

THE
Catholic Citizen

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

Vol. X, No. 2.

FEBRUARY 15th, 1924.

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.

Women's Rights in Chile.

BY HELEN DOUGLAS IRVINE.

A Bill to change the legal position of women has lately been introduced in the Chilean Chamber of Deputies by a numerous group of members. It deals with a woman's rights of guardianship over her own children, her right to be guardian of the children of others, her right to witness a legal document, the property rights of married women, and their right to be paid work.

The custody of her children is given to the widow who does not marry again, to the wife whose husband has for mental incapacity, conviction for crime, or other moral incapacity, forfeited his guardianship; and to the wife whose husband has been divorced for his fault.

All women may become guardians of children not their own on the same terms as men, saving that married women may not do so without their husbands' consent and a special legal authority.

All women may witness legal documents on the same terms as men.

The act of marriage is held to institute the separate property rights of husband and wife, unless there be special contrary provision. A wife who thus holds her property separately may sue and be sued in respect of it. If she and her husband collaborate in trade or industry, a partnership is *ipso facto* established between them; the husband is the managing partner, and profits and expenses are divided between the two, according to the rules generally in force.

A husband and wife may, however, specially stipulate in their marriage contract that they will hold their property in common.

Persons who are already married when the Bill becomes law, may either, within a year, declare that they wish still to hold their property in common, or, at the petition of either husband or wife, they may at any time liquidate their partnership as holders of property and subsequently own in severalty.

Property acquired after marriage by husband or wife will be owned by them separately unless they declare that they desire to own it jointly.

If a woman loses her civil capacity, the custody of her property passes, in the first instance, to her husband.

As to the married woman's right to work, the Bill rules that she may accept any employment and enter any profession or trade unless, at the husband's petition, the magistrate forbids her to do so.

The terms of this Bill, which will doubtless be subject to much delay and amendment before they become law, speak for themselves. The rights they would confer are new rights. To realise the present legal position of Chilean women, it is necessary only to note that they lack the rights—the elementary rights to care for their own children, possess their own property, and do their own work—which this Bill would give them.

The women of Chile are almost, without exception, devout and virtuous. They are

charming, sympathetic, very often beautiful, generally, unless they enter religion, married and the careful mothers of large families. The precariousness of their rights over their children is probably the disability which has caused them most suffering.

The State recognises only civil marriages, but it is rare, except among the very ignorant, to find couples who have not also been married by the Church. The converse case is more common: in all innocence a peasant boy and girl, or a boy and a girl of the town working-class, are married by the priest, live together and have children, unsuspected by themselves or others of irregularity until one of them dies and the State declares the children illegitimate, the widow a spinster, and adjudicates the small inheritance to some distant relative. This happens too frequently. There is an even worse tragedy when a worthless husband purposely omits the civil ceremony, of which his wife has never heard, because he wishes to keep a door of escape open for himself, or when he learns its necessity and the fact that the same door stands open after he has spent her dowry or grown tired of her. The wife thus deserted has not, in the eyes of the law, a grievance, far less a means of redress.

The movement for women's rights comes from the middle class, where some women are highly educated and enter the learned and artistic professions. Quite lately they have arrived in the offices. Courses in shorthand, typewriting, and book-keeping, have been opened for them; and in September one State department, that of railways, took the new step of making certain clerkships available for women. The feminists are delighted to see women in offices: they hail the typewriter as a trophy of victory. Europe, with its army of women doing in offices the work it bores men to do, more cheaply and more industriously than men, is a long way from Chile. The Chilean *senoritas dactilografistas* are young triumphant pioneers.

Women Police.

On Monday, March 3, at 8 p.m., a public meeting will be held at St. Anne's Settlement Hall, Harleyford Road, Vauxhall, on "Why we want Women Police."

Speaker: Inspector Mrs. Hamilton More Nisbett. Chairman: Very Rev. Mgr. Provost Brown, V.G. Entrance Free.

Private Members' Bills.

Among those who have won places in the private members ballot, we note that Mr. W. M. Adamson will introduce a Bill on February 29 to amend the Representation of the People Act, and which, among other matters, will give votes to women on the same terms as men. The Bill is backed by Mr. Clynes, Miss Bondfield, Miss Jewson, Miss Lawrence and Mr. Lansbury. With our long experience of the fate of private members' Suffrage Bills, we earnestly appeal to the Prime Minister to take this over as a Government measure.

Mr. H. Edwards has also won a place in the ballot for a similar Bill, which is supported by Lady Terrington and Mrs. Wintringham, and is down for May 9, though in view of the former Bill it may be withdrawn.

Other private members' Bills in which we are particularly interested are the Legitimacy Bill, to be introduced by Colonel Campion on February 29, and Mrs. Wintringham's Guardianship of Infants Bill on April 4.

We need not remind our readers that *now* is the time to show that we are earnest in demanding Equal Suffrage, and we beg of them each to write at once to the Prime Minister and their own Member of Parliament, demanding that this matter should be dealt with as a Government measure this session.

Catholic Citizens' Parliament.

The first annual dinner was held at Vauxhall on Monday, January 21, Mr. Speaker Hand presiding. Speeches were made by Canon Monk, Fr. Thompson, Mr. Bishop, and others. On behalf of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, Miss Mary Wall proposed the toast of the Catholic Citizens' Parliament. Many members of the Alliance were present, and spent a most enjoyable evening.

The next debate will take place on Monday, February 25, at 8 p.m., at St. Anne's Hall, Harleyford Road, Vauxhall, when Dr. Halliday Sutherland will propose "That artificial birth control is a menace to the nation." All members of the Alliance are cordially invited.

The new Badges are now on sale at the Office, 2d. each.

Notes and Comments.

We offer our sincere congratulations to the Right Reverend Monsignor Brown, whom we are happy to count among our associates, on his appointment by the Pope to be Auxiliary Bishop of Southwark.

In feminist circles our cordial congratulations go to Miss Crystal Macmillan, on her success in passing the final examination for the Bar.

Miss Margaret Bondfield, M.P., is the first Englishwoman to hold office under any Government, but while we are glad to see that she has been appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour, our pleasure is tinged with disappointment: with other feminist societies we had hoped to see her a full-fledged Cabinet Minister.

Miss Bondfield attended, as British representative, the recent meeting of the Governing body of the International Labour Office. This is the first time the British Government has sent a woman as Government representative.

We wish every success to Lady Astor's housing scheme. Lady Astor is founding a trust for Plymouth on the lines of the Peabody Trust in London, and is providing £10,000 to start it. The idea is to give impetus to house-building for the working classes, and it is calculated that by this fund, plus Government subsidies, a considerable number of houses may be built. Lady Astor asks the Borough Council to co-operate by providing a site. She suggests that parents of large families should be allowed a reduction in rent for every child under a certain age, so that the larger a man's family, the less rent he will have to pay. Many besides ourselves will rejoice at this innovation in the interests of the family emanating from a woman M.P.

Three of the new women M.P.'s made their maiden speeches during the Debate on the Address. Miss Susan Lawrence said she regretted that there was no mention of education in the King's speech; she believed

that the Board of Education were not merely pursuing a reactionary policy, but were actually violating the law which they had to administer. She criticised in particular their action in regard to the provision of meals to necessitous children. She declared that in their action in this matter they had not merely strained the law, but broken the law. The circular sent out practically stated that the Government had decided not to acquiesce in an arrangement sanctioned by Parliament.

The Duchess of Atholl said she would not have addressed the House but for the fact that the King's speech contained announcements regarding various matters of special interest to women and to Scotland. One was the intention to develop juvenile unemployment centres, and to provide additional facilities for general and technical education. She believed the centres initiated by the Government had done much towards mitigating the evil. There was also the proposal to develop the probation system of dealing with young offenders. Women were deeply interested in the system which had been taken full advantage of in Scotland.

Miss Bondfield said that the points on which she wished to address the House had a great deal to do with the suffering that was going on in this country at the present amongst unemployed women. The Government could have done much to mitigate these sufferings, with very little expense, but had persistently refused to do so. The gravest criticism should be directed against the Government's handling of the juvenile question. Boys and girls alike had been at the mercy of the world upon leaving school, while with proper co-ordination it would have been possible to build up an extension of evening class work, to fit them for better service to the State. Miss Bondfield also dealt with the need of more Inspectors to enforce the awards of Trade Boards.

We call the attention of our readers to the Public Meeting which is to follow the Annual Meeting on March 15 (see advt.), and to the meeting on Women Police, March 3.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":

55 BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.1. Tel. Museum 4181.

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

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A New Manifesto from the President of the International Catholic Women's Leagues.

Our reply to the International Catholic Women's Leagues, which appeared in these columns in October, has now been translated into French, German, and Spanish, and circulated among feminist societies in many lands.

The Spanish paper, *Mundo Femenino*, prefaced their translation of the article by stating that the C.W.S.S. (now St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance) had withdrawn from the International Catholic Women's Leagues, on account of their *intransigence* with regard to the I.W.S.A. We have informed the Editor that this statement is incorrect. The C.W.S.S. being mainly a political society, did not apply for affiliation, but sent a fraternal delegate to the I.C.W.L. Congress in Rome, May 1922.

The President of the I.C.W.L. has recently sent us a new manifesto, issued in reply to the statement published by the International Woman Suffrage Alliance in defence of their programme, which statement followed the same line of argument as our own. The President's new manifesto is written in the same intolerant spirit as the first, only with more bitterness. She brings one definite charge against the I.W.S.A., which, however, is not founded on fact.

In case we may be accused of exaggeration, we quote verbatim from the manifesto sent us by the I.C.W.L.:

"Toutefois ceci ne sont pas les seules

conclusions du Congrès de l' A.I.S.F. visées par la Protestation du Bureau de notre union lors de la réunion à Bruxelles, celle considérant l'adultère (par mesure de santé, la même que pour les maladies vénériennes) comme cause de nullité de mariage, et plusieurs autres qui mettent l'unité familiale en danger ne pourront pas non plus être acceptées par les femmes Catholiques."

The readers of this paper who know the ideals of the I.W.S.A. need no assurance that none of the resolutions adopted at the Rome Congress bear any resemblance to this charge. Nor was the question of the possibility of making concealment of venereal disease by a person contracting marriage, a cause of nullity, even so much as discussed at the Congress. We will not accuse the President and her colleagues of deliberately misleading their followers, but we must accuse them of condemning with violence resolutions which they have not troubled to read. Yet those resolutions were easily accessible, being published in full in the July number of the International Woman Suffrage News, which number, I may perhaps mention, was edited by myself.

We may be forgiven for reminding the President of the I.C.W.L. that the principles of justice, charity and truth, are an integral part of Catholic doctrine, as well as the indissolubility of marriage.

L. DE ALBERTI.

International Notes.

While the fate of Woman Suffrage in France is still in suspense, it is encouraging to read the vigorous terms in which Mgr. Baudrillart supports the measure. "I regard it as a remnant of barbarism," he declared recently, "and a policy unworthy of France to refuse women the vote." Women, he added, are human beings; their intelligence is equal to, though different from that of men; they have more practical sense and a better understanding of the needs of the family.

It is a matter of sincere regret to us no longer to see the name of Mme. Jane Misme as editor at the head of *La Française*. The change has been caused by financial re-construction, but it will not be easy, even for so talented a successor as Melle S. Babled, to replace anyone with the wide knowledge of affairs and the sure judgment in all matters feminist enjoyed by Mme. Misme.

The Lucretia Mott amendment in favour of Equal Rights, introduced into Congress in December, has not yet reached a decisive division. Meanwhile the National Women's Party keeps the matter well to the fore. In *Equal Rights* (December 22) we find the text of the protest against the Amendment sent by the National Council of Catholic Women to every member of Congress. It is based generally on an objection to a "blanket amendment," as unworkable, a matter on which we cannot express an opinion over here; the more specific drawbacks enumerated, fully dealt with in *Equal Rights*, seem to us without much foundation. The amendment does, of course, cut at the root of special labour legislation for women only.

We were led to suppose that a small but definite reform had been achieved now that married women in Quebec are allowed to hold bank deposits up to 2,000 dollars instead of only 500. But it appears from a leader in *La Bonne Parole* (Montreal) that such deposits are still at the mercy of any husband who chooses to withdraw them from the bank, without his wife's knowledge or sanction, even when they are her personal earnings! It is indeed melancholy that such things can be in any part of the British Empire.

Italian women at the moment, are no more fortunate than their French sisters, and Mussolini's promises to the International Congress in Rome have borne as yet no fruit. The Chamber has been dissolved without any decision on Woman's Suffrage having been arrived at, and the whole matter now stands adjourned to the new Parliament. (*Giornale Della Donna*.)

* * * *

Writing with extreme good sense and moderation on some of the conditions of industrial life for women in *La Femme Belge*, we are glad to note that Maria Doumont frankly states—in the face of so much that is often urged to the contrary—that the plain reason why the vast majority of women enter industry is financial necessity. We are less in agreement with her point of view when she places among the "drawbacks" to industrial life the fact that women who work in factory or mill, doing the same sort of work as men, very quickly cease to regard them as their "superiors." It is, of course, regrettable when the work-girl adopts the bad habits of her male companions—we should like him to set her a better example—but we cannot accept it as a sad result of a "false equality."

* * * *

The *Port Elizabeth Advertiser* publishes in full the Annual Report of the Women's Enfranchisement League, drawn up by our valued friend and co-worker, Miss Dorman. Progress seems slow just now in S. Africa, but the women are pegging away demanding their rights, and the Port Elizabeth League is increasing in numbers.

* * * *

The *Christliche Frau* (Dec.) prints a pathetic account of the Conference held at Hildesheim of the German Catholic Women's League by Dr. Eliz. Cusack. All the women, she says, felt drawn more closely together by the extremity of their national misery, and tried to concert possible measures for relieving unemployed women. It was urged that only by the united effort of all could any better life conditions be hoped for.

* * * *

The *Action Sociale De La Femme* prints a very good summary of the world progress of women during 1923.

V. M. C.

A Spanish Augustinian on Feminism.*

Padre Graciano Martinez quotes on the first page of his Preface the definition of Feminism by Canon Arbolea as including higher education of women, defence of the rights of the working woman, claim of women to specific political rights. Our author goes further: "I want the law to treat men and women equally. In an atmosphere of slavery children cannot be brought up honourably." "Feminism is a question which was latent in imperfectly organised societies, and which has become prominent through a multitude of new economic, cultural and political factors, which have forced it upon us as a human problem whose solution can in no way be deferred."

The book under review is one of nearly 400 pages, published in Madrid in 1921, and issued with a letter of welcome from Benedict XIII.

In the historical survey, which occupies three chapters, the writer shows very extensive reading and a fine scorn for anti-feminist pretences. His book is directly inspired by conditions in his own country, nor does he fail to point out that the argument of physical or muscular inferiority comes badly from those who look on while women are employed the livelong day in workshop or factory—even in the mines—or from the countrymen of peasants who in Costa de Oro and Sapao, indolent themselves, leave to their active and industrious wives the labour of cultivating the land.

An ardent desire to strike off fetters of custom, to root out tyrannies and injustices, to open the doors of trades and professions, and to awaken or encourage in Spanish women aspirations after learning and social reform: these are evidenced on page after page. Padre Graciano Martinez is convinced that the vote in women's hands would help to establish maternity and infant welfare centres, to abolish child labour, to regulate hours and conditions of work, to diminish alcoholism, to stop the White Slave Traffic, and "abolish official prostitution."

In contending that Christianity has always been favourable to women's development, he maintains that if ever the Catholic Church

*El libro de La Mujer Española, by Padre Graciano Martinez.

has appeared to be anti-feminist, it was because the modern movement for emancipation started under socialist and anti-religious auspices. Of particular interest to the English reader unfamiliar with Spanish history are the references to Beatriz de Galindo, the learned teacher of Isabel the Catholic and founder of the Hospital in Madrid, called after her "la Latina"; to Lucia de Medrano, a professor at the University of Salamanca, who held with Juana de Contreras (another "great humanist" of her time) a famous classical disputation; and to a series of women distinguished in literature.

That remarkable Spaniard, Oliva Sabuco de Nantes, has a paragraph to herself. At the age of twenty-five she published her "New Philosophy of the Nature of Man," where both the physiology and psychology are extraordinarily advanced and original. What our author says may be compared with the chapter in Dr. Mélanie Lipinska's "Histoire des Femmes Médecins," devoted to an analysis of Sabuco's work. There is a tradition that she practised medicine in her native town of Alcaraz. Certain passages of her book were censured by the Inquisition in 1707, not on theological grounds, but seemingly at the instance of the medical and legal professions, whose outworn theories and whose vested interests were boldly attacked in its pages. Padre Graciano even claims for Sabuco, living in the reign of Philip II, and dedicating her book to him, some glimpse of a theory of gravitation. No less noteworthy are her demands for radical reforms in administration, for assistance to be given to agriculture, for the purification of the law courts and the simplification of legal processes. Her style is praised for its purity and richness, and she holds a place in the "Catalogue of linguistic authorities."

We may pass over Padre Graciano Martinez' allusions to Saint Teresa, her life and works being known—if only superficially—to all, and notice finally his outline of the attainments and career of the Abbess Sor Maria de Agreda. Her correspondence with Philip IV, who consulted her not only on matters of conscience, but on affairs of State, fills a substantial volume, and according to the late Condesa Pardo de Bazan, the distinguished Gali-

cian who has modernised one of the Abbess's mystical treatises, "the King went to the Venerable de Agreda for the honest counsel which could not be obtained from the magistrates at his court."

Not the least helpful part of a book which, if often tantalising by its ejaculatory style, its repetitions, its adjurations, sentimentalisms and limitations, is admirably full of *verve* and instinct, with genuine moral indignation and reforming zeal, is that which gives to the foreign reader an idea of what progressive Spanish women of to-day desire for themselves, and what, distinctively, that land of "splendid women" could contribute and does contribute to the general advance.

F. de G. M.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Hon. Secretary:—Miss N. S. Parnell, 91 Bedford Street, Liverpool.

The Cake and Candy Sale in connection with the No More War Demonstration will be held at the Friends' Institute, Islington from 3 to 6 p.m. on Monday, March 3rd. Members are asked to send in their contributions of cake or jam for St Joan's S. and P. A. stall to Mrs. Parnell, 91 Bedford Street, or addressed to her at the Friends' Institute. They are also earnestly requested to come and buy. (Admission 1/- including tea.)

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

On January 20th, by kind permission of Miss Forbes Robertson, a meeting was held at Bayswater to form an "Under 30" section of the Alliance. A committee was formed and officers elected and the following resolution was carried unanimously and sent to the Prime Minister: "This meeting of unenfranchised women under 30, members of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, calls upon the Government to grant without delay, the Parliamentary franchise to women on the same terms as it is, or may be given to men."

All Catholic women under 30 who are anxious to be enfranchised should write to the hon. secretary, Miss Bumpstead, S.J.S.P.A. 55, Berners Street, W.1. and join the "Under 30" section of the Alliance.

Annual Meeting.

The Annual Meeting, for members only, will be held at Bedford College (by kind permission of Miss Tuke and the Council of Bedford College) on Saturday, March 15, at 2-45 p.m. It will be followed by a Public Meeting at 4-30 p.m., when Mr. F. W. Sherwood, Recorder of Worcester, and the Hon. E. A. St. Aubyn Harney, K.C. M.P. will speak on the Legitimacy Bill (1924).

Mr. Sherwood was a member of the Home Office Departmental Committee on Adoption, and both speakers are great authorities on the Legitimacy Laws, so we hope members will advertise the meeting among their friends.

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It is a pleasure to find that Subscriptions are coming in faster to date than in other years. I would ask members who have not yet paid to follow the good example of those in the list above. The money is really needed for use at once, and delay causes extra trouble and expense to the Society.

G. JEFFERY.

WARNING.

It has come to our knowledge that at least two postal orders sent to the office recently failed to reach us safely. Members are advised to cross their postal orders and cheques, and not to address letters to the "Treasurer," but to Miss Barry or Miss Jeffery by name. If anyone has not had money acknowledged, we should be very glad to hear from them.

**ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL ALLIANCE.**

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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.

MEMBERSHIP.

All Catholic women are eligible as Members, who
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members of their "White List" who were successful at
the General Election. Tickets 10s. 6d. each from the
Organising Secretary, 92 Victoria Street, S.W. 1.

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St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance.

A PUBLIC MEETING on

WHY WE WANT WOMEN POLICE

will be held on

Monday, March 3rd, at 8 p.m.

at

ST. ANNE'S SETTLEMENT HALL,

HARLEYFORD ROAD, VAUXHALL.

(near Kennington Oval and Vauxhall Stations and five
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Miss Kathleen Wright.

CHAIR :

Very Rev.

MGR. PROVOST BROWN, V.G.

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FULL DRESS DEBATE

ON

Monday, February 25, 1924, at 8 p.m.

at ST. ANNE'S SETTLEMENT HALL, Harleyford Road,
Vauxhall, S.E.

(Near the Kennington Oval and Vauxhall Stations).

DISCUSSION WILL BE OPENED BY

DR. HALLIDAY SUTHERLAND.

**"That Artificial Birth Control is a menace to the
Nation."**

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The Monthly Organ of

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