

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

The Cruiser Question.

As we write the British delegates are not yet arrived at Geneva. Until they do arrive, and have made known any modifications in the British position which the Cabinet may have authorized, it is premature to say that the conference has failed. But public opinion is not hopeful. The details of the British-Japanese agreement have been known to the Americans for a week, and they have given no indication that they are prepared to give effect to the hopes held out by the chief of their delegation that the American demand can be adjusted to meet it. As our readers know, we have during the last weeks freely criticized the position taken up by our Government, and in particular our naval experts. We feel the freer therefore to say now that the Americans are showing themselves difficult to deal with. They are as a nation ready with phrases expressive of the most enlightened idealism, and perhaps on this account believe sincerely that their actions must express the ideals referred to in the phrases. This being so, they tend to conduct negotiation on the basis that every point of view which differs from their own is militarist, hypocritical, and not to be entertained for a moment. In the present case, the problem is made more difficult by the fact that they have been badly served, from the point of view of ascertaining the truth, by their Press, and that the French are openly declaring that they hope the English will "win", on the ground that the more cruisers we get the more they can have themselves! To put it mildly, this is not likely to clear the air; in fact it must lead us to suppose that the setting out of our case has really been in some degree misleading.

The Assembly of the League of Nations.

The agenda of the next session of the Assembly of the League of Nations is now obtainable. It gives no indication of the order in which the questions will be taken, but their very titles are reminders to us that besides the League's definite work for peace, labelled as such, its day to day routine, and the working of its committees are ensuring a continual growth of international co-operation and understanding; and it is this, as much as if not more than, actual discussions on armaments, which creates that informed public opinion from which alone the will to peace can spring. Among the questions down for discussion are Miss Jeppe's final report on protection of women and children in the Near East, the Slavery Convention, the report of the Committee on Traffic in Women and Children, the report of the Child Welfare Committee, and the resolution on Alcoholism, proposed by the Finnish, Polish, and Swedish delegations, whose consideration was postponed from the last session of the Assembly to this one. . . . We remind our readers that on Monday, 10th October, a meeting will be held at which Dame Edith

Lyttelton, British substitute delegate to the Assembly, will explain and report on the session which is about to take place.

Equal Franchise—When?

In one important respect the answer given by Mr. Churchill to Miss Wilkinson's question on 21st July as to whether the Prime Minister would reconsider his decision not to introduce an Equal Franchise Bill this autumn, is profoundly disturbing. He stated that provision could be made in "the Franchise Bill for any arrangements which may be necessary in connection with the preparation of the Register to enable new voters to vote at a General Election in 1929." His answer to a supplementary question as to whether the Government intend that women under thirty years of age shall vote at the next election was somewhat more reassuring. He said: "Statements on this subject have been made by the Prime Minister, and I have nothing to add to the declarations of the Government." Fortunately the Prime Minister, in answer to a question from Mr. Pethick-Lawrence on the occasion of his famous statement on 13th April, with regard to his intention to introduce Equal Franchise legislation next session, as to whether the Government "intends to carry the Bill into law sufficiently early in the next session so as to allow time for the new voters to be put on next summer register of the year 1928," said: "Yes, but that is rather a difficult matter, technically. I would reply in this way, that should the life of this Parliament last its normal length, there will be no difficulty in the new voters being able to vote. The only case in which the new voters would not be able to vote would be in the event of any unexpected, shall I say, catastrophe, bringing the life of this Parliament to an end." Would the Prime Minister consider an election "unexpected" if it occurred, shall we say, in October or November of next year? In the fourth year of a Parliament the general public would certainly not do so; and if such an event should take place, without the Government's having arranged for a Franchise Bill to be introduced early enough for the new voters to be on the register by that time, this would inevitably be considered by women's organizations as a betrayal of his pledge.

Women in the Wesleyan Church.

On going to press last week we were able to record the bare fact of the rejection by the Wesleyan Conference at Bradford of a proposal to admit women to the Wesleyan Ministry. Further consideration of this unfortunate decision—arrived at by a vote of 239 to 209 in favour of an amendment to refer the matter back with a view to further development of the existing deaconate for women—recalls the disappointing fact that last year's representative session affirmed what this year's representative session has denied, and that the proposal last year was only prevented from becoming effective by the subsequent veto of the pastoral session. There is no doubt that the attitude of those who are opposing progress in this direction is to a large extent reinforced by the assumption that as far as a woman is concerned marriage and ministry are incompatible interests. We agree of course that they may be. It would be difficult for a woman to continue her ministry after marriage to a man whose career was dependent upon permanent residence in a place unsuitable for her ministry. That particular difficulty need not, however, occur in the case of marriage with a commercial traveller, a merchant seaman, a poet, or a novelist. That it did, however, constitute a stumbling block in the minds of the anti-feminist section of the Wesleyan Conference is demonstrated by the Rev. J. H. Cartwright's triumphant announcement that the one woman who wanted to enter the ministry some years ago was about to be married. That, in his opinion, and without further information concerning her prospective husband, was the end of her. It is something of a relief to turn from such

assumptions to the spirited defence of the resolution conducted by its proposer, Dr. Ryder Smith, and by its supporters, Miss M. V. Hunter, Secretary to the Women's Missionary Auxiliary and Dr. Maltby, ex-President of the Conference. One feels that with such advocates the matter will not be allowed to drop. It is always a matter of wonderment to us that any Christian Church should deliberately retain among its active traditions a taboo which so perversely denies the capacity of the Holy Spirit to express itself through channels undetermined by sex, class, or colour. That the Wesleyan Church, which has its origin in a revolt against man-made tradition, should tenaciously uphold such a denial, is a matter of very special wonderment.

Miss Eleanor Rathbone at the Wesleyan Conference.

The decision of the recent Wesleyan Conference to keep women out of the ministry has created so much dust in feminist circles that the fact that the second Beckley lecture was given by a woman—Miss Eleanor Rathbone—has been overlooked. The Beckley lectureship was founded to set forth the social implications of Christianity and Sir Josiah Stamp delivered the first lecture last year on the Christian Ethic as an Economic Factor. Miss Rathbone's subject was the Ethics of Family Endowment. As this lecture has been published like its predecessor in book form we shall take an early opportunity of reviewing it in these columns. The Wesleyans have been pioneers in this field as allowances are given for minister's children until they have completed their education, so that the reform is not for them a wild and revolutionary theory, and its wider application is a suitable subject for their consideration.

Women and Advertising.

It is interesting to learn that the head of the very successful "Vigilance Section" of the largest American advertiser's association is a woman. The duty of this section is to see that the descriptions of their goods issued by advertisers are in the strictest sense of the words accurate, and honest. The section is attempting, for example, to prevent the use of the well-known formula in sale times "ordinary price x , sale price y ," unless the goods have actually been on sale for x in the actual store which is now selling them for y . It protests against the use of the word "flannelette" for a material made entirely of cotton, and so on. In fact, it is carrying out among traders at large the work which in this country is undertaken, if at all, by the various trade associations. Where these associations are active and their organization is complete our system is perhaps to be preferred, on the ground that the only truly valuable reform is that which comes from within. It is all to the good that our furriers should, of their own accord, have agreed so to label imitation furs that no one is likely to be deceived by the descriptions of them. If customers think that "sable coney" and "chinchilla coney" have a nobler descent than rabbit they have only themselves to blame. But all associations are not active, and some of those most to be desired do not even as yet exist. It is still, apparently, legally possible in this country for raspberry jam to be sold to poor people which is largely composed of seaweed and apple pulp, and it is not altogether unusual to find that one has paid more for a remnant marked "half price" than would have been sufficient to buy it in the ordinary course of the season by the yard. In these circumstances, we should certainly welcome an extension of the activities of advertisers.

Nationality of Married Women—Abroad and At Home.

Several interesting new nationality laws have been passed among European States recently, some of which deal with the nationality of married women. In Germany a unanimous resolution has been passed to the effect that the Reichstag should

"Prepare immediately a Bill whereby the Reich and States Nationality Law of the 22nd July, 1913, shall be modified in the sense that loss of German nationality by a German woman on marriage with a foreigner shall not occur so long as the couple do not remove their domicile outside German territory, and the wife has not specifically renounced her existing nationality. On removal of domicile to a foreign country, the wife shall only lose her German nationality on the assumption that by her marriage she obtains her husband's nationality under the laws of the country of their new domicile. A German woman contracting marriage with a stateless person shall retain her nationality without further formality."

(*Jus Suffragii*, May, 1927.)

In Finland a law has been passed on the same principle as that which came into force in Sweden last year. A Finnish

woman marrying a foreigner will retain her Finnish citizenship as long as she resides in her own country, and also if she and her husband live outside Finland she can still retain it unless by so doing she acquires his nationality. A Finnish woman who has lost citizenship in her own country without acquiring that of her husband, may regain her Finnish nationality. It is unfortunate how slowly matters in connection with this question are moving in Britain. It will be remembered that the committee appointed by the Imperial Conference was so divided that it recommended to the Conference that further consideration of the question should be postponed pending the report of the committee of experts on Inter-Imperial Relations. This committee is dealing, however, with various matters connected with the operation of Dominion Legislation, and will, we gather, be largely concerned with the attempt to regulate the problem of dual nationality.

How to Abolish the Slums.

THE WOMAN'S LEADER is in good company in publishing a series of articles on the present situation with regard to the Housing Problem. *The Spectator* has recently devoted much space to the subject, both in a series of strong and painfully convincing articles which must shake the complacency of the most complacent and in its correspondence columns. Westminster has been in the glare of the limelight since the revelations of the recent survey,¹ but conditions equally shameful can be duplicated all over the country. Officials and members of Women's Societies who can spare a little of their holiday leisure in planning their future activities should not fail to study Mr. Currie's articles (back copies may be obtained) with a view to action in the autumn and winter.

Questions in Parliament.

21st July.

METROPOLITAN POLICE.—In the course of a question asked of the Home Secretary with regard to the contributions made to the Metropolitan Police by Local Authorities, Lady Astor asked: "If careful consideration be given to local requirements, will the right hon. Gentleman see that they have more women police?"

The Home Secretary answered: "With regard to the second supplementary (Lady Astor's question), so far as the Metropolitan area is concerned I have already increased the number of women police, and I am shortly getting a report."

SEXUAL OFFENCES AGAINST YOUNG PERSONS.—*Viscount Sandon* asked the Home Secretary whether he can now make any statement as to possible legislative action arising out of the Report of the Committee on Sexual Offences against Young Persons, now that the Report on Youthful Offenders has been out for some time?

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks: I am not yet in a position to make any statement as to proposals for legislation. The two Reports referred to cover very wide fields, and raise various questions that require, and are receiving, careful consideration.

Viscount Sandon: Will the right hon. Gentleman still be sitting on this question in the autumn, or can I put a further question then?

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks: I am perfectly open to sit on it in the autumn if necessary, but, as I intend to devote most of my exiguous holiday to the study of these Reports, I hope it will not be necessary.

Mr. Buchanan: Has the right hon. Gentleman come to any conclusion as to whether a Bill of this kind should include Scotland; and is he consulting the Secretary of State for Scotland on this subject?

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks: Obviously, I cannot say, until I have arrived at a considered opinion upon the Reports, whether it is desirable to extend the operation of the Bill to Scotland.

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

¹ Report and Survey of Housing Conditions in the Victoria Ward, Westminster. Copies of the Report may be had free on personal application from N.U.S.E.C., 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, or by post on receipt of 1½d. stamp.

ADVERTISING.

One would have thought that of all people on earth the advertisers would least need an exhibition. They have already for their exhibiting ground practically all London—its stations, hoardings, fences, shop-counters and windows, the backs of tickets, the beginnings and ends of magazines (to say nothing of those horrible loose coloured leaflets that lie waiting when one turns a page), more than half the space in many newspapers, the buses, much of our architecture, the sky, and anywhere else that they think it will pay them to seize upon. Roses have not yet been trained to display the names and addresses of nurserymen upon their leaves, but doubtless they soon will be. With all this, why Olympia? The answer seems to be that the advertising exhibition made a profit of £10,000 in a fortnight. In these days that is a good enough reason for anything, especially if one can combine it with the pleasure of seeing all our great newspapers—they who so bully the rest of us, breaking up Cabinets, deciding the issue of elections, and what not—meekly toe the line, pay for their stands, and give up column after column of their news space to praising the exhibition and its organizers. Otherwise it hardly seemed worth doing, for the most striking impression it made was that the advertisers are not yet very good at their job. In the first place their exhibition looked exactly like all other exhibitions; in the second place it was a jumble. It is only after the eye has enjoyed a little peace that it can be stimulated by something sharp and startling, and in a confined space where every yard is intended to startle, the general effect is of three gramophone records being played at once. Nothing stands out because there is nothing else from which it can stand out, and the clever and useful things to which it is desired to draw attention are hard to find and when found can hardly be attended to. The exhibition, in fact, was a vindication of the hated high-brow, with his harping on fundamental principles and his belief that vulgarity is not effective in the long run, and that it is always dangerous to neglect the truth. For the rest, these efforts among advertisers force on us certain reflections. What are the uses of

advertisements? . . . They enable us to buy a shilling paper for twopence, and they keep it lively even when the nations are friendly and the murderer of the week has pleaded guilty. . . . They help us to satisfy the wants we have and force upon us new and possibly more exciting wants. A "good drawing advert" of a garden chair may lead us to desire a garden to put it in. . . . They suggest, without saying so, that the perfect life is neatly divided between choosing goods in shops and writing out and mailing post orders for goods. Conversely, while enormous pressure is being used to persuade us that we cannot be happy without a crêpe-de-chine and crepella three-piece suit, it is difficult to remember that we are also anxious to cultivate a contented spirit. . . . They keep many people away from politics, and drive others, for insufficient reasons, into the Labour Party. . . . They destroy our reasoning powers, by inducing us to accept statements on the guarantee of a pretty girl's face or a slogan, and the more honest, on the whole, advertising becomes, and the more the advertised wares are up to description, the more dangerous this mental effect becomes. . . . By pushing the sales of flannel trousers, motor-bicycles, and tennis racquets they help to empty the churches. . . . In short, they are making us what we are. But what chiefly emerged from the study of advertisers' methods which some of the stallholders were kind enough to make possible, was that modern advertising is a tremendous tax on new enterprise. If we may believe these experts, it is almost impossible to get a sale for anything that is not backed by "strong" advertisement. Retailers will not stock it, shop assistants will not push it, the public will not buy. However good a thing may be, thousands of pounds must be spent on advertising it for months before it can hope to pay its way. This money must in most cases be borrowed, and interest must be paid on it by the man with the idea and the energy to the mere possessor of money. This is in itself a pity, and it is particularly a pity in the comparatively stagnant atmosphere of industry in this country to-day. On the other hand we must not forget that the exhibition made a profit of £10,000 in a fortnight.

THE HOUSING PROBLEM.

By G. W. CURRIE.

IV.

We spoke last week of the attempt which the Conservative government, in the seventies, made to deal with slums, and of how it made shipwreck upon the rock of compensation to owners. It is an interesting historical reflection to bear in mind that nearly thirty years before that Disraeli had burned his boats on the iniquitous evils of slumdom. His language leaves little to imagination and nothing to chance. It was proof against benevolent misunderstanding and malevolent misrepresentation alike. Listen: "Gutters of abomination, piles of foulness, stagnant pools of filth, reservoirs of leprosy and plague." Now, the reason why Disraeli wrote this and a good deal more in 1848 and did not legislate until a generation later, is that he never got the chance. But Mr. Chamberlain has: he has Mr. Baldwin behind him with an enormous majority. They are pledged to tackle the slum problem. In respect to the fulfilment of this pledge their enemies are within their own camp; or, at all events, amongst their own camp followers. The policy of the present Government was laid down on its formation: it is to build 2,500,000 houses in fifteen years. Towards implementing this policy, we have got since the war under 900,000 houses in nine years. The performance falls very far short of the expectation, and we can but hope that the six remaining years will show accelerated progress. Last year gave us more than 200,000 houses. If we could raise this to 300,000 and keep it up for six years the thing would be done. We do not, however, like the policy of reducing the assistance given by the State towards house-building, because it simply throws a heavier burden upon the local ratepayer. Mr. Chamberlain is entitled to no little credit for securing 200,000 houses last year, and it is rather terrible to say that the slum problem remains practically untouched. We said something about slum landlords last week, and can only repeat that we are waiting impatiently for Mr. Chamberlain's slum bill. It should be clearly understood that the legislature has declared its willingness to do what is needful in so far as money is wanted. Suffice it to say without further arithmetical struggles that the whole money at stake is a few pence per pound of rates and a few pence per pound of income tax. The country spends more than 300 millions a year upon social

services. Did we house our people decently we could effect large savings upon this figure. A saving of 10 per cent, i.e. 30 millions a year, would represent about 6d. in the pound of standard income tax—that is to say, it would represent about 4d. in the pound of standard income tax plus an amount of local rate expenditure equal to half as much again: and that is just about what the estimated cost of the whole Wheatley programme could come to for the next two generations. Such is the period of time contemplated in the financial resolution underlying the House of Commons acceptance of the existing programme which has the dual financial foundation of the Chamberlain 1923 Act and of the Wheatley 1924 measure.

In what we have written we have had in view a good deal the powers entrusted to borough councils: but in London the attitude of the London County Council bulks largely. To its control of and provision for the expanding requirements of Greater London we must look for much. We do not wish to minimize and make light of its difficulties. Large portions of the work it has accomplished have been well done, and if faults can be seen in them they are probably curable. But it is idle to pretend that what the L.C.C. has achieved is anything like sufficient: if it has secured even a fractional improvement in overcrowding this rate of progress will never do, and the slum problem seems at a standstill—waiting for the bill which will make or mar Mr. Chamberlain's reputation. On one point of cardinal importance we do not hesitate to characterize the attitude and action of the L.C.C. as gravely disappointing and quite unworthy of a great body. The reactionary elements on the Council secured the postponement of the operation of important public health bye-laws until the Rent Restriction difficulty be disposed of. If a dwelling is in a state which the law condemns and against which humanity revolts, why, may we ask, should its cure be made largely contingent upon the repeal of a rent restriction Act? The Ministry of Health, to use a familiar phrase, took this lying down. We thought Mr. Chamberlain was made of sterner stuff, and we still hope his promised slum bill will show that we are right.

HOW UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON, LED THE WAY IN THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN.¹

By DAME MILLICENT FAWCETT.

I had the privilege, now many years ago, of hearing Lord Roseberry give the address at St. Andrew's in celebration of the 600th anniversary of the founding of the University.

He drew attention to the contrast between the permanence of the "little lamp of learning" which was lighted then and the fleeting character of other contemporary features of the civilization which existed six centuries ago. Where, he asked, are the fighting barons and bishops with their battles and their burnings? They have clean gone off the face of the earth, "their place knoweth them no more." But "the little lamp of learning" not only continues in existence, but burns clearer and brighter century after century, and fills a far more important place in the national life of Scotland and Great Britain than when it was first lighted.

University College, London, has also been a "lamp of learning"; and it was lighted by those who had at heart the inclusion within its radiance of all those to whom the so-called "national" universities offered nothing.

Among the excluded classes were what one may almost call "Jews, Turks, and heretics", and to these must be added "women." The idea that women were capable of benefiting by University education was born early in the nineteenth century. Its godfather, perhaps its parent, was Sydney Smith, who contended in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1810 that women would be "none the worse for sense and knowledge"; but he went much further than this, because he had to convince the British public in general that they were mistaken in supposing that if women were permitted to eat of the tree of knowledge the rest of the family would soon be reduced to the same kind of aerial and unsatisfactory diet; or that the care and perpetual solicitude which a mother feels for her children depended upon her ignorance of Greek and mathematics, and that the latter study would cause her to desert her infant for a quadratic equation.

When I spoke of the Rev. Sydney Smith as the father of the movement for women's education in this country, I should have said the *modern* movement; for there were splendid forerunners in the same field at a much earlier time, such as Sir Thomas More, Roger Ascham, Defoe (who wrote as wittily on it as Sydney Smith), and Mary Astell, who *nearly* succeeded in persuading Queen Anne to found a College for the higher education of women, and there was also, a little later, 1726, Elizabeth, Lady Godolphin, who, actually out of her own fortune founded and endowed a first-rate school for girls at Salisbury—a school which still flourishes and celebrated its second centenary in Westminster Abbey last year. Lady Godolphin's first thought had been to make the Dean and Chapter of Salisbury her trustees, and to leave the guidance of the school in their hands, but they rejected her gift with contumely and would have nothing to do with such an undertaking, which they regarded not only as useless, but as actually mischievous. Therefore, Lady Godolphin, quite undismayed by clerical opposition, placed her gift in the charge, as trustees, of the Mayor and Corporation of the City, and with them it remains to this day.

Sydney Smith's witty words did not fall on a barren soil; moreover, the Quakers had long set a good example in the sound education they provided for their girls and boys alike. Elizabeth Fry was the child of a wealthy Quaker family, the Gurneys of Norwich, who had given their children, girls as well as boys, a thoroughly good education, including instruction in Latin and mathematics. Mrs. Fry's great work for prison reform began about 1813, when she was 33 years of age. Her husband thoroughly sympathized with her public work; but there were people even among the Quakers who protested that a married woman had no duties except to her husband and children. Neither did popular feeling wholly sympathize with Mrs. Fry's efforts. Hood's ballad, "Keep your school out of Newgate, Mrs. Fry" is probably symptomatic of a widely diffused prejudice against her work.

¹ Our readers will be interested to have in print the substance of a "talk" by Dame Millicent which was broadcasted on Thursday, June 23rd, from 2 L.O.

Mary Carpenter was another forerunner of the best type of educated woman. And she, too, had been prepared for her work by a thoroughly sound education. It may interest our listeners to know that in 1877, within a month of her death, she signed the memorial to the Senate of the London University in favour of the admission of women to degrees.

Mrs. Somerville is another example of a woman profiting largely from the educational opportunities accidentally open to her. Early in the nineteenth century, she attended the lectures of University Professors in Edinburgh and was awarded a silver medal by one of the Mathematical Societies of that day. She was very materially helped in her work by her second husband, and she wrote of this in a spirit that is a credit to them both: "The warmth with which my husband entered into my success deeply affected me; for not one in ten thousand would have rejoiced in it as he did; but he was of a generous nature, far above jealousy and he continued through life to take the kindest interest in all I did."

Harriet Martineau's education benefited in consequence of a rather curious combination of circumstances. Her family, which was of Huguenot descent, had settled in Norwich and had become Unitarians. Early in the nineteenth century, the Rev. Isaac Perry, the head of a leading boys' school in Norwich, became a Unitarian, with the consequence of losing nearly all his pupils. The Unitarians in Norwich thereupon felt it their duty to rally round him and support him to the utmost of their power. Hence those, like the Martineaus, who had children, sent them, girls as well as boys, to Mr. Perry's school, so that the little Harriet had, from her earliest childhood, the advantage of being under a thoroughly competent teacher.

The education of women no longer depends upon the fortuitous grouping of lucky accidents. And one of the first great steps towards this desirable end was taken 100 years ago by University College. It began to have women students very soon after its foundation, and to-day, among its 3,200 students, 1,074, a little more than a third, are women.

CONFERENCE WITH DAME EDITH LYTTTELTON.

Caxton Hall, Monday, 25th July, 1927.

The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship arranged its usual conference for the substitute woman delegate to the League of Nations to meet representatives of women's organizations, in order that she might have an opportunity of hearing the points they are particularly anxious to have pressed at the League. The following organizations were represented:—

Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, Association of Higher Grade Women in Post Office Departments, Catholic Women's League, Conservative Women's Reform Association, Council for the Representation of Women in the League of Nations, Federation of Women Civil Servants, Federation of Working Girls' Clubs, International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, Kensington and Paddington S.E.C., London and National Society for Women's Service, Mothers' Union, National Council of Women, National British Women's Total Abstinence Union, National Federation of Women's Institutes, National Union of General and Municipal Workers, National Union of Teachers, National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, Six Point Group, Women's Advisory Council of the League of Nations' Union, Women's Co-operative Guild, Women's Freedom League, Women's Guild of Empire, Women's International League, Women's National Liberal Federation, Young Women's Christian Association.

In order that perfectly free speech could be allowed, no representatives of the Press were invited. The following subjects were discussed: *Arbitration and its Connections with Disarmament*, raised by Mrs. Swanwick, Women's International League. *The Position of Women in the League of Nations*: (1) In the Secretariat, raised by Mrs. Corbett Ashby, International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship; (2) In the Assembly, raised by Mrs. Zimmern, National Council of Women; (3) On Commissions and Committees, raised by Lady Simon, Women's National Liberal Federation. *Traffic in Women*: (1) Punishment of Third Parties, raised by Mrs. Bigland, Association for Moral and Social Hygiene; (2) and (3) The Age of Consent and the Age of Marriage, raised by Miss Green, National Council of Women, and Miss Rathbone, National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. *Forced Labour*, raised by Mrs. Robertson, Women's International League. *Mandates*, raised by Mrs. Swanwick, Women's International League. Resolution on the agenda regarding the *Limitation of the Activities of the League*, raised by Miss Rathbone, National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.

POETRY NEW AND OLD.

POEMS, by W. B. Yeats. (T. Fisher Unwin (Ernest Benn), 10s. 6d. net.)

POEMS OF THIRTY YEARS, by Gordon Bottomley. (Constable, 7s. 6d. net.)

COLLECTED POEMS, by Edward Shanks. (Collins, 7s. 6d. net.)

THE LAND, by V. Sackville West. (Heinemann, 6s. net.)

SAINTS IN SUSSEX, by Sheila Kaye-Smith. (Cassell, 7s. 6d. net.)

BEAUTY THE PILGRIM, by Gerald Gould. (Ernest Benn, 3s. 6d. net.)

The magic wine in Mr. Yeats' flacons does not evaporate with the years. He says in a brief preface that the volume issued this year contains what he *hopes* is the final text of the poems of his youth. The temptation to alter and re-write is evidently strong in him. One hopes that he will resist it now, for the best of these poems could hardly be improved in their kind. The reader's pleasure in them will, of course, depend on his susceptibility to their peculiar appeal. The play of *Countess Cathleen* is the most perfect expression of it. It tells how in time of famine devils came to Ireland disguised as merchants buying human souls for gold. Countess Cathleen sold hers to save those of the people, but God took her to be with "them who walk upon the floor of peace," for—

The Light of Lights
Looks always on the motive not the deed.

There are many beautiful lyrics in this volume, but nothing to surpass *Inisfree*, which Canon Scott Holland used to repeat to himself as he went into stuffy committees, murmuring as he took his seat—

I will arise and go now, and go to Inisfree.

There is magic, too, though of a different kind, in Mr. Bottomley's *Poems of Thirty Years*. He has considerable imagination and a good command of blank verse. Mr. Shanks' verse, on the other hand, shows only delicate fancy, love of beauty, and some skill in combining conventional phrases and metaphors.

Among the newer books of verse we have two remarkable books of poems by women (both of whom have in their time contributed to THE WOMAN'S LEADER). In *The Land*, Miss Sackville West makes a valuable addition to the literature of the English countryside. Her writing is without sentimentality and even without sentiment, but it is full of instinctive passion. She has a pre-natal kinship with the things she writes about:—

I tell the things I know, the things I knew
Before I knew them, immemorially.

They are too much part of her for her to have illusions or to pretend about them. She cannot choose out the pretty bits though she does not shun the beautiful:—

Many have sung the summer's songs,
Many have sung the corn,
Many have sung white blossom too
That stars the naked thorn.
That stars the black and naked thorn
Against the chalky blue.
But I, crouched up beside the hearth
Will sing the red and gray;
Red going down of sun behind
Clubbed woods of winter's day . . .

Winter is her chosen season (though she writes of all). She loves best the time—

When the florid summer,
The bright barbarian scarfed in a swathe of flowers,
The corn a golden ear-ring on her cheek,
Has left our north to winter's finer etching,
To rawboned winter, when the sun
Sinks in a narrow and a furtive arc,
Red as the harvest moon, from east to west,
And the swans go home at dusk to the leaden lake
Dark in the plains of snow.

Her chosen land is the weald of Kent, where—

. . . Meadow, shaw, and orchard keep
The glaucous country like a hilly sea
Pure in its monotone.

She knows it in all its moods and seasons and has caught the very spirit of the land.

Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith writes of the neighbouring county of Sussex. She, too, feels the delicate enchantments of that South of England country which was first all forest and then nearly all meadowland. She sings the same hedgerows and the

same wildflowers. But for her the landscape is illuminated by light from another world. It is a setting not only for age-long human efforts but for those great religious events, which she thinks of not as past, but as happening perennially like the blooming of the buttercups. Like the artists of the Middle Ages she pictures the Incarnation and the Resurrection happening in her own familiar surroundings. Like them she carries conviction to all those who instinctively feel that these events belong not to time but to eternity, and are therefore happening all the time. *The Child Born at the Plough* and *The Shepherd of Yattendon* are mystery plays in a Sussex setting. In them we see Pilate as the Mayor of Rye and Caiaphas as an Archdeacon with an Oxford manner.

The same feeling of eternal things shining through the veil of this particular bit of our own world is seen in the very lovely lyric, where "Tall tapers are lit . . . in the drooping horse chestnut boughs" and the thrushes serve a mass "There in the whitethorn hedge." To Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith—

Lewes Town like Heaven is
And Heaven is like Lewes Town.

The golden streets go up the hill,
In sunshine dreaming, warm and still;
Ouse river through the vale below
Like Zion's stream of Life doth flow,
And many fruits our fruit-trees bear—
Plum, cherry, apple, quince, and pear—
And in our streets the live long day
The girls and boys are at their play.
When evening falls the church bells ring,
And faithful voices pray and sing;
When morning comes the faithful feet
Tread to the altar-paces sweet.
The lamb is with us day and night,
So, like high Heaven's, our streets are bright.

I have left myself no room to speak of that other modern mystic Gerald Gould, whose slender volume of verse is well named *Beauty the Pilgrim*, after the poem in it which seems best to express the author's thought.

I. B. O'M.

BALKAN TRAVEL.

In her *Three-legged Tour in Greece*¹ Dame Ethel Smyth combines with very pretty skill three elements of travel: First, there is the descriptive element which illuminates the country and conjures up at moments a reflection of its peculiar magic. Second, there is the guide book element—of very real use to prospective travellers—which directs our steps to the right tourist agency, and communicates certain hard facts about trains, steamers, and hotels. Third, there is the human element always vividly present in the literary work of Dame Ethel Smyth, which recreates in the foreground of the Grecian scene the indomitable figures of the great aunt and the great niece whose admirable blend of qualities, spiritual and physical, gave wings to the Hellenic quest. It was not always, or so it transpires from the great aunt's written record, an easy or a comfortable quest. Some people, after following in print their stages overland from Salonica to Athens, and from Athens still overland, round the southern splendour of Peloponnese, may turn in preference to the facilities offered by those solemn personally conducted pilgrimages of dons and schoolmasters which annually tap these springs of beauty from the vantage point of a well-equipped British liner. But there will undoubtedly remain a select few who will choose to devote extra time and extra money and extra energy to following in the unflinching footsteps of our self-assertive, unconventional author and her very agile young relative. And undoubtedly for such extra expenditure they will receive a very extra special dividend of adventure and ecstasy.

M. D. S.

¹ *A Three-legged Tour in Greece*, by Ethel Smyth. (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.)

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ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING, 1928.

At its meeting on Tuesday, the Executive Committee decided that the Annual Council Meetings next year should be held on 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th March. We feel sure that Societies will take advantage of this specially long notice to make both the Council Meeting and the Equal Franchise Demonstration next year record ones.

QUEEN'S HALL MEETING ON EQUAL FRANCHISE.

The Executive Committee has booked the Queen's Hall for the big Demonstration in connection with Equal Franchise, announced last week, to be held on Thursday, 8th March, in connection with the Annual Council Meetings soon after the King's speech. An unusually interesting list of speakers have been invited, and it is hoped that all Societies will co-operate to make it a great success.

PRESS TEA-PARTY.

Mrs. M. A. Spielman very kindly gave a tea to women journalists on Thursday, 21st July, at 29 Cambridge Square, in order to give the Press and Publicity Sub-Committee of the N.U.S.E.C. an opportunity of talking over various matters of importance on which we hope for the help of the Press, notably in connection with Equal Franchise. There was a fair attendance, and a useful discussion took place.

RESPONSES TO THE GUARANTEE FUND, 1927-29.

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Already published up to 22nd July	203 0 0
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Teasdel, Mrs.	10 0
	£1,104 13 0
New Subscribers—	
Hatch, Miss D. Coombe	2 6
O'Donnell, Miss	5 0
Pary, Miss G. M.	5 0
	12 6
Equal Franchise Appeal.	
	£ s. d.
Already published up to 22nd July	297 15 0
Exeter S.E.C.	1 0 0
Gillingham (Kent) W.C.A.	1 1 0
MacLeod, Mrs. Duncan	2 2 0
Stafford W.C.A.	1 1 0
Sutton Coldfield W.C.A.	5 2 7
Walrond, Miss F. E. L.	10 0
	£308 11 7

APPEAL FOR CARS.

We propose during the holidays, the autumn, and winter, to continue actively organizing deputations to Conservative Members who have not recently declared themselves in favour of the Government's Equal Franchise proposals. We are proposing to employ another whole-time organizer for this purpose, and have urged member societies to undertake the work in the constituencies more especially under their charge. The expenses, which are heavy, could be very much lightened and

the amount of work achieved greatly increased if members who own cars would undertake to drive about the organizers engaged in this work, and we appeal to all who could devote a day or two for this purpose to let the National Union know, at 15 Dean's Yard, what time they are prepared to offer. We appeal also to individual members living in constituencies where we have no societies, themselves to organize deputations of representatives of classes of unfranchised women, representatives of women's societies, and women actively engaged in public work. Suggestions and help can be given from headquarters.

"WHAT THE VOTE HAS DONE."

On being sent copies of the new edition of her pamphlet, "What the Vote has done", Dame Millicent Fawcett writes: "I am very glad to have the latest edition. It is a splendid record and I think you must be very proud of it."

NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

CARDIFF W.C.A.

A Garden Party was to have been held on 30th June at Hillside, Pen-y-lan, by the kind invitation of Dr. and Mrs. Robinson. Heavy rain, however, rendered an out-of-door gathering impossible, and the meeting was held at the Roath Park Presbyterian Church Hall. Mrs. Robinson (vice-president) took the chair, and was supported by Mrs. J. T. Richards, J.P. (vice-president), Lady Davies (hon. treasurer), Miss M. M. Sanders (hon. secretary), and others. The meeting was addressed by Miss Collin, who gave an account of Crosby Barbara Foxley, who described an experiment in temperance hotel keeping made by Women's Societies in Lucern; and by Miss Stainer, who reported upon the annual meeting of the South Wales Federation of the W.C.A.s recently held at Newport.

EDINBURGH S.E.C.

In co-operation with the Edinburgh Society for Equal Citizenship, the Open Door Council organized a meeting to protest against the dismissal of married women doctors by local authorities. The meeting, which was a representative one, including in addition to members of the Society for Equal Citizenship, members of the Women's Freedom League, the Education Authority for Edinburgh, Women's Co-operative Guild, and Women Citizens' Association, coincided with the British Medical Association Conference in Edinburgh. Mrs. Chalmers Watson, M.D., presided, and the principal speakers were Mrs. Abbott, Chairman of the Open Door Council, and Dr. McIntosh (Durham), whose wife was recently dismissed by the Durham County Council, on the grounds that Dr. McIntosh was already in receipt of an adequate income. The following resolution was passed unanimously, and a copy sent to the British Medical Association:—
"This meeting protests against the policy of local authorities in dismissing and refusing to appoint to their staff married women officers, and trusts that the British Medical Association, assembled in annual meeting, will discourage the continuation of that policy by wholeheartedly re-affirming its own adherence to its policy of equality of status as between men and women members of the profession, whether employed in private practice or by the State or the municipality. It further trusts that the British Medical Association will strongly condemn the introduction of entirely irrelevant tests in connection with the appointment of either men or women members of the profession to any public appointment."

As was pointed out in THE WOMAN'S LEADER last week, the British Medical Association has re-affirmed the Association's policy of equality of status and salary for medical men and women.

REIGATE AND REDHILL W.C.A.

On Tuesday, 12th July, a very interesting meeting was held at the Congregational Hall, Redhill, when Mrs. J. C. Carr gave an enlightening address on "Conditions in China." She referred specially to the changes in the conditions under which the women of China are living now as compared with those of twenty years ago, and said that although the Chinese had jumped in one bound from the old regime to the new, thus causing a good deal of confusion, some of the Chinese women were showing remarkable points, and she thought that before long the nation would show some very fine things in womanhood. At the conclusion of the meeting Mrs. Carr answered questions, and the meeting ended with a very hearty vote of thanks to the speaker.

SUTTON COLDFIELD WOMEN CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION.

Mrs. G. E. Lowe, the newly-elected Town Councillor, presided over a well-attended meeting of the Sutton Coldfield W.C.A. on 6th July. The meeting warmly congratulated Mrs. Lowe on her election and expressed their satisfaction at securing two women representatives on the Council without a contest within the month. Mrs. Ryland drew the attention of the meeting to the Equal Franchise campaign which the N.U.S.E.C. was now carrying on, and for which funds were urgently needed. Headquarters asked the local Associations to support the present effort. A collection was then made which amounted to £4 5s.

Miss Berry addressed the meeting on the proposals for Poor Law Reform, outlining the various proposals of the Minister of Health, together with those made by the Association of Poor Law Unions. She laid stress on the need for safeguarding the position of women as administrators in the work of Public Assistance, and referred to the difficulty which women had in securing election to county councils, fifteen of which were still without women members. If women were to continue their present work, the membership of county and county borough councils would have to be increased, or the method of co-optation must be more largely adopted. The co-opted member was in an inferior position to that of the elected person. Several of the women Guardians took part in the subsequent discussion and expressed strong objection to the proposed abolition of Boards of Guardians. The Association agreed to study the proposals and to watch any legislation that may be introduced.

A CORRECTION.

We regret that the writer of our report on the Trafalgar Square Demonstration, in quoting the number of Societies represented, i.e. twenty-three, had taken the figures from an old leaflet. We are glad to state that there were forty-four Societies supporting the Demonstration, showing that the interest in it had grown marvellously during the last week or so. We regret also that owing to a printer's error Miss Woodman's name was given as "Miss Woodward." It was Miss Woodman, of the Young Suffragists, who presented the bouquets to both Dame Millicent Fawcett and Mrs. Despard.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE HOUSING PROBLEM.

MADAM,—In your issue of the 8th instant there appears an article on the housing problem by Mr. G. W. Currie, in which a severe criticism is levelled against municipal administration in several West End Boroughs. It is not for me to defend Westminster and Chelsea, but as Chairman of the Public Health Committee of the Kensington Borough Council, I must take the strongest possible exception to the following paragraph from Mr. Currie's article:—

"The slaughter of the innocents which goes on year after year in, say, North Kensington, is officially described as an over-average infant mortality rate; in plainer English it is a landlord's murder rate. The whole gamut of iniquitous justices exposed in recent reports cry to high heaven for justice. Every one of them is committed for the sake of money, 'the price of innocent blood.' Why is the promised Bill to deal with slums delayed?"

It is perhaps not generally known that Kensington has in its northern area a very large population of people of the poorer classes. Indeed, these number not less than 50,000, but there is no slum area within the Borough and the Council have no knowledge of even one house which can be officially certified as unfit for occupation. The reference to the "slaughter of innocents" is unfortunate in that it is not based on fact. The infantile death-rate for the Borough has shown a very remarkable and gratifying decline from 179 per thousand births for the year 1900 to 80 per thousand births for the year 1926. Indeed, the published figures for 1926 (which are the latest available) show that the infantile death-rate for Kensington is below that for London as a whole and also for England and Wales. Even for North Kensington alone the infantile death-rate is below that for England and Wales and only four points above that for London as a whole. It may be mentioned that the infantile death-rate for Kensington is lower than the rate of any other West End Borough.

It is a little difficult to know why this attack has been made against a Borough in which every effort has been made both by the Municipal Authority and many excellent voluntary organizations to give the infants of the poor the best possible chance of a happy and healthy life. If Mr. Currie will take the trouble to study the very great decline in the infantile death-rate which has taken place in Kensington in recent years, and also pay attention to modern housing statistics rather than rely on figures for previous generations, he will, unless biased, come to the conclusion that his attack is unjustified.

C. KEELING,
Chairman of the Public Health Committee,
Kensington Borough Council.

SLUM LANDLORDS AND TENANTS.

MADAM,—Surely slum property of the kind Mr. Currie describes can be emptied by a closing order, and the landlord gets no compensation.

The difficulty is not only in dealing with the landlord but with the tenants. If they are turned out of their present dwellings, they can only move into houses which are not equally convenient from their point of view. The new houses are farther from their work, and are more expensive. In London, not many houses are in themselves insanitary. They become insanitary when many more people try and live in them than they are meant to hold.

For dealing with lack of sanitation, underground dwellings, etc., inspectors have ample powers to compel landlords to put their property in order.

It is much more difficult to deal with overcrowding, and overcrowding will turn the best built property into a slum. People who crowd into the dwellings that line the small streets of this city are not fastidious. The landlord, often very little better off than the tenant, the tenant, and too frequently the sub-tenant, all combine to break the by-laws and mystify the inspectors.

There is too much tendency nowadays to imagine that only the material factors make a slum, and this belief makes people think that slums can be abolished by a wave of the legislative wand.

It is preachers that are wanted, administrators, and leaders.

If those who are anxious to improve the present condition of things would themselves purchase a few houses—they may be old houses with many faults of construction even, and patiently try to improve their condition, they can succeed. Some tenants will have to be got rid of, but the general tone will gradually be raised. This was the work that Miss Octavia Hill carried out so successfully, using the old houses as far as possible, and so keeping the rents down to the level the poor could pay.

MAUD SELBORNE.

[NOTE.—Mr. Currie's remarks on the two above letters will be published next week.—Ed.]

WOMEN AND THE CHURCH.

MADAM,—During the last sixty years the sphere of action open to women has enlarged in ever widening circles as steadily as the growing circles when a stone is thrown into a pond. The world of politics and the Civil Service are now open; she may enter the legal and medical professions. But among the learned professions there is one glaring exception—the Ministry of the Church of England. Is the progress towards equality to cease here? When the Church is bewailing its shortage of ordination candidates does it never occur to her that the answer to her needs may lie in the service of her daughters as well as of her sons? Canon Raven, a few months ago, in a speech as fearless and just as it was reasoned and eloquent, said that he knew of young women now coming down from the universities who wished to offer themselves in the service of the Church's Ministry, but who could not do so because their services were not wanted.

Not that one would wish, or that it would ever so come about, that shortage of candidates would lead to the inclusion of women. It must come, as it came in the other professions, by the desire of women to accomplish the work, and the recognition by the world of her ability to do so. Many of us are often sorely tried by the blindness of the Church's officers to realize the possibility—let alone the justice—of woman's claim to serve in these capacities. It seems a desperate business even to get people to take the question seriously. But if the fight comes from within the Church it can prosper. Small bands of Church people have done as hard things. The Tractarian movement began with a small band among masses of lukewarm and heedless. The cause is one to be undertaken by those who love both the Church and the cause of women so much that they cannot stand by and see them divorced one from the other.

I. M. S. C.

DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF FAMILY ALLOWANCES.

A letter has recently been issued by the three Vice-Presidents of the Family Endowment Society, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Sir Henry Slesser, and Sir Gilbert Murray, inviting those interested in the subject to attend a public conference to be held at the London School of Economics on Friday and Saturday, 14th and 15th October. The programme of this conference should induce many to attend whether they are predisposed to family allowances or not. Sir William Beveridge will give the case for family allowances, Mr. Brailsford, Principal John Murray, and Mr. Cohen will state the arguments for each of three proposed methods of administration—State, through Industry, or as part of family income insurance. Dr. Fisher will speak on the effects of family allowances on population, and Professor Mottram will speak on the Physiological Basis of the Minimum Wage. Added interest will be given to this important gathering by the fact that the University School in which it is held has already put the principle into practice.

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