

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

"Act of God."

In the small hours of Saturday morning, ten of our neighbours in Westminster were drowned in their beds by the inrush of an abnormally swollen high spring tide. Many more than ten were faced with sudden terror, spoiled property, and a load of apprehension. A still wider circle were victimized by a pest of minor inconvenience as the muddy waters of the Thames lapped round their doorsteps and gurgled into their basements. But such reparable evils seem irrelevant and negligible in face of the irreparable tragedy of the drowned. We are assured that death came to them very quickly. We know that those who survived met their troubles with courage and dignity. Practical neighbourly help came quickly and spontaneously to the rescue. From such small grains of consolation does man attempt to reconstruct his happiness after a fall. Meanwhile we find our thoughts most strangely dissociated by this gesture of untamed nature from the twentieth century Westminster of Imperial Parliament and civic status. As night falls on our apprehensive neighbourhood, the spirit of Thorn Island with its drenched mudflats and its invading tides seems to reassert itself. This sort of thing has happened before. Edward the Confessor's lonely Abbey has looked out over these same unruly tides. Tudor watermen have paddled their boats to the windows of Westminster Palace. It has happened before, and it may happen again.

Westminster's Responsibility.

It is always a natural human reaction to tragedy to seek immediately for a punishable scapegoat. Thus, for the flooding of Westminster, and indeed for similar though less catastrophic floodings in other areas, quick allegations of blame have been flying through the Press. But against the Thames, the full moon and the weather, acting in sinister concert for the perpetration of this evil deed, it is difficult to lodge an effective indictment. They have at any rate managed to throw into still sharper relief certain aspects of Westminster housing which have been under the limelight of public discussion during the past few weeks. More than ever now will members of the public ask themselves how it happens that so many basement dwellings exist in this low lying area under the shadow of Big Ben. We cannot indict the Westminster City Council for the sins of the Thames, the moon, and the weather. But we can and do indict it for its continued tolerance of housing conditions which are a scandal to a rich Metropolitan Borough. We can and do hope

that it will find some more constructive method of dealing with such scandals than vulgar personal abuse of conscientious ratepayers who dare to express their dissatisfaction with the time-honoured policy of *laissez-faire*. A weighty and well-proven charge has been laid against the city fathers of Westminster by influential individuals and newspapers representing all parties. A few easy relief measures in response to the present dislocation will not dissipate that charge. Nor can it be effectively refuted by the method of defence known to lawyers as: "Abuse the plaintiff's attorney." The next flood must find the poorer inhabitants of this wealthy borough decently and securely housed.

Liberals and Family Endowment.

It is really astonishing to find the Union of University Liberal Societies now in session at Manchester refusing to support family endowment not on the ground that as University students it is not a reform which particularly appeals to them but because "the money would go in drink and betting" and would "give people an opportunity of developing their vices". We should have thought it clear that most schemes of family endowment would definitely result in keeping down the surplus money of the young people and childless married couples who are most likely to use it in amusement, and increasing the incomes of those who most need money for house room, rent, fuel, clothes, etc. When family endowment in the form of separation allowances was paid during the war the improved physique, cleanliness, and clothing of the nation's children was at once remarked by every competent observer. It is a dreadful thing that these young people of the fortunate classes who call themselves Liberals should gain so little from the education which is being given them that the only contribution they can make to a problem of this sort is to cheer when their colleagues say "Why give money to be wasted? What we want to do is to sweep away our taxes!" or to bring sweeping charges against all working-class mothers of "going gambling".

Splendid Elizabeth Scott.

It was something of a satisfaction to know that of the six competitors chosen from among 72, to submit final designs for the Stratford Memorial Theatre, one was a woman—Miss Elizabeth Scott, late student of the Architectural Association, aged 29 years. But when, shortly after going to Press last week, we learned that of the six, Miss Scott had submitted the winning design, our satisfaction leapt beyond its bounds. Have any of our readers, we wonder, ever felt the urge, on perusing the headlines of an evening paper in Piccadilly Circus, to sing aloud among the jostling crowds a *Te Deum* of praise, and to dance unmeaningly upon the pavement? Because of Miss Scott's achievement the way of all women architects will be easier, the status of all women architects more assured. Because of her, the tradition of mediocrity which has dogged the professional woman will receive a staggering blow. There is, perhaps, an element of luck in all architectural competitions of this kind, but such luck is rarely on the side of a woman. Miss Scott is, we learn, remembered by her generation at the A.A. not only as a delightful colleague, but as a brilliant student. And family tradition is on her side. She is one of the Scotts and her theatre will be second cousin to Liverpool Cathedral. Some great achievements represent the end of a long effort, the crowning point of a career. Hers is essentially a beginning, the acceptance of an obligation, the promise of an effort. A good many years of work lie between her present foretaste of success and the completion of her theatre—which is indeed something more than a theatre, for it includes a section of town planning which is of importance to the world, and will be judged by the world. We wish her,

during those years, health and happiness in her work, loyal fellow-workers and enduring inspiration. We wish her yet wider fields, honour and glory and true fellowship with great men who have bequeathed to us great buildings. In the name of all women we participate in her happiness and thank her for her promise.

Miss Royden Overseas.

Miss Royden left London for her world tour on 28th December, amidst the cheers of her friends under a most inclement sky. Regret at losing her for so long was tempered by the knowledge that wherever she went she would enhance by her gracious personality, her quick intelligence, her humour, and her sincerity, the reputation of British women. The first news of her faring which comes to us from the outside world is that in two American cities a hearing has been denied to her, in one case because she smokes cigarettes (which indeed she does), in another case because she believes in "companionate marriages" (which we have reason to believe she does not). We are inclined to mock at the fundamentalist scruples of our cousins overseas—more especially when we learn that one of the places in question is Chicago, a city which of recent months has provided the civilized world with several reminders that its civilization is a thin breakable crust. But let us, while visualizing the mote in our cousin's eye, recall the beam in our own. Some years ago a meeting at which Miss Royden was to have spoken in Oxford was prohibited by the then Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Farnell. We were unable at the time to ascertain the cause of this action, nor have subsequent researches enlightened us. We remember at the time putting the question to a distinguished Oxford theologian, whose name would be familiar to the majority of our readers. He replied that he had considered all possible explanations, and that of these the most probable supposition was that the Vice-Chancellor had confused Maude Royden with Maud Allen—owing to the similarity of their Christian names. All things considered, we felt that this explanation was not improbably the right one. But in view of this incident, can we mock at what Mrs. Trollope calls "the domestic habits of the Americans"?

Maude Royden Travelling Exhibition.

This Exhibition, awarded for the first time this year, is given by Madame André Rieder for the encouragement of women desiring to take up a business career and to get business experience in a foreign country. It is open in the first instance only to present or recent students of Lady Margaret Hall, which was Miss Maude Royden's College. Miss Phyllis Turner, of Lady Margaret Hall, who went down in the summer of 1927 after taking Final Schools in History, was unanimously elected by the Council of Lady Margaret Hall to be the first holder of the exhibition, having been nominated by a small Committee including the donor and Miss Royden. She proposes to study the part played by the municipalities in the economic recovery of Germany.

The Age of Marriage.

We always, if we happen to see them, read articles signed by Miss Helena Normanton—they are apt to be good journalism. But we are not so much surprised as grieved when we find her in the daily Press attacking the women's societies for their efforts to raise the legal age of marriage. Why, she writes, waste time on a matter of this sort, which only affects a handful of individuals, instead of attacking the more serious problem of extended facilities for divorce? Miss Normanton points out that in nearly every case in which girls have married under the age of sixteen it has been because they were pregnant, and she pleads that to prevent such marriages is an unwarrantable interference with liberty. Our readers will perceive that in arguing on these lines she ignores the whole reason why this reform is being asked for at this moment. We know that she has read Miss Mayo's book, *Mother India*, and she should therefore be aware both of the difficulty and the immense importance of raising the age of marriage in India. As long as the marriage age in England is twelve it is impossible to persuade the majority of Indians that Englishmen are not merely hypocritical when they work for improvement among Hindus. Further, in some British dependencies the law of England takes effect automatically and a change here is the only practicable method of stopping the large number of child marriages which take place. These arguments were clearly stated by the deputation to the Home Secretary which seemed to Miss Normanton so futile, and they are of course the reason both why it was organized and why it was sym-

pathetically received. Miss Normanton's opportunities for using the telephone should have prevented her from making so ill-informed a criticism even if by availing herself of them she would have lost a sprightly article.

Women in the I.L.P.

The following list of subjects have been forwarded to branches by the National Women's Advisory Committee for discussion at the I.L.P. "Women's Week-end" on 3rd and 4th March, 1928: Children's Allowances, Maternal Mortality, Women and the War Danger, Education, the Surtax and Social Services, Should Marriage be a Bar to the Employment of Women?, Is Protective Legislation for Women Desirable? Public Washhouses, The Problem of the Young Worker. There are four among these alternative titles which, we confess, we should particularly like to see freely and exhaustively discussed among the advanced women of the Labour Party—for such are the women members of the I.L.P. The first is Children's Allowances, with special reference to the immediate possibility of co-operating with promoters of family endowment schemes other than the full State scheme advocated by the I.L.P. The other three are Maternal Mortality, the Employment of Married Women, and the pros and cons of differential protective legislation, on both of which subjects we believe that Labour women have yet to make important contributions *qua* women to the counsels of their Party.

Coalwomen.

The *Daily News* has discovered the existence of four women actively engaged in the operation of coal carrying. There may be more, but at any rate those quoted by the *Daily News* appear to be lusty and cheerful workers in what is undoubtedly a somewhat unusual avocation for women. We can imagine that many of our contemporaries may be tempted to hail it as not merely an unusual but also a highly unsuitable avocation—a matter indeed which seems to call for instant legislative prohibition. It does not, however, affect us in this manner. Coal carrying appears to be an occupation which combines judgment and diversity, independence of movement, and life in the open air with a degree of muscular effort of which many women are capable. It is undoubtedly a more genial and healthy occupation than the traditional women's occupations of spinning, weaving, tailoring and laundering, and we should not be surprised to learn that it is, in addition, better remunerated.

A Woman Game Warden.

An interesting life must be that of Mrs. Hoffman, the only woman Deputy State Game Warden in the United States. Her duty is to keep a protecting eye on the buffalo, mountain sheep, elk, deer, wild cats, bears, etc., who roam undisturbed through the immense State park in South Dakota. She has in the course of her duties made 300 arrests for breaking game limits, or for hunting without licences. One of her greatest interests lies in educating the children to care for natural beauty and not to spend their time in making sling slots. Even the wild flowers come under Mrs. Hoffman's jurisdiction; they too are to be protected in that most wonderful of spots.

A New Woman Agent.

The Liberal Party, whose Parliamentary benches display at the moment a most regrettable deficiency of feminine balance, can now boast of the appointment of its first woman political agent. She is Miss Eva Parnell-Bailey, the first woman to pass the Agents' Examination in 1921, and a fully qualified member of the Society of Certificated and Associated Liberal Agents. Her appointment is in the Finchley Division of Middlesex.

A Partnership.

Among the four women recently called to the Bar was Mrs. Gladys Siddie Powell, of Bridgend, Glamorgan, whose husband, Mr. D. L. Powell, is a practising barrister on the South Wales circuit. According to the *Manchester Guardian* Mrs. Powell is the first woman barrister to enter her husband's profession. We have long been familiar with a husband and wife who carry on in partnership the business of a solicitor's office.

The Amsterdam Peace Conference.

We congratulate Miss Rosa Manus, hon. secretary to the Peace Committee of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, on the appearance of the report in three languages within a month of the Conference. It is an admirable piece of work, and will be studied with interest by many who were unable to go to Amsterdam.

WHY NOT PREVENTED?

"If preventable why not prevented?" said the late King Edward VII concerning some forgotten allusion to a "preventable evil". It is a simple though significant question, and once again we are tempted to ask it in response to the latest report on Maternal Mortality issued by Dame Janet Campbell from the Ministry of Health.¹ It is nearly four years since she issued her last report on the subject to which this is "in the nature of a supplement"; but during those years there is no improvement to record, no indication that mothers are sharing in the general improvement of public health and expectation of life which characterizes the same period when viewed from other angles. Why?

Dame Janet Campbell is a Civil Servant of high eminence in her department. She speaks, as is the way of such functionaries, with measured discretion and iron reserve. Her report is bare of rhetoric or invective. It is qualified with repudiations of "criticism or censure". Nevertheless in speaking guardedly she speaks clearly, and we are left with the strong impression that it is not only our public authorities but also our medical schools who have failed in their duty to motherhood.

It appears that in 1922 the whole question of midwifery training, then admitted to be grievously inadequate, was considered by the General Medical Council, and certain resolutions were passed which came into force on 1st January, 1923. These resolutions detailed minimum requirements for the training of medical students in maternity work. According to our report, "this represented a great advance on previous arrangements and when these resolutions are fully carried out by all medical schools every student should start his professional life with a sound knowledge of midwifery". But the ugly truth is that *they have not been fully carried out*, or, as Dame Janet Campbell delicately puts it, "unfortunately by no means all the schools have been able to make the necessary changes in the curriculum, one great difficulty being the provision of sufficient maternity beds to give the required practical experience." There are, of course, exceptions. In London, the midwifery arrangements of

ANOTHER LONDON HOUSING SURVEY.

By G. W. CURRIE.

Some months ago, following upon the exposures made in Chelsea and Westminster, steps were taken to bring under review the neighbouring borough of Fulham and the report upon its condition has now been published by the Fulham Housing Association, constituted on the usual lines, in order to bring about a better state of things. The President of the Association is the Bishop of London. The Secretary is Miss A. M. Lupton, of the Mandell Creighton Settlement, 378 Lillie Road, S.W. 6, and the report itself is the work of Mrs. John Barclay, B.A., P.A.S.I., and her partner, Miss Evelyn E. Perry, P.A.S.I. The committee of the Association is representative of Fulham in a way that leaves no possible doubt of the reliability of its statements: it is particularly satisfactory that it includes the name of Mr. Councillor W. A. White, the Chairman of the Borough Council's Housing Committee. Mr. Councillor White must know all about Fulham, and his appearance on the committee confirms our conviction that as a rule real knowledge of what is wrong creates a desire to put it right. *The Spectator*, in its issue of last week, reported its impressions after a personal—and evidently a very careful—investigation of Fulham conditions; and of its article it suffices to say that it confirms the Association's report. What then does the report say? It specifies as the worst features of Fulham housing (1) overcrowding in the poorer streets, (2) the unfit condition of many of the old cottages and low-lying basements, and (3) the general state of neglected repair of the majority of the poorer districts.

On overcrowding, the report states:—
A residential district near the centre of London and with many industries of its own, is necessarily crowded.

Fulham is the nearest and most convenient district for many London workers in the better paid occupations; local industrial workers are, generally speaking, crowded into the poorer streets. There has been practically no building to meet the needs of the growing population since the war. Sons and daughters who married eight or nine years ago were often given a room in their parents' "flat"; they have been unable to move, and still live in one room with their children. Their younger

the Royal Free Hospital, University College, and St. Thomas's are quoted as up to standard. But taking the twelve London Medical schools collectively it is obvious that the 1923 recommendations of the British Medical Council are "far from being complied with".

But in laying a heavy charge at the door of the medical profession for neglect of this vital branch of their subject, we do not cover the whole field of criticism inherent in this latest report. The public is accustomed to get what it wants, or rather what it is prepared to pay for, from the specialists who serve it. Because there is an *economic demand* for cinemas, hotels, tobacconists and public houses, these agencies appear, and function. It is clear that there is as yet no adequate *economic demand* for the services of well-trained doctors and midwives, for maternity beds in institutions, or for decent housing accommodation wherein mothers can be delivered in privacy, comfort, and cleanliness in their own homes. To quote what we fear is a typical example of this last deficiency, an analysis of 1,000 Manchester maternity cases made in 1926 showed that in houses occupied by one family, privacy was impossible in 54 per cent of cases; in houses occupied by more than one family it was impossible in 98 per cent of cases. To say that there is no adequate *economic demand* is to say that there is no immediate *economic demand* commensurate with the *social need*. In all probability the same might have been said of the treatment of military casualties during the war, had these been left to make their own private arrangements for medical and hospital service. We may be accused of begging an important question when we say that it is the duty of society as a whole to create an effective economic demand for adequate conditions of maternity, medical, institutional, and domestic as the case may be. It may indeed be held by some that motherhood is a private hobby of the individual which should be embarked upon only by those who are able to make independent and complete economic provision for all its expensive eventualities. We, however, do not take that view, nor, it appears, does Dame Janet Campbell.

brothers and sisters have now grown up, and the problem of finding room for them is increasingly difficult. In house after house every room—with the exception in some cases of tiny kitchens—is a sleeping room as well as a living room and frequently adult boys and girls have to sleep in their parents' room. In some families the boys sleep with their father and the girls with their mother; in other families the older girls contrive to undress in the dark when their brothers are in bed, or the boys when their sisters are in bed. Adult boys and girls usually have to share beds with younger children. It is difficult to give any adequate idea of the extent of overcrowding of this kind in Fulham.

Ten printed pages of actual and almost unbelievable instances of conditions are given.

Of houses unfit for human habitation and of widespread and total neglect of repairs full proof is given. Damp, dirt, decay, and vermin are rampant.

The conclusions arrived at are—

(1) There is urgent need for the provision of inexpensive flats in the district, for local workers.

(2) There is immediate need for an efficient house to house inspection by the Council, to be followed up by proceedings against any landlords or agents who fail to comply with the Sanitary Inspector's orders.

In 1925 a set of 36 flats was erected by the Borough Council: obviously, building is the first step required in Fulham, and slum clearance the second. Bad landlordism—ranging from inexcusable carelessness to flagrant inhumanity of the worst type—has had a long innings in Fulham.

It is very evident that the staff of inspectors in Fulham must be kept busily employed, but it is equally certain that no sanitary inspector could have passed over the "nuisances" discovered in the investigation for this Report, and the conclusion must be that the officers do not have time to get round their work, and that the staff is insufficient for the needs of the area.

Such is the verdict upon Fulham published by those who know it best.

So far as houses are capable of reconditioning, a vigorous campaign against defaulting landlords would secure—entirely

¹ *The Protection of Motherhood*, by Dame Janet Campbell, D.B.E., M.D., Ministry of Health. (H.M. Stationery Office. Price 9d.)

at their cost—an enormous improvement. This campaign should be begun to-morrow; reconditioning does not take long. It is common knowledge that in neighbouring districts thousands of pounds per annum that used to go into the pockets of landlords and "investors" have been forced, by exposure, to be spent on repairs. This should be done in Fulham, too. So far as new houses are required there is no reason to believe that more than a small increase in the rates would be required. The last official census of houses "not in all respects fit for human habitation" reports the number of such at 1,593. The conduct of landlords who go on as they have in Fulham reaping financial gain out of the misery, blood, and tears of women and children of the most utterly defenceless social class is and always has been an outrage against human decency. These pests and vampires deserve short shrift, and we hope the Bishop of London and Mr. Councillor W. A. White between them will see that they get it.

A SIGNPOST TO SOCIAL INSURANCE.¹

This is a small but ambitious book. It is *multum in parvo*; for Miss Martelli has managed in the space of 80 pages to describe and criticize the whole gamut of our insurance legislation and administration. Naturally there is no room for more than an outline of the practical details of each separate scheme, but it is a competent summary and, if we may say so without offence, readers of this journal will find in it a lot that they think they know, but do not. The book shows not only what is, but also what might be, if our State insurance schemes were extended to cover all the damaging emergencies which beset the lives of the masses, including the death of the breadwinner and the parents' burden of maintaining a young family.

The Signpost Series is promoted by N.U.S.E.C. and, true to the purpose of the Union, the particular objective of this booklet is to point out the need for greater equality of status between insured men and insured women. Why should the schemes of insurance against sickness and unemployment both treat women as a class apart, with lower contributions and lower benefits? There are some women with higher wages and greater needs than some men. Then why this arbitrary sex distinction? There are several alternatives. The State could, of course, entirely ignore the sex of insured persons and could raise the women's rates to the same levels as men's, but that would press hardly on low paid women clerks or factory hands and might often transgress the commandment that, in these State insurances, benefits must never run too close on the heels of normal earnings, still less exceed them.

But there is another doctrine and Miss Eleanor Rathbone is its major prophet. Normal weekly earnings, not sex or age, should determine the rates of contribution and of benefit. Such a method is freely adopted abroad. Why not try it here?

The out-and-out application of this doctrine is not urged by Miss Rathbone or by Miss Martelli. That would mean thousands of varying rates and would be unworkable under the stamping system. But wage groups could be formed among the 15 million insured persons and appropriate flat rates could be determined for each group. At the bottom might be a group earning 20s. a week or less, then a group earning 20s. to 35s., and so on up the scale. Within each group the principle of the flat rate would still obtain and it would be the same for women as for men, but dependants' allowances would still be needed.

From several points of view it is an attractive plan. For one thing it would smooth the path for the entry of agriculture into unemployment insurance. Logically, the agricultural labourer should never have been excepted and left out in the cold, but, as a practical matter, no government has had the face to compel him to come in, partly because neither he nor his employer, the farmer, could afford to pay the flat rate Unemployment Insurance contribution (now at 1s. 3d.) in addition to the other weekly insurances and partly because the flat rate of benefit, with dependants' allowances, would often have exceeded his normal weekly earnings. But a graded scheme, with low contributions and benefits in proportion, is just what he needs and, indeed, demands.

Another argument to arm the advocates of graded insurance is that our rulers have recently confessed that they no longer see any insuperable obstacle to paying a wide range of graded insurance benefits under a State scheme. Only a few days ago Parliament decreed that, in future, there shall be no less than

¹ *Social Insurance*, by Evelyn Martelli. Signpost Series No. 2. (P. S. King and Son. 2s. 6d.)

ten different rates of unemployment benefit, with dependants' allowances of varying amounts on top of that. The rates will be rates for age and not for wages, but the task of the employment exchanges will be none the lighter on that account.

Administrative objections on the contributory side will still have to be met, but it would take too much space to consider them here. May we, however, put one question of principle to the women who advocate the graded system in the interests of women? Assuming that there is to be no increase in total cost, is there not a danger that the lower paid women might find themselves worse off than under the flat rate system? Under the proposed division into wage categories, the existing rates of contribution and benefit would have to be graded down as well as up. Insured women would fall, for the most part, into the lower paid wage groups. Will there be a point in the grading below which adults of both sexes will only be entitled to rates of benefit lower than those which women draw to-day? If so the loss of income in time of stress would hit the insured woman hard, even though she had paid a lower contribution to earn it, and, if dependants' allowances were also graded, the loss would hit the wife of the low paid man harder still.

R. C. DAVISON.

RACHEL McMILLAN.

That man is a poor student of human affairs who believes that the initiative for social or educational reform comes from Government. This biography¹ is one more proof of the hard fight of a pioneer and its issue happily coincides with a renewed interest in the feasibility on a large scale of the open air school.

It is but rarely that the individual is early conscious of a mission in life. That comes frequently through a variety of experiences having little apparent relation to the end destined by Providence. So it was with the two sisters Rachel and Margaret McMillan. Childhood spent in America, with parents who "impose no needless restriction on us, and do not overwhelm us with the Atlas of unreasoning and almighty authority", was the first lap in the destined race. Experience of Scottish life with its purposive gravity, inside knowledge of a working girls' hostel in London, communion with great minds was a further march. A variety of character is met with in these pages not by any means confined to an educational problem. There was William Morris, H. M. Hyndman, Louise Michel, the anarchist Queen of the Paris Commune who in Bloomsbury taught children oral French and portrayed on the blackboard the execution of anarchists much to the delight of the onlookers, who revelled in the details. In contrast to this fiery soul whose one refrain was "Je n'aime pas souffrir" we meet Lady X, the temperamental and ostracized Society Dame.

Rachel McMillan became a travelling teacher of hygiene for the Kent County Council. Here she was brought into actual contact with the problem of child health. Her sister was elected to the Bradford School Board and Bradford is much in evidence in this volume.

Rachel McMillan enjoyed visiting Greenwich but alongside this beauty spot was the festering sore of Deptford slums. Those who knew the slums of Deptford had plumbed the depths of human misery.

With a plan for a school clinic the sisters approach the London County Council, the Board of Education, the House of Commons. The pioneers have still to pioneer. In 1910 with some private support they open a school clinic at Deptford. Children swarm in. The camp school follows and then the open air nursery school, commencing with six children and now providing for over three hundred. Doctors express their astonishment at the improvement of the pupils, public and official interest is in some measure aroused, the noble pioneer dies without seeing the full fruition of her toil.

Even now we are but slowly advancing towards that fuller provision of the facilities which these two sisters have striven for so long.

H. G. FIELDS.

¹ *The Life of Rachel McMillan*, by Margaret McMillan. (J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd. 6s. net.)

THE ETHICAL UNION,
Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.
SUNDAY at 7 p.m.,
Mrs. WALTER LAYTON on:
"Child Insurance—National or Industrial."

THE WORLD'S PILGRIM.¹

Eva Gore-Booth was a poet, a mystic, a dreamer of dreams. Therefore she threw herself into the women's suffrage movement and spent many years of her too short life in addressing public meetings, or street corner groups, making hurried journeys, writing letters to the papers, and all the other wear and tear of a popular agitation. With her seer's eyes she looked at what lay behind, and went towards it, without much heed to the nature of the way. If it had not been for women's suffrage, she might have devoted her whole life to poetry, or to religious teaching. It is probable that she expressed herself as truly as if she had done so, and that there is therefore nothing to regret. But the fact that the volumes she has left behind are few in number compared to what they might have been, and that they are mostly very slender, makes them all the more precious to those who have realized the quality of her mind.

The book of dialogues recently issued by Messrs. Longmans, who are, we believe, the publishers of all her books, is permeated by this quality. Each dialogue expresses an idea—not a rigid or precise idea, but one that is part of a vision. This does not mean that the dramatic character of this literary form is lost. On the contrary, Brother Elias, Lorenzo the Magnificent, Fra Angelico, and others are called up before our eyes, by the words they utter, and we feel that the author was seeing them as she wrote. If it is her own ideas that St. Francis, and Michael Angelo and "Brother Giacomina" express, that is because her visions, at some point, overlapped with theirs. As an artist as well as a mystic, she knew how to seize on that point.

Though these poems are written in limpid prose, there are moments when they remind one of Browning's dusky verse. Perhaps this is partly because of the subjects. But then, in neither case were the subjects accidentally chosen, both these visionaries had to take what was in their dreams.

I. B. O'M.

COUNTY LIBRARIES REPORT FOR 1926-7.

This report, lately issued by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, shows that the county library system of the country has made a considerable advance during the past year. Slow growth in such a movement is inevitable—inevitable but not necessarily discouraging, and the fact that over the country heavier library rates have been levied than in 1925, shows that the importance of the movement is beginning to be felt. There are still, however, large unreserved areas, the population of which amounts to 6 or 7 millions, and there are still many special problems to be tackled; how to deal suitably with the large demands of populous areas; how to meet the growing need for collections of books on special subjects for students and others, and how best to advertise the whole movement.

The movement, in fact, is still in its infancy, but it is a healthy and very robust child.

The question of advertisement is particularly important. Once the good work that is being done is more generally realized, then there will be fewer "Indignant Ratepayers" writing to the papers to protest against a farthing increase in the library rates. "The best advertisement," states the Report, "is a satisfied reader," but it is a slow business working up a general enthusiasm from personal recommendations, and the Librarians would do well to consider carefully the matter of publicity. The experiment of the travelling book van, which was noted last year as being of particular interest, has proved very useful. Many counties have now acquired book vans, and the question of their design is being carefully investigated. The book van, besides being an excellent method of transport, is first rate propaganda and advertisement.

We feel that the Report is justified when it says: "The fundamental fact which emerges from a study of the development from 1925 onwards, is that the service was designed, however modestly, on sound lines."

M. B. B.

ERRATUM.—STANDARD OF EXAMINATIONS.

In the note under this heading it was stated erroneously that the Association of Headmasters had passed a resolution recommending different examination conditions for girls and boys. The Conference at which this resolution was passed was that of the Headmasters of the Public Schools.

¹ *The World's Pilgrim*, by Eva Gore-Booth. (Published Longmans, Green and Co.)

MEETING OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS COUNCIL.¹

By MARY SHEEPHANKS.

Those who may think of coming to Geneva on purpose to be present at a Council meeting would be well advised to postpone their meeting until the accommodation is improved and extended, and in no case to count on admission until they are assured of a ticket. At present very few seats are available for the public and it is not easy to hear or to follow the proceedings, which consist largely of the reading and adoption of the reports of commissions, which can better be studied by obtaining the documents themselves.

The outstanding event of the 48th Council was, of course, the settling of the Polish-Lithuanian dispute. For eight years, since the taking of Vilna (the old Lithuanian capital but with a Polish and Jewish population) by the Poles, Lithuania has maintained that a "state of war" existed between the two countries. Not a letter even could cross the frontier, Polish timber could not be floated down the Niemen, the port of Memel was moribund, and the innumerable petty difficulties and grievances arising in countries each of which included considerable populations belonging to the other race, could meet with no solution and became threatening sources of friction.

Moreover the character of the national leaders in each country made it difficult for either to make concessions. Mr. Valdemaras, of Lithuania, is a dictator of the Fascist type, and Marshal Pilsudski a martial "hero", each of them of unbending pride.

Considering that no intercourse was carried on between the two countries, a mediator had to be found. Russia did something by urging reconciliation, the Council has done more; it has brought the parties together. The calm atmosphere of the Geneva council table, the quiet good manners that are the rule, the gentle influence of the Chinese president, the pressure of the representatives of all nations that peaceful solutions must be found, all these have brought about the end of the "state of war". Friendliness will not come at once, but the "insurmountable barrier" has been broken down, communications are re-established, the League's officials offer their services to help solve disputes, and the "face" of the protagonists is saved. (Possibly they were not sorry to have their hands forced!)

Lithuania does not renounce her claim to Vilna but she will no longer boycott her neighbour. Poland pledges herself to respect Lithuania's independence. Thus a situation of acute danger has been removed.

Methods were also found of settling the long standing differences between Germany and Poland about the port of Danzig; and the dispute about the rights of German children to attend German schools in Upper Silesia was referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice. The Council has had these matters before it again and again and it is hoped and believed that they are now disposed of.

One pleasant piece of news was Roumania's gift of £1,000 sterling for the establishment of Armenian refugees in Erivan. This reflects great credit on Roumania, which is the first country to answer Dr. Nansen's appeal. Great Powers please note and copy.

Another appeal to which the Great Powers are reluctant to respond is that of the Commission on the opium traffic, that they should sign the Geneva Convention of 1925. Until sufficient countries have ratified this convention, the illicit traffic in noxious drugs cannot be checked.

Dr. Snow, the chairman of the Committee of experts in the traffic in women, presented Vol. 2 of their report—Vol. 1 was published early in 1927, and gave the main results of the investigation. Vol. 2 contains specific examples from various countries and it was considered only fair to submit this information to the governments concerned for their comments before publishing it. Vol. 2 is now published.

Many other matters were dealt with: international health work, codification of international law, settlement of refugees in Bulgaria and Greece, and other matters.

It was generally considered one of the most practically valuable sessions the Council has yet held.

A WOMAN FREEMAN.

The Twickenham Town Council has made Mrs. Leeson, the widow of the first Mayor of the new borough, its first honorary freeman in recognition of her public work.

¹ Contributed by the Woman's International League, 55 Gower Street, W.C.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS.

By BERTHA MASON.

THE COMING LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS.

The New Year is with us bringing in its train four elections for local government authorities, all of great importance and in the following order:—

- (1) Triennial Elections for 62 County Councils between 1st and 8th March.
- (2) Elections for District Councils (Urban and Rural) early in April.
- (3) Boards of Guardians early in April.
- (4) Borough Councils and Metropolitan Borough Councils on 1st November.

The year 1928, obviously, will, or should be, a year of great activity and strenuous work for women's organizations, and for all men and women who are interested and engaged in the important work of local government and responsible for the selection and election of the members of the authorities to whom the work is entrusted.

Our system of Local Government, which was in force long before Central Government came into existence, has been well described as "that part of the government of a nation which deals mainly with such matters as concern the inhabitants of a particular district or place".

"What matters?" someone may ask. Briefly, matters concerning Health, Housing, Education, Water, Food, Mother and Child Welfare, Locomotion, Abolition of Smoke, Recreation, Legitimate Amusement, the Care of the Sick, the Blind, the Aged, and the Mentally Afflicted, Maintenance of Law and Order, Administration of Justice, Promotion of Temperance and Public Morality.

These are but a few of the many "matters which concern the inhabitants of districts and places", the administration and management of which are entrusted to local government authorities. Women equally with men can serve, and are elected by the inhabitants of the respective localities who are qualified and known as Local Government Electors.

It will be evident at a glance that these problems, some of which we hope to deal with in a later article, are problems of extreme importance, for the solution and administration of which the practical assistance of suitable women as well as suitable men, acting in co-operation, is required.

If then, the presence and assistance of suitable women are needed on local government bodies, and there are few to-day who will dare to deny it, then it follows that women's organizations and individual women must take a fair and prominent share in the work immediately before the country, i.e. the work of rousing enthusiasm in the coming County Council Elections. It lies with them to draw the attention of women electors especially, (1) to the true meaning and importance of local government, (2) to the way in which it is linked up with the health, happiness, and morality of the home life of the community, (3) to the duty and privilege of helping, through the exercise of their vote, to return to these Councils, men and women of high character and intelligence, who will put the interests and welfare of the community they serve before all personal motives and party political considerations.

This is not to suggest for one moment that work so important can be efficiently done in the few weeks which now remain before polling day. As we have repeatedly stated, if good results are to be achieved, educational work must be carried on throughout the year, suitable candidates must be sought early and carefully. When found and selected, every legitimate means must be taken to ensure for them whole-hearted support from start to finish. But the time for this preparatory work is now past, candidates in most counties are already selected. The point we wish to make is, that those women's organizations, local associations and individual women workers who, like the Wise Virgins of old, have made their preparations and now stand alert and ready for action, shall, in the few weeks before the elections redouble their efforts, and do all in their power to combat the apathy, which in past years has been so appalling a feature of local government elections.

The great danger in connexion with our system of local government, which as a system cannot be beaten, is the lack of interest taken in the administration of the system by the mass of electors.

During the last ten years the number of women local government electors has been increased from one million to something

like eight millions. What might not have been accomplished by now in the direction of social and moral betterment, if one-half only (it is a moderate estimate) of these eight million women had fully recognized their new duties and used their new powers as citizens, by bringing to bear on the problems awaiting solution that "active civic spirit" which is the bedrock of all true citizenship.

It is for a quickening of this "active civic spirit" and for a better realization of civic responsibility and duty that we appeal at the beginning of a year of such momentous importance to the local government of the country.

THE WOMEN TEACHERS' CONFERENCE.

During the week beginning 2nd January, the Annual Conference of the National Union of Women Teachers was held at Chester and the Town Hall filled with delegates and visitors. In the Assembly Room round which hang the portraits of the public-spirited Mayors of old Chester, there was seen the green and gold of the Union with its rising sun and the legend, "Who would be free herself must strike the blow." Other banners, too, there were—Birmingham, Lancashire, Swansea, and the beautiful one of the London unit with its full-rigged ship and a favouring wind to suggest hope and courage for a year full of possibilities.

Chester, her Dean, her Mayor, her education authorities, welcomed the women teachers. And the laity, inclined in its superciliousness to view teachers—and indeed other professional classes—as persons dealing in swelling phrases, but much occupied with their own pay, status and prospects, wandered in and listened during the public sessions.

The time was not lost. It is excellent discipline to leave one's own grievances sometimes and to listen to those of other people. Besides, as an individual, one may only have one grievance—one person, one grievance! Two make one intolerable, three are absurd. But a body of people, organized people, may have many grievances, and it is right to make them known. The women teachers have indeed a grievance or two. Some of them we ourselves share. The franchise of the United Kingdom is limited and unfair, women teachers are still penalized for their sex in the matter of their pay and promotion. They are still subject to inequitable interference as regards marriage and home-making.

Then the women teachers, too, in addition to their claim for justice as regards liberties, status and opportunities, have at heart the things necessary and good for their school children—healthy buildings, proper equipment, personal care, beautiful things to see, varied things to learn to think about. A woman from a northern industrial town, telling of her airy, well-lighted, up-to-date school in amongst a slum population, spoke of the girl pupil wishing for "electric light in my house when I grow up", and the little aside, "I let them switch on the light for me—different children each time—they do so love to do it!" brought a ripple of tender, amused laughter from listeners.

The problem of the rural school run on economical lines as regards staffing, accommodation, and amenities was not unnoticed. One remembers Léon Frapié's novel, *L'institutrice*, which gives a sunless glimpse of the loneliness and difficulties of the schoolmistress in a small French village: and in England, as a delegate remarked, "the country is very beautiful, but, as a teacher, don't go there for a rest!" No indeed. Listen to Jane Eyre:—

I continued the labours of the village school as actively and faithfully as I could. It was truly hard work at first. . . . Their amazement at me, my rules and ways, once subsided, I found some of these rustics wake up into sharp-witted girls enough. Many showed themselves obliging and amiable too, and I discovered amongst them not a few examples of natural politeness and innate self-respect, as well as of excellent capacity, that won both my goodwill and my admiration.

On the third day of the Conference it was well proven that to very many of the women teachers there were things that ranked higher even than bigger salaries, smaller classes, better equipment and a later school-leaving age. One of the finest and most far-sighted speeches was made upon the League of Nations, by a Past-President who supported the belief that teachers can best promote the growth of peace ideals by framing syllabuses from an international rather than a national standpoint. And when a prophet of smoke abatement spoke, regretting fervently the limited scope of the Smoke Abatement Act of 1926, one listened and then fell into dreams of blue skies and children with straight limbs, in a lovely land where coughing and sneezing and soot and sanatoria were not. It is hard to believe that the

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

President: Miss ELEANOR RATHBORN, C.C., J.P. Hon. Treasurer: MISS MACADAM.
Parliamentary Secretary: Mrs. HOWTON.
General Secretary: MISS HANCOCK.

Offices: 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W.1.
Telephone: Victoria 6188.

EQUAL FRANCHISE DEMONSTRATION, Queen's Hall, 8th March, 1928.

Since it has been announced that the Prime Minister has promised to speak at the Demonstration applications for tickets have rapidly increased, with the result that the number of seats is now limited. We therefore urge those Societies who have not already applied to do so immediately.

By kind permission of Miss Reeves, a practice of songs will be held at the Minerva Club, 56 Hunter Street, W.C.1, on Wednesday next, 18th January, at 8.30 p.m. We hope very much that all societies in and near London will send representatives to this practice, as we are anxious the community singing on 8th March should be a real success.

It is hoped to have a record display of banners, and we rely on our Societies to send them.

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING, 1928.

HOSPITALITY.

Many of the delegates to our Annual Council Meeting come from a considerable distance, which entails heavy railway fares, and we are anxious to obtain hospitality for such delegates, so that no Society should be prevented from being represented at this very important Council Meeting on account of expense. We should be very grateful to receive at Headquarters offers of hospitality from members and friends as soon as possible together with particulars as to whether bed and breakfast only, or late dinner as well, can be offered. Such help on the part of those who live in London is very greatly appreciated and quite invaluable.

PROXY DELEGATES.

Where it is quite impossible for Societies to send a delegate or their full quota of delegates to the Council Meeting, Headquarters is anxious to arrange for proxy delegates, and would be glad to hear from any members willing to act in this capacity. The Society for which a proxy delegate is required supplies the delegate with tickets, and full instructions with regard to voting, etc., and the proxy delegate is asked to send an account of the Council proceedings to the Society represented.

THE

INTERNATIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE NEWS

(Jus Suffragii)

Is an international record of the women's movement, which is unique in its scope. Every woman with a wide interest in world events ought to be a subscriber. Send 6/- for a twelve months' subscription (post free) to—

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CROSBY HALL.

A CLUB AND HALL OF RESIDENCE now open for WOMEN GRADUATES OF ALL NATIONALITIES.
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THE WARDEN, CROSBY HALL, CHEYNE WALK, S.W. 3.

old archæan sayings about unequal franchise could come to one with any fresh conviction. But it was so: and the mouths of the young and the unfranchised, perfected wisdom in their remarks on the present position, which Mr. Baldwin says is "rather hard to defend!"

Income tax, married teachers, playing fields and cinemas, with other matters, came to the front before this "Why?" Conference on the Dee had ended, with real gratitude to those who had done so very much to make the reunion a possibility and a success.

Whatever may be said of the hardships and injustices which sometimes fall to the share of the teacher, she has at least one very real consolation and pride. Her work *really matters*. Everybody's does not! And the worse her conditions, often the more important is her personality. In the schools of the people, "the firm but kindly hand that set her feet in learning's pleasant ways" is long remembered by the girl as a guide amidst the milestones of the later years—

"And when the world shall link your names
With gracious lives and manners fine,
The teacher shall assert her claim,
And proudly whisper, 'These were mine!'"

T. OUPIE.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORS IN LONDON.

The register on which the London County Council elections will be fought next March includes the names of 6,344 more women than men out of a total electorate of 1,949,125, a decrease in the electorate since 1924 of 863. In that year men local government voters outnumbered the women by 5,263. Now the position is reversed as the increase in the number of men voters is only 11,315, and the women have increased by 22,922. In 35 divisions women voters outnumber the men, and in 26 men electors predominate.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"RELIGIOUS TESTS FOR PROBATION WORKERS."

MADAM,—Your issue of the 16th Dec. contains two references to this Mission's connection with Probation Work, both evidently due to misunderstanding. The agents of the C.E.T.S. do undertake the supervision of any case entrusted to them, *regardless of Creed*, and they do call in the assistance of the particular religious bodies to which the probationers belong. A regards Miss Royden's threefold protest, I should say (1) for 51 years the C.E.T.S. has given this service to the State, having created and developed the system; (2) any other organization could have done the same; and (3) it is no more "a degradation" to demand that these Ministers shall be communicants than to insist that Bishops, Priests and Deacons shall be proper members of the Church.

H. H. AYSBOUGH,
Secretary.C.E.T.S. House, 40 Marsham Street,
Westminster, S.W. 1.

[There is no misunderstanding; if the matter had not been quite clear already it would have been made so by the last sentence in the above letter. It is to these denominational tests for public servants that objection is taken. No one denies that where the C.E.T.S. agent is the only Probation Officer available at a Court he may be entrusted with all probation cases, but it is a question whether this does not rather intensify the unsatisfactoriness of the position. This correspondence must now cease.—Ed.]

WOMEN GOVERNORS OF BOYS SCHOOLS.

MADAM,—In this week's issue of THE WOMAN'S LEADER I notice that you wish to know whether Mrs. Simon and Mrs. Mary Smith are the first women governors of boys' schools.

I have been a Governor of the Colchester Royal Grammar School (a King Edward VI Grammar School of 600 boys, 200 of them boarders) since 1924. I was *Chairman of the Governors* for one year. In 1926 Dame Catherine Hunt was appointed as a second woman governor.

There is no part of the work in education which I enjoy more than this work in a large boys' school and I think all boys' schools—especially where there are boarders as in the case of our Grammar School—should have some women on their governing bodies. I believe that Manchester and Colchester are at present the only two towns where boys' schools have women governors.

The headmaster of the Colchester Grammar School wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* to correct the statement that Mrs. Shena Simon and Mrs. Smith were the first women governors of boys' schools. No doubt you will correct this mistake in your next issue.

CATHARINE BUCHANAN ALDERTON.

24 Cambridge Road,
Colchester.

COMING EVENTS.

EQUAL POLITICAL RIGHTS CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE.

FEB. 8, 8 p.m. Caxton Hall. A "King's Speech" Meeting. Chair: Viscountess Rhondda. Speakers: Mrs. Abbott, Miss Froud, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, Miss N. Stewart Parnell. Admission free.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

East Lewisham W.C.A. JAN. 20. 2.45. Courthill Road Hall. Whist Drive in aid of funds.

PEOPLE'S LEAGUE OF HEALTH.

JAN. 25. 6 p.m. 11 Chandos Street, W. 1. First of series of lectures on "The Mind, and what we ought to know about it." Dr. H. Crichton-Miller. Tickets from the Secretary, 12 Stratford Place, W. 1.

WOMEN'S ADULT SCHOOL (Highgate Road Branch).

JAN. 16. 8 p.m. 69 Bartholomew Road. Miss Auld, "Equal Franchise."

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PUBLIC SPEAKING.—Classes, Lectures, Private Lessons, Speech Club.—Miss Lucy Bell, Minerva Club, Brunswick Square, W.C. 1.

FOR SALE AND WANTED.

SALE.—IRISH LINEN TRAYCLOTHS.—Fine Snow-white, real good quality. Fitted with Dainty Scalloped Edge, 13½ × 19½ ins., 1s. 2d. each. Also Snow-white Irish Hemstitched Linen Traycloths, heavy, strong quality, 14½ × 20½ ins. Only 1s. each. Larger size, 17 × 23 ins., 1s. 6d. each. All these cloths will wear for years. Complete Sale List FREE.—HUTTON'S, 41 Main Street, Larne, Ulster.

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SECOND-HAND CLOTHING wanted to buy for cash; costumes, skirts, boots, underclothes, curtains, lounge suits, trousers, and children's clothing of every description; parcels sent will be valued and cash sent by return.—Mrs. Russell 100 Raby Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. (Stamped addressed envelope for reply.)

POST WANTED.

LADY (29) desires PRIVATE SECRETARIAL POST; shorthand, typewriting, accounts; experienced; highest references; drive a car.—Box 1,461, THE WOMAN'S LEADER, 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.

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FOR BUSY WOMEN.—Soiled Linen, Stockings, etc., washed and mended; moderate terms; send parcels, Miss Syred, 204 Tong Street, Dudley Hill, Bradford.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS, Votes for some Women.—PUBLIC MEETING on Equal Franchise. Speakers: Suffragette Ex-prisoners. Monday, 6th February, 8 p.m., Essex Hall. Admission free, reserved seats 1s. and 2s. 6d. SUFFRAGETTE DINNER, 5s., Craigs Court Restaurant, Saturday, 4th February, 7 p.m.—Tickets for both from Mrs. Elsa Gye, Adsett, Ridgeway, Mill Hill.

LONDON AND NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE, 35 Marsham Street, Westminster. Secretary, Miss P. Strachey. Expert advice on what to do with your girls. Addresses to schools and societies in London and Provinces by arrangement.

EDUCATED HOME HELPS BUREAU, 100 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W. 1 (new address), requires and supplies educated women for all domestic work. Registration: Employers, 2s. 6d.; workers, 1s. Suiting fee: Employers, 7s. 6d.; workers, 2s. (Victoria 5940.)

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 15th January. 3.30, Sir Frank Dyson, Astronomer Royal. 6.30, The Rev. Harold Anson.

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