

# THE WOMAN'S LEADER

## AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

#### The Ninth Assembly.

We publish to-day a brief introductory article by Miss Hebe Spaul, on the Ninth Assembly of the League of Nations which will open on 3rd September. Our representative this year will again be Mrs. K. G. Innes, whose reports of the last three Assemblies have been so much appreciated by our readers. Her articles this year will appear on 10th, 17th, and 24th September. We congratulate Dame Edith Lyttelton on her fourth appearance as substitute delegate. As Miss Spaul points out, she is in fact the most experienced member of this year's delegation as regards League procedure. Surely she has qualified to be delegate without the "substitute."

#### Our Women M.P.s.

Now that there are more women in Parliament and the three different Parties are all represented, we do not hear so much of their collaboration as in the days when women M.P.s were a complete novelty and Lady Astor and Mrs. Wintringham formed a sort of Coalition Cabinet for the women of the country. We are therefore all the more pleased when they do take concerted action as they did last week when a deputation of women members consisting of Lady Astor, Lady Iveagh, Miss Margaret Bondfield, Miss Susan Lawrence, and Miss Ellen Wilkinson was received by the Home Secretary to discuss with him the development of the work of women police. The deputation undertook to make suggestions as to the best lines of advance. The events of the last few months have done much to educate public opinion on this subject, and watch committees must sooner or later yield to pressure of opinion. It is at all events satisfactory that our women Members of different political complexions can join forces in the House and in this year of grace when we are giving thanks for the unconditional vote, we count among our blessings our women Members of Parliament. May their numbers at least be doubled next year.

#### Unjust Wills.

Last May, as our readers will remember, Lord Astor introduced in the House of Lords, at the request of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, a motion urging the setting up of a Committee to consider the desirability of introducing legislation to prevent dependent wives or husbands and children being left destitute by a testator. After an interesting debate,

this motion was withdrawn, but at the end of the session, on Wednesday, 1st August, Lord Askwith, on behalf of Lord Astor, asked leave to introduce a Bill entitled the Wills and Intestacies (Family Maintenance) Bill. This was given its first reading and ordered to be printed, and, although it could not progress further at so late a stage of the session, the Bill is now available for examination and discussion, and we hope that it will be introduced early in the autumn. There is thus every chance that this principle for which the N.U.S.E.C. has been working for many years may become law within the lifetime of the present Parliament.

#### Manchester Stands Firm.

We referred recently to a decision of the Manchester Education Committee which was designed, in our opinion, to *sabotage* the City Council's refusal to countenance the enforced dismissal of married women teachers. This decision imposed upon married women teachers a compulsory absence of seventeen months in the event of maternity. In recording this decision we expressed the hope that when the minutes of the Education Committee came before the City Council, that body would take the opportunity of amending them, as on an earlier occasion it took the opportunity of amending the Education Committee's policy of dismissing all women teachers on marriage subject to considerations of special financial necessity. We were glad to learn on Wednesday of last week, that this is precisely what the Manchester City Council has done, by the substantial majority of 47 to 26. In the discussion which preceded this decisive vote, the opinion was very freely expressed that so absurdly protracted a period of absence was only explicable as an attempt to penalize married women in defiance of the Council's decision that they should be allowed to continue work if they so desired. The period finally determined by the terms of the amendment was three months before the birth of the child, and three months after. We are under the impression that a good deal of vigorous and obstinate work has been put into the business of consolidating the Manchester City Council's policy in the matter of married women teachers, and that if praise were to be assigned for the result, Councillor Shena Simon and Councillor Wright Robinson would deserve a notable share of it. They have fought a most excellent fight for the liberties, status, and opportunities of women.

#### Democracy and the "New Voter."

Summer Schools are so plentiful that the searcher after knowledge who can spare a holiday week must find it difficult to make a selection. The keynote of the School organized by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship at St. Hilda's College, Oxford, from 4th to 11th September, is Democracy and its problems. Speakers will deal with the ideals of the three political parties, the history and meaning of the woman's movement and its manifestations to-day and international problems will be discussed. A feature of the School will be small groups of "students" with interests in common and plenty of time for discussion; it is expected that there will be a group of women magistrates and a group of women councillors, as well as other groups. The opportunity which will be given for the study of the Government's proposals for local government reform will be specially welcome in view of the approach of legislation. There will be many attractions—a practising class for speakers, to say nothing of the delights of the river and Oxford itself. But the primary object of the School is to give an opportunity for serious study and discussion—to provide a "retreat" for the busy woman or girl who wishes to think out, with the stimulus of other minds, some of the political problems which confront



her to-day. The School is well-timed. Important legislative changes are expected next session; a general election is rapidly approaching; women are now for the first time completely enfranchised. A quiet week in the Oxford atmosphere away from committees, telephones, school, office, workroom or family cares, should be too precious an opportunity to miss.

#### The National Council of Women.

The annual meeting of the National Council of Women takes place this year in York from 15th to 19th October. The special subject is "Citizenship in its wider aspects." Three public meetings will be held which will cover problems of Industry, Domestic Conditions, the progress of the Women Police Movement, and the Influence of the Cinema. The speaker on this last subject will be the Hon. Anthony Asquith. The resolutions as usual cover a wide range, and as they are given in alphabetical order on the preliminary agenda it is uncertain which will be discussed. Several deal with Equality between the Sexes, including one dealing with restrictions on women's work and the right of married women to undertake paid work. We are particularly glad to note that the Bedford Branch has put down a resolution opposing any departure from the voluntary system of the treatment of venereal disease, and we hope that the National Council will now definitely come down on the right side in this controversy. The Hull Branch has a resolution deprecating the proposals of the London hospitals to discontinue the training of medical women and urging for equal facilities. An important point is raised by the Emigration and Immigration Sectional Committee and the Government is urged to amend the Widows, Orphans, and Old Age Contributory Act, 1925, so as to enable widows in receipt of a pension, if migrating as approved settlers within the Empire, to retain their pension or receive a sum representing its surrender value. The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship proposes a resolution on behalf of the status, education, and well-being of Indian women. This meeting will have a new interest as the first since the final extension of the franchise and with a general election within sight. Societies should make an effort to send at least some young voters. It is always an impressive gathering, with a high educational value and the discussions this year should prove to be of unusual interest.

#### The League of the Church Militant.

We greatly regret the dissolution announced in our correspondence columns to-day, of the League of the Church Militant, formerly the Church League for Women's Suffrage. This organization has done splendid work for our Common Cause both before the passing of the Representation of the People Act, and in the ten years which have just culminated in the final measure of Equal Franchise. We wish that the other object of the League—the Ministry of Women in the Church was more within sight of realization than it is at the present time. It may be true that this end can be more successfully achieved so far as the Church of England is concerned through other channels than those of a society whose activities have been directed along political lines, but we fear that the Church will be the last stronghold of the forces of reaction with regard to equality between the sexes. Constant education and propaganda have never been more necessary than they are to-day, not only in the Church of England, but in other branches of the Christian Church. Though the Society may no longer exist in a corporate form, we are convinced that its able leaders will not relax their efforts and will give the fruits of their experience to the women of the different Churches on whom this responsibility now mainly rests.

#### Should Women's Non-party Societies Continue?

The activities of the Preston Women's Citizens' Association as enumerated in their recent annual report make an effective reply to this question. As the result of their investigation and representations to the health authority stricter supervision of Common Lodging Houses and the closing of two unsatisfactory houses has been secured. As the result of a resolution forwarded to the Education Authority, four nursery classes have now been set up in different wards of the town. A police court rota of women has been formed, and a representative of the Association was appointed to the Court of Referees of the local Employment Exchange. Municipal candidates have been interrogated on their views on matters affecting women. Efforts are now being made to place women on the Infirmary Board. But Preston is not

content with purely local matters. Meetings for young voters of the different political parties have been held with great success. A fine record of work!

#### A Distinguished Woman Geologist.

Many readers who know Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon as a worker for social and feminist reforms, and above all a keen internationalist, will hardly recognize her under the above heading. But her book, the *Geological Description of the Gröden, Farsa, and Ennelberg District of the South Tyrol Dolomites*, written in German and published in two volumes by the Geological Survey Department of Austria last year has won for her great distinction. In recognition of its value to geology, the Diploma of Honorary Membership of Innsbruck University and the Diploma of Foreign Correspondent of the Geological Survey Department of Austria have recently been conferred upon her. We regret that the scientific nature of her work confines its full appreciation to specialists dotted here and there over the world, but we are proud to know that a woman whose life has been mainly given to public work can excel at the same time in the realm of science and scholarship.

#### The Passing of a Pioneer Woman Guardian.

Miss Donkin, who recently passed on at the ripe age of 88, was a keen supporter of the movement for women in local government. The greater part of her life was passed in Kensington, and she was closely connected with the social life of that borough, both public and private. She was a member of the Kensington Board of Guardians from 1881 to 1887—working with the great pioneer of Poor Law reform, Louisa Twining. For many years she took an active interest in the work of the M.A.Y.B.S., and was hon. secretary to the local branch of the Charity Organization Society, resigning the latter office only owing to ill-health. She was particularly interested in the modern developments for the care of the mentally defective and never failed to support them.

#### The Dominion Scheme and the Wives' Consent.

Has any scheme of emigration for married men ever before been contingent on an undertaking given by their wives that they agreed to their husbands going? Such agreement is one of the conditions of the acceptance of married men for the interesting scheme which has been negotiated between our own and the Canadian Government of sending 10,000 men for the Canadian harvest. Or is it a new recognition in keeping with the spirit of the time of the right of the married woman to some say in decisions which affect home life and the well-being of the family? The whole scheme is an encouraging constructive effort to deal with unemployment, and our best wishes go with this little army of men who have suffered through no fault of their own as they set out on their adventure to the new world.

#### The Brontë Setting.

Lovers of the Brontë family will have read with great satisfaction that Haworth parsonage has been handed over by Sir James Roberts, a native of Haworth, who has childish memories of Charlotte, to the Brontë Society. An article describing a pilgrimage to the place where the three sisters lived their short lives will appear in these pages during the autumn.

#### The First Pan-Pacific Women's Conference.

The first Pan-Pacific Women's Conference will open this week in Honolulu when women from Canada, China, Japan, Korea, Java, the Philippines, India, Indo-China, the Straits Settlements, Siam, Samoa, Tasmania, New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii, the United States, and some of the Latin American countries will discuss the progress of women in countries around the Pacific Ocean. The *Observer* on Sunday, 5th August, gave an interesting interview with Miss Jane Addams, who leads the delegation from the United States.

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

### "THE SPOILT DARLING OF THE LAW."

It is strange that those who speak of the legal "privileges" of the married woman seem invariably unable to realize that these so-called privileges either arise inevitably from the economic dependence of the majority of wives, or act as positive handicaps. Thus we find Professor Montmorency, in a lecture on English Law given last week as part of the City of London Vacation Course, referring to the married woman as the "spoilt darling of the English Law".

Can this point of view be maintained?

It is, of course, true that in certain classes of action known as "torts", i.e. civil actions for damages arising out of bodily or other categories of injury, a married woman whether married at the time the damage was committed or subsequently, is only liable to the extent of her separate property and if this is insufficient as compensation her husband is liable. No other member of the community can, however, pay more than he or she possesses, and although we should prefer that a husband should not be liable in such cases, we must remember that a wife is frequently—owing to her marital and matrimonial duties—unable to play her part in the labour market, and that not only the marriage service but to a lesser degree the law, regards this as the source of her income. Take the other cases of so-called privileges quoted—the law of contract, and the presumption of coercion. It is true that a wife, even if she is to come into property later, cannot, if there is a "restraint or anticipation", be liable for more than her separate property at the time during which the contract runs. Still comparatively few women expect to come into property, and all are handicapped by a law which makes a married woman an undesirable partner or client in business. It is for this reason that the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship has prepared a Coverture Disabilities Removal Bill to sweep away this "mass of legal lumber" which at present embarrasses a married woman when she wishes to stand on her own feet.

The "presumption of coercion" by which a wife was not held responsible for certain crimes (excluding murder and treason) committed in the presence of her husband has been whittled down by recent legislation so that it only amounts to a possible defence in certain cases. This again we should have preferred to see cleared away altogether.

### THE HARDSHIPS OF WOMEN IN HINDUISM.<sup>1</sup>

By BHAGAT RAM JIV DAYA PARCHARAK.

It seems to me that, whatever may have been the social status and condition of Indian women in the far remotest past, their present position could not be worse in the social life of our people. Yet some leaders who could not picture the sufferings of others, are always trying to suppress the real condition of women here through a racial vanity.

In order to tell you of the many and strange obstacles that hamper the natural development of our Indian sisters, I must explain the attitude of our Hindu scriptures and leaders. Manu—the great Hindu lawgiver, who is considered as the first expounder of Vedic texts and whose rules are generally observed to the letter to this very day, says: "A man, aged 30 years, should marry a maiden of 12 who pleases him, or a man of 24 years shall marry a girl 8 years of age; but if the performance of his duties would otherwise be impeded, he (must marry) sooner."—Ch. ix, 94. You can imagine how a Hindu girl has been generally sacrificed on the altar-stone of this practice of early marriage.

As to the liberty of women, Manu says: "In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent."—Ch. v, 148.

<sup>1</sup> We publish the above article as showing one side of the picture—the darkest side—although aware that it is neither a complete nor perhaps a quite fair presentation. It seems hardly fair to record the dictates of Manu as though they represented the general level of even orthodox Hindu opinion, any more than the sayings of St. Paul about women represent the general level of British opinion. Also there are many Hindu reformers, including Ghandi himself, who in the midst of their nationalist propaganda have spoken as fiercely as our correspondent himself against the evils of early marriage and the low status of women. Nor surely can it be said that Congress has been inactive lately on the subject of early marriage.—Ed.]

Professor Montmorency claims that a wife is privileged because her vote can nullify her husband's in the constituency in which he has his business. But this applies the other way round, and cannot each cancel the others in their place of residence? The Professor's case is indeed thin if this is all his powder and shot amounts to.

And what about the other side of the picture? What about the loss of nationality if a British woman marries an alien, and the enforced assumption of his domicile even if this takes place after marriage. There we are up against real hardship indeed. The evils arising from an unwanted change of nationality are too obvious and too well known to need stressing here. The hardship of an enforced domicile, i.e. the selection of which country shall be regarded as a permanent home and whose laws shall be obeyed, is clear when one considers the very different laws even between England, Scotland, and Ireland with regard to matters such as divorce.

Professor Montmorency ignores the legal economic status of the married woman. Where is the "privilege" of the worker, however skilled, denied employment by virtue of marriage in the Civil Service and under most local authorities? And what about the maintenance of the great mass of wives debarred by the housewifery and maternal duties from earning money of their own? Are they privileged whose livelihood together with the means of carrying on their occupation as mother are dependent entirely on (a) the ability and (b) the goodwill of their husband? Their payment bears no relation to their services and they are the only section of the population whose rewards are still paid in "truck" in the vast majority of cases alone.

The laws with regard to maintenance of wife and children are, for the most part, designed to ensure her little more than a bare competence. Finally, when her husband dies, however many years of her life have been devoted to serving him, he need not leave her or their children a single penny.

We should dearly like to know whether all things considered, if it were possible, Professor Montmorency would care to change his own legal status with that of the "spoilt darlings" to whom he refers.

Defining a virtuous wife, Manu says: "Him to whom her father has given her, let her honour. Though ill-behaved, though in love with another woman, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must be constantly revered as a God by a virtuous wife."—Ch. v, 154.

As to the religious freedom of women, Manu says: "No sacrifice, no vow, must be performed by women apart from their husbands. If a wife obeys her husband she will for that reason alone be exalted in Heaven."—Ch. v, 155.

As to the possession or inheritance of property, women are classed here in a manner with minors or lunatics. As a general rule, at all events, women do not take absolute estates of inheritance which they be enabled to alienate. (Hindu Law 323a.)

As to the matrimonial relation, the Hindu marriage, though considered to be a sacrament in idea, can be put an end to at any time by the husband, but not by the wife. Besides, a Hindu man may marry any number of wives, although he has a wife or wives living. (Mulla's Hindu Law 348.) A Hindu wife should not take her meal until her lord has been properly fed and propitiated, otherwise the doors of Heaven shall be closed to her. Besides there are certain days in a year when our Hindu sisters have to observe full fasts for the safety meditation of their husbands—no matter whether good, bad, or indifferent. Furthermore, a Hindu wife is demanded to listen constantly to such traditions as prescribe godly attributes to the husband. For the sake of securing Suhag (married state of life), Hindu women have to put on also some five ornaments continually for more than a year: chank on the head, nose-ring in the nose, ear-ring in the ears, bangles on the wrists and anklets on the ankles.

The three duties of everyday life as are prescribed most



necessary for women here are hand-mills, hearthplace, and cow-dung rubbing about the kitchen. In spite of all that piety and devotion, Hindu women are looked upon as beings quite inferior to men, both intellectually and morally. Hindu women as women cannot get salvation. He who will care to look into the Hindu scriptures will be surprised to learn that how a woman's everyday life is so circumscribed as to leave her continually at the mercy of man claiming for himself permanently all the worship belonging to God, and that how great an effort is made throughout to establish man's predominance over woman by terrorism. Besides, the birth of a girl in a Hindu family is an undesirable thing, and the wife who has had a girl is also looked down upon. So the vast bulk of our people being still against female education, the woman half of the country is about two per cent literate yet.

The students in our private girls' schools are often required to read such books as prescribe godly attributes to the husband. Accordingly Hindu teachers, preachers, and sadhus are very particular to always bring to the notice of girl students such traditions that tell about the life sacrifice of a Hindu woman for the sake of her earthly lord. Thus all knowledge that reaches the girl-students is not for education but for enslavement.

Our Indian sisters have been long centuries putting up with such injustice. Hindu law, traditions, and customs being generally against women, the mentality of an average Hindu is to sympathize oftener with men than with women. It is only as mothers of sons that Hindu women get some honour. Otherwise Hinduism is an almost exclusive religion for the benefit of the males. Even the four Vedas do not recognize any right of self-determination for a woman. All life-giving and inspiring words like self-expression, pursuit of health and happiness have been meant for, and applied to the male sex only. So the cry of the suppressed womanhood here is the cry of unassisted woe. It strangely appeals to our humane instincts. Although the Indian Congress has thought itself to be considering the real needs of India for the past 40 years, yet never has it given a moment's consideration to the most urgent need of uplifting women from their degraded position, into which Hindu laws and customs have cast them. The problem of Hindu-Muslim unity cannot be satisfactorily solved as long as the problem of our dear mothers, sisters, and daughters is left unsolved. Yet self-satisfied men will never care to know of what great benefits they have cheated themselves and their children by denying the two sexes equal rights and opportunities.

But there is the Press, too! The Press is so submissive to the Indian Congress. The way the Press will refuse any mention of the root-causes of social evils concerning women and children here is perfectly marvellous. Imagine thousands of our papers with a full-page congress display, often sensationally illustrated, giving forth propaganda which will result still further in our greater slavery to a caste-ridden oligarchy.

We who claim to be more merciful than others, haven't as yet passed a law to stop early marriage.

Indeed, there have been and are still in India, too, many eminent speakers and writers who have done wonders mostly for the welfare of their own masculine sex. We have a great number of various associations here, but you could scarcely find a forum to stand and say there something for the real emancipation of women. Hundreds of thousands of Indian newspapers are still quite indifferent to this great cause of causes. Private benefactions have been almost always flowing toward the aggrandizement of the male sex alone. Most of the women's meetings here do oftener follow with docility the gestures of their male leaders. Is it not then the pious duty of every thinking humane person to do something that can be done towards helping the helpless women here?

## THE WOMAN'S LEADER

EVERY FRIDAY.

ONE PENNY.

### SPECIAL TERMS FOR SOCIETIES

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## THE NINTH ASSEMBLY.

By HEBE SPAULL.

The Ninth Assembly of the League of Nations opens at Geneva on 3rd September. The British delegates will be Sir Austen Chamberlain, Lord Cushendun, and Sir Cecil Hurst, with Sir Edward Hilton Young, Dame Edith Lyttelton, and Mr. Duff Cooper as substitute delegates. This is the fourth occasion on which Dame Edith has formed part of the British delegation to the Assembly. She will in fact be the most experienced member of this year's delegation as regards League procedure.

Sir Austen Chamberlain will go to Geneva via Paris, where he will sign the Kellogg Peace Pact. The signing of the Peace Pact immediately before the meeting of the Assembly will have considerable effect on the deliberations that take place at Geneva. The chief matters that are likely to be discussed there are arbitration and disarmament. The fact that the nations have agreed to outlaw war will make it all the more imperative to perfect the machinery, both inside and outside the League, for providing other alternatives than war in the settlement of disputes. Hence the added importance given to the League's work for arbitration by the signing of the Pact.

Similarly the outlawry of war, by the signature of the Pact, will make the question of the all-round reduction and limitation of armaments more imperative than ever. Sir Austen Chamberlain's recent announcement in the House of Commons that Great Britain and France have at length reached a compromise on the question of naval armaments is of special interest and encouragement in this connection.

## GRANDMOTHER'S ALBUM.

By K. E. I.

It is just 100 years ago, in a Buckinghamshire village, then remote, that my great-grandmother gave an album to my grandmother. My grandmother was already gaining a reputation as a county beauty, whom, it was said, young men rode many miles on a Sunday to see in church. Did her serious-minded father guess that it was not his sermons that swelled the congregation—eloquent and learned though tradition says that they were?

The first pages of the album are in one handwriting—my great-grandmother's, and the date is 1819. Poems by Byron, while Byron was still living, are copied out in ink now fading away. Others are by Scott, Burns, Thompson, Joanna Bailie, Montgomerie (sic), Cowper, Moore, Sheridan, and verses in French and Italian showing a wide range of reading in a country vicarage. Grave and gay are mingled. Near the beginning a sample of witty repartee is quoted:—

"An old gentleman of the name of Gould marrying a girl of 19 wrote to acquaint his friend Dr. G—ch of the circumstance; and added the following couplet as a close to his letter—

"So you see, my dear Sir, though eighty years old,  
A girl of nineteen falls in love with old Gould."

To which the Doctor sarcastically replied—

"A girl of nineteen may love Gould it is true,  
But, believe me, dear Sir, it is *Gold* without *U*."

With what misgivings one wonders, did the couplet haunt the aged bridegroom?

The passing on of the album to my grandmother is recorded in 1827, and most of the contents are dated from 1827 to 1829, though occasionally entries go up to 1869. Various hands contributed. The second part opens with a godfather's advice to his godchild—serious indeed—"Always think before you speak." "In music prefer serious to light compositions; and in vocal keep close to sacred words." When in company—

"Be cheerful, but not gigglers,  
Be serious, but not dull,  
Be communicative, but not forward,  
Be kind, but not servile."

"Do not go into valuable company, without endeavouring to improve by the intercourse." "Ever show the interest which you take in the subject of schools for the poor, the distribution of tracts, the Bible and Missionary Societies."

Wise, and truly democratic, is the advice headed "Estimate of Character." "Do not disesteem good people on account of their foibles or deficiencies in matters of little importance."

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

### INCORRIGIBLE INDIA.

Miss Margaret Wilson has written a novel about the normal activities of an American mission in India.<sup>1</sup> The subject may perhaps sound unattractive to persons who from long experience have learned to regard missionaries as the common butt of literary scorn. As the mother-in-law is to the musical comedian, so habitually is the missionary to the novelist. But with Miss Wilson it is not so. Steering miraculously between the Scylla of sentiment and the Charybdis of cynicism, she has piloted her craft upon the dangerous sea of religious endeavour with a full sail and a steady course. Certain necessary ingredients of success have contributed to this result. A peculiarly vivid insight into the mental and material environment of the particular classes of Indians dealt with (the result we surmise, of many years of first-hand experience), a ready wit, and a fine sense of dramatic values, have played their part, and the result is not merely a novel which insistently compels the undivided and continuous attention of its reader, but one which leaves the reader possessed of a vivid and convincing picture of Indian life. Instinctively we slip this book into its place beside Foster's *Voyage to India*.

But it is a somewhat heart-breaking picture, telling in its own sectional and intimate way much the same tale that Miss Mayo has recently trumpeted to the world through her book *Mother India*. Poverty, disease, child-like faith entangled with devastating superstition, the eternal conflict between Christianity and caste, the thin crust of educational progress painfully forming and breaking on the unfathomable formless morass of Indian decadence, these things are the background of Miss Wilson's book. Its foreground is, however, composed of live and intensely individual characters—American, Hindu, Mohammedan, as the case may be.

Those women who, stimulated by the gospel of Miss Mayo and the tribulations of the Statutory Commission, are beginning to meditate disquietingly upon the feminist implications of imperial responsibility, will be well advised to read this book. It will increase their wisdom. Those who seek a new diverting tale in a sequence of detective novels, will be well advised to read it too. It will amuse them greatly.

M. D. S.

### THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES.<sup>2</sup>

From first to last Miss Mair pursues her inquiry with singleness of purpose, concentrating on her task wide resources of energy, penetration, and systematic exposition. The result is a book whose thoroughness and reliability make it invaluable as a contribution to international studies and as a reference work for any inquiry into racial problems in Europe. But it also is a book where the critic's service lies rather in a plain recommendation than in polemics or judicial treatment, for Miss Mair's aim allows little room for these. She sets out to give "simply a summary of the cases that have come before the League of Nations and the action taken upon them," and she expressly describes her material as consisting only of "statements for which there is documentary evidence." But this very material proves invaluable when collected and systematized in a rapid survey which, passing from country to country, discovers similar conditions and problems in all. Difficulties, solutions, deadlocks become compelling and urgent to the reader in a degree impossible when the cases in point trickle across, one by one, stage by stage, in the daily Press. And Miss Mair has a sense of historical background and a breadth of scope which carry her work far beyond the official records on which it is based. The different methods here shown of dealing with such problems as education, government, expropriation of land, give the question of minorities a new massiveness, and also afford a unique insight into the working of the League.

With Professor Gilbert Murray's foreword we fall into the stride which carries us to the end of the book; he is concise but comprehensive, intent on furnishing data and summarizing events rather than on theorizing. So is Miss Mair. The plain fact from which she starts is that the War and the Peace Treaties brought to the surface the time-worn friction of minorities in Europe, that the minority clauses in the Treaties contain the greatest

<sup>1</sup> *Daughters of India*, by Margaret Wilson. (Jonathan Cape.)

<sup>2</sup> *The Protection of Minorities: The Working and Scope of the Minorities Treaties under the League of Nations*, by L. P. Mair, M.A. (London, Christophers, 8s. 6d. net.)

"Gentility and piety form a happy union; but poverty and piety are quite as acceptable in the eyes of God, and so they ought to be in ours." It was not long since the teaching of the Wesleys had roused the conscience of evangelical England.

Occasionally, recent or current historical events are referred to. A strange old-world aroma breathes in a poem in reproach of levity "on seeing in a collection of new music 'The Waterloo Waltz,' for—

"Awful was the victory!  
Chastened should the triumph be,  
Mid the laurels she has won  
Britain mourns for many a son."

A hundred years later, those who turned Armistice Day into a day of revelry were met with a like fitting reproof.

Most of the historical references are fervently patriotic, but that the patriotism was not uncritical is shown by a quotation in the early part of the Album of very satirical lines on "The Visit of the Prince Regent to the tombs of Henry Eighth and Charles I at Windsor."

"Scarce worth an epitaph by Tate or Quarles  
See heartless Henry lies by headless Charles  
Between them stands another sceptred thing."

It would be hard to put more scorn of the unpopular Prince Regent into one word.

Later on, the enthusiastic devotion that swept over England on the accession of Queen Victoria, and extended to successive incidents of her married life is reflected—

"Descendant of a race of Kings, she weeps a Queen to be,  
Fear not, fair girl, thy people's hearts will prove a throne for thee."

A sidelight is thrown on industrial history by the copy of a notice issued to the workmen of "Messrs. Venables Brothers, Cliefden, Wooburn, Soho, and Princes Paper Works" to inform them that "the works will henceforth be closed at 12 o'clock on Saturday night until 12 o'clock on the Sunday night, in order to enable the whole of their work-people to attend a place of worship on the Sunday." An added note informs us that Messrs. Venables were the last paper-works in the valley to be kept working throughout Sunday, and they are congratulated "on their determination no longer to oppress those over whom their influence extends, by obliging them to disobey the Divine injunction—Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy."

Most interesting, perhaps, is the picture that is given in verse and prose of the life and outlook of women in rural England in those so far-away days. The majority of the poems are highly moral, religious, evangelical, and other worldly. The serious-minded maiden is recommended to converse as often as possible about her soul and eternity. Love poems, in which renunciation and resignation figure frequently as woman's lot are common. One lighter page is occupied by a "Marriage Table." It gives the estimated Chances of Marriage for Women from 14 to 39. The "chance" is designated as 1,000. At the ages of 14 and 15, the chances are 32 out of the 1,000. They increase rapidly up to 233 at 21 and then go down as rapidly to 1 at 39. The chances at 16 are much higher than those at 26.

The choice of subjects and the character of the quotations are as revealing of the life of the "maidens" through whose hands the album successively passed, as a direct essay on the subject.

The wide reading and linguistic knowledge shown have been noted; but there is no hint that portends of coming revolution reached the quiet valley. Although Byron is quoted, and his last poem, "written at Missolonghi on his thirty-sixth birthday" is given in full, there is nothing of Shelley or Godwin or Mary Wollstonecraft. It is an entirely sheltered life that is portrayed—life where woman plays one part, and "Man," usually with a capital M, plays another.

One of the latest entries was made in the 60's by the granddaughter of the first owner.

"The rights of women, what are they?  
The right to work, the right to pray—  
The right to oil the wheels of life  
The right to heal the wounds of strife.  
The right, by scripture and by choice  
To be without a public voice.  
Humbly at home her Bible search,  
Meekly keep silence in the Church,  
Gladly enjoy her cherished right  
To keep aloof from party fight."

The sex of the author is not revealed. Evidently by that time the storm *was* muttering in the distance.



remedy yet applied to the problem. Her aim is, working from this basis, to collect evidence of the results. This she does admirably. Her accounts of the cases dealt with by the League are all remarkably full and explicit, practical yet scholarly in their detachment.

Miss Mair has done a complex piece of work so well that to carp were invidious. Yet at times we grudge her her self-imposed avoidance of the critical and theoretical field. For when she is dealing with the wider sides of her subject—with the minorities question in political theory, in relation to the "Sovereign State," in its historical evolution from the Congress of Vienna—she is so sound and constructive a critic that we want more instances of her judgment, of her capacity for sound deduction. We regret that the clear, firm outline of fact at which she aims leads her to curtail her own criticisms. The questions of Estonia, of the Jews in Hungary, of Baltic minorities, would profit by the kind of constructive commentary which she passes on the Italian minorities and the non-acceptance by the great states of the minority treaties. But this, again, would be to change and elaborate Miss Mair's purpose. What she has set out to do she has done brilliantly, and to give a verdict on that is the critic's central aim.

E. C. E.

NEAPOLITAN ICE.<sup>1</sup>

Last year Miss Rosamond Lehmann, just down from Cambridge, wrote *Dusty Answer*, a novel of Girton, dealing with the ferment of interests, intellectual, emotional, personal, academic, in the mind of a young student and centring in the rather Elizabethan theme that neither security nor permanence can be found in dependence on externals, whether people or things. Miss Haynes's *Neapolitan Ice* inevitably presents itself as an Oxford counterpart of its forerunner, similar in material, in point of view, in the circumstances and age of the author, in the very meaning of its title. Friend after friend, incident after incident returned to Judith their "dusty answer", and here bitterness and frustration come to Sylvia Verney in her life at home, in the corporate college life, in her relationship with specific people, not only with Crispin Burgess, until eventually "every layer of her life tasted bitter now: she saw it as a Neapolitan ice into whose stripes a child had put bitter aloes".

To cite these parallels is not a mere exercise, nor is it derogatory to either author. Both have expressed with intense sincerity and directness and self-knowledge the main facts of youthful experience, especially of such experience to-day. Both are tinged with disillusionment—like the youth of to-day—and both, uneven and immature as their work is, rise above the negation of disillusionment with a dignity and poise which seem characteristic not so much of youth alone as of a personality. But the stage of experience with which they deal is essentially a preliminary one, and with both what matters most is whether, having brought their world crashing round their ears, they can build it anew or whether *Dusty Answer* and *Neapolitan Ice* will be new instances of "a trumpet uplifted but no call".

Like Miss Lehmann, Miss Haynes gives promise of doing work that will count in literature. Her book is crude in many ways—in the vigorous episode of Miss Noggins who buried herself alive in order to fertilize her rose-tree, in a certain inconsequence which breaks out in characterization and ideas and which show that Miss Haynes has not attained the mature artist's unity of vision. Her portrayal of Oxford life often suggests a transcript of loose impressions rather than experience which has become imagination all compact within her. There is a boarding-school atmosphere about her college-life, an amateurishness of attitude in her students which one's own college memories leap to refute. Strangely enough Miss Haynes, in her dedicatory poem on Oxford, suggests things which her prose never matches—yet perhaps it is not so very strange after all, for are not the best things in literature about colleges poems rather than novels?

With her other characters Miss Haynes is more successful. She has a sure, penetrating touch and there is none of the 'prentice hand in her portrayal of the diverse group who make up Sylvia's family—her father, the tired, gentle, world-weary artist of endless reserve; his second wife, Moira Dwyer, a musical-comedy actress, vulgar, ageing, sensual; Sylvia's sister Kitty, kindly, worldly, superficial; Crispin, a fine reticent, rather sombre don. All of these are seen in the round, so that they speak for themselves. Yet they are also eloquent of Miss Haynes's attitude. They show a sensitive and alert sense of values, an appreciation of what is fine in personality, and the fact that in them the clear-cut

<sup>1</sup> *Neapolitan Ice*, by Renée Haynes. (Chatto and Windus, 7s. 6d.)

verdicts of youth are tinged by a maturer gravity make one look for developments in Miss Haynes's work. This last quality comes out best in the treatment of Henry Verney and Crispin Burgess, which is a fine achievement for a young wife. Another promising feature about this book is the author's sensitive appreciation of the colours and form of outward things—exquisite rooms, firelight, roads at dusk—of the atmosphere people create, and of music. Although the theme suggests a certain cynicism, Miss Haynes's treatment of it refutes any such implication, and the depth of her appreciativeness is interesting in an age when youth is often accused of having allowed its values to slip. If Miss Haynes can clarify and deepen her vision and ideas, and rid herself of the lurking indifference to impersonal thought which crops up in, for instance, the conversation on democracy between Sylvia and Crispin—in that case she should achieve fine work and fulfil the promise she shows.

E. C. E.

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## THE NEW WOMAN VOTER.

An opportunity for the new woman voter to study many questions which, since the passing of the Franchise Act on 2nd July, have become of vital and immediate interest to her, will be given by the Summer School arranged by the N.U.S.E.C. at St. Hilda's College, Oxford, from 4th to 11th September. Among the subjects to be considered are:—

**Problems of Democracy**, including the Ideals of the three main Political Parties, Local Government, with special reference to the new Government proposals for reform, and a Survey of Prospective Legislation;

**International Problems**, including Security and Disarmament and Arbitration, with special reference to the Kellogg Peace Pact; and

**The Woman's Movement**, including lectures on Women in Industry, Women in the Professions, Economic Aspects of Marriage, the Legal Status of Wives and Mothers, and Family Allowances.

The speakers will include Mr. Blanco-White, Miss Vera Brittain, Miss K. D. Courtney, Miss Marjorie Maxse, Mr. Pethick Lawrence, M.P., Miss Eleanor Rathbone, and Mr. W. A. Robson, B.Sc. (Econ.), Ph.D.

Intending students are asked to apply, as soon as possible, to the Secretary, N.U.S.E.C., 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, from whom all further particulars can be obtained.

## A SUFFRAGIST CENTENARIAN.

Our members and friends will, we think, be interested in the following letter from Mrs. Hobbs in reply to congratulations and good wishes sent to her mother, Mrs. Pennington, on her 100th birthday: "I am sorry not to have written sooner on behalf of my mother, Mrs. Pennington, to thank you so much for your kind letter on her 100th birthday. She is, of course, delighted to have lived to see the complete extension of the Franchise to women, having worked so hard for it in earlier days. Will you please convey to your Executive Committee her warm thanks for their kind thought of her? She is still as clear headed as ever and much interested in all that goes on. She often says 'Don't mind getting really old, everyone is so kind to you,' and she really is so serene and happy still."

## NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

KINGSTON W.C.A.

A well-attended meeting of the Kingston W.C.A. was held at the end of last month, when Mr. Alec Wilson gave a very interesting address on the Kellogg Peace Pact. Mr. Wilson urged the women of Great Britain to give their continued support to these proposals and asserted that the Pact was entirely due to public opinion and behind that public opinion, the opinion of the women of America.

WEST BROMWICH S.E.C.

Mrs. Osler gave a very interesting address on Women Police at a recent meeting of the West Bromwich S.E.C. She urged the need for a more adequate number of women in this capacity, and a resolution in favour of one or more policewomen being appointed for West Bromwich was carried unanimously and will be sent to the Town Clerk and the Chairman of the Watch Committee. The meeting was followed by an interesting discussion.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## TRAINING OF MEDICAL WOMEN.

MADAM.—I see in the issue I have just received, 15th June, that the N.U.S.E.C. is making representations on the subject of training of medical women. It seems that we have the remedy in our own hands—a financial one. Let all those women who subscribe to hospitals, which have closed their medical schools to women, stop their subscriptions. As soon as I heard that no further training of medical women was to be accorded at the London Hospital, I withdrew my subscription, and now I see the ever energetic Lord Knutsford appealing for a large sum. We should none of us give to this.

Further the large sums collected on Alexandra Day are mainly due to the efforts of women: let them cease these efforts unless a guarantee is

given that only those hospitals will be supported out of this fund which open their medical schools to women, and generally treat women fairly. (Mrs.) E. C. STEEDMAN, M.A.

Norfolk Farm, Gwelo, S. Rhodesia.

## 15,000 FRENCH WOMEN RECLAIM THEIR NATIONALITY.

MADAM.—I have been surprised at your statement that it is disappointing that since the passage of the new French nationality law only 15,000 requests have been received from Frenchwomen who had lost their nationality by marrying foreigners for reinstatement into French Nationality.

It has to be remembered that so far as this retrospective condition is concerned such Frenchwomen can only be readmitted to French nationality with the authority of their husbands. It is not in their own hands. They themselves have to wish for the change and have to persuade their husbands to give their authority. This may be a difficult and in many cases an impossible task.

Another point that is overlooked too is the machinery that has to be set in motion before they can make their application. I have no first-hand information from France on the question. But in its issue of last Sunday a writer in the *Sunday Times* told of one case in which a woman had to go five times to the Palais de Justice before she could get any information or copies of the papers she had to fill up. After she had dispatched them and waited six weeks she was told to apply at a local bureau in the suburbs. She made two train journeys and two weeks after the second got further information and was told that the papers she had originally got to fill up were not the right ones. How many poor women could afford the time and money for such an effort? This is second-hand information, but having had first-hand information from a British woman of similar difficulties when she tried to reclaim her nationality and knowing the ways of officials I have little difficulty in believing the tale.

In all the circumstances 15,000 seems a remarkable figure.

CHRYSAL MACMILLAN,

Chairman of the committee on the Nationality of Married Women of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship.

4 Pump Court, Temple, E.C. 4.

## THE LEAGUE OF THE CHURCH MILITANT.

MADAM.—At a meeting of members recently called, it was resolved to dissolve the League of the Church Militant before the close of 1928, and we shall be grateful if you will be good enough to give publicity to the reasons by which this decision was reached.

The members of the League, formerly the Church League for Women's Suffrage, felt that with the passing of the Equal Franchise Bill, part, at least, of their society's aims had been achieved, and while still desiring to see women ordained to the threefold historic Orders of Ministry in the Church, they felt that the movement within the Church had reached such a phase that the education of Churchpeople along these lines could now be carried on more satisfactorily through other channels than those of a society whose activities had been directed along political lines in the past.

Since the League started its work of education and propaganda, thought on women's service in the Church had advanced so rapidly that it was felt that ordination to the priesthood must inevitably follow in due time, and that the best way that women of this and future generations could further this cause was by prayer for its fulfilment and by preparing themselves mentally and spiritually to meet those opportunities and responsibilities of service in the Church that may open up to them in the future.

J. G. SIMPSON (President).

E. LOUIE ACRES (Chairman).

The League of the Church Militant, Church House, Dean's Yard, S.W. 1.

## BIRTH CONTROL IN A MINING AREA.

MADAM.—The attention of the public has recently been drawn, not merely to the existence of unprecedented and bitter distress in the coal mining areas, but to the fact that this distress is connected with a permanent surplus (some 200,000 all told) of labour in this particular industry, necessitating a deliberate transfer of miners and their families to other industries and other localities. I am venturing therefore to call the attention of your readers to a venture which has an important bearing on this situation: the establishment of a properly qualified birth control clinic in the Rotherham area, by persons interested in the well-being of the mining population within reach of that industrial centre. The clinic is carried on under the expert and wholly disinterested management of a local committee, and it has, since its inception, been visited by miners' wives suffering under very acute economic necessity. But those who give their time and energy to running it are not rich, and those who visit it are too desperately poor to make it a self-supporting venture. I therefore ask any of your readers throughout the country who feel that this is a justifiable and scientific way of helping to solve the problem of a distressed and overpopulated industry, to come forward with subscriptions or donations (preferably the former) which I will most gratefully receive on the Rotherham Clinic's behalf.

It must not, of course, be assumed that I or anybody else, believe that birth control is a kind of patent medicine for such economic distress, or that it is an easy alternative to the difficult constructive efforts which such a situation requires for its readers. It is one among many important lines of advance. But it is a vitally important one because it provides relief for the future as well as relief for the present, and as such it deserves strong public support.

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**F**ELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 5th August, 6.30, The Rev. W. B. Selbie, D.D., "Religion and Redemption."

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