

THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST

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

VOL. III., No. 10.

October 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.

THE APOSTOLATE OF WOMEN.

BY THE VERY REV. VINCENT McNABB, O.P.

The following thoughts aim at being constructive. Their writer has no desire to begot mere negative criticism.

The past position of women in the Church is one of extraordinary interest. Whilst the "Virgin Daughter of Sion" and the other holy women had a unique place in the external work of the Church during its first days, succeeding ages seem to have overlooked this fact. Something akin to this oversight befel the Church's first attempts at collectivism.

Women had no very great part in the monastic system. Here and there women, like Paula, the two Melanias and Hilda, show that monasticism, as such, had no opposition to their sex. But the histories of Egyptian and Palestinian monasticism give proof that the monastic life was dominantly masculine.

It is not always realised how this fact continued throughout the Middle Ages. If proof is needed it may be found merely in the Index of Dugdale's *Monasticon*. A careful examination will reveal how comparatively few were the communities of women.

Thus it seems a fact that women were not only by divine institution debarred from the anointed ranks of the clergy, but were largely shut out from monastic and community life.

The reasons of the latter fact are a little difficult to enumerate. Perhaps we are on safe ground in assuming that the Church's first duty towards women, as towards slaves, was to enfranchise and uplift them. Because the state of women had become lowered and even degraded, the first need was to raise it and protect it. Too great a shock would have been given to the normal conscience, or consciousness, if the Church had allowed women the full freedom it allows to-day.

Seen in this light, monasteries of women protected against lawless men by enclosures and excommunications were a first necessary step towards the emancipation of women.

But this first step could not be the final step. Beginnings must give way to ends. Women should not always need protection. As it is men from whom they must be protected, to argue that women shall always be protected is to accuse men.

I am not quite sure that all this desire to see women shut up behind bars and grilles was due to men's desire to safeguard women. We may well ask if some little of it was not due to an unconscious jealousy of women. The question is perplexing and perhaps useless.

The results to the Church of this attitude towards women are hard to trace and calculate. Indeed there is an element of danger in any attempt to analyse these results dispassionately. However, almost any daring becomes wise if we are to accept, as some feel they must accept, the weighty words of an experienced priest. To the "Universe" of 31st August, the Rev. F. H. Highley contributes an article on "Leakage in Industrial Centres," with the under-title "Are we living in a Fool's Paradise?" His opening, if true, is revolutionary. "The sorrows and sufferings caused by the war have been almost infinite, but as for myself one of the greatest sorrows that I have ever had has been to recognise the failure of the Catholic Church to teach the labouring classes." As these labouring classes form the vast majority of the world, this slum-working priest's weighty statement makes almost any outspokenness wise and timely, if only it stimulates research and action.

It is therefore high time we asked ourselves frankly whether the normal attitude towards women, and especially religious women, has not now outgrown its need and usefulness. To such an extent has the Church already realised this need of change, that women have been called in to help in the harvest field of souls. Indeed, so great has been this calling-in of women that the religious orders, once dominantly masculine, are now dominantly feminine. In some countries, as in the United States, Catholic Elementary Education, and therefore the future of the Catholic Church, has been saved by these women.

Women have now some share in what may be called the apostolic work. I have heard an experienced priest say that, in the West Indies, during the persecution of negro Catholics by English Protestants, the faith of the Catholics, from whom priests were banished, depended almost solely on the women teachers or Catechists, whom the French missionaries had organised and trained.

It is, then, to some purpose, and for some wise reason that one woman saint (St. Mary Magdalen) has been called "Apostola Apostolorum," the Apostle of the Apostles.

It is not always realised how great a part women now take in the Apostolic work of the

Church. The following details of a parish in Paris (Notre Dame de la Croix de Ménilmontant) were given me by the parish priest, L'Abbé Henry Flynn. The parishioners number 70,000! Before the war there were nine priests (or an average of 7,700 per priest). Now there are four priests (or an average of 17,500 per priest). The number of children of school age in this parish should be 14,000! As the State nowise helps, or even approves of, voluntary schools, the yearly cost of educating these children, at £1 per head, would be £14,000—an impossible burden! To meet this lack of Catholic education, there is a group of 35 Catholic ladies, who give catechism on Thursdays and Sundays. They belong to a larger group of 5,000, who work in the City of Paris. These 35 women Catechists deal with 1,000 children out of 14,000. Their work is absolutely necessary. But it should be multiplied tenfold!

Even here in England our elementary education, and therefore the religious instruction, is dominantly in the hands of women. It is not always recognised that these women teachers are probably fulfilling more ecclesiastical and apostolic functions than the primitive "Lectors"; who were in minor orders.

The present writer is personally of opinion: 1st, that the system of catechists, men and women, should be still further developed in the Church, and 2nd, that the men and women teachers who are doing such efficient and necessary catechetical work should receive some official status.

THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL GUILD.

The above Society is organising lectures in connection with the Women's Industrial Council. On Saturday, November 17th, 3-15 p.m., Mr. F. Hughes will speak on the Future Position of the Secretary and Clerk; and on Saturday, December 1st, 3-15 p.m., Miss E. B. Ashford, B.A., will speak on Patriotism and the War Workers. No tickets are required for these lectures, which will be held at the Catholic Association Rooms, 55, Russell Square, W.C.1., and will be followed by discussion. The lectures should be of interest to our members.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The persistent rumour that the Representation of the People Bill was to be postponed pending the reform of the House of Lords, has given much anxiety to women and organised Labour. On September 28th a deputation, representing the National Labour Party Executive and the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress, waited on the Prime Minister, and called his attention to the apprehension which this rumour had aroused.

Mr. Harry Gosling recalled to Mr. Lloyd George the words he had used when receiving a deputation from the Labour Party, in the early part of the year, to the effect that: "The Parliament that reconstructs Great Britain and Ireland after the war ought to be a Parliament that receives a direct mandate from a strengthened and reinforced electorate." The Prime Minister assured the deputation that the Government had every intention of giving all facilities for the early passage into law of the Franchise Bill, and declared that the urgent necessity of the Bill was apparent to all. We shall feel safer when the Government have put their good intentions into practice.

* * * *

Meanwhile there is always some cause for rejoicing in suffrage circles, the most recent being the election of Miss MacAdams to the Alberta legislature. Miss MacAdams is a lieutenant in the Canadian Army Medical Corps. It is not long since the women of Alberta won their enfranchisement, yet Miss MacAdams is the second woman to be elected, Mrs. McKinney having been elected last June. The election of two women M.P.'s in so short a time shews the fine progressive spirit which is abroad in the British Dominions. Incidentally it is quite in the Twentieth Century spirit for daughters to be ahead of their mothers, perhaps in this topsyturvy world it is all that we can expect; but it is surely high time that the Mother of Parliaments awoke from her long slumbers, and began to show some spirit.

After three years' talk of total prohibition the men of West Hartlepool have been getting busy, and have brought in prohibition—for women. All public houses to be barred to women, "in the interests of the lads who are fighting." Was one public house ever closed on a Saturday night in the interests of wives and children? It is the old game of one law for the man and another for the woman. And this insult is put upon women in spite of the fact that statistics show an enormous decrease in the number of convictions of women for drunkenness. A decrease which cannot be accounted for by their absence from the country.

* * * *

Between those who hold, as we do, that marriage is an indissoluble sacrament, and those who hold that it is a civil contract, there is not much common ground for discussion, though some discussion on general grounds might be possible. But when the supporters of easy divorce take up the attitude of a correspondent in "Votes for Women" (upon whose letter the Editor very fairly invites correspondence) that those who oppose divorce do so on economic grounds, believing that a wife must cling to any husband, however, undesirable, because he supplies her with bread and butter, discussion becomes frankly a waste of time.

* * * *

Some of the Suffrage Societies, including the C.W.S.S., are working for the improvement of the Representation of the People Bill by urging the Government to bring in an amendment extending the municipal vote to married women on their husband's local government qualification. This is the same principle which the House of Commons endorsed by very large majorities as regards the Parliamentary vote.

In an article in the "Common Cause" of October 5th, Mrs. Fawcett gives the reasons why, though she at first thought this course might be dangerous, she now thinks it may safely be adopted.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

Office: 55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W., I.

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A DANIEL COME TO JUDGMENT.

One of the chief things that strikes a reader of Miss Meikle's book, "Towards a Sane Feminism" (Grant Richards, 3/6) is that her outlook on life is old fashioned. And this, not because feminism has moved with gigantic strides since it was written a year ago, but rather because the picture she paints is the picture of a world which had passed away even before the war. Indeed, a part of it reads like a novel of the nineties, which has burst its cerements, and come to life in a new guise. The heroine of those musty novels flouted the marriage ceremony for no particular reason, but when the time came to face the music—that is to inform her charming daughter that she was a child of illicit love—decked herself in white samite, lay down on a flower-strewn couch, clasped a lily in her hand, and departed this life in an odour of prussic acid. Miss Wilma Meikle's "new hetairæ" do not commit suicide when on their quest for soul mates they find that men were deceivers ever, instead they gather round the hearth of a distinguished suffragist, whose flat was a bureau of advice to lovers. At intervals during these evenings of "free love" conferences a "new-comer would introduce a friend to the hostess, with the mystic explanation, "She is one of us." We may hope that the war has summoned these ardent spirits from the mephitic atmosphere of that firelit flat, if it ever existed, and that they are at work on the land, where air and sunshine, winds and storms, may perhaps have dispersed some of the noxious vapours which clouded their vision.

For epigram, in which Miss Meikle is said to be proficient, we have such original remarks as: "Christianity is a philosophy that has consoled many disappointed lovers, but for the majority of intellectuals it is discredited, and agnosticism is not a philosophy." Or: "It is to be hoped that after the war the Churches will preach that God is a god of brain power, and is to be worshipped with the sincerest flattery of imitation." If, as Miss Meikle seems to suggest, the sin against the Holy Ghost is a readiness to adopt second-hand opinions, she is likely to have a heavy account to render. For her opinions are coin which has passed through many hands, and was base metal in the first instance.

Her book recalled to me a long-forgotten comedy tragedy which had a fleeting passage at a London theatre. At every acute moment in the play one of the characters, an old man who had lost his reason, wandered on to the stage, shook his head at actors and audience and announced, in quaking tones: "I am Chiquinaque, the great Seer, and you are all fools but me." Miss Wilma Meikle has donned the cloak of old Chiquinaque. She has a sneer for Mrs. Fawcett and the constitutionalists, a gibe for Mrs. Pankhurst and the militants, a superior smile for the Church League. Indeed, she embraces the universe in one comprehensive glance of pity, and shakes her head at Churches and universities, bishops and Father Vaughan, feminists, suffragists and educationists. Go to! you are all fools but me, she seems to say.

But in her last chapter, "A Straight Tip for Feminists," she gives us the benefit of her accumulated wisdom. The Buss-Beale agitation, she has told us, was a blunder; the suffrage agitation was a blunder; honest, individual, continuous thought is the only real morality. One thing alone matters—let girls be given a good sound commercial training, let women become industrially powerful.

Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die.

But why this sordid doctrine should be called feminism it would be difficult to say. It is even more difficult to say why it should be called sanity.

L. DE ALBERTI.

REVIEW.

THE POPE'S PEACE NOTE. (Catholic Social Guild, 1, Victoria Street, S.W.1.)

In issuing the text of the Holy Father's Note in pamphlet form (1d.), the C.S.G. has rendered a valuable service. The fantastic reports which have appeared in the Press, the "latest intelligence" straight from the Vatican of the Pope's movements and aspirations may have befogged even some Catholics, who have not read the note for themselves. The very fact that English newspapers declared that the note was obviously inspired by Germany, and German papers that it was unmistakably due to English influence should be sufficient to convince any level-headed person that the Note was neutral, as, if it was to be any good, it only could be. It seems incredible that anyone should doubt that it was inspired by an infinite compassion for suffering humanity, and a desire for a just and lasting peace.

The pamphlet contains some admirable comments on the Note written in a fair and dispassionate spirit, and a preface by his Eminence Cardinal Bourne.

His Eminence justly complains of the "light-hearted fashion in which reputable organs of public opinion in England hastened to attribute the inspiration of the Note to pro-German or pro-Austrian influence. Such attribution was manifestly based on surmise or suspicion; clearly it did not rest on knowledge or any trustworthy source of information. To those who know, such lightheartedness begets grave

distrust of the theories and impressions which our newspapers present to us on other subjects where there is no personal means of control."

It will come as a surprise even to some Catholics to read that the Pope "has condemned the invasion of Belgium, the transportation of Belgians, the sufferings of the innocent and the bombing of undefended towns, the sinking of the Lusitania and much more." These facts are apt to be omitted from the newspapers. There is no question here of whether one agrees with the suggestions put forward by the Holy Father as a basis for negotiation, or whether one considers the moment favourable for peace, the question is that anyone, Catholic or non-Catholic, who discusses the Note at all has no right to be ignorant of its contents. And when the information may be procured by the expenditure of a penny the neglect is inexcusable.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORAL AND SOCIAL HYGIENE.

September 25th, 1917.

To the Editor.

Madam,

Recent action in regard to women charged with moral offences has turned the attention of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene to the need of first hand evidence as to the procedure, methods of taking evidence, etc., employed in such cases. They are therefore organizing a rota of police court visitors, believing that by this means valuable information will be gained, which may form a basis for definite recommendations as to improvements in the law and procedure. In connection with this rota Mr. F. W. Barnett (P.C.M.), Mr. Cecil Chapman, J.P., Mr. Councillor Dawson, Mr. Theodore Dodd, J.P., Miss Alison Neilans and Mr. Pethick Lawrence will give a series of public lectures on Police Court Procedure and the Laws as they affect Women, at 5-30 p.m. on Fridays, commencing on October 5th, at the Fabian Hall, 25, Tothill Street, S.W. No tickets will be required. Full particulars can be obtained from the Offices of this Association, 19, Tothill Street, S.W.1.

Yours faithfully,

CHRISTAL MACMILLAN,
 Chairman Police Court Rota
 Sub-Committee.

THE EDUCATION BILL.

Perhaps there is no subject upon which social reformers felt more pessimistic at the outbreak of the war than that of the future of education.

For years, certain essential measures of reform in public education had been blocked again and again by niggardly local authorities, and by a government in which the educational expert had no place. Educationalists were tired of repeating that educational theory must remain theory, so long as large classes were the rule. Sadler had written his report on Continuation Schools, and had proved convincingly the folly of breaking off education at the age of 14.

Those connected with educational movements, such as the Workers' Educational Association, had realised, over and over again, the pathos of the clumsy weary hands and the stiffened tired brain working laboriously at essay writing; and had heard the complaint,

"It's all very well for some, but I left school at 10."

We read "Across the Bridges," and saw the waste of boy life,—the picture of the eager elementary school child turning into the common-place labour-dulled working man. We remembered ourselves at 14, and wondered what we should have been like if we had been practically free from control at that age.

Before the war, progress seemed to be checked by the necessary parsimony of local ratepayers, and the unworthy parsimony of the State; the war came, and the plea of economy seemed justified; it dragged out three weary years, and suddenly it seemed as if educational dreams were to be realised. The President of the Board of Education was an educationalist, and one in touch with educated labour, new grants for teachers were given, and in August, 1917, Mr. Fisher brought in his Education Bill.

To sum up the main provisions of the Bill.

It does away with the half-time system and gives to local authorities the power to raise the school leaving age to 15.

No child under 12 is to be employed at all. No child of 12 and over is to be employed on school days before the close of school hours, and on any day before six in the morning and after eight in the evening.

Further, if the School Medical Officer considers that even such employment is prejudicial to the child's health and physical development, such employment may be prohibited.

These reforms, though obviously essential from an educational point of view, raise very difficult economic questions. Probably, however, any objections that may be raised here could equally have been raised against compulsory education in the beginning. Secondly, there is a gradually increasing volume of working class opinion in their favour.

Another important article is the provision of adequate education for children from 12 to 14. It is now compulsory on educational authorities to do away with the scandal which made it possible for children to "mark time" in the last two years of school.

Adequate and suitable provision must also be made for practical instruction, and permission is given to local authorities to provide holiday or school camps, playing fields, physical training and school baths.

The most important point in the Bill, however, is the duty laid upon the local authorities to provide, or see to the provision, of a sufficient supply of Continuation Schools, attendance at which schools for 320 hours in each year being compulsory on all young persons between 14 and 18.

But the Bill does away with the farce and the cruel strain of attendance at a continuation school at the end of a long, tiring day. Such schools shall not be held on a half holiday, nor before 8 a.m., nor after 7 p.m., except under exceptional circumstances; and it is compulsory on the employer, not only to release the child from work during the hour allotted to instruction, but also to give him adequate time to secure his being in a fit mental and bodily condition.

To turn now to the problem of the Bill in its relation to Catholics.

In the first place, to quote the "Catholic Federationist," "the abolition of half-time will involve 1,100 additional places, at a moderate estimate of £10 per place, and will cost £11,000 to the Salford diocese alone. The abolition of exemptions will involve the erection of 130 additional class rooms in the same diocese."

Further expenses, and very heavy expenses, will also be incurred, should the local authorities decide to raise the school age to 15, also in the provision of Central Schools for children between 12 and 14, and Nursery Schools for children under 6, and in the building of Day Continuation Schools, owing to the fact that, though denominational ratepayers pay to provide school buildings for undenominational ratepayers, their own school buildings must be provided out of their own pockets.

Further, in the case of secondary schools, the Catholic ratepayer must also largely maintain, as well as provide, his schools. Non-denominational schools obtain a large maintenance grant from the State. Any new Catholic secondary school which wishes to have a Catholic majority on the Board of Managers, and to ensure a Catholic atmosphere, can, owing to the regulations of 1907, obtain no State grant at all. These regulations are not, of course, part of the present Education Bill, but were made by Mr. McKenna in 1907, and have never been annulled.

But perhaps the most serious part of the Bill, so far as Catholics are concerned, is the clause by which Central Schools built for practical instruction, and schools built for the further education of children between twelve and fourteen are deprived of their Catholic majority on the management, so that it is possible, under the Bill, for children of twelve to be removed entirely from Catholic Schools.

The Bill is thus manifestly unjust to Catholics. It can only be made just by:

(1) The giving of monetary aid towards the provision of new Catholic Schools.

(2) The sweeping away of the 1907 regulations.

(3) The abolition of the clause depriving Catholic central schools of their majority on the Board of Management.

On the other hand, the Bill repairs an injustice to English working people as a whole, and an injustice which arouses a sense of wrong which only those closely in touch with labour can even slightly realise. It will be a bitter thing for Catholics if they are obliged to stand in the way of the Bill. The non-Catholic workman is largely estranged from the Church (understood by him in the sense of the various denominations). He feels bitterly

that he has been shut out from his heritage. He asks for justice, and the Church does not care; and for that which the Church offers him he has no use. "His eyes are darkened that he cannot see" the spiritual good offered, but they are darkened by a bitter sense of injustice.

ANNIE HEATH.

LONDON NEWS.

Office, 55, Berners Street, London, W.1.
Hours 3-30—5-30. Saturdays, 10-30—12-30.
Other times by appointment. Holy Mass will be offered for the intentions of the Society at St. Patrick's, Soho, at 10-30 on Sunday, November 4th.

The Executive of the C.W.S.S. desire to express their gratitude to Miss Whately for her services as Secretary during the past year. Miss Barry has now returned to London, after her illness, and has taken up her work for us once more. The committee and members of the C.W.S.S. are glad to welcome her back.

CHRISTMAS SALE.

We are taking a Stall at the Christmas Sale organised by the United Suffragists. The Sale will take place on December 8th. We appeal to all our members to send us useful articles.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Miss E. O'Callaghan, Hon. Sec., pro. tem.,
4, Onslow Road, Fairfield.

A meeting of members was held at the Rooms, 18, Colquitt Street, on Saturday afternoon, September 8th. Mrs. Macdonald presided. Tea was served at 4-30, after which Miss D. J. Collier, Oxon., read a paper on "Effect of the War on the Position of Women in Industry." This was followed by discussion, after which a hearty vote of thanks was accorded Miss Collier for a very interesting and instructive address.

A Whist Drive will be held at the rooms on Friday, 26th inst., at 7-30 p.m. Owing to the difficulties of catering there will be no refreshments. Tickets, 7d. each, may be had from the Secretary.

C.W.S.S. Literature.

Leaflets:

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DISCUSSION MEETING

AT THE

MINERVA CAFE, 144 HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.1.

Tea 4-15. Lecture 5 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 18th.—Miss REBECCA WEST on
"The Real Sources of the Inequality of the Sexes."
DISCUSSION INVITED.

Reserved Seats 2s. 6d. and 1s. Tickets from W.F.L. as above.

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WEEKLY LECTURES. HOUSE DINNERS.

Wed., 24th Oct., 7-15 p.m.—HOUSE DINNER (for Diners only)
"Breakfast Manners"—Speaker: Mr. Keighley Snowden
Chair: Miss Mildred Ransom.

Wed., 31st Oct., 8 p.m.—"The History of the Waringes and other English
Settlers in Constantinople from the earliest times." Speaker: Sir
Edwin Pears. Chair: Miss F. C. Johnson, M.A.

Wed., 7th Nov., 7-15 p.m.—HOUSE DINNER (for Diners only)
"Eastern and Western Proverbs." Miss Zabelle C. Boyajian
Chair: Mrs. Percy Bigland.

Wed., 14th Nov., 8 p.m.—"The Future of National Defence." Mr. Spenser
Wilkinson. Chairman: Mr. H. C. O'Neill.

Wed., 21st Nov., 7-15 p.m.—HOUSE DINNER (for Diners only). "The
Lighter Side of Officialdom." Miss Amy E. Otter. Chairman: The
Rev. A. E. de Ceito.

Wed., 28th Nov., 8 p.m.—"Engineering for Women." The Hon. Lady
Parsons. Chairman: Mr. John Cameron Grant.

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IN THE

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October 17th.—The Rev. W. C. Roberts (Rector of St
George's, Bloomsbury).
"Indian Education."

Miss Nina Boyle.

Chair: Miss Eunice Murray.

October 24th.—Miss Evelyn Sharp.

Mrs. Despard.

Chair: Miss Nina Boyle.

October 31st.—Miss Abadam, "The Feminist Revision of
Theological Values,"

Miss Nina Boyle.

THE CHAIR WILL BE TAKEN AT 3-30.

ADMISSION FREE. Tea can be obtained in the Cafe.

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS.—All communications respecting advertisements to be
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