

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

Organ of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, 55, Berners Street, London, W.1.

VOL. IV., No. 5.

May 15th, 1918.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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.

SHOULD WE ABOLISH THE POOR-LAW ?

BY VIRGINIA M. CRAWFORD.

(Poor Law Guardian, St. Marylebone.)

The need for the abolition of the Poor Law has been brought once more before the nation by a Report made by the Local Government Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction. The aim of the Committee was not a purely destructive one. The truth is that the Poor Law is one of the hindrances to the creation of a strong unified Ministry of Health, the urgent need for which is recognised on every side if the babies of the nation are to be saved and the children to grow up healthy and efficient. Nevertheless a variety of administrative interests have hitherto blocked the way and the Poor Law is one of them.

When nine years ago, the Royal Commission on the Poor Law reported emphatically in favour of its abolition—although disunited as to ways and means—one of the main arguments used was the perpetual overlapping of authorities and the wasteful duplication of officials that the existence of the workhouse entailed. In the interval matters in this respect have grown much worse, not only through the ever-increasing number of persons assisted through Municipal and County Council Authorities, but by the creation of a number of new Authorities, such as Old Age Pension and Insurance Committees and the more recent War Pensions Committees. Hence the tangle of our local administration grows year by year more bewilderingly complicated, and the Committee called into existence last July to advise as to how a Ministry of Health could be fitted into the scheme, has pronounced in favour of the abolition of the Poor Law as an essential preliminary. Otherwise, indeed, a propor-

tion of the babies and the children and the sick will still remain outside the purview of the new Ministry.

Apart from the actual duplication of services that the existence of the Poor Law compels, there is the conflict of spirit between the old deterrent ideal of the workhouse and the new constructive, sympathetic ideal of Health Authorities. The original spirit of the Poor Law, which still survives in many forms, is to spend as little as possible on the poor, and to make that little distasteful—or, to use the accepted term, deterrent. It has always put the saving of the rates in the first place. It has habitually been penny wise and pound foolish where the health of the nation is concerned. It has done next to nothing to prevent disease, to reduce infant mortality, to protect childhood. Nearly all its reforms—and it would be absurd to deny that many beneficent reforms have been carried out in the last half century—have been forced upon it by public opinion or by the compelling powers of the Local Government Board. And in spite of these reforms there still remains a pauper taint in all institutions run by the Poor Law which renders them highly unpopular among the bulk of the people who have to make use of them. It is a real hardship that many of the sick poor can only receive treatment in a Workhouse Infirmary; that lunatics have to pass through the Workhouse wards, that the old people under seventy on Out Relief are subject to a variety of inquisitorial regulations from which the old people over seventy with Old Age Pensions are wholly exempt. For centuries recourse to the Poor Law has been

held to be a disgrace, and in my opinion nothing we can do now can so exorcise the old spirit of Bumbledom as to bring the Poor Law into line with the constructive, helpful scientific spirit in which we all wish the work of a Ministry of Health to be done.

Women, especially, have had little cause for gratitude to the Poor Law. The treatment of widows on Out Relief has been scandalously inadequate, and that of deserted wives and girl-mothers often deplorably callous. Undoubtedly the barrack system of the big modern Workhouse has lain more heavily on women than on men, and the breaking up of their little homes in order to come into the "house" is a more acute misery. I find it difficult to understand that women should wish to defend the system.

The Local Government Committee now suggests that the main duties of Boards of Guardians should be transferred to existing County Council or municipal authorities. A great deal of this could be done with comparatively little re-adjustment, as the machinery is already in existence. The children now educated by the Guardians would be educated with all other children by the County Councils; the necessary infirmaries for the many sick poor who cannot find accommodation in our voluntary hospitals would be provided by the Public Health Committees of the Councils, and to their care would also fall the maternity cases and the aged and infirm poor for whom institutional treatment is necessary. Lunatics and mentally deficient persons, for whom the mixed workhouse has been so singularly unsuited, would pass under the Asylums Committees of the Councils, while the supervision of Vaccination would naturally devolve upon the Medical Officers of Health. In these various ways the great majority of Poor Law cases would be provided for, without any need for their becoming technically paupers. But there would still remain certain categories of persons for whom the Report proposes the creation of two new committees of Town or Borough Councils. The first of these would be a Prevention of Unemployment and Training Committee and it would have to carry out measures for dealing with local unemployment and for enforcing suitable training where necessary. The other would be a Home Assistance Committee, which would deal

with the large variety of cases that require public assistance in their own homes and should co-ordinate all such help given. This Committee would undoubtedly have important and often difficult duties to perform, and should attract skilled philanthropic workers. They will need not only first hand knowledge of the district, but much tact and judgment, for it is this Home Assistance Committee which will have to act as the connecting link between the family to be helped and the numerous institutions among which its members may be dispersed. Needless to say, women must be well represented upon it, and every such Committee should have on it one or two Catholics, for it is certain that a considerable proportion of the poor who will come under its authority will be members of the Catholic Church. As regards the personnel of the Committee this can either be provided by increasing the numbers of Town and Borough Councils, or by co-opting outside suitable persons, but the principle of direct election is far preferable to co-option.

This then, in brief, is the scheme put forward. That it is highly unpopular with the majority of Poor Law Guardians goes without saying, yet viewed impartially it suggests no insuperable difficulties. It is, in the main, a re-shuffling of administrative duties that have become hopelessly entangled. And it would seem to be a matter of common sense where simplification is urgent, to suppress the antiquated and unpopular Poor Law, with its pauper disqualifications, and to give increased power to more modern and progressive public bodies.

CATHOLIC CITIZEN FUND.

As everyone is aware, the price of paper and printing has increased enormously of late. We are very anxious not to raise the price of the "Catholic Citizen." Miss Whately is therefore organizing a Jumble Sale for the Paper Fund. We hope every member will contribute by sending a subscription or articles for the Sale. All kinds of men's, women's and children's clothing, boots and shoes, household furniture, kitchen utensils, china and glass, are required. Sacks of goods can be sent by rail or Carter Paterson, addressed to Miss Whately (Room 22), 55, Berners Street, Oxford Street, London, W.1.

NOTES AND COMMENTS. QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY VOTE.

It is greatly to be regretted that Miss Nina Boyle's nomination papers were not in order. As our readers are no doubt aware, Miss Boyle was standing for Parliament for the Keighley constituency, and the Returning Officer expressed his intention of accepting the nomination. Mrs. Philip Snowden and Miss Margaret Bondfield have been added to the list of the I.L.P. candidates. We hope that the day is not far distant when we shall have women M.P's. at Westminster.

Resolutions demanding the withdrawal of No. 40 D., D.O.R.A., have been sent to the Prime Minister, the War Office and the Catholic M.P's. by the Executive of the C.W.S.S. The Worthing, Hastings and Liverpool Branches have sent a similar resolution to the War Office and the local M.P's. The C.W.S.S. also supported the Women's Freedom League at the mass meeting, held at the Central Hall, Westminster, on April 29th, to demand the immediate withdrawal of No. 40 D. The resolution was carried unanimously by the vast audience. The Society will also be represented on the deputation organized by the Association for Social and Moral Hygiene, which it is hoped Lord Milner will consent to receive.

The scurrilous lies circulated against the W.A.A.C. have been, as indeed we knew they would be, finally refuted by the Commission that was sent to France to enquire into the matter. The W.A.A.C. is now admitted to be an honour to women and to the Army. H.M. the Queen has assumed the title of Commandant in Chief of the Corps.

The Catholic Social Guild has issued, in pamphlet form, His Eminence Cardinal Bourne's great pastoral. Addressed in the first place to Catholics, it is in point of fact a message to the nation. We have no doubt all our readers are familiar with this message from his Eminence, nevertheless we advise them to buy copies for distribution among their non-Catholic friends. (The Nation's Crisis, 3½d. post free. C.S.G., 1, Victoria Street, S.W.)

A woman who has reached the age of thirty will have a vote:

a. If she is the occupier either as owner or tenant of a house or flat, or one of two joint occupiers.

b. If she occupies any land or business premises of the annual value of not less than £5 for each occupier.

c. If she rents an unfurnished room, or rooms. According to Miss Chrystal Macmillan's reading of the bill the room or rooms must be of a yearly value of £5, but there appears to be some doubt as to whether a lodger will not be qualified however low the rent of the room may be.

d. If she is a university graduate. This also applies to Oxford and Cambridge provided she has passed the final examination, and kept the necessary period of residence for a man to obtain a degree.

e. If she is the wife of a man who is a Local Government elector.

f. If she is serving away from home with the Naval or Military Forces, and would otherwise be qualified. The qualifying period in this case being reduced to one month.

The qualifying period for the Spring Register is for the six months ending January 15th, and for the Autumn Register for the six months ending July 15th. The qualifying period for the first Register is from October 16th, 1917, to April 15th, 1918. The new register comes into force on October 1st, 1918. There will be a house to house canvass, and when the list is complete it will be posted up at all churches and chapels, post offices and public buildings from June 15th to June 29th. Every woman who is entitled to a vote should ascertain that her name is on the Register, and if it is not she should apply at once to the Town Clerk.

Miss Chrystal Macmillan's pamphlet giving full details of the qualifications for England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland is on sale at the office, 55, Berners Street, W.1., price 3½d. post free.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

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Hon. Editor MISS LEONORA de ALBERTI.
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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL RE-CONSTRUCTION.

It is surely a sign of the eternal buoyancy of the human spirit that in spite of the darkness that has come upon us mankind can look beyond the horror of these times to the world that is to come. On all sides there is a widespread determination that that new world shall be a different place to the world we tolerated before the war. The scheme of social reconstruction put forward by the Interdenominational Conference of Social Service Unions comes therefore most opportunely. The scheme has been drawn up by representatives of ten religious bodies, including representatives of the Catholic Social Guild; and realising the importance that such a scheme should not alienate progressive minds one reads it with jealous eyes, and a certain anxiety. Not that we have anything to fear from true Christian principles, but from past experience we almost expect to find hoary prejudices, common to Christian and pagan alike, set forth in pious terms as Christian teaching. It is with relief, therefore, that we find there is nothing in the scheme itself which is likely to arouse the antagonism of the advance guard. It is true, as the Bishop of Oxford says in his introduction, that though an agreed scheme must be too moderate for adventurous spirits, "the most adventurous or progressive spirits will recognise that it would be an enormous gain, if it could be said that the main forces of the Christian name in England were agreed upon such a social platform as is here presented." The problems dealt with are those with which suffragists are familiar—the right to a

living wage, the housing question, the right of every individual to education, to rest and recreation and self-development. For no man or woman should be doomed to an unbroken life of toil. It would almost seem that we Christians have stood by while Christian principles have been trampled on, doing homage to brotherly love with our lips, while in our hearts we echoed the words: "Am I my brother's keeper?" We find in this scheme, too, stress laid on the truly Christian principle that immorality is as sinful in man as it is in woman. That doctrine, at least, suffragists have cried on the housetops.

This scheme of reconstruction the Catholic Social Guild has issued in book form,* with lucid explanations and comments for the use of study circles, and other students. Unluckily the commentator or the editor has a strong anti-feminist bias, and the brief section dealing with the woman worker will have the vast majority of the woman's movement against it. He does not like the woman worker, and he does not, I should say, believe in her. He lays down the principle that every man, married or unmarried, is entitled to receive from his employer a family wage—sufficient to support a wife and four or five children—but that no woman, whatever her dependents, is so entitled. Even the widow he tells us, is not entitled, in strict justice, to a family wage, for she has not to provide for her husband. We must be forgiven if we see in this weighting of the

* A Christian Social Crusade, 6d. net. C.S.G., 1, Victoria Street.

scales against the widow the result not of Christian thought, but of male prejudice. He further tells us that women cannot work with the same regularity and endurance as men. If the writer has in mind married women workers it should be mentioned, otherwise the accuracy of the statement is indeed questionable. Speaking with a fairly wide experience of professional women I may say that I have yet to meet the man who, in normal times, works as incessantly as many women of my acquaintance. For a woman worker more often than not combines many domestic duties with her professional or industrial labours. There is no doubt, however, that the health of many women of the industrial classes has been undermined by their being permanently overworked and underfed. The objectionable section closes with the dogmatic assertion that the industrial employment of women is a distinct menace to the Christian home. Again, if the writer had in mind the employment of married women he should have plainly stated it.

It is to be hoped that the Catholic Social Guild will see that this section is amended and brought into relation with the position held by the woman of the twentieth century.

The result of laying down the principle that every man is entitled to a family wage, but no woman would surely be, that wherever possible women would be employed instead of men. It is only fair to our anti-feminist commentator to say that he does see that there may be some danger to men in the proposal.

For the rest the book is full of useful information, and naturally does not fall into the error common to books of this description, in putting before us the rights of the workers and others it does not omit to mention the duties which should accompany such rights. But there is one omission I cannot refrain from drawing attention to—on page 82, among the remedies enumerated to counteract the undermining of family life, we read, "Christian mothers, etc"; no doubt the etc. stands for fathers, but, although in the building of a Christian home the mother is the most important factor, is it quite respectful to fathers to dismiss them with an etc.?

L. DE ALBERTI.

LONDON AND BRANCH NOTES.

55, Berners Street, W.1. Hours, 3.30—5.30; Saturdays, 10.30—12.30. Other times by appointment. Holy Mass will be offered at 10.30, at St. Patrick's, Soho, on Sunday, June 2nd, for the intentions of the C.W.S.S., that is for peace and for all who have died in the war.

Office closed for Whitsuntide from May 17th to Wednesday, May 22nd.

We ask the prayers of our readers for Mrs. H. D. Clarke, an earnest member of the C.W.S.S., who died recently.

We thank all who helped to sell tickets and who sent donations to the Suffrage Celebration Fund, earmarked for the C.W.S.S. Our share amounts to £22 13s.

In response to our offer to send speakers to explain the Franchise Bill to the women of various London parishes, we have sent, or are sending, speakers to Eltham, Haverstock Hill, Highgate, Brondesbury Park, Eden Grove, St. John's Wood, Rotherhithe, Bow, and St. Ignatius', Stamford Hill. Mrs. Anderson, Mrs. Finlayson Gauld, and Miss Kathleen FitzGerald, B.A., have been kindly undertaking these lectures.

Sister K. M. Burnman, one of our earliest members, has been awarded the Mons. Star for her work in Brussels. She was one of a party of trained nurses sent to Belgium on August 14th, 1914, by the Catholic Women's League.

Mrs. V. M. Crawford is serving on the Surrey District Committee for fixing agricultural wages under the Corn Production Act.

Members will be interested to hear that the Editor's criticism of the objectionable Cinema play, "Where are my children?" is reprinted in the March issue of the "Woman's Outlook," the organ of the Women's Enfranchisement Association of South Africa.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Hon. Sec., Mrs. Murphy, 12, Anson Street, Liverpool.

A meeting was held on April 17th, at 8 p.m., at 18, Colquitt Street, Liverpool. A most enjoyable paper was read by Miss D. M. Hughes, B.A., Miss Barry, London Secretary, afterwards addressing the assembly.

Members are reminded that the next meeting takes place on the 15th inst., at the same address and time as previously. On this occasion a debate on "Equal pay for men and women workers" will be held.

STIRLING BRANCH.—The Hon. Sec., Mrs. Bentley Murray, is on the Committee of the Stirling Communal Kitchen, and has been organizing a course of Cooking Demonstrations, especially adapted to present times.

OFFICE RENT FUND.

Owing to pressure on our space, the list of Subscribers is held over to next month. More Donations are urgently needed and should be addressed to

B. GADSBY,

55, Berners Street, C.W.S.S.
Oxford Street, W.1.

THE STATUS OF THE MARRIED WOMAN IN EARLY ENGLISH TIMES.

PART II.

By the 10th century the social position of women had in every way improved. Instead of waiting at table, they sat side by side with their men-folk, they were allowed to be present at the *witena-gemot*, they had acquired the right to dispose of themselves in marriage instead of being sold by their fathers, they had established their rights of property and separate responsibility for crime, and the queens had obtained the full rights and dignities of royalty, for, in A.D. 856, for the first time in English history, the queen, Judith, had been publicly crowned, and sat by the king's side on State occasions. This development is rightly ascribed by Thrupp to "the pains which the clergy took with their education, and to the intellectual accomplishments which they acquired at a time when the male sex could study little but war.

3. We now come to the third heading, the Marriage Ceremonies. It is well to note that at one period in our history, a religious ceremony, though recommended, was not essential to the validity of the marriage, for we have already seen that no priest was allowed to be present at a second marriage, and yet it was valid. (See Theod. Pen. ix. 14, 15. . . . "Non dimittat tamen uxorem.") The ceremony of espousals consisted in the ancient custom of hand-fasting and the mutual consent of the parties to be husband and wife at some future date. The man had to give a "wed" or security that he would fulfil all pecuniary obligations and treat the woman well, and his friends had to guarantee the fulfilment of these promises. The woman's "foresprecas" or guardians had to guarantee her good conduct. From the word "wed" we get our modern name "wedding" for the ceremony; the friends of the bridegroom are represented by the "best man"; and there are some curious modern survivals of the ancient custom of hand-fasting, for an instance of which see Thomas Hardy's "The Well-beloved." The marriage ceremony differed but little from the espousals. The foster-lean was paid to the father, when he "gave away" the bride to the bridegroom, and the ring was transferred from the bride's right hand to the left, to

show she was no longer a maid. The father gave the bride's shoe to the bridegroom, who touched her on the head with it as sign that he became her master. This custom probably had its origin in the fact that a master placed his foot on the neck of a slave to show that he accepted his services. In connection with this, the modern practice of throwing an old shoe after the bridal carriage is interesting. If the bride was single and chaste, the priest presented her with a wreath of myrtle or olive leaves, and the benediction was pronounced under a veil or care-cloth held over the bride and bridegroom. These survive in the wreath and veil now worn by unmarried brides. They were not used at the marriages of widows.

The Church insisted that the marriage service should be public, and that, except in the case of second marriages, the benediction of the Church should be given. Marriages at first took place in the porch; but later they were permitted to be celebrated in the church, and there was legislation to that effect in the reign of Edward VI.

A manuscript Salisbury manual contains the following form of marriage:—

"N. wil tow have this woman to thin wife, and love here and worschipe here, and hold hire and kepe here, in seknes and in hele, as an housbonde owyth to his wif, etc." Respondet vir 'Volo.'

'N. wil tow have this man to thin housbonde to be buxum to hym and serve hym and love hym and worschipe hym, and kepe hym in syknes and in hele, as a wif owyth to do here housbonde, etc?' 'Volo.'

'I, N. take the N. to myn wedded wyf, to have and to holde from this day forward, for beter for wers, for richere for porere, for fayrere for fowlere, in seknes and in helthe, til deth us departe, and if holy chirche it will ordeyne, and ther to I plithe the myn trewth.'

'I, N. take the N. to myn wedded housbonde, to have and to holde from this day forward, for beter for wers, for richere for porere, for fayrere for fowlere, in seknes and in hele, to be boner and buxum as a wyf owyd to her husbond, etc.'

There are different forms according to the

York, Hereford and Bangor uses. In the York, the priest asks "Who gyves me this wyfe?" The Sarum Manual contains a promise by the bride "to be bonoure and buxum in bed and at borde," which is glossed "meeke and obedient." In the Danish form used in the more Danish parts of England, the hands of the contracting parties were joined by the bride's father, who said: "I join this woman to you in honour to be your wife, with a right to half of your bed and keys, and to a third of your goods acquired or to be acquired, according to the law of the land and of St. Eric. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." This was a more advantageous settlement for the wife, but the Sarum and other like forms show still further advance in the promise of the bridegroom to endow his wife with all his goods: "With all my gold y the endowe," or "with all my worldely cattelle I the endowe," which is an advance on the curious addition to the form in the Salisbury Manual: "Et dato annulo dicat sacerdos. 'Loo this gold and silver is leyd down in signifyng that the woman schal have hure dower, thi godes, zif heo abide after thy discas.' (Fol. 17.) This form postpones the endowment to her widowhood, whereas the Sarum and the present form make over the husband's goods to the wife at the marriage ceremony.

4. There remains now only the question of the grounds of the dissolution of a marriage. In the 7th century the Anglo-Saxon husband had lost the right of putting away his wife without cause shown, but the causes adduced were most insufficient. Towards the end of this century it was declared that it was not sufficient ground for repudiation that the wife was either barren, deformed, fetid, silly, passionate, luxurious, rude, an habitual drunkard, a glutton, a gad-about, quarrelsome or abusive (Ex. Eegb. cxxi.). It was to the clergy that women were indebted for the limits imposed on the husband's power of repudiation, but the clergy moved slowly. In the Laws of Northumbrian Priests, whereas for unlawful marriage the man is obliged to *abstain* and make "bôt" (No. 61), yet "If any one forsake his lawful wife, as long as she lives, and unlawfully wed another woman, let him not have God's mercy, unless he make 'bôt!' There is no mention of abstaining. Women, when powerful enough, also exercised the

power of repudiation; for example, Gunhilda dissolved her marriage with Henry, Emperor of Germany, who had accused her of infidelity (Will. Malm. I. 11. c. 12. s. 188). Separations were allowed for adultery, idolatry, leprosy and such grave evils. As to divorce and subsequent re-marriage, there seems to have been some hesitation on the part of the Anglo-Saxon authorities. The following is an extract from the ambiguous answer given by Archbishop Egbert to the question whether re-marriage were allowable after the dissolution of a marriage for a good reason, such as the infirmity of a husband or wife:—"Audi—'quod Deus conjunxit, homo non separet.' Et idem per mutatione, necessitas legem frangit. Quid enim fecit David, quando esuriet? et tamen sine peccato est. Ergo in ambiguis non est ferenda sententia—sed concilia necesse est periclitari pro salute aliorum hac conditione interposita ut ei qui se continentiae devovit, nullo modo concedatur secundas inire nuptias, vivente priore."

The Liber Pœnitentialis of Archbishop Theodore contains the following regulations: "Si mulier discesserit a viro suo, despiciens eum, nolens revertere et reconciliari viro, post v annos, cum consensu episcopi, ipse aliam accipiat uxorem. Si continens esse non poterit, iii annos pœniteat, quia, juxta sententiam Domini, moechus comprobatur." (xix., 23.)

"Si cujus uxor in captivitatem per vim ducta fuerit, et redimi non poterit, post annos vii. potest alteram accipere." (2b. 24.) The "Confessionale" of Egbert, Archbishop of York, contains the following:—"Si uxor alicujus viri adulteraverit, marito licet eam dimittere, et aliam ducere, si ea prima sit uxor; si secunda sit vel tertia, non licet ei tunc aliam ducere." (19.)

It is hardly necessary to add that the laws against adultery fell more heavily on the woman than on the man. (See Cnut's Domas, 55, etc., etc.)

These instances of divorces being allowed by the chief of the clergy in England should be a warning to those who would argue from isolated laws and regulations issued even by prelates to the general teaching of the Church. This is the usual method of those who would unjustly accuse the Church of supporting the worn-out and fast disappearing theory of the married woman's subservience to her husband.

MAGDALEN MÆVE WEALE.

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Wed., May 22nd.	...	"The Medical Profession for Women."	Lady Barrett, M.D.	8 p.m.
Sat., June 1st	...	"The Teaching Profession for Women."	Miss F. C. Johnson	4-30 p.m.
Sat., June 8th	...	"Ireland to-day and some of the causes of present discontent."	Miss Christina O'Connor	4-30 p.m.

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British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union.

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Caxton Hall, Westminster.

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Subjects: Equal Suffrage; Equal Pay for Equal Work, and
 Endowment of Motherhood; Equal Parental Rights and Status of
 Illegitimate Child; Nationality of Married Women; Prostitution
 and an Equal Moral Standard; Divorce; Women Police; Women
 in the Crown Colonies; Women in relation to the Press and to
 Political Parties, etc.

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 ney, Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, Miss Damer
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 and others.

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