of a great cow. And he is a great bull because he received from his dam a great female vital-potential, for differentiation into greatness of the male traits that characterise great males. . . . The great cow is mother of a great bull because she was daughter of a great sire. And she was a great cow because she received from her sire a great male complement of developmental power. . . . And she may

mother a son greater even than her sire because the great male developmental impetus of her father becomes, in her a greater Vital potential. . . ." p. 296. For such is the law of the Jungle.

But, says Canon Barry, discount these theories if you like, but accept her conclusions. Surely it is an eccentric proceeding, I ask in all humility, on the part of a trained mind to accept blindly conclusions based on theories which common sense bids one reject?

I am, however, grateful to Canon Barry for compelling me to read the book, it has revealed to me the sorry plight in which some anti-feminists find themselves, since a Catholic theologian in search of an ally is driven to commending and recommending such a crack-brained book as Dr. Kenealy's *Feminism and Sex Extinction*. But perhaps it were more charitable to believe that though he advises feminists to read the book before burning it, the Canon has not troubled to read it himself. In truth I have no doubt, given a different age and a different clime, that once read the book would not have escaped burning, so Christian and so Catholic is its teaching.

L. DE ALBERTI.

## Widows' Pensions.

In the regrettable absence of Miss Fennell, her paper on "Widows' Pensions" was read at our sectional meeting at the Liverpool Congress by Miss Eileen Hughes. Father Hall took the chair, and congratulated the Society on being for the first time recognised as part of the Congress. Every priest realised the importance of the subject chosen for discussion, the terrible plight of widows left with a family to bring up was perpetually being brought to one's notice. Miss Fennell's paper also dealt with the hardships suffered by these women, and the urgency of adopting a scheme of pensions such as has been established in the States. Miss de Alberti asked everyone present to advertise the fact that on the authority of Judge Neil himself the Catholic Church in America had been one of the strongest forces in getting Mothers' pensions established in America. At the close of the meeting the following resolution was unanimously adopted and sent to the local M.P.s: "This meeting of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society believing that reconstruction must begin with the welfare of children urges the Government to establish a system of Pensions for Widows with dependent children."

**INTERNATIONAL NOTES. THE NEED FOR WOMEN M.P.'S**

"The Woman's Outlook" (S. Africa) chronicles the successful progress of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill through the Dominion Parliament in spite of the violent opposition of Mr. Merriman and others. The voting has been on non-party lines, but it is worth recording that the Labour party was the only one to vote solidly for the Bill.

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"Le Travail Feminin," the organ of the Union des Travailleuses Catholiques de Genève, gives a sympathetic report of the International Congress, but sticks to the wisdom of its own policy not to agitate for the vote until women are more prepared to use it wisely. It has apparently not yet grasped the truth that responsibility offers the only effective preparation.

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The "Luxemburger Frau" (Cath.) prints all the resolutions passed at Geneva but fears that some of them are a little extreme and might destroy the unity of the family.

\* \* \* \*

"La Femme Belge" prints in full the letter written to the Geneva Congress to explain why Belgian women could not participate in it. It is dignified in tone and has doubtless evoked much sympathy. None the less it is a matter for regret that Belgian women could not see their way to take part in the first big after-war gathering of women at which something was done to heal international antagonisms from which Belgium has suffered so bitterly.

The same number contains a full report of the first congress of Belgian women socialists held in Brussels in June, at which the main discussions turned on methods of organisation. It was resolved by large majorities not to promote separate organisations of any kind for women in order to avoid even the semblance of sex antagonism, and appeals were made to the men to throw open all their organisations in a spirit of perfect equality and comradeship to women.

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The Osservatore Romano, official organ of the Vatican, gives a full report of Father Hall's sermon at Geneva, and mentions that the only Catholic Society represented at the Congress was the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society of Great Britain. V.M.C.

The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society took advantage of the National Catholic Congress at Liverpool to hold a public meeting at Picton Hall on the need of Women in Parliament. The speakers were Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell, Professor Mary Hayden, M.A., of Dublin University, Mr. Joseph Clayton, Miss Annie Christitch, B.A., gave an account of the International Woman's Suffrage Congress in Geneva. In the absence of Miss Fennell, Miss Leonora de Alberti took the chair. In calling on Miss Parnell, the chairman reminded the audience that it had always been said that the woman's movement was entirely composed of elderly spinsters with jaundiced views poisoning the world. Miss Parnell was in the spring-time of life, in fact the C.W.S.S. had been founded by two young girls of twenty-one and twenty-three; one of whom, Miss Jeffery, was in the hall. Miss Parnell gave some good reasons for returning women to Parliament. Professor Hayden drew attention to the fact that the valiant woman of the Gospels was not a woman who only knew of domestic matters, she considered a field and bought it, with the fruit of her hands she planted a vineyard. Mr. Clayton said Englishmen were much more careful in selecting a cricket team than the people to represent them in Parliament. Women M.P.'s were badly needed and women should start a crusade and return a number of their own sex to Parliament. The following resolution was carried unanimously: "That this meeting of the Catholic Women's Suffrage, realising the need for women in Parliament, calls upon the different political parties to adopt a fair proportion of women candidates at the next election." Before putting the resolution to the meeting the chairman emphasised the fact that the society is non-party, nevertheless the C.W.S.S. felt justified in asking all members to work for women candidates wherever possible to whatever party they belonged. She was glad to see in the audience the two prospective candidates for Liverpool constituencies, Miss Eleanor Rathbone, independent; Mrs. Egerton Stewart Browne, Liberal; she hoped everyone in the audience intended to work hard for these candidates and return them to Parliament, where they were badly needed. Miss Christitch then gave a report of the Geneva Congress, and spoke of how the women from all countries, whatever they had suffered, felt that even the remembrance of the terrible war had to be set aside before the gigantic problems which had resulted from it. Miss Christitch also spoke of the propaganda among the Swiss Catholics done by the C.W.S.S. delegates to the Congress.

Continued from page 60.

with a dash of Don Quixote. The owner of this engaging face apologises—in the Latin sense of the word—for that he, young and unmarried, should be in charge of the Mothers' Pension Bill. He says becomingly,

"Perhaps it is because I am fortunately still young enough to remember that I had a mother and the value to me of that mother's care and devotion that I am wishing to see every child in this country enjoying the same privileges, I may say, the same rights, for I hold that every child has an inherent right to a mother's love."

It is good to read that when the Mothers' Pension motion was brought before the House of Commons on April 8th, 1919, there was not one voice raised against it.

It was Napoleon who said, "I do not want nuns, give me mothers!" Well, the only institution for children I know which is, at least, a good substitute for the home and the mother, is run by nuns. I nearly embraced the nun with the real heart of a mother who told me the little girls of the Orphanage wound up the day with a dance, that each had her party-frock, made by herself, if she was old enough, with the assistance of a nun, the design chosen by herself from the paper-pattern book. Also the nun was eloquent on pretty hair ribbons for the children. There were orphan children, or deserted children, or the children of criminals; and the spirit towards the children was the spirit of the Mother of Our Lord.

"We are not supposed to take the children under five," said the nun, "but the Rev. Mother never can refuse a baby."

Who was it who said, "When God could not be everywhere at once He made Mothers?"

Judge Neil is up against the usual stupidities, urged one grieves to say, rather by women than by men, and very often by the spinster woman.

One is grateful to Mrs. Lloyd George for her answer to the question "What about drunken mothers?"

"... for every bad or drunken mother there are ninety-nine competent and loving ones."

Indeed the mother would be very bad who would not be preferable to an Institution.

I hope that one hundred years hence people

will be shocked at the tale of the Institutional System for Children, as we are shocked now at the working of children in mines and factories, the chimney-sweeping boys, the violence and brutality to children that were committed or permitted a hundred years ago or later, and not only in the homes of the poor. The Institutional system is, I believe, very well calculated to raise idiots and criminals. It is dead and damned. All honour to the Good Knight, Judge Neil, to his brave young lieutenant, A. Baldwin Roper, M.P., and to all who have given a hand! I would recommend all who are interested in the cause of children to read, "The Child She Bare" published by the Swartmore Press, London. But that raises another question, that of the illegitimate child, as though any child could be illegitimate or bear stain coming innocently into life in the sight of God. When that cruelty comes to be wiped out, may the attacking Knight have the courage, the insistence, the passionate enthusiasm of Judge Henry Neil, Father of Mothers' Pensions, as he likes quaintly to call himself.

KATHERINE TYNAN.

**Treasurer's Note.**

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\* Geneva Congress Fund.

Many thanks to the above contributors. The Geneva Congress Fund is now closed, with a balance of 19s. 1d. to the good, which has been transferred to our General Fund. Owing to a generous donation we were able to pay our office rent for this quarter, but may no one neglect to send their half crown, as the September quarter will be upon us in a few weeks' time. We have again had to incur heavy expenses in connection with our propaganda work, particularly the Public Meeting at the National Catholic Congress. These amount to about £20, towards which I have received £3 10s. in donations from two members of the C.W.S.S. attending the Congress. I am sure many others would like to contribute to this activity of the Society, which gave us the greatest opportunity of the year for furthering our cause amongst Catholics.

GABRIELLE JEFFERY.

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