

THE
Catholic Citizen

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

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

Vol. XXX. No. 3.

15th MARCH, 1944.

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 Lesser Half

By B. M. Halpern.

There are two deplorable kinds of people still—alas—to be met with to-day. One kind believes that women ought not to need or claim any kind of equality in any kind of sphere. They make much play with arguments such as "different in kind" and "the unique suitability of women's own jobs," and have seized, with simple delight, on the idea that *all* women will rush gladly back into "The Home" and nothing but "The Home" after the war, thus solving every kind of problem. These are wrong-headed, or rather wrong-hearted. But the other kind—the stupid people who say "but surely women have got their equality now—what more can they want?"—these are both more exasperating, and, I think, more dangerous, because ignorance is a dead weight. When faced with a person of this type one yearns to have all the facts at one's finger tips, to confute them by very weight of evidence. Some facts we all have, for there are few women to-day, taking any interest in what goes on around them, who have not been brought face to face with some of the many disabilities from which we still suffer. In "The Lesser Half" Vera Douie has provided a perfect mine of such instances very clear, very fair, very accurate, very damning, and lit up with glints of mildly sardonic humour. This, I think, is essentially a book for women, just as Ethel Woods' companion piece, "Mainly for Men," is, as the title states, for men. The two complement each other rather neatly, and it is not unrevealing to notice that the book for men, while by no means less intelligent, is far simpler and more emotional in its appeal. Vera Douie has set out, not to startle or to state a case, but to prove one by a relentless accumulation of well-documented facts. After reading for a while, one begins almost to despair as restriction after restriction, shoddy excuse after shoddy excuse, is unrolled before one. No one, at any rate, could pretend, after reading this book, that women enjoy equal opportunities and suffer from no discrimination.

By far the greatest field of inequality, of course, is the economic field, and this war, which many optimists believed would bring us economic equality to match the political advances won in the last war, has so far done little to bear out the high hopes. Wages, salaries, pensions, allowances, compensation, the story is almost always the same. While the Commons again and again endorse the principle of equal pay for equal work, some excuse, blatant or devious, is invariably thought up later to make so revolutionary a course impossible. On the one hand you have

such arguments as "The nation cannot afford it," or still more impertinent, "Such matters are too far-reaching to be decided at short notice" (no one, it may be noted, ever suggests how many years' all-out agitation are to constitute "long notice"). On the other hand, the endless shabby tricks by which employers, from the State downwards, contrive to get round common honesty and decency in order to pay women less. The odious habit, for instance, sanctioned by the Treasury, of re-employing women who have left to get married, in their old jobs but at salaries sometimes less than half those they had been earning—and those, of course, were already lower than the men's. Also the endless tricks which make it possible for industrial employers to claim that the work a woman is doing is not a man's job, and therefore need not be paid at a man's rate.

These battles are still to be won, but there is one battle which public opinion, after a three-year fight, *has* won for us, and that is Equal Compensation. In describing the deep and widespread feeling which was aroused on the subject, Vera Douie's precise style warms to real eloquence. "That women should be condemned," she says, "to a lower standard of life merely because they were women, was a matter which made women see red. The cost of living is the same for both sexes. The charges for food, clothes, lodging and medical attendance (not to speak of taxation) do not differ on account of sex. It is not possible to go to the baker's and say: 'I want a woman's loaf, please,' and receive it at a reduced price. Women were naturally bitterly indignant at the suggestion that their arms and legs were worth less than those of men, but the indignation was not confined to women. . . . The men were solidly behind the women and felt the injustice as keenly as they did themselves."

In this incident I think one can glimpse both a hope and a warning. Men were as eager for this reform as women; it was generally accepted as no more than common justice, and the Government was at last forced to act. Now that was a clear and simple issue, and affected every woman equally, but wages and economic disabilities vary, and we none of us take enough interest in our neighbours' troubles. Clearly it is both our duty and our best strategy first to find out what is unjust about present conditions for ourselves, and then to advertise it loudly. When the nation as a whole is aware of a major injustice it will react against it and once again force the Government into action, but you can't mobilise public opinion in this country without first giving everyone the facts.

Notes and Comments.

Mass will be offered this month at St. Patrick's, Soho, for our Founder, Gabrielle Jeffery, and for the first editor of the *Catholic Citizen*, Leonora de Alberti, whose anniversaries occur on March 19th and 26th respectively. We know all our members will remember them with affection and gratitude in their prayers.—R.I.P.

There is still time for members to ask their M.P.s to support the amendments to the Education Bill, which (1) strengthen the financial position of the Catholic schools, (2) impose equal pay for men and women and the abolition of the marriage bar.

An injustice was removed, in principle, when the Senate of London University recently adopted the recommendation of a sub-committee that all the London medical schools should be opened "to men and women on terms of equal opportunity." Hitherto nine of these schools have admitted no women, two schools admit a few women and one school admits women only. The recommendation is unlikely to have effect until some years after the war.

A deputation, to put forward the opinion of women's organizations which had given detailed study to the Beveridge Plan, was received by Sir William Jowitt on February 25th. It was organized by the N.C.W. and introduced by Mrs. Tate, M.P., and it included a representative of St. Joan's Alliance. Mrs. Abbott, Miss Burnham and Miss Watts pointed out that the inequalities, as between men and women, largely spring from the inferior position assumed for the married woman, and gave a convincing and detailed criticism of the plan. Most of their points readers will find in the resolution of the Alliance reported in the *Catholic Citizen* of December.

Sir William Jowitt listened with keen interest and promised to report to Lord Woolton, the Minister of Reconstruction.

The Secretary for India informed the House of Commons that, owing to the shortage of coal production, the Government had temporarily suspended the prohibition (enforced since 1939) of women's work in coalmines in the provinces of Bengal and Bihar and the Central Provinces. The employment of no women in galleries less than six feet high and the payment of women at the same rates as men are conditions of the suspension, which will be reviewed in six months' time. Special measures have been taken for the welfare of the women. Replying to a question, Mr. Amery said that men workers tended to leave the mines because their wives were not allowed to work with them. In a later debate it was emphasized that no compulsion was exercised on the women.

The arguments against the employment of Indian women in the mines are said to be that it entails their neglect of their children and homes, and that the atmosphere underground is unhealthy. On the other hand, a miner working at a distance from his village whose wife is not with him has no home life, and is tempted to squander his earnings and live immorally. Moreover, the unemployment of a wife decreases the joint income of her and her husband. The latter disadvantage might be counteracted by fixing an adequate minimum wage for miners. This establishment of a fair wage would probably best solve the problem, for it would leave Indian married women free to choose whether or not they would work with their husbands in the mines.

International Notes.

The *Bulletin* of the International Council of Women (Geneva) summarizes a report by the acting Secretary-General of the League of Nations on its surviving organization. Member States have been reduced in number from 55 to 45, of whom many "continue their full and effective co-operation, regular payment of the contributions, and generous encouragement." The headquarters, in which some hundred officials now work—instead of more than 700 as in 1939—are still in Geneva. They deal with economic, financial, social and health questions, dangerous drugs and communications. The valuable library is still being used. The Permanent Court of International Justice is ready to resume work. The I.L.O., now in Canada, is pursuing its work actively.

China. We learn from the N.C.W.C. News Service that a High Mass of Requiem was celebrated at Holy Rosary Church, Vancouver, for Flt.-Lt. Hanyin Cheng, the only woman in the Chinese Air Force, who died at the age of 29 after a short illness. She was the only woman in the world who held an international flying licence from the Royal Aero Club of London. For the last three years she had been a member of the Chinese Consular staff in Vancouver, and for three previous years she held a similar office in China. Her name means in Chinese "Heroine of China." She was a niece of Dr. Wei Tao-Ming, Chinese Ambassador to the United States.

Mexico. The *Universe* tells of a thousand young Catholic girls, the Catechists of St. Francis Xavier, who leave Mexico city at daybreak every Sunday to teach the faith to some thirty-six thousand Indian children in the surrounding villages. These Catechists, who are trained by the Jesuits, were organized thirty years ago. The *Catholic Digest* (U.S.A.) gives particulars of the typical Sunday spent by one of them, Señorita Maria Paz. She rises at five, hears Mass, takes a seven o'clock train to a lonely mountain station, which she reaches at nine. Thence a donkey-ride of two hours brings her to the village of Santiago, where in the old Spanish colonial church, in which, because priests are scarce, Mass is said only once a month, she gives her first catechism class. Afterwards she has another two hours on donkeyback before she reaches the village where she holds her second class, and then she has an hour's walk to the railway station, whence she travels back to Mexico by train, arriving after dark.

U.S.A. A statement published by the Women's Advisory Committee of the U.S.A. Man Power Commission, after consideration of a report by its sub-committee on war planning, comments on the policy which the Commission has adopted of urging labour and management organizations to remove all barriers to the employment of women, to admit them to all forms of training, on an equality with men, and to fix rates of wages on the basis of the work performed, without regard to the sex of workers. The Commission's assumption that women doing war work will return to their homes after the war is questioned: "Some 14,000,000 working women are not newcomers to the labour force. The number who want and need to work has increased enormously. . . . There will be an even higher proportion of unmarried women in our population. There will be hundreds of thousands of women who must accept the permanent function of breadwinner, because of the loss of husbands. And there are the women who have adjusted their family life and found a new, often hard-won economic status, which they do not wish to lose." E.F.G.

THE CONDITION OF THE STREETS.

In her lecture to our discussion meeting on February 23rd, which was held in the Interval Club and over which Miss Monica O'Connor presided, Mrs. Forster, of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, shewed that prostitution is now a considerable evil, its gravity heightened by the war. The immediate causes for its increase are obvious. Young girls are living away from their homes, either "directed" to work at a distance from them or evacuated, or else they are in their own homes where their mother works in a factory and their father is in the Forces: in both cases they escape parental discipline, and they are excited by the presence of many men in camps and other military establishments. These men are detached from domestic ties and their wonted duties and amusements, and lonely, bored, often depressed. Mrs. Forster deplored the marked and unreasonable tendency to blame only women and girls for the consequences of these conditions, among which an increased incidence of venereal disease is conspicuous. She instanced the leniency with which men indicted for offences against girls are often treated in the courts, the magistrates excusing them even when they are of mature age, and even for intercourse with girls in their earlier teens, and assigning all the blame to the depravity of these girls. This usual attitude is the outcome of the moral standard which demands chastity of women and not of men. In fact, prostitution, like other trades, follows the law of supply and demand: where there is a demand among men there is a supply among women. Public opinion advocates, however, that prostitution be combated by measures directed only against women, and mainly by one of two methods or both of them together—the establishment of licensed brothels in which allegedly healthy prostitutes give men the opportunity to practise incontinence, sup-

posedly without injury to their health, and repressive measures such as those aimed at getting girls "off the streets," or the notorious Regulation 33B. The continued availability of prophylactic packets for the troops is a condonation of any sexual intercourse practised by men which does not endanger their health.

Mrs. Forster spoke from her knowledge of China and Japan of the exploitation of women by the capitalists who are the suppliers of those profitable enterprises, the brothels. Even where there are licensed brothels there are also, invariably, the sly girls who are free-lance prostitutes. In New York measures to repress prostitutes have been tried thoroughly, but were easily evaded, for clubs, speak-easies and "hostesses" sprang up to afford the facilities for vice of which the authorities had deprived the population. After thirteen years, prostitution was found not to have diminished but to have increased.

Mrs. Forster recognized the great importance of remedying the social, physical and psychological conditions which minister to the problem of the streets. But she emphasized that it is above all a moral problem. A generally accepted standard which would demand chastity and decent conduct from men as well as from women, not on grounds of expediency, either social or individual, but as a moral duty: this is the desideratum. If it is to be realized women must be recognized, as they are not yet, to be the spiritual and social equals of men.

In the subsequent discussion Canon Reardon dwelt on the need for mental discipline and for the cultivation of *puer*. It was cheering that more than one speaker paid a tribute to the good conduct of the girls in uniform. A resolution in the sense of Mrs. Forster's speech was passed unanimously.

THE HOUSEWIFE.

The following interesting statement has reached us from the Committee of Norwegian Women in Great Britain.

"Under Norwegian Law a husband and wife become, on marriage, joint owners of the entire property of both. This legal co-partnership may, no doubt, be barred by a marriage settlement, but such settlements are of exceedingly rare occurrence in Norway, especially in the rural districts and outside the educated classes. By far the greater number of Norwegian marriages are, accordingly, regulated by the provisions of the Act of 20th May, 1927, regarding *matrimonial co-ownership*.

"The above-mentioned co-ownership comprises the possessions at the time of marriage, as well as earnings, savings, inheritance, gifts, etc., acquired subsequently.

"As a general rule, however, the legal effects of the co-ownership do not appear as long as the parties are living together, but only when the marriage is dissolved through death or divorce, for the wife, no less than the husband, has, while the marriage lasts, an exclusive *right of disposal* with regard to property which previously belonged to her or is acquired by her during the marriage. Nor can creditors of the husband lay claim to those belongings.

"In Norway, as in most other countries, all, or the greater part, of a family's income is generally derived from the husband's earnings. In that case, the law obliges him to supply not only the amount necessary for household expenses, but also what is needed for the wife's 'particular requirements.' (And this is, says the law, to be regarded as acquired by herself.)

"It is doubtful whether savings made by the wife out

of her housekeeping allowance would, under Norwegian law, be considered as acquired by her during the marriage. Earnings acquired by taking in lodgers, however, would probably—at least to a certain extent—be regarded in this way. The deciding of this question is, however, of small importance because of the special Norwegian system of matrimonial co-ownership. When it has come to the question of law-suits between the parties, a divorce may be presumed to be not far distant, and, on divorce, the total property of both will, as previously indicated, be *equally* divided between husband and wife."

MADAME CURIE.

After seeing the film purporting to represent the life of Marie Curie, the strongest impression left is that it is high time some law were passed to protect the illustrious dead from the phantasy of cinema producers. If the picture now being shown at Leicester Square is intended to go down to posterity as a record of the lives of those two truly great people—Marie and Pierre Curie—then someone would do well to take prompt steps to have it destroyed. Two passions governed the life of Madame Curie, her work and her country—radium would have been called "Polonia," had that name not already been given to a former discovery, yet in the film her patriotism is barely touched upon. M. Curie is represented as a semi-buffoon. He may have been absent-minded, but no Frenchman ever born could possibly bow profoundly to a lady *without removing his hat*, as he is shown to do at his first meeting with his future wife. To turn his tragic death into a sloppy sentimental episode is an outrage.

E.F.G.

Women in Post-War Industry.

The following significant statement was made in the House of Commons during the Committee stage of the Reinstatement debate by Mr. Lewis Jones:—

"In the iron and steel trade they (women) were not generally employed, and when it became necessary to find substitutes for some of the men who were called up we allowed women to be employed by agreement with the trade unions and they have done a remarkably good job. . . . Voluntary agreements with trade unions say that women shall not be in steel works after the war, yet the (Reinstatement) Bill gives to women rights of reinstatement within the industry, notwithstanding the fact that the employers and the trade union leaders are in agreement that they should not be employed there."

There is no suggestion that this statement applies only to women who have replaced men, whose jobs would, in any case, be safeguarded by the Reinstatement Act, so that individuals who applied for reinstatement would obtain it. The agreement between employers and trade union leaders which is mentioned denies to women the right to be engaged in a large and important trade.

The trade unions boast that they are in favour of equal pay at the rate for the job, but of what use is this to the women if they are denied access to the job? It is vitally necessary to be on the watch for such restrictions, which are beginning to appear even now, before the end of the war.

POPULATION INQUIRY.

The following are the terms of reference of the Royal Commission on Population:—

"To examine the facts relating to the present population trends in Great Britain; to investigate the causes of these trends and to consider their probable consequences; to consider what measures, if any, should be taken in the national interests to influence the future trend of population; and to make recommendations."

The 16 members include 7 women: Mrs. Ethel Cassie, Lady Dollan, Mrs. Margaret C. Jay, Mrs. Gwen Longmoor, Mrs. G. P. Hopkin Morris, Lady Ogilvie, Mrs. Helen P. Lawson. The women suggested by some of the women's organizations are, regrettably, excluded. Of the three committees nominated, the Economics Committee includes Mrs. Joan Robinson, while to the Biological and Medical Committee Dame Louise McLroy has been appointed. The chairman is Viscount Simon.

Miss Agatha Harrison and Mrs. Lankester, of the Liaison Group of British Women's Societies, co-operating with the All-India Women's Conference, have been invited to attend this conference in Bombay in April. Unfortunately, while they greatly appreciate the invitation, the time factor makes their acceptance impossible. The Alliance sends greetings to the conference and best wishes for its deliberations.

A. FRANCE & SON (HOLBORN) LTD.

CATHOLIC FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Head Office: HOLBORN 4901.

45 LAMBS CONDUIT STREET, W.C. 1.

PRIVATE CHAPELS OF REST.

Liverpool and District Branch.

Hon. Secretary: Miss Mary Hickey, 81, Park Road East, Birkenhead.

Letters have been despatched to the sixteen local M.P.s with reference to the two amendments to the Education Bill affecting women, viz., equal pay and the abolition of the marriage bar. The replies to these letters encourage us to go ahead with our efforts.

The monthly meetings will take place again, beginning in April. The first will welcome once more Alderman Miss Mabel Fletcher, C.C., who will give a talk on Housing. The three following meetings will have the legal position of Women as Wives, Mothers and Wage Earners expounded to them.

Oldham Branch.

Hon. Secretary: Miss Muldowney, 43b, Roscoe Street, Oldham.

Energetic and largely successful efforts have been made to secure the support of the two local M.P.s for the equality amendments to the Education Bill.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.

From "The Catholic Citizen," March 15th, 1919.

"Unfortunately the United States Senate has again rejected the suffrage amendment. Fifty-five votes were cast in favour of the resolution and twenty-nine against—that is, one vote less than the necessary two-thirds majority."—*Notes and Comments.*

The largest

CATHOLIC HOSPITAL

in the South of England

The Hospital was founded in 1856 by four Sisters of Mercy on their return with Florence Nightingale from the Crimean War.

The Hospital contains 156 beds, including 31 beds for Paying Patients. Private rooms are available from 8 gns. per week. Eight beds are set aside for Priests and Nuns from the Diocese of Westminster.

Trained Nurses sent to patients' own homes. Apply to the Superintendent in charge of the Trained Nurses' Institute, 32 Circus Road, N.W.8.

THE HOSPITAL OF ST. JOHN & ST. ELIZABETH

60 Grove End Road, St. John's Wood, N.W.8

CONVENT OF OUR LADY OF THE CENACLE

Tel. HAM 1257.

33 West Heath Road, N.W.3.

DOMINICAN STUDY WEEK-ENDS.

April 15-16—"The Liturgy, the Prayer of the Church"

Fr. Francis Moncrieff, O.P.

" 29-30—"Beauty and the Love of God"

Fr. Gervase Mathew, O.P.

May 13-14—(Subject later) Fr. Richard Kehoe, O.P.
Lectures in every case on the Saturdays, 3.15 & 5.15.
On the Sundays, 11, 3, 5.

An offering of 2/6 for each set of 5 Lectures will help towards the Father's expenses.