

THE
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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 Pope of Peace*

BY V. M. CRAWFORD

The way of the peace-maker is proverbially hard and no one in our own times has suffered more cruel misrepresentation from both sides than Benedict XV who filled the Chair of Peter throughout the four years of the last war. And to-day, amid the still greater misery and devastation under which Europe groans with the hope of a Christian peace more remote than ever, it has been all too easy to forget the heroic efforts of Pope Benedict, from the very outset of his reign, to shorten the war or at least to alleviate some of the suffering it imposed. Thus this first English Life of Benedict XV, even though it cannot be accepted as a definitive biography or in many respects as an authoritative picture of international events, performs a really useful service in chronicling efforts which English Catholics should bear in mind not least because, in some quarters, we are seeing to-day a repetition against the Holy See of precisely the same accusations as were levelled a quarter of a century ago. There are still individuals for whom the Church of Rome remains a convenient scape-goat, amid every calamity, to be blamed for all its activities and condemned for all its judgments.

Cardinal della Chiesa—lame, delicate and retiring—absent from Rome for the previous seven years as Archbishop of Bologna, had never been prominent as a "papabile" and his election in August, 1914, took the outside world by surprise and made his policy a matter of speculation. Yet within a week of his election, in his Exhortation to the Faithful, the new Pope had expressed his deep horror of the "monstrous vision" of war that faced him, with

his determination to leave nothing undone to hasten the end of the conflict. And on All Saints' Day, 1914, appeared his first Encyclical containing an impassioned appeal for peace addressed to all rulers. But no one at that date was ready to listen. Equally vain were the Pope's efforts to promote a brief truce over the coming Christmas Day. He was, however, more successful in his attempts to organise the exchange of interned civilians and disabled prisoners, a work of mercy which, thanks to him, was developed with the co-operation of Switzerland for the remainder of the war.

All this, and much more, prepared the way for the celebrated Peace Note of August 1st, 1917, which unhappily was to bear no fruit. Fr. Rope, who interlards his historical narrative with too many purely personal judgments, attributes the failure mainly to Masonic intrigues, but in truth no statesmen, and no nations, at that date, were in the mood for a policy of give and take, all still hoping for ultimate victory for their own side. Nothing could have been more deeply Christian in sentiment or more eloquent and pathetic in terms than the Note despatched to all belligerents which Fr. Rope rightly prints in full. Yet in point of fact many leading English and French Catholics were foremost in rejecting the proposals as ill-timed, the late Lord Brayne being a notable exception. To the Allies the Note was pro-German, to the Germans pro-Allies. How wise

* *Benedict XV, The Pope of Peace.* By the Rev. H. E. G. Rope, M.A. (The Catholic Book Club, 2s. 6d.)

and how far-seeing the Holy Father was in his proposals time alone was to show.

The Armistice was naturally welcomed by the Pope with deepest thankfulness, though he foresaw at once the appalling difficulties of arriving at "a just and lasting peace," referring to the "exceedingly great need of divine light" in the delegates to be charged with the negotiations, for whom Catholics should offer prayer. The short three years of life that remained to Pope Benedict were years overcrowded with post-war problems of the gravest nature. Perhaps the greatest of all his anxieties was for his beloved Poland, miraculously saved by victory at the gates of Warsaw in August, 1920. The fate of Palestine and the Holy Places was a matter of very special concern, so too were all the Foreign Missions, so dislocated by war and the transfers of territory. It is pleasant to read that the wholly undenominational "Save the Children Fund" received repeated commendations from him, more especially in his touching appeal to the Catholic world at Christmas, 1920, for the "little waifs of far off countries," for whom he himself sent a contribution of 100,000 lire. Members of St. Joan's will like to be reminded that it was Benedict who canonised St. Joan of Arc, as well as an unusual number of women saints.

But indeed it is impossible to touch on all the outstanding events of these crowded years super-imposed upon the routine activities of the Holy See, of which Fr. Rope gives a rather confused sketch. We do however learn afresh from his pages how far-flung beyond immediately ecclesiastical interests is the rôle played by the Papacy in modern Europe. Disentangled from all international intrigue, Benedict XV will surely stand before the bar of history as the Pope of Peace in this war-struck century. And perhaps the first lesson we should all learn from the noble failure of Benedict to act as peacemaker for Europe is to bear in mind the essential falseness of all war-time propaganda, which tends to warp the judgment even of those sincerely desirous to retain some sanity of mind and some charity of outlook. No one can doubt to-day that an agreed peace in 1917 would have spared countless lives and, who knows, might have laid the basis of a permanent peace for Europe. Yet a mere handful of leading people in each country realised this basic truth. Are we any better prepared to-day to listen to the voice of reason, even when unpalatable to ourselves? And should we pay any greater attention to Pius XII than the statesmen of 1917 displayed towards Benedict XV?

Woman Power Committee

As the result of a deputation of women M.P.s to Mr. Bevin, Minister of Labour and National Service, a Committee on Woman Power has been set up, to advise him on questions relating to the economic use of woman labour. To celebrate this event the British Federation of Business and Professional Women gave a public luncheon presided over by its Chairman, Miss Caroline Haslett, C.B.E., on July 17th. Among the speakers were the Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P., Miss Irene Ward, C.B.E., M.P., Chairman of the Woman Power Committee, and the Viscountess Astor, C.H., M.P. The dinner is fully reported in "The Woman Engineer." In the course of a long speech, Mr. Bevin said he hoped that people would be wise enough not to let Parliament escape the principle of the "Rate for the Job" in the future. He had always been nauseated when listening to people arguing as to what a woman could live on. Referring to regulation of hours, etc., he said that over-long hours had been carried out too long and announced the resumption of the Factory Acts on August 1st. With regard to additional women voluntary workers "they will be paid the rate for the job," he declared. One point he made was that—"many disgruntled people who are sometimes regarded as a nuisance are people of tremendous ability who have been denied a place in the sun. For lack of an outlet they had often taken the wrong road. I would like to prevent such a waste of ability."

Since the holding of this public luncheon, in the words of the "Woman Engineer," "many meetings have been held, questions asked inside the House or directly addressed to Departments. Spectacular results have not yet been achieved, but quiet persistent work has obtained much considered desirable. . . ." We await with eagerness still further results, for as the "Woman Engineer" justly remarks, "women were not being given the opportunity to serve—a right which is implicit in citizenship."

Obituary

We offer our deep sympathy to our Chairman, Miss Challoner, on the death of her mother, and to Miss O'Farrell on the death of her brother. May they rest in peace. Of her mother, Miss Challoner writes: "I owe to her my chance of higher education, and my interest in feminism—amongst other things."

Notes and Comments

When Mr. Ernest Bevin made a statement in the House of Commons on August 8th on the need for an increase in the number of skilled workers, he said that "the main and essential thing at this moment is to bring women on to the repetition work, and that is where women have to be brought in." Challenged on this point he replied that "there is no time to train women in the highest skill efficiently to meet this programme, and we have to face the fact, especially in the case of women who are transferred from other trades and who, when trade revives, will expect to go back to these trades."

Surely when the whole Nation is told to "Go To It," women who have had some engineering training in preparation for the Nation's need should not be relegated to repetitive processes. And there is no reason to suppose that other women would not train efficiently and quickly. With regard to what may or may not happen after the war Mr. Bevin himself, in a recent broadcast speech, urged the workers to forget their concern as to what may happen afterwards and to let nothing stand in the way of increased production now.

The Minister of Health reported in the House that for England and Wales in 1939, the number of women who died in child-birth for every 1,000 births was 2.82, the lowest figure ever recorded in this country, .15 lower than in the previous year and little more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the 1915 figure. The number of children who died in their first year in 1939 were 50 per 1,000 children, again the lowest figure ever recorded.

The Ministry of Labour has taken over the training initiated by the Women's Engineering Society at the L.C.C. Beaufoy Institute, and has instituted an eight-weeks' course of training on various machine tools. Training is free and students are paid a maintenance grant. This is the beginning of a country-wide scheme.—*The Woman Engineer.*

Mrs. Jennie Adamson, M.P., has been appointed additional Parliamentary private secretary to Sir Walter Womersley, Minister of Pensions, and is to take over special work

relating to the provision of pensions for women and children in need.

We have lately welcomed two opportunities of meeting our colleagues in the feminist movement—opportunities of meeting are, alas, all too rare these "blitz" days. The first time was when the Open Door Council held its 14th Annual Meeting on October 19th at Friend's House, Euston Road. Miss Barry and Miss Spender represented the Alliance on this occasion when, under the Chairmanship of Mrs. White resolutions were passed on Conditions and Pay of Women in War Work, the Rate for the Job, the Need for Women in Key Positions, Compensation for Personal Injuries, the Nationality of Married Women. The first resolution called upon the Government "to issue a White Paper giving full information as to the recruitment and placing of women in war industry," and "to admit women equally with men to all training schemes, and to introduce equal conditions of work for men and women in the war industries, including the payment of the full rate for the job."

At a Conference of the Women's Freedom League on Married Women's Nationality and Women Police our representatives were the Misses Barry and Challoner. Miss Pearson presided and a Memorandum prepared by Mrs. Donzé for the Nationality of Married Women's Committee was discussed. The Conference decided to ask the new Home Secretary to receive a deputation in order to submit the Memorandum and urge the immediate introduction and passage into law of the Nationality of Married Women Bill, a Bill which has been introduced in the House of Commons twelve times since 1914.

A resolution asking the Home Secretary to take immediate steps that it should be obligatory upon every local authority to secure the appointment of a suitable number of trained and attested women constables, under conditions of pay, promotion and responsibility identical with policemen, was proposed by the Hon. Mrs. Home Peel, Chairman of the Women Police Campaign Committee and unanimously adopted by the Conference.

We are grateful to the Women's Freedom League for calling this Conference and thus keeping two important questions to the fore.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,

AND

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

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O Call Back Yesterday . . .

At a time when ruined houses, ruined hopes, ruined ideals form so much of the background of our lives that at times we are profoundly discouraged, it is as well to remind ourselves of the up-springing which must surely follow the present desolation. To read of past building which still abides in spite of every obstacle is one way of recovering our sense of proportion and Miss Fletcher's book of memoirs—"O, Call Back Yesterday"*—gives us this mental tonic and stimulus. In the sad process of destruction it is good to "escape" into Miss Fletcher's Oxford childhood in the sixties, and her subsequent experiences as a young art student in London and Paris.

Over thirty years of Miss Fletcher's life were spent in building up the organisation known as the Catholic Women's League. In the pages of the "Crucible"—a venture which preceded that of the Catholic Women's League—Miss Fletcher first published the idea of a League. "From the first it was claimed that this League should include women of all classes in its membership . . . mixing freely in any intercourse which its activities called for." In 1905 a National Catholic Conference held in Brighton was circularised with "some ideas on present-day social work for Catholic women," and shortly after this the first meeting of the League was held in London. An executive Committee was formed and Miss Fletcher herself became first President. An Information Bureau was opened almost immediately and so the first steps were taken in the formation of a Society which was to give Catholic women a social sense, train many in social work and generally extend their

* *O, Call Back Yesterday.* By Margaret Fletcher. (Basil Blackwell, 5s.)

influence. This movement was outside party politics and outside the then very active suffrage movement: it had the patronage of Cardinal Bourne and several Bishops, and before long Father Bernard Vaughan, S.J., was its spiritual adviser. Yet it could arouse suspicion in various quarters, which, according to Miss Fletcher, "shows how completely the Catholic body had been living to itself." Branches of the League were gradually formed in districts throughout the country, and its organisation was steadily worked out. Parish Priests were at first "distinctly hostile," thinking the League "an attempt to copy the methods of irreligion" since its organisation was modelled on that of inter-denominational groups of women like the National Council of Women. It was in fact a determined attempt to make Catholic women live up to their social obligations instead of allowing themselves, with all the advantages of the Faith, to lag behind other groups of women.

In Germany, France, Italy and Switzerland, national Leagues of Catholic women were being formed, as though there were a diffused consciousness of a crying need. "Even Spain possessed two . . . and early in 1910 the idea of forming an International Federation was taking shape. Ultimately in Brussels, in July, 1910, twelve Leagues met in conference."

The second International Congress of Catholic Women's Leagues was held in Madrid in July, 1911; there was one in Vienna in 1912, and these two were in connection with Eucharistic Congresses. The 1913 Conference was held in London and at this meeting statutes already drawn up were revised, at the wish of Pope Pius X, and the choice of Presidency

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ST. JOAN OF ENGLAND

By GEORGE BUDAY

With acknowledgments to "Lilliput"

Gabrielle Jeffery Memorial
December 8th.

On December 8th, the day on which Miss Jeffery and Miss Kendall decided to found the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society in 1910, members are asked to attend the 12 o'clock Mass at St. Patrick's, Soho, which will be offered by request of the Alliance for Peace and for all killed in the war. Lunch (3/6) will follow at the Berners Hotel, Berners Street, at 1-15, at which our Chairman, Miss P. C. Challoner, M.A., will preside and afterwards unveil the Portrait of Gabrielle Jeffery which has been painted by Mr. Lee Hankey, R.W.S., R.O.I., and which he hopes to send to the Academy next year.

The speaker at lunch will be Madame Wanda Grabinska, the first woman judge in Poland and for several years delegate from Poland to the League of Nations Assembly and a member of the Advisory Committee on Social Questions which deals, among other things, with Traffic in Women and Child Welfare.

We know all members and friends within

reasonable distance will do their utmost to attend to do honour to the memory of our Founder, and to welcome our distinguished guest. Please apply for your tickets at once to Miss Barry, 55 Berners Street, W.1.

The Gabrielle Jeffery Memorial Fund has now reached the sum of £93 2s. 6d., the latest donations received being from Mrs. V. M. Crawford (10s.), Miss Crawford, Liverpool (10s.), Miss A. L. P. Dorman, S. Africa (10s.), Mrs. and Miss Hughes (10s.), Dr. C. H. Jabloner (10s.), Messrs. A., C., and P. Jeffery (£3), Miss Somers (2s. 6d.), Mrs. Sowerby (£1). Would those few members who have not yet sent donations do so at once so that the fund may reach £100 by December 8th.

St. Joan of England

We hope our readers will like the beautiful picture "St. Joan of England" by George Buday, which was first published in "Lilliput," to whom we offer grateful acknowledgments. We saw it in the "Catholic Herald" and asked them if they would lend us their block. This they very kindly did and we send them our warm thanks.

International Notes

Brazil. Senhora Sylvia Vaccani da Motta Rezende is the first woman to be made Professor of Geology at the University of Brazil. This event was celebrated by a luncheon given in Professor Sylvia Vaccani's honour at the Sala Azul (Cineac) when the Rector of the University of Rio de Janeiro and the Actuary of the Ministry of Labour were present.—*The International Women's News.*

Ireland.—A Vocational Commission has been set up under Governmental auspices before which the National Council of Women in conjunction with other women's societies has been invited to give evidence. Women's societies are making the claim that home-making is a profession and should be included as a Vocation, under any future scheme for Vocational Organisation that may be adopted in Ireland. Women's societies also maintain that women should obtain representation under the heading of whatever "profession" they may hold.

The National Council of Women of Ireland is pressing for the fuller inclusion of women on the Parish Councils in Ireland. These Councils were formed two or three years ago with the object of organising rural life; promoting self-help and co-operation in country counties and combating unemployment. The Government is now using these Councils as ad hoc Emergency Committees their duties being to conserve and distribute food supplies and to administer local relief in case of isolation. The President of the N.C.W., Dr. Mary Hayden, points out that these are house-keeping matters on which women have very special experience. Dr. Mary Hayden adds that some of the Parish Councils intend to constitute "Ladies' Committees" to work under them, and she hopes that no "lady" of spirit will consent to serve in this subordinate capacity—at least until a proper proportion of women have become members of the Council itself.

From the Social Questions Section of the League of Nations in Geneva we continue to receive various documents relating to the work of the Section. Among recent documents to arrive are several announcing new French laws; for example, a law dealing with the suppression of Souteneurs, dated Vichy, 20th July, 1940—and a law dated August 14th, giving a "carte

nationale de priorité" to certain mothers of families when applying to public departments and services, etc., and when using public transport.

Switzerland. From *Le Mouvement Féministe* (Geneva), which we regularly receive at the office, we learn that in Berne, on the occasion of the "fête nationale" those young women who had attained their majority received for the first time, together with the youths of the town, their certificate of citizenship. "Thus," comments our contemporary, "the collaboration of women in the affairs of State, hitherto considered undesirable, is consecrated by an official document. . . . May this document lead to political equality" . . . i.e., votes for women.

From the same source we note an article in which it is remarked that party programmes which deal with national reconstruction, such as those issued in the recent Federal election, simply ignore the question of women's franchise or the part women should play as citizens. A famous exception is Councillor M. Henri Valloton, who has published statements on the rôle of the Swiss woman which merit attention. One new party, among the initiators of which were some famous feminists, said that "they had no time to consider the question of women." Some parties even go as far as to attack the liberties of women, one demanding that "the employment of men should

(Continued in next column)

Christmas Sale

Owing to the difficulties of transport for most of our members nowadays, we propose to hold an imaginary sale this year. We depend on our Christmas Sale to balance the accounts for the end of the year, so we ask those members and friends who have been so generous in past years to think this year what they would have spent in providing us with a gift, sending it, coming to the office and buying other gifts, taking tea, etc. When they have made this calculation would they then be so very kind as to send us the equivalent money direct to the Office, not later than Friday, December 6th.

For those who prefer something more concrete and have the time to spare, we propose to hold a "bring and buy" party at the Office on Friday, December 13th, from 10-30 a.m. until 3-30 p.m. Bring your gift and buy a gift, and buy your refreshments from us.

be favoured in the many occupation in which women, without family obligations, are employed." The article goes on to comment on a recent pronouncement of M. Ybarnegaray, member of the Vichy Government, who declared that the primary destination of women is to bear children and to live solely that these may become strong and useful men, and insisted that courses of mathematics and Latin should give place to domestic science and child welfare, thus regarding women purely as reproducers of the race.

Such attitudes towards women are found in every country, and we send our best wishes to our Swiss colleagues who work untiringly for their alteration.

Twenty-Five Years Ago

Leonora de Alberti in the *Catholic Suffragist*, 15th November, 1915:

The gallant woman who, after a life spent in the alleviation of human suffering, was executed for saving the lives of others, has left a truly Christian message to the world: "Standing as I do in the view of God and Eternity, I realise that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone." Surely there was never a time when such a message was more necessary. Patriotism is a noble passion, but in moments of upheaval—prejudice, hatred and revenge are apt to masquerade as patriotism. This is a danger which stalks at the elbow of each one of us, however much we may pride ourselves on our breadth of view, and Miss Cavell's noble words are a challenge to us all.—*Notes and Comments.*

O Call Back Yesterday . . .

(Continued from page 96)

(the Presidency had a three year limit and passed from country to country) was placed in the hands of the Holy Father.

On the declaration of war an appeal went out from H.E. Cardinal Bourne for voluntary women workers and "the task of sorting the volunteers, grouping them and allotting their duties was given to the C.W.L." The reception and placing of Catholic Belgian Refugees was also organised by the League. But "Hut work abroad and in England" was "the really big achievement" of the League during those war years.

After the account of war work comes the interesting chapter on Czechoslovakia where, in 1919, at the request of the Cardinal, Miss Fletcher and another member, went, representing the League, to visit the Czech Catholic Women's League, with encouragement and advice. The Catholics of Czechoslovakia had

the hard post-war task of rebuilding under an entirely new social order.

Pope Benedict XV requested that a post-war Conference of Catholic Women's Leagues should be held in Rome in 1922, and there is an account of the difficult post-war journey to Cracow where the officers had to meet for the preliminary arrangements. On her way to Poland Miss Fletcher passed through Vienna where English and American Catholics were pulling their weight in providing help and money for the relief of the dreadful conditions there. Travelling home, Miss Fletcher, now at the end of her second Presidency, felt it was time that her active work for her creation, the Catholic Women's League, should come to an end. She felt that the moment had arrived "when the future depended on younger women coming forward to take on the leadership in days which were properly their own."

After her retirement from public work in the League, Miss Fletcher turned her energies to the publication of a quarterly called the "Catholic Woman's Outlook," but this venture came to an end after eight years. The last chapters of these memoirs end on a hopeful note—satisfaction in the survey of past years fruitfulness and hope for the future, and this note does not sound less dim in the Postscript written after the outbreak of war. After all, war may be terrible, but it affords fresh opportunities and what is destroyed may we hope be rebuilt in a better way.

It is hard to add a "Postscript" of criticism to this article when we would wish only to admire a great achievement. But in a paper which began life as the "Catholic Suffragist" we cannot pass over Miss Fletcher's lack of appreciation of the Suffrage Movement. She does not seem to realise that but for the movement and its ultimate victory her own venture would have failed completely. For the spiritual significance of the united endeavour to win the vote was the awakening of women from sloth and slumber with the determination to assume responsibility, whatever the cost, and despite a very general wish that they should retain the status of children. The suffragettes were permeated with this ideal and the currents flowing from the whole Suffrage Movement were enough to energise many a lesser project. For Miss Fletcher to minimise the Suffrage struggle and withhold her full meed of praise is as if a traveller in a strange country, possessing a very good map, were to take all the merit of his achieved journey to himself, forgetting the pioneer struggles of the map-maker.

CHRISTINE SPENDER.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

NON-PARTY

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