

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

The Constructive Spirit at Geneva.

We deal elsewhere with the work of the League Assembly at Geneva, but any survey of its progress, from whatever angle, must strengthen the impression that a spirit of constructive activity is abroad which may conceivably result in a real strengthening of international security. The Permanent Court of International Justice gains new force by the adherence of Great Britain and Italy to the Optional Clause; and the attempt to bring the League Covenant into complete harmony with the terms of the Kellogg Pact, though it may be a prickly and ticklish proceeding, will help to preserve the latter agreement from the mists of airy piety. The initiation of shadowy schemes for the formation of a European Zollverein or even for the achievement of political federation, will serve to throw into sharper relief the practical possibilities of more limited proposals. With bated breath, since there are always storm clouds on the diplomatic horizon, we venture to boast that 1929 is a propitious year for the Assembly of the League.

Women's Medical Service in India.

The grievously inadequate supply of medical women and of hospital accommodation for women in India is stressed in the report for 1928 of the "National Association" for supplying medical aid by women to the women of India. This association was founded by the Countess of Dufferin with the object of opening women's hospitals throughout India, and of making provision for the training of women doctors, nurses, and midwives. Though in existence since 1886, and in spite of the magnificent work of its pioneers, the growth of this movement has been painfully slow. A recent aim mentioned in the report is to increase the cadre of the Women's Medical Service from 44 to 50, a modest objective when one realizes that this handful of women (together with some 155 medical missionaries), have to serve the needs of 117,500,000 Indian women. The Government's refusal, however, to raise the annual subsidy from 370,000 Rs. to 500,000 Rs., has made even this small increase of personnel impossible. As regards hospitals, the report states "the fact has to be recognized that women's hospitals receive scant attention and still scantier support in almost all the Provinces of India." "Readers of this report . . . cannot fail to be struck by the universal cry from all the doctors from Karachi to Calcutta

and elsewhere, for more money for the supply of the barest necessities of these hospitals . . . the institutions are popular and supply a crying need . . . there is considerable overcrowding and this is increasing annually." In face of these problems the Council "felt so strongly the hopelessness of coping with the work of providing well-qualified women doctors without increased aid from Imperial revenues, that it has determined to lay the matter before the Indian Statutory Committee."

A memorandum for the Statutory Committee giving the history and objects of the Association and stressing the special needs of Indian women owing to such social problems as the purdah system, etc., is included in the report. This Memorandum urges the creation by the Government of an Indian Medical Service for Women, and the inclusion of medical relief by women within the category of central subjects in order that the Government of India may not be precluded from increasing its financial support.

Women and the Medical Profession.

The recent issue of the *British Medical Journal* devoted to Medical Education is indispensable to all who are interested in this subject. The section dealing with women is not only full of useful information but incidentally a fresh and convincing contribution to the literature of modern feminism. There does not appear to be two opinions in the mind of the writer as to the wisdom of the decision of the London hospitals. It is described as "an unsatisfactory state of affairs which can only be temporary, no unsatisfactory result of co-education having been brought forward by any of the schools closing their doors to women." There is, we are told, an increasing demand by the public for the services of women in all branches of the profession and "statistics show that the number of those who make good is as high, if not somewhat higher, than that of their men colleagues." The views of the writer on the work of married women and equal pay could not have been more strongly expressed if they had appeared in our own feminist stamped pages than in the columns of a scientific journal of high repute. Speaking of the exclusion of married women from the public health services, we are told that the effect is not only to lose their services but to prevent them, "the most suitable of all," from specializing in this branch of medicine. The writer pays tribute to the work of medical women, backed by the British Medical Association in resisting the persistent efforts of local authorities to secure women at a lower rate of pay than men. "Women realize as clearly as men that lowered pay invariably implies lower status and prestige . . . where the rule of equal pay for equal work is isolated there is no limit to the extent to which women may be exploited and sweated."

Co-option.

It is impossible not to regret the decision of the Manchester City Council to refuse to co-opt any members on the new Public Assistance Committee. The opposition was based on the view that co-option vitiated the whole principle of democracy. We should prefer to put it differently, that co-option mitigates the effects of democracy. The average ward is unlikely to elect the man or woman who is a specialist on any given subject whether it be education or the relief of the poor. It prefers an all-round representative with definite party views. Co-opted members clearly should not be numerically in a position to override elected members but the inclusion of a certain limited number of men and women of special experience and knowledge on a specific committee must make for greater effectiveness and breadth of ideas. Why should the services of such experts be lost altogether unless they are willing to stand for election and offer themselves for general council work for which they may have no time or aptitude?

Domestic Work Overseas.

An Australian correspondent sends us news of a significant development in Victoria where the Association of Headmistresses of Secondary Schools has taken the initiative in establishing a Homecraft Hostel for the training of girls in all branches of domestic art. It appears that apart from the sectional work of the technical schools the new Hostel is the first of its kind in Australia, and it is of peculiar importance that its inspiration should come from a body of professional women whose business it is to launch the girls of Australia into their subsequent careers. A two years' course of training is provided at the Hostel, which takes full advantages of outside agencies in the formation of its curriculum. This is sufficiently wide to include such subjects as domestic architecture, child psychology and dietetics. Its larger ideal is to professionalize domestic work as Florence Nightingale professionalized sick nursing by raising its standard and systematizing its technique. Our correspondent, herself a headmistress, writes that "even in a democratic country such as Australia there is a great deal of prejudice to live down before parents will see that housework in other people's homes is at least as honourable and useful a calling as clerical work." She adds that something else besides better standards and technique are necessary to secure the required change of attitude, and that is the offer of better conditions as regards hours, and housing amenities on the part of the employer. The two things are, of course, inextricably interlocked.

Broadcast Education for the Citizen.

An attractive broadcasting programme for London and Daventry for the next four months lies before us as we write. Mrs. Oliver Strachey's useful Wednesday mid-morning talks, "A Woman's Commentary," have now started again, and during the session women Members of Parliament will speak at the same hour on the week in Parliament. On the same day at 3.30 in the afternoon, Mrs. Rackham, also well known to our readers, will give weekly talks on local government, "How we manage our affairs"—talks which will be of very special interest at this turning point in the history of Local Government. In the evening, also on Wednesday, monthly at 7 p.m., the descriptions of the work of public departments will be continued. The education of the woman voter has certainly not been overlooked in the preparation of the programme, though we don't quite know why Wednesday should monopolize all the privileges. It seems captious to curtail, even very slightly, such an admirable bill of fare, but we should have liked another hour—afternoon by preference—for something approximating to what is at present given on Wednesdays at 10.45. We believe that meetings of women's societies or institutes would greatly appreciate the opportunity of collectively hearing such talks on current affairs, which they could follow up by discussion among themselves. But we are well content with Mrs. Rackham's series, and suggest that meetings at 3.30 on Wednesday should establish a loud speaker and thus give their members an opportunity of hearing such well-informed talks on a subject that comes so closely home to their lives.

Equality Among the Rechabites.

Some readers may not know that the Rechabites is a well-established friendly society of which the members are all total abstainers. At the recent Biennial Conference an attempt was made to institute different scales of contributions and benefits for women on the grounds that in a certain district the sickness rate among women was heavier than that of men. A woman delegate from Bradford, however, pleaded successfully for the maintenance of a policy of equality between men and women. Surely in friendly societies women and men must stand together, but it would be interesting to see if the experience quoted is universal, and if the high sickness rate referred to is among married women as a rule.

Motor-cars for Women Workers.

In a recent meeting of the Haywards Heath Town Institute for women, it was announced that the local woman probation officer had been provided with a motor-car. Labour and time saving in domestic work has attracted a good deal of attention, but its importance is too often overlooked in professional work, perhaps especially in professions mainly recruited by women. Some nurses are provided with little cars, but many must still depend on the slower, more fatiguing pedal bicycle, though

the possession of a reliable little car may sometimes mean the saving of a life. Organizers, health visitors, school visitors, women police in country areas, social workers of all kinds as well as nurses would gain enormously in efficiency by greater use of motor transit.

Brighter Post Offices.

The Postmaster-General has been paying incognito visits to different types of post offices in the course of a cruise in a cable repairing Post Office ship. He hopes to turn the present dingy official premises with their grubby blotting paper and congealed ink into clean shining offices. We hope the question of ventilation will not be overlooked in the investigation which is under way. It is not only the small post office that is stuffy and ill-ventilated; there are handsome buildings on entering which one is almost knocked down with foul air. The post office is everybody's office; its officials especially in villages and poor streets perform a public service far beyond that of selling stamps or dispatching telegrams. It is the poor man's bank, his insurance office, his centre for information, and Mr. Lees Smith's efforts towards improvement will be welcomed by the public and the Post Office official alike.

No Hotel Licences for Single Women.

A correspondent writes: "Having extreme temperance views, I am not in favour of licences to anyone, man or woman; but as a feminist I fail to see why if they are granted at all there should be any discrimination between the sexes. I read recently in the papers that the Rhyl magistrates have announced that they are not in favour of transferring licences of hotels to single women, holding that such licences should be held by men or by married women. Would a widow also be disqualified? What exactly is the reason that disqualifies the unmarried woman hotel keeper from holding a licence? It is supposed that under a woman a licensed house would be less respectable than under a man? If the newspaper report is correct, could the Rhyl magistrates offer some explanation?"

Public Library for Malden.

After several years of local endeavour in which the Women Citizens' Association has taken an active part, a public library has been established at New Malden. A woman, Miss Cresswell, who holds the London University diploma as a librarian, has been appointed librarian. The Chairman of the Library Subcommittee is Mrs. Porter, who has been a member of the Urban Council for some years.

A Woman Sculptor's Honour.

We are informed that a sculpture by Lady Hilton Young, a bust of the late Earl Oxford, has been presented to the Tate Gallery by Sir Joseph Duveen. A pupil of Rodin, Lady Hilton Young was last year elected an associate of the Royal College of British Sculpture. We believe that this is the only sculpture by a woman which has been placed in a national collection in this country.

Mrs. Mary Layton.

The death of Mrs. Mary Layton at the age of 80 will remind all old suffragists of her indomitable figure with its white hair and flashing brown eyes at the organ or conducting the choir at the old suffrage meetings at the Albert or Queen's Hall. She was the first woman to be awarded the Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists, and for the greater part of her life played the organ at Markham Square, Westbourne Park, and Westminster Chapels. Her choir was extraordinarily successful and obtained two first prizes at the International Competition in 1912. She was a born teacher, and a fine and powerful personality with strong beliefs and high principles.

POLICY.—The sole policy of THE WOMAN'S LEADER is to advocate a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women. So far as space permits, however, it will offer an impartial platform for topics not directly included in the objects of the woman's movement but of special interest to women. Articles on these subjects will always be signed, at least by initials or a pseudonym, and for the opinions expressed in them the Editor accepts no responsibility.

THE SPIRIT OF FEMINISM.¹

J. M. Dent & Sons could hardly have chosen a more auspicious year than 1929 for the addition to their invaluable *Everyman* library of Vol. 825 containing *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, by Mary Wollstenclraft, and *On the Subjection of Women*, by John Stuart Mill. Nor, indeed, could they have chosen a more capable and sympathetic editor than Professor George Catlin, whose introduction of 39 pages gives to the uninitiated reader some general idea of the personality, environment, and historical significance of the two authors in question. He writes not merely as a literary critic or as a historic commentator, but as one of ourselves—as an initiate of the woman's movement, its ambitions and its traditions. Thus, in the year of grace 1929, *Everyman* has opened a window through which the enfranchised and emancipated young women of the new age can look back at the origins of their own freedom, measure the distance travelled, and gain (if they have eyes to see) an understanding which may breed in them a certain attitude of reverence towards the opportunities which surround them, and a certain critical perception in regard to the obstacles which remain.

Now the significant thing about this new volume is the strong contrast which emerges when the two classic works in question are seen in close juxtaposition. Professor Catlin puts his finger on it in the second paragraph of his introduction, and we may as well quote him in full:—

"These two books, at one in principle, differ strangely in their impression upon the reader. The first is Mary Wollstenclraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. To the purist this is a bad book. But it is alive and irritating, as challenging to-day as in the day in which it was written—and far more likely now to be understood. The second book is John Stuart Mill's *On the Subjection of Women*. Logical and lucid, it gives pleasure to the appreciative reader. But it discusses, in a fashion high-minded and solemnly passionate, on the basis of principles which, thanks largely to Mill's own writings, are now very generally accepted, a chapter of grievances that, with some exceptions, may now be said to be closed for the English-speaking world."

Here then is Professor Catlin's indication of the symptom of contrast. Let us go a step farther and attempt a diagnosis. What exactly is this living, irritating, challenging quality in Mary Wollstenclraft's *Vindication*, which enables it to survive the series of feminist victories which the carefully documented indictment of John Stuart Mill has helped to achieve? Why

"THE OPTIONAL CLAUSE ASSEMBLY."

By KATHLEEN E. INNES.

Whether the title suggested as a possible one for this Assembly is a good one or not the announcement made by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald that Great Britain would sign the clause during this Assembly has been hailed here as a landmark. It was greeted by the most vigorous applause, and the implication that the Dominions were likely to follow was also warmly welcomed. It is regarded as a great step forward that Great Britain (and now among the Dominions Canada) has accepted for the first time, an obligation beforehand to take certain differences to an International Court. The decision to do so, as one Government after another has taken it, this week, has been welcomed by the whole League because of the realization that by such action another class of quarrel is definitely removed from the sphere of war, and M. Briand notably gained loud applause for his declaration that France would now ratify.

Outstanding features of the opening days of the Assembly have of course been the speeches by our own Prime Minister, by M. Briand, and by Mr. Henderson. Herr Stresemann is likely to speak just after this article is posted. The contents of the speeches will be widespread before it appears, but a few features may be emphasized. Before Mr. MacDonald's speech the question was being asked: "Will the British Delegation attempt to revive the Protocol?" To this question it gave "No" as a final answer. Since last Assembly the acceptance by over sixty nations of the Briand-Kellogg Pact has set a fresh starting-point, and it is that "castle-in-the-air" for which the nations must now strive to build the foundations of disarmament and of machinery for peaceful settlement. The pledge against war is now an established fact, and security has become a psychological question. It is a problem which can only be solved by trusting the nations we make bargains with. The

¹ *The Rights of Woman*, by Mary Wollstenclraft, and *The Subjection of Women*, by J. S. Mill. (Everyman Library, No. 825, J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd. 2s. cloth.)

is the feminist spirit of Mill at rest and at peace, while that of Mary Wollstenclraft is still fighting passionately? We are inclined to think that it is because Mary Wollstenclraft, not unnaturally, had a more profound knowledge of her own sex than John Stuart Mill, and took a more serious view of their position. To Mill they were the victims of an external imposition, and the business of the equitable legislator was to get that imposition removed and let all start fair in the race. Critics may reply that he did not ignore the reactions of such an imposition upon character. Of course he did not, for he was a supremely intelligent man. But Mary Wollstenclraft went further. She was obsessed with the reactions of the imposition and far more curious concerning its nature. She took what might be called a Freudian view of it. It was a sexual imposition from first to last, having its origins in the sex attitude to women with its attendant subjugation of all other standards to the sex standard in its various social, artistic, and domestic manifestations. Thus, among the evils which she tilts at, evils which have passed and evils which remain to-day, the supreme evil which broods like a cloud over her horizon, is the evil of the double moral standard. Not the conventional double standard of marital fidelity, but that wide divergence of standard at which we have often tilted in these columns: the lesser expectation of concentration, good sense, honesty of purpose, and creative achievement which dogs a girl's career from the moment when, on leaving school, the world smilingly condones her desire to "have a good time," reserving for her brother the question: "What are you going to do?"

And the reason why the pages of Mary Wollstenclraft's *Vindication* still scintillate with life and force, point and pathos, is that modern feminism has not yet won that battle for a single moral standard—has hardly begun to win it—may we be so churlish as to say, has only half awakened to its profound and far-reaching significance. When the last economic barrier has been broken down, the last equalitarian statute chronicle, that battle will still remain to be fought. And the young women whose business it is to fight it, will perhaps fight the better if they listen to the passionate, unmeasured, courageous challenge of Mary Wollstenclraft, sounding, not across a century and a half of changed manners and reformed policies, but here in their midst, neither blunted by criticism nor staled by time.

M. D. S.

connection of this with disarmament is obvious, and was clearly made.

Another problem continually to the fore in almost all the speeches is the economic problem. Of this more must be said next week. The tendency is certain. Mr. MacDonald pronounced emphatically against tariffs, and offered in advance, general support to M. Briand for the proposal which it was known he would make. If the French Foreign Minister's tentative suggestion for some sort of an Economical Federation of Europe may be as yet very far from realization, it is of great interest that it should be mooted already by a leader in a State of such importance.

Mention of the General Act was a marked omission in Mr. MacDonald's speech. On behalf of France M. Briand pledged himself to secure its acceptance shortly, and here again applause was great.

In these first days of "great speeches," one of the chief interests of the Assembly lies in the revelations of national temperament and outlook thereby afforded.

It was extremely interesting to get such characteristically Scotch oratory as Mr. MacDonald's in the Assembly. The less penetrating critics were inclined to object to the mixture of practical politics and Christian idealism, which is really bred in his blood as well as fostered by his party traditions. The more tolerant found particular interest in the unfolding of a political philosophy and of the evidence of a temperament and outlook so different from their own. M. Briand is a Celt, and as an orator is an artist to his finger tips. He plays on the Assembly as on an instrument, and the modulations of his rich, musical voice are a joy to listen to. At every stage of his long speeches, delivered entirely without notes, he gives the impression of knowing exactly what he is aiming at, and of certainty that he can achieve it; and he never pauses for an applause that is not forthcoming. In addressing the Assembly he is always not merely speaking for, but also addressing, France. Thus

his reference to the Hague was an appeal to the generosity of the French people, to welcome a small sacrifice in the interests of peaceful settlement. His irony is rare and delicious, and he uses it skilfully to drive home his points with good humour. He is characteristically French in such a claim as his insistence that more paper agreements are needed to close the "gap" in the Covenant before "security" can be held to be established. The part of his speech of which most will be heard in the future was that dealing with economic problems. As in the case of Disarmament, it is becoming clear that these problems cannot be solved by technical experts. A political solution must be sought, and to this conviction M. Briand gave expression.

Mr. Henderson was direct, workmanlike, and earnest. Support of the British Government for progress in arbitration and disarmament; for the Treaty for Financial Assistance to States Victims of Aggression, subject to the proviso that the State helped shall have accepted the coming Disarmament Convention; for a model Treaty on the lines of the General Act, after revision and at next year's Assembly—these were important features of the speech.

Most significant, however, of the progress made in the ten years of the League's work was the resolution put forward in the name of Great Britain but supported among others by France, Italy, and Belgium, and approved generally by Germany, for the revision of the Covenant to bring it into line with the complete renunciation of private war made in the Kellogg Pact. The work of many private organizations for several years here finds fulfilment. The outlawry of war is officially accepted and realization of its consequences is growing.

In conclusion we must add a note about the women included in this year's delegations. This year's list contains the names of ten women delegates or substitute delegates. Australia sends a doctor, Mrs. Roberta Jull, who is serving on the Fifth Commission. The "old" and the "new" substitute delegates from Great Britain, Mrs. Swanwick and Mrs. Hamilton, are both nominated to two Commissions—Mrs. Hamilton to the Fifth and Second (Technical Organizations) and Mrs. Swanwick to the Fifth, and with Lord Cecil, to the Sixth, which will deal with Slavery and Refugee problems. On the Fifth Commission also are Miss MacPhail, M.P., whom we are very glad to see here from Canada for the first time. Miss Forchhammer is here again from Denmark, Dr. Ingeborg has come from Norway, and Mme Hainari from Finland. Mme Apponyi, from Hungary, has been elected this year as Vice-President in the Fifth Committee—an office held last year by Miss Forchhammer. With the Rumanian delegation is, one almost says "of course," Mdle Vacarescu. Princess Cantacuzene, who is here also as an expert adviser, is with Mrs. Hamilton on the Second Commission. Lithuania has the distinction of being the first State which has sent a woman, Mme Ciurlioniene, as one of its three full delegates! She also is on the Fifth Commission.

Finally, among the expert advisers, secretaries, and "attachees" there is one fact that should be noticed. Several delegations have women among these, including Germany and Holland. France and Italy, in their large group, have none. But the "awakening East" includes three—two from Persia and one from Siam!

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT.

A CONFERENCE

on Constructive Schemes for Improving the Conditions of

WOMEN IN INDIA

will be held at the

CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER

on the afternoon and evening of

MONDAY and TUESDAY, 7th and 8th OCTOBER

under the auspices of

The Women of India Survey of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.

Tickets (members of N.U.S.E.C. free; visitors 1/- per session, 2/6 full conference) may be obtained on application to the Women of India Survey, 4 Tufton Street, S.W. 1.

SLAVERY.

By C. NINA BOYLE.

PART I.

In 1925, fifty-six national representatives at Geneva signed a slavery Convention which endorsed and consolidated all previous agreements and conventions of that nature. The definition of slavery enshrined in that Convention of 1925 is:—"Slavery is the status of a person over whom all or any of the powers attaching to the rights of ownership are exercised."

The signatories pledged their respective countries, in this 1925 document, to put down, and to help each other put down, slavery "in all its forms." It would appear, however, that once more the word *person* is not intended to include women. Men alone are to be rescued from some of its forms, and the men who must not on any account be allowed to be slaves are to be maintained and reinforced by some of the signatory governments, in the possession of their own slaves—the women of their races.

Throughout the length and breadth of Africa native women rank as property. Whether they be pagan or Muslim, they are articles of price. They are purchasable, barterable, inheritable; they are used to pay a debt, oblige a friend, or make a present; and they have this forlorn advantage over Eastern women—that no one laments their birth. In addition to what kudos they may obtain as breeding-stock, they may take pride in the prices they fetch.

Over a great part of Africa child marriage prevails. A baby girl may be pledged before birth—as between friends: "Your first girl for my first boy"; as a bargain, "Your next girl against your debt to me"; in pure greed, adding another to a bloated harem; in any spirit save that of regard for the girl. In some areas the child is not handed over without the completion of obscene and often grossly cruel ritual; in others, the purchaser has access to his property from the moment of purchase. If he injure or even kill the child with sexual violence it is his own property and no one else's concern.

Child marriage is the foulest form of slavery known; yet no Convention protects or rescues its victims. Theirs is a life sentence. The customs are surrounded by a mass of those "phrases of noodledum"—represented in this country by "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," etc., which can cover such a volume of iniquity. Native men are quite as adept as white in these forms of camouflage. The sole thing that can be said in favour is that the price on their heads saves girl babies from ill-treatment in infancy. No man will pay for damaged goods.

France signed the Slavery Convention, and so did Italy. In their North African territories the Muslim Creed—cruellest of all enemies to women—does its worst, unrelieved by compunction or legislation. Children of tender years are sold to old men; chiefs have huge collections of women; the choice is between stifling, overcrowded dens or the toil of a beast of burden. "Make what you will of a woman save a corpse," says the Kabyle proverb.

Officials of the Courts take custody of women over whose possession there is a dispute, handing her over to the successful litigant. A Christian girl, educated, married to a converted native educated like herself, was claimed as the "wife" bought for him by his father when they were babies, by a man whom she had never seen. She "belonged" to the man whose father bought her; she was taken by the Court from her home and was *given to him*. The law was clear; and France, in spite of her pledge at Geneva, has neither altered nor modified it.

There is no protection for these slaves from the most brutal discipline and punishments. Assault, mutilation, savage floggings, life-long detention in the custody of eunuchs—the husband's gaolers—is their lot if it please their owners. The "powers attaching to the rights of ownership" are exercised over them inexorably: nor does one signatory to the slavery Convention lift a voice at the meetings of the Assembly to plead their cause. Yet were men, and boys, and male infants, to be thus dealt with by women, for profit, or for pleasure, or for social or religious belief, what a volume of protest would arise from the moment the facts were discovered.

Women, it is plain, not being "persons," cannot really be slaves. The Convention, therefore, so far as they are concerned, might just as well not have been signed. The whole force of the Anti-Slavery movement is being directed by the Anti-Slavery protagonists at the comparatively tiny and definitely limited evils of "forced labour," while the overwhelming mass of slaves go unredeemed and unchampioned.

(To be continued.)

OLIVE SCHREINER IN HER 'TEENS.

Sometime after the death of Olive Schreiner, her husband, Mr. Cronwright-Schreiner, learned to his surprise of the existence of a novel, *Undine*, written by his wife in her late 'teens, and left forgotten and unpublished, in the hands of her old friend Havelock Ellis. It is presumably the earliest of her literary works, and now, thanks to the devoted editorship of Mr. Cronwright-Schreiner, it is the last to be published.¹ Presumably it completes the literature of Olive Schreiner. If she is a great enough author to focus public interest upon the chronological development of her work and personality (and very many people hold that she is) then the publication of *Undine* is to be welcomed. It presents us with an immature foretaste of the undisciplined soaring genius which finds full expression in the *Story of a South African Farm*. It is the crude and headlong outburst of a girl in passionate revolt against the cramping conventions and standards of material civilization. In another aspect it is a tumultuous plea for the spiritual freedom of women—a feminist cry from the depths of a peculiarly vivid and isolated personality. Its characters are the purest myth, crudely painted puppets, marshalled in a human setting—African farm, English countryside, ocean liner, Transvaal mining camp as the case may be—but making that humanity strange and remote by the strangeness of their behaviour. Had *Undine* first seen the light at the time of its completion in the 1870's, it might have stirred and bewildered a world less inured to the ecstasies of mystical fiction than the world of to-day. Yet even to-day its young author's mastery of words and headlong emotional unreserve almost suffice to carry from one impossible incident to another, the troupe of gesticulating, stylized, melodramatic, exciting figures who fill her stage.

M. D. S.

A VENTURE IN GOODWILL.²

The story of the Women's International League opens with a scene at the Tilbury Docks in April, 1915, when a group of women stood looking out to sea. These women who included Margaret Ashton, Catharine Marshall, and Maude Royden, were waiting in the hope that they might be allowed to go to the Hague for a meeting of the Women's International Congress. They waited in vain for permission was not forthcoming, but fortunately some British women, among them Chrystal Macmillan and Kathleen Courtney, were already in Holland, so this country was not unrepresented at the historic gathering on 28th April, when women from twelve nations—some of them at war with each other—participated, under the presidency of Jane Addams, in the first great international effort to restore peace. From this beginning sprang the International League for Peace and Freedom, represented in this country by the Women's International League.

Miss Ward's admirable record goes on to describe the work of the newly founded League during the critical war years, when the abhorred epithet pacifist was hurled at any effort toward peace. She describes its development after the war, during the Peace Conference, and later in Ireland, when it sent its own commissioners to report on the state of affairs. Its more recent history is well known to our readers, and this little book with its background of war history will serve as a precious memento to many who have shared in its later activities. The suffragist warns to the recital of the adoption of suffrage methods of pilgrimage, and pageantry to win the adherence of the men and women of the crowded streets and village lanes to the cause of International Peace.

It is well known that the recent Women's Peace Crusade on which nearly fifty societies co-operated was not only initiated but oxygenated by the League, and no one can doubt that this campaign definitely influenced the results at the General Election by the return of a large proportion of candidates of all parties who made peace a predominant issue in their programme.

Those who are following the course of international affairs fully realize that the work of the League is far from completed. It should secure the allegiance of all who, to quote the closing words of its little history, "are willing without fear to put the same brains, courage, and initiative into the crusades for peace as have been put into the cause of war."

E. M.

¹ *Undine*, by Olive Schreiner. (Ernest Benn, 7s. 6d.)
² *The Story of the Women's International League, 1915-29*, by Helen Ward. (Women's International League, 55 Gower Street, W.C. 1. 1s.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS.

By BERTHA MASON.

ARTICLE I.

THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS.—A CALL TO ACTION.

Now that the holidays are practically over, attention will be concentrated, we hope, on preparation for the elections which will take place on 1st November for the one-third vacancies on the Town Councils of County and non-County Boroughs in England and Wales.

These elections are (or should be) always important, for the well-being of the community depends in no small measure upon the way in which members of local authorities discharge the duties of their office.

This year special interest attaches to the elections for the councils of *County Boroughs* for the following reason:—

On 1st April, 1930, as our readers are aware, Boards of Guardians under the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1929, will cease to exist. From that day the duty and responsibility of administering the Poor Law will devolve upon the Councils of Counties and County Boroughs. (It is with the latter authorities, elections for which are fast approaching, that our article is concerned.)

It is a heavy task which confronts the 84 County Borough Councils in England and Wales, as well as the 62 County Councils, for in addition to their duties and responsibilities connected with housing, health, sanitation, education, maternity and child welfare, recreation—to mention only a few of their present functions—the work of assisting the poor and the destitute of whom there are approximately one and a half millions in the country, will on the appointed day come into their hands. In the case of County Borough Councils the work includes not only home and institutional relief, but the care of the blind, the mentally defective, and the insane.

The provisions of the Act in regard to the transference of the administrative functions of Boards of Guardians to the above-named authorities are clear and well known. But there is another side to the question. It may well be asked, "What are the provisions of the Act in regard to the present *Administrators* of the Poor Law, viz. the 20,000 elected Poor Law Guardians, of whom over 2,300 are women, whose local knowledge and experience concerning the needs and care of the poor, the aged, the children, and the sick in its many and varied phases have been, and are, admittedly valuable?"

Will these 2,300 elected women be transferred along with the powers and functions of their office to the authorities which on the appointed day will take over the duties and responsibilities of the existing Boards of Guardians? Obviously, this is impossible.

Before going further, let us make quite clear that limiting our remarks to women guardians does not mean that we are unmindful of the splendid services rendered by men in this department of public work, only that at the moment we are concerned with women's work.

Will the services of the 2,300 elected women at present actively engaged in Poor Law administration be lost to the poor and to the community?

It is a fact which must be faced that under the new conditions and in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, the country does stand to lose (for a time only, we hope) the co-operation of the majority of the elected women poor law guardians, no matter how willing they may be to continue that work.

Even a brief consideration of the provisions of the Act and the most limited knowledge of the constitution of the local authorities to whom in the near future will be committed the home and institutional relief of the poor, show that it cannot be otherwise.

To-day, the number of directly elected women guardians is, as already stated, approximately 2,300.

The total number of elected women on the Councils of Counties and County Boroughs is approximately 345.

Of this number 185 are members of 73 of the 84 *County Boroughs* with which at the moment we are dealing, a number quite inadequate for the work requiring attention. The remaining eleven County Borough Councils are composed solely of men.

It is true, of course, that there is nothing in the Act, theoretically, to prevent the displaced women guardians standing for election to the Councils of the new authorities, and doubtless many will do so; but granting this, only a small proportion of the displaced women can be elected.

It is also true that the Act provides for the exercise of co-option under certain conditions, of persons to the "Public Assistance" and Guardians' Committees, in which event some of the persons co-opted must be women. But even so, only a few women in each case can be co-opted. Here it must be remembered that co-option to the Public Assistance Committees of County Councils is not compulsory, and the creation of Guardians' Committees is, in the case of County Boroughs, permissive. Further, even if co-option is enforced, and there is proof in the schemes already open to inspection that the power will not always be exercised, co-opted members are not directly responsible to the electors (a great disadvantage), nor are their powers and position equal to those of directly elected members.

For these reasons amongst others the position of women under the Act gives cause for anxiety.

In view of these facts it is clear that if the help of women in the work of public assistance is to be adequately retained, and it will be admitted, we believe, that in this work the co-operation of women is essential, a supreme effort will have to be made at once and as opportunity arises, to secure the election of a greater number of directly elected women not only upon those County and County Borough Councils which have already women members, but also of women on the councils which at present are composed solely of men.

The first opportunity for increasing the number will occur in connection with the municipal elections on 1st November. The selection of suitable women for the office ought not to be difficult, in view of the displacement of 2,300 women Poor Law Guardians, many of whom doubtless, if asked and selected, would be willing to go to the poll. Once selected, and we hope that many have already been chosen, every effort should be made between now and 1st November, to arouse the interest and enlist on their behalf the sympathy and support of the local government electors, the men and women with whom rests the ultimate decision. If the issue is made clear to them, we have little fear as to the result of the polls.

But, the facts as outlined above must be clearly stated, and in season and out of season during the next six weeks, if success is to be achieved.

(To be continued.)

OBITUARY.

MRS. T. H. GREEN.

The death of Mrs. Green removes from Oxford life a personality dear to many generations both of men and women and an influence which was felt on the higher education of women from its very beginnings. The charm of her benign and serene presence was so great that it was difficult to think of her as a pioneer in the fighting sense of the word though she never lacked courage to range herself actively on the side of the fighters. But the fiction that learned women were of the aggressive and ungainly masculine type did not need contradiction in her presence; it simply melted away as a manifest absurdity. Following in her husband's steps, she associated herself with all the various stages of the opening of the University to women. As early as 1873 she was secretary to the Committee for providing lectures and classes for women.

And when the Association for the Higher Education of Women was started a few years later she became its joint Hon. Secretary with Mr. H. S. Butcher. She was also associated with the Society of Home Students and sometimes took one of its students to reside with her. But perhaps her closest association was with Somerville College, serving on its Council from 1884 to the day of her death. In the cause of secondary education she was also active, being for some time a member of the Oxford Education Committee.

Her own chosen profession was sick nursing. She underwent training in her early widowhood in order to be able to help better in the organization of nursing and for a time actually practised as a district nurse. It was said that she saved Dr. Jowett's life in his first illness and was with him to the last when he died in 1893.

So successful was she in carrying out all the legacy of work and interest left her by the husband to whom she was so deeply devoted that it is difficult to realize that their actual life together had lasted little more than ten short years. Her death will seem to many like the final passing away of that brilliant group of philosophers and reformers who did so much to rescue Oxford from its early tradition of obscurantism and establish it as the nursery of progressive ideas.

TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILDS.

PARLIAMENTARY WORK.

The ultimate object of the Townswomen's Guilds is to "enable women to obtain all such reforms as are necessary to secure a real equality of liberties, status, and opportunities between men and women." These reforms to a very large extent can only be obtained through Parliament. The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship has already promoted many measures such as the Equal Guardianship of Infants, Matrimonial Causes, Age of Marriage Acts, etc., which are now on the Statute Book and which are steps on the road to real equality. The work which must be carried on at Headquarters, such as noting which reforms are ripe for consideration, drafting and amending Bills, lobbying members of the Government and the House of Commons, consultation with Government departments and other organizations, and press work can only be fully effective if supported by the affiliated societies in the constituencies. The most important part, therefore, of the monthly meetings of the Townswomen's Guilds is the reading of the letter from Headquarters telling of the progress of the various reforms and suggesting action to be taken in support of them. It is necessary that the members should be acquainted with the main points in the passage of a Bill through Parliament. They need to study the Bill and the grounds for its promotion in order that they may bring their influence to bear on their local M.P. and keep him in touch with and informed of their views on the question. Individual letters and telegrams from a number of his constituents, or resolutions passed at a meeting are more effective in securing his support than any letters from the Head Office. A deputation provides an even better opportunity of meeting any objections, explaining any difficult points and equipping him with information which will turn him into a useful champion in the House. The Townswomen's Guilds can also act as missionaries among other organizations, sending speakers and securing their support and thus helping to create that public opinion which makes for the success of an Act of Parliament both before and after its passage. Another very useful function of the Townswomen's Guilds is the collection of information for Headquarters such as will demonstrate the need for the measure proposed, or serve as evidence before a committee of investigation. For after all it is not the experience alone of those who draft the bills that will make good laws but the day to day experience of the people who will be most affected by them.

Work at Parliamentary elections and especially the support of women candidates or of those men and women who support the programme of the N.U.S.E.C. is a natural sequence of the interest taken by members of the Guilds in Parliamentary work. It would be a fine thing if each Guild could provide a trained band of election workers, a flying squad to go to the help of candidates in other constituencies. It might ensure a better proportion of women Members of Parliament in the House of Commons than at the present time—14 women to 601 men—and advance at a quicker pace those reforms in which women are interested and which are included under the name of Equal Citizenship.

M. B.

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SOCIETIES AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1929.

Practically all the schemes regarding the transfer of the powers of Boards of Guardians have by now been submitted to the Minister of Health by the County and County Boroughs concerned, and once more we would urge Societies and members in these districts carefully to examine the schemes in order that any representations necessary may be made to the Minister within four weeks of their publication. A question of particular importance is that adequate provision is made for the co-operation of women in the administration of relief. The estimates should also be examined with a view to seeing that proper provision is being made for voluntary associations providing maternity and child welfare services.

EDWARD WRIGHT AND CAVENDISH BENTINCK LIBRARIES.

The following books have recently been added to the Library:
The Cause: A Short History of the Woman's Movement in Great Britain. RAY STRACHEY.
Before the Blue Stockings. ADA WALLAS.
Victorian Working Women. W. F. NEFF.
Woman and Society. MEYRICK BOOTH.
Town Planning and Town Development. S. A. ADSHEAD.
How to Abolish the Slums. E. D. SIMON.
A Magistrate's Handbook. S. R. C. BOSANQUET and D. H. J. CHALMERS.
The Woman Worker and Restrictive Legislation. Prepared for the London and National Society for Women's Service by J. BLAINEY.

For particulars of the very moderate terms on which books may be borrowed from the Library readers are referred to the advertisement on back page.

CORRESPONDENCE.

NATIONAL HEALTH.

MADAM,—I was very glad to see Lady Selborne's letter in your issue of 6th September, and would like to support her contention that the high rate of mortality in childbirth has some connection with artificially produced abortion. Our members are working midwives all over the country and from their experience they are invariably of opinion that both morbidity and mortality in childbirth are seriously influenced by this cause.

It is, indeed, much to be desired that information should be obtained, but in spite of our great desire to be of service, and the unanimous belief among members of the Midwives Institute in the widespread nature of the evil, we have not been able so far to obtain any direct evidence. Since the taking of any drug by a pregnant woman which is liable to procure abortion, or any other steps taken by her with the same intent, render her a criminal in the eyes of the law, it is very unlikely that a mother, driven by many circumstances known to social workers, to try and get rid of the unwanted child, will tell anyone if she can help it, or will "give away" another woman who has done the same. Information is handed on secretly among themselves, and though the midwife may have, and often has, her suspicions, she can hardly ask a woman she is attending to confide in her concerning a crime which if made public would land her patient in the dock.

Greater vigilance and a service of detectives such as Dr. Whitehead recommends might only succeed in driving into still greater obscurity and secrecy these attempts of ignorance and misery to solve the problem of unwanted births.

Education and enlightenment not only of mothers but of fathers also are greatly needed.

EDITH M. PYE,
President, Midwives' Institute.

12 Buckingham Street, W.C.

MADAM,—Lady Selborne raises a very cogent question. I have raised it before. The disingenuous attempt to saddle midwives with the responsibility for the high maternal mortality rates should be considered in connection with the facts.

Maternal mortality in the hands of the midwives is as one per cent to the three per cent of the cases tended by doctors. When one considers that the cases taken by midwives include the least clean, least cared for, least fed, and most heavily worked, and in conditions that often beggar description; and that doctors have almost a monopoly of the wealthy, well-fed, well-formed patients, the facts are remarkable and have never been given their due weight.

Lady Selborne attributes the trouble to the prevalence of contraceptive efforts. I think she overlooks two important facts. One is that the vast

bulk of such efforts are the taking of drugs or using bodily exertion; and the other is that puerperal fever and kindred troubles are germ diseases which such efforts could not conceivably produce. On the doctors and nurses must lie the responsibility for introducing them.

A high medical authority attributed these lamentable results, and much miscarriage and stillbirth, to the unnecessary and improper examinations carried out by doctors. I am given to understand that at ante-natal clinics, quite illegally, women are allowed to suppose they may not have the benefits they require unless they submit to examination. It is at least significant that the mortality rate has risen since the establishment of the clinics. Sir George Newman's report is worthless, as will any other report be until we have an analysis of the deaths and know how many of the cases that succumbed to infectious diseases of the nature referred to had been subjected to ante-natal examinations, how often, and at what stage.

C. NINA BOYLE.

6 Balcombe Street, N.W. 1.

THE CHRISTIAN AND BIRTH CONTROL.

MADAM,—The really staggering remarks of your correspondent M. Smith, can only lead us to hope that she—(or he?)—is unique either in experience or in powers of observation and deduction. To begin with a case of which I have personal knowledge, my own two babies—(new originally)—were considered convenient and economical both before and after their arrival, and although I am a firm believer in Birth Control, I certainly do not need the constant lure of a future "Reward" in order to appreciate them.

The attitude of my middle-class friends towards their families does not seem to differ from my own; with regard to working-class mothers, among whom I worked professionally for four years—in my experience, the first two, or even three babies are a pride and joy to them. It is the "carrying, bearing, and rearing" of the fifth, sixth, and nth that means the "struggle" of which your correspondent speaks.

LOIS GATLIFE.

The Plain House,
Chipstead, Surrey.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS.

PRAGUE, AUGUST, 1929.

Women delegates of over twenty countries met together in Prague, the ancient historic city where East meets West, for the Sixth Triennial Congress of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

An unusual and welcome feature of this Peace Congress was the presence of women from the Balkan countries, representing the National Sections of the League in Rumania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. There were also delegates from National Sections in the U.S.A., Canada, Great Britain, France, Hungary, Finland, Austria, Australia, Holland, Ukraine, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Ireland, and Poland. The Congress was also attended by women from China, India, Japan, and Tunis.

There was naturally much rejoicing at the signing of the Kellogg Pact, which has taken place since the last triennial International Congress, and at the same time a sense of responsibility among the delegates for making the Pact a reality by bringing about a moral disarmament and a real will to peace in the hearts of the people. Hence the general subject chosen for discussion at the Congress—The Renunciation of War: What Next? This subject was dealt with in detail in addresses to the Congress, followed by discussion, by delegates who are distinguished speakers in their respective countries. These addresses came under such headings as Disarmament and the Machinery of International Peace, the Machinery of Internal Peace: Pacific Methods of Settlement of Internal Disputes and their International Aspects, Changes in International Relations without War. The speakers included Miss Agnes MacPhail (the only woman member of the Canadian Parliament and a member of this year's Canadian delegation to the League of Nations Assembly), Lucie Dejardin (a member of the Belgian Parliament), Miss Emmy Freundlich of the Austrian National Council, and Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P. The British delegation was headed by the chairman of the British Section, Miss K. D. Courtney. Miss Jane Addams, of Chicago, the International President of the Women's International League since its formation in 1915, came over to Europe to preside.

Several public meetings were held and were very well attended by the town. Prague extended a very cordial welcome to the Congress delegates, and among the various occasions on which they were entertained was at a reception by the Mayor.

Two urgency resolutions were passed by the Congress: one regarding the danger of civil war in Austria, and the other deploring the news from Palestine and appealing to the British Government to bring peaceful pressure to bear to induce both Arabs and Jews to avoid further bloodshed and to use every effort to find a settlement satisfactory to both sides.

J. H.

COMING EVENTS.

B.B.C.

16th September. 10.45-11 a.m., "Common Sense in Household Work: Choosing a Maid," Miss Sydney Bushell.
18th September, 10.45-11 a.m., "A Woman's Commentary," Mrs. Hubback.

INDUSTRIAL WELFARE SOCIETY.

13th-17th September. Lecture Conference, Balliol College, Oxford.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

7th-8th October. Caxton Hall, S.W.1. Conference on Women in India, under the auspices of the Women of India Survey. Tickets and particulars from 4 Tufton Street, S.W.1.

11th-14th October. Scottish Summer School, Allan Water Hotel, Bridge of Allan.

25th October. Reception to Women Delegates to the League of Nations Assembly, 50 Porchester Terrace, W.2 (by kind permission of Hon. Mrs. Franklin).

WORLD LEAGUE FOR SEXUAL REFORM.

13th-14th September. International Congress, Wigmore Hall, W.1. Friday, 13th: 9.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m., "Sex Education"; 2.30-5.30 p.m., "Modern Methods of Treatment of Sexual Disorders"; 8.30-10 p.m., "Miscellaneous Papers," by G. B. Shaw and others. Saturday, 14th: 9.30 a.m.-1 p.m., "Miscellaneous Papers." Particulars from the Hon. Secretary, 127 Harley Street, W.1.

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EDUCATED HOME HELPS BUREAU, 190 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1, requires and supplies educated women for all domestic work. Holiday engagements. Registration: Employers, 2s. 6d.; workers, 1s. Suiting fee: Employers, 10s. 6d.; workers, 2s. 6d. (Victoria 5940.)

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