

THE  
CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST

VOLUME, II.



THE  
CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST

VOLUME II. 1916.



CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY,  
55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON.

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# THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST

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

VOL. II., No. 1.

January 15th, 1916.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Daughter of the ancient Eve,  
We know the gifts ye gave and give;  
Who knows the gifts which *you* shall give,  
Daughter of the newer Eve?

—Francis Thompson.

## WOMAN IN 1916.

BY MRS. BELLOC LOWNDES.

It is not my purpose in this article to deal with the women of the British Empire. What they are, what they have done, what they are doing, and what they will do, is, I think, known to us all, and none of us can doubt that in 1916 the huge net of their splendid and beneficent activities will be thrown yet further and further over the whole of a now suffering world.

Woman, for the purpose of this article, is a belligerent belonging to an allied or enemy country. Yet women of the neutral nations have done a noble and splendid work since that awful 4th of August, 1914. Instead of standing apart, and carrying on their usual pleasant, useful, selfish, or beneficent lives, as the case may be, they have taken on themselves the often dangerous, and the always sad and discouraging task of succouring not only the wounded, but the sick, the homeless, and the desolate.

In this connection the women of America have played a particularly fine rôle, all the finer because, with the exception of a tiny minority, they could know nothing of the countries to whom they were giving money, time, and in some cases, life itself. American nurses have died while nursing French, Russian and Serbian wounded, and since Admiral von Tirpitz started his submarine method of waging war on non-combatants, every American woman coming from the States to Europe, has run a very real risk or a horrible death by drowning.

To English and French Catholics there is something very disappointing in the knowledge that Spain is the only country from whence comes no word of help or succour, though to this statement a great exception must be made, for there can be no doubt that

the King of Spain and his English queen have worked with the greatest earnestness on behalf of all prisoners of war, and that, whether they were English, French, or German.

It would be churlish indeed to deny a full meed of praise to the women of Germany; for it is clear that from the first moment they threw themselves with astounding energy and patriotism into the great conflict which they have been so strangely led to believe was forced on them by a ring of enemies. For many long months they have endured what must have been a great measure of discomfort and shortage, for the German separation allowance, like that of France, is pitifully inadequate. It is 24/- a month for each adult, and 12/- a month for each child.

We now hear that German womanhood in the mass is beginning to rebel against what is regarded as the cruel, not to say, infamous dealings of the Middlemen. Even now the German woman would bear the absence of what are to her the necessities of life, could she be convinced that in so doing she was helping the State, but she is not disposed to go through untold misery, still less to see her children suffer want in order that a few great merchants and landowners may amass large fortunes.

The present writer, who takes a very strong interest in the present state of Germany, and especially in that of the German women and children—is disposed to believe that the food shortage is only due in a small measure to the grasping callousness of middlemen. More probable is the theory that the German government, faced with a situation which must spell disaster within a

shorter or a longer time, is unwilling to confess the truth to the deluded populations of Prussia and of Prussia's subject states.

There is something pathetic, disturbing, and surely highly characteristic, in the news (which reaches this country by devious ways from Berlin) that the women of Germany—and especially those women who ardently desire to take a more prominent part in the Government of their country—are arranging to conscript not only the women, but the maidens and even the girl children of Germany with a view to more thorough preparedness in another war! A most elaborate scheme has already been drawn up by which girl children and those slightly their elders will be ranged into classes, exactly as have been their brothers in the past. Each class—that is all the girls born in a certain year—will be summoned in turn at the outbreak of war, and given its special job. To the little girls will fall the task of collecting money for the State, while those of sixteen upwards will be trained to nurse, and when not old enough actually to take part in the nursing, will help in the rougher work of the hospitals. Thus no "class" of German womanhood will be too young or too old to bring its quota of assistance to the Fatherland. It is thought by its promoters that this extraordinary Feminine Conscription Scheme will greatly help on the Woman's Cause, and persuade the Prussian Government to give to German women at least a measure of the political rights which a section has been striving so long and so earnestly to obtain.

Strangely—one might almost say astoundingly—different is the French woman's ideal with regard to her future and that of her girl children!

The Frenchwoman of 1916, with the curious, rather coldly logical temperament of her race, has not the slightest desire to influence, by her present attitude, members of a Government for whom she has a profound contempt and distrust. Her one object in the coming year is the same as dominated all her thoughts and actions in the year which has just gone by. That object is to put an end, for ever if possible, and with certainty for several generations, to the possibility of another Franco-German War. She does not trouble herself to consider the question of a future war with any of her

present allies—as so many foolish people do in this country—for she has long known that the real enemy France has had and will have to fear, is Germany. And her one wish is to put it out of Germany's power to do her, her children, and her children's children, further harm. To attain that object the Frenchwoman to-day is willing to endure any sacrifice, any anguish, any personal loss, and that is the reason why in France there is no talk, and even no thought, of Peace.

The present writer receives many letters from French women in all classes of society. One village woman, with whom she is in very constant communication, has her five nearest and dearest all fighting, but in no single letter written during the last sixteen months has this woman ever alluded to Peace, or even to the end of the war.

The Frenchwoman—and that whether she be duchess or dairymaid—does not think of future conscription for her girls, but she has carried out in a very wonderful way what may be called the most remarkable feminine mobilisation the world has ever seen. Little by little, she has taken on, with the one exception of fighting, all the work hitherto done by Frenchmen. To give but one instance, the women of France are very largely running the railways, doing in this particular connection every kind of hard and physically dangerous work.

A great deal has been written, especially in America, about the noble part Frenchwomen are playing in this terrible contest which their country not only did not seek but made agonised efforts to avert. In France itself, however, the marvellous part played by her womanhood has not aroused any extraordinary or exceptional comment, for no Frenchman would pay his wife, his daughter, or his lover so poor a compliment as to suppose that at such a moment there could be any doubt as to what the attitude of the womanhood of France would be. The lavish compliments which the German official press is constantly paying German women would be received with annoyance by Frenchwomen, and with something more than annoyance if the compliments were paid by the Government. Only from the military authorities would they be tolerated, for now, even more than usual, the Army is France.

(Continued on next page).

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

This is the first anniversary of the CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST, and in looking back over the year we may be well pleased with the result of our venture. We said in starting our paper at such a time that we were making a great act of faith in the righteousness of our cause, and indeed we have had no occasion to repent that act of faith. The paper has enabled us to spread our propaganda further than we have been able to do before, it has brought us into touch with Catholic Suffragists of other lands, and has enabled us to do our share in keeping the suffrage flag flying. Members will see from Miss O'Sullivan's article how they can help us to continue this good work. We are very grateful to Mrs. Belloc Lowndes for contributing our leading article this month. The promises of help which we have received from other distinguished writers enable us to assure our readers that they will not be disappointed in the CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST of 1916.

\* \* \* \*

Our annual meeting will take place at the Catholic Association Rooms, 55, Russell Square, on Saturday, 29th of January, at 3 p.m. The meeting is open to members only, and we very much hope that a large number will attend; being a meeting for members only, it is the great occasion of the year for exchanging views.

(Continued from page 2).

We know all too little of the women of Russia, but everything that we do know rebounds to their honour and credit. Like Frenchwomen, their one desire is to be finished for ever with the German peril; and like Frenchwomen again, they are willing to make any sacrifice to attain that end. The outstanding Christian virtue of Russian women is compassion, and they are being most touchingly kind to the masses of German prisoners who are constantly being distributed all over Russia, not, as in other countries, in camps, but in villages among the peasantry.

As to the women of Italy, they have thrown themselves with immense ardour into every kind of war work, and some of the Italian hospitals are said to be the most perfectly equipped and the best managed in the world.

"Votes for Women," for December 31st, contained a most interesting survey of the year 1915, as it affected the woman's movement, showing that we had taken many a step forward, compensating in some measure for the temporary pause on the political side of the suffrage agitation. The cartoon for the same issue was a clever illustration of a quotation from Mrs. Stephen Gwynn's article in our December number. A witty Dublin professor, Mrs. Gwynn told us, said that democracy was often accused of leading us a strange dance, but then democracy had been dancing without a partner. The cartoon in "Votes for Women," entitled "Our New Year Wish," represented the master of ceremonies for 1916 introducing Democracy to Women's Suffrage, saying: "This gentlemen, madam, is as tired of dancing alone, as you are of not dancing at all, won't you take pity on one another."

On all sides women munition workers have earned high praise, and it is promised by the amended Munitions Act that their rights will be safeguarded, hours of work and wages regulated, and women assessors appointed to the tribunals. As to what these promises amount to—wait and see—we do not feel too confident that they will be realised.

*Jus Suffragii* for December contains an interesting petition to the Reichstag from German Suffragists demanding the suffrage after the war. The petitioners state that the period after this world-shaking war, will force upon every State more than ever the inevitable necessity of using to the full for the good of the State all available forces, and of giving to all citizens the best conceivable possibility of development of all their faculties, and for that object the political emancipation of all citizens of adult age is necessary. History teaches that every time that political rights are greatly extended political life is greatly vitalised, and after a few decades the newly enfranchised citizens have greatly advanced in mental and material development. The petitioners point out that the world-war will produce the mightiest changes in the life of nations, and as far as possible, the whole peoples should bear the responsibility of the future welfare of their country.

## THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY,

Office: 55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON.

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## THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST.

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Hon. Treasurer . . . . . MISS BRADY.  
Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

## CHRISTIAN FEMINISM.\*

Miss Fletcher has written a very interesting book, but she has brought to her work a mind not entirely alive to the exigencies of our time. She betrays, too, a tendency to dogmatize, where dogmatism is uncalled for, and before dismissing her opponents as revolutionary feminists, she should remember that she would, herself, have been considered a revolutionary not many years ago. She touches briefly on the controversial question of married women's work, and although she has read the illuminating report on this subject issued by the Women's Industrial Council, she has not assimilated its lessons, indeed it seems merely to have afforded her an opportunity of sneering at 'modern views.' Let us bear in mind that it is quite impossible to prevent married women from working, though it may be possible to shut certain trades to them, no one has attempted to drive them from the wash tub or from charring, nor will they be prevented from doing home work, the most ill-paid of all. And always it is only the poorer classes who can be dictated to.

As to unmarried women of the professional classes, Miss Fletcher seems to have discovered that they have no rights at all, she tells us that unmarried women are not all equally with men potential wage earners, that the aged and the sick of the extended

\*Christian Feminism, by Margaret Fletcher. King and Son. 6d. net. (Catholic Social Guild Manuals.)

family group fall to their care in the home. That we know this to be exclusively women's work, that it is in accordance with Christian charity and natural affection, but unremunerated. That these women will very likely only be relieved of their duties, at a comparatively advanced age, and that such women between 50 and 70 can scarcely be regarded as skilled wage earners. She surveys the dismal future of these poor creatures with serenity and suggests that special treatment might have been accorded to women so circumstanced, when it was a question of increasing the death duties on inherited property. But as she has already told us that often they will either inherit nothing or the slenderest of portions that would not have helped them much. I have no hesitation in saying that if these women are acting in accordance with natural affection, the people who accept their sacrifice are guilty of criminal selfishness.

In touching briefly upon the marriage service, Miss Fletcher rather strangely speaks as though recent researches had revealed to us the fact that the vow of 'obedience' was not an innovation of the reformers, whereas anyone curious on the point had only to refer to the Sarum Missal to find that it appears there. But the fact that numbers of the clergy and laity were content to take for granted that this vow was a product of protestantism is eloquent evidence of Catholic feeling on the point.

Miss Fletcher speaks of the revolutionary type of feminist as accusing the Church of being repressive in her attitude towards women, but in this country, at least, the charge does not come so much from genuine feminists as from rationalists eager to capture the woman's movement. I am inclined to think that all the fragments of the Fathers which have been flying about of late, plus the Macon scarecrow, could be traced to one source, I do not intend to advertise this plausible piece of special pleading, suffice it to say that the writer is not a woman and is more renowned for atheism than feminism. Miss Fletcher does not, I think, meet the charge very wisely—it has, of course, been quite adequately met, notably by the Rev. Father Keating, S.J. (Christianity and Woman's Rights), and if my memory serves me by other writers of the Society of Jesus. But Father Keating admits that not a little spice of Oriental Manichæism is discernible in certain ascetical writings about women. And at that let us leave it, for really the most intelligent amongst us must be aware by now that these more or less isolated statements have no connection with the Church's real conception of women.

When she comes to the vote Miss Fletcher speaks of an almost incredible confusion of thought having arisen around the subject, but she is herself not quite free from a certain confusion. She tells us that the only logical basis for the demand is "because she is entitled to it in justice as a citizen who pays rates and taxes without reference to sex, and that how she exercises it is no one's business but her own." Quite so, and if the writer has attended many suffrage meetings, she must be a little weary of hearing of a certain elementary principle of justice; but when a speaker alludes to the vote as a 'moral lever' (in the hands of the moral that is), when she describes the wretched conditions of women's labour, the terrible social evils existing in our midst, she is not addressing herself to the State, it would indeed be a waste of eloquence, she is appealing to her audience, endeavouring to reveal to them some of the motives underlying the suffrage agitation. That is quite a legitimate appeal. It is a pity that Miss Fletcher should speak of the Church as not having pronounced one way or another on this matter,

it would be equally sensible to say that she has not pronounced on Home Rule or Tariff Reform. The Church lays no claim to pronouncing on political matters; our non-Catholic friends sometimes find a difficulty in understanding the claims of the Church, we should not add to their difficulties.

But it is the last sentence in the book which is the most provoking. "Revolutionary Feminism," says Miss Fletcher, "founded on a claim to equality of the sexes and freedom for complete self-realisation for the individual, is seeking to make a new path and is convinced that whatever seems to obstruct this work stands, for that reason, condemned, whether it be revealed religion or traditional morality."

Of course, if and where the Church has spoken for a Catholic there is nothing but to bow the head, but we should always be quite certain that she has done so before sitting in judgment. Christians are much too apt to pass off their own narrow views as immutable Christian principles, and even theologians have been known to declare some innovation as subversive of Christian teaching, which time has shown to be subversive of nothing but hoary prejudice. And Miss Fletcher should make quite certain that she understands her opponents' demands—equality of rights does not necessarily mean identity of function; and I can quite imagine some rebel accused by Miss Fletcher of seeking complete self-realisation turning triumphantly to the writer's own pages, where she so finely tells us: "Now the Catholic Church maintains as stoutly as the most rebellious Feminist can desire, that what is highest and best in the individual may never under any circumstances be sacrificed—whether to the State, or to friendship, or to anything else. To sacrifice it would be a sin and a kind of moral suicide. God wills the highest moral perfection and the completest development and happiness of His rational creatures." And there—the rebel might say—what in the world do you suppose I mean but just that? Indeed she might almost suppose that Miss Fletcher had taken the scriptural command too literally, and that one hand is unaware of what the other has given.

Nevertheless, Miss Fletcher's book is of much interest, and full of useful information.

L. DE ALBERTI.

## THE NEW YEAR.

To think of the New Year is always to review the old. Joys and Sorrows now of the Past challenge the Future. New hopes and prayers await fulfillment. How true is this of the New Year, 1916. No one can call to memory a New Year so fraught with possibilities of sorrow and sacrifice, of victory and of peace. The New Year message of happiness has never been more prayed for.

All those united in various forms of Social Service are engaged in reviewing the past year and its efforts, and are drawing their members together for future activities. The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society can look back thankfully upon a year of great progress. Many of its members have been untiring in their devotion. In January the first issue of the Society's monthly paper, THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST, appeared. The leading article was contributed by Mrs. Alice Meynell, and to this distinction no doubt the paper owed much of its first welcome. Many of our well-known Catholic writers have generously contributed to its pages. The Editor has received very wide spread messages of congratulation, to all of which she is indeed entitled, for she has in every way piloted THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST to its present success.

Those members who have made sacrifices of time, and who have braved the disagreeableness of our climate, to sell the paper during the year at Catholic Churches and meetings, have given very great help in the necessary work of placing the paper in the hands of Catholic readers. This has brought us many new members and the paper has proved our introduction to friends all over the world. We hope that members will appreciate the good results and add their services to those already given.

The lectures arranged during the year have been very interesting to members and their friends, and from our Treasurer's point of view they have been very useful as successful financial ventures. We owe our thanks to the distinguished lecturers, the Rev. Father T. J. Walshe, for his lecture on "St. Catherine of Siena"; Miss Christopher St.

John for her lecture on "Rhoswitha, the first woman dramatist"; Miss Violetta Thurstan on "Red Cross Work on both fronts"; and Miss Christich on "The Women of Serbia."

In April the first woman's conference to be summoned by a Government Department, was held at the Offices of the Board of Trade, under the Presidency of Mr. Runciman. It was summoned to discuss the problems surrounding the new schemes of employment for women during the war. A delegate attended from the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, and she united with the delegates of the other women's societies in urging upon Mr. Runciman the necessity for safeguards and sureties in connection with all employment of women.

Our general activities are more particularly explained in the Annual Report, which can be obtained from the Secretary at our Offices, 55, Berner's Street, W. It contains also the Branch Reports with their record of progress and of good work.

It now remains to hope that all members and friends will unite to help the Society during this New Year. There are so many ways of doing so. The first help in the year is the prayer for the welfare of the Society. All members are asked to remember the yearly membership fee of 1/-; and to subscribe to THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST, 1/6 per year post free. These necessary expressions of fellowship and friendship being fulfilled there will remain the opportunities for general activities so constantly provided by the Society's energetic and enthusiastic Secretary at the Office, 55, Berner's Street, Oxford Street, W. Members and friends will be welcome during office hours, which are from 3 to 5-30. Saturdays from 10 to 1 p.m. In our prayers for the Catholic Suffrage Society let us remember the words of Blessed Joan of Arc, embroidered on our Banner:

"We will find the Soldiers,  
God will give the victory."

MARY E. O. SULLIVAN.

## REVIEW.

MARRIED WOMEN'S WORK. Being the Report of an Inquiry undertaken by the Women's Industrial Council. Edited by Clementina Black. (Bell, 2s. 6d.) We have here a book compiled by trained investigators, persons with open minds eager to discover the truth, not primarily occupied with proving this, that or the other theory. The consequence is that we have a record of actual facts upon the controversial question of married women's work; and if there is one thing which stands out more clearly than another, it is that any evil resulting from married women's work lies not in the work itself, but in the scandalous wages paid. In fact, in by far the greater number of cases, it is not only the underpayment of women, but underpayment of men, which is the root of the trouble in the workers' homes. Many of the women declare that they would far rather stay at home provided their husbands earned a wage adequate to support the family. Other wives who did not go out to work whilst rearing their little ones express the opinion that they would perhaps have done better to do so, as the children might then have been better fed. The book supplies an insight into the lives of the poor which should shake the comfortable theories of those persons, who were under the impression that these women go out to work chiefly to obtain a little society, or because they object to home duties, indeed such critics may well feel ashamed of their rash judgment. For these pages show a vivid picture of men and women struggling against overwhelming odds to keep a roof over their heads, and feed their little ones—a picture of women working hard in a factory all day, and cleaning, cooking, baking, sewing at night, and even so scarcely keeping the wolf from the door. In few cases reported could the wages of the women, small as they are, have been dispensed with. In considering the question of infant mortality we have no statistics to go upon—that is, we are unable to draw a comparison between the children of working and non-working mothers. Nor should we forget the many factors with which we have to reckon—the ill-health of

parents, the underfeeding of the mother, the terrible housing conditions which cause sick and healthy to herd together, the ravages of consumption, and the vitiated constitution of the child, which leaves it no stamina to fight against childish ailments. Let the economic conditions of the poor be ameliorated before we have the cruelty and impertinence to criticise wives who think fit to supplement their husband's all too inadequate earnings. It is a question which we may safely leave to the conscience of the parents themselves.

Miss Clementina Black supplies an able introduction. From the experience she has had, Miss Black tells us she is convinced that the moral and mental effect upon the women themselves of being wage-earners is good." And further on: "The testimonies collected bring out very strongly the sterling qualities of the English working people in the mass. A very large majority of the women visited are evidently kindly, industrious, reasonable, self-respecting persons, emphatically good citizens. About their husbands less information naturally appears, but there is enough to show that in the main the men deserve the same praise. Among both groups there is a certain number of rather weak, thriftless, incompetent though not ill-meaning people, but the really bad husbands are rare, while the really bad wives are, of course, not found among the ranks of those who earn industrially. Parental affection seems to be the ruling passion of nearly all these fathers and mothers, they toil and suffer privation with amazing patience in the hope of making their children happy—a hope which can only very seldom be fulfilled and of which the frustration forms the real sting in times of unemployment or of illness."

Great thanks are due to the Women's Industrial Council for this most human and enlightening book.

The first volume of the CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST, bound in blue, will shortly be on sale, 2/6, post free 3/-.

## LONDON AND BRANCHES.

Office: 55, Berners Street, London. Hours, 3-30 to 5-30; Saturdays, 10-1-30. Other times by appointment. Mass will be offered for the intentions of the Society (i.e., for Peace and for those killed in the War), at St. Patrick's, Soho, at 10-30, on Sunday, February 6th. The Annual Meeting will take place on Saturday, January 29th, at the Catholic Association Rooms, at 3 p.m. The meeting is open to members only. Members of the Committee, and other members of the Society, attended 8 o'clock Mass, at St. James' on the last day of the year, and received Holy Communion. The Mass was offered to our intention to enable us to take part in the day of prayer arranged by the British Dominions' Women's Suffrage Union.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.—Hon. Sec., Miss T. M. Browne, University Hall, Fairfield. The Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, January 27th, at 8 p.m., at 18, Colquitt Street. Members are asked to make a special effort to be present.

WOMEN'S PATRIOTIC CLUB.—Under the auspices of the Liverpool C.W.S.S., the members enjoyed a splendid entertainment on December 20th, organised by Miss W. Cooper, M.A. Presents from the Christmas Tree were distributed to the children. Lately, the mothers have been receiving advice as to the care of children, and awards were made as the result of a competition for children under three. The success of the evening may be guessed from the numbers present—over 250. The competition was organised by Mrs. Hughes.

We learn from the *Tablet* that Dr. Agatha Doherty has been appointed Senior Surgeon of the Queen Charlotte Lying-in Hospital. Dr. Doherty is the first woman to hold this important post, surely one for which a woman is eminently qualified.

## CHRISTMAS SALE.

The Sale of Christmas Presents which was held at the Central Hall, Westminster, on the 10th and 11th December, was a great success. Our stall cleared over £20, which sum has been added to our general fund. We wish to thank all those who helped by sending contributions in money or kind, those who gave their services in selling at the stall, and our branches, who, while being entirely self-supporting, made up parcels for us in order to assist Headquarters. One special word of thanks is due to our Sale Secretary, Mrs. Clarke, who worked so untiringly to ensure the success of the undertaking.

B. GADSBY.

A recent issue of the *Daily Express* contained an article by Miss Sybil Eden, paying a glowing tribute to the great work accomplished by Miss Annie Christitch among the sick and wounded in Servia. In the first place we must rejoice that Mrs. Christitch and Miss Annie Christitch are in safety, for their friends have been in great anxiety concerning them. They are, it appears, at Trsnik, now in the hands of the enemy, but are being well treated by the Germans. Our members will have a vivid recollection of the lecture Miss Christitch gave us in the early part of last year, in which she described the terrible conditions prevailing among the wounded in Servia, and told us that she was going out to help them. And here in Miss Eden's article we have an account of all she has done. Miss Christitch has eight hospitals under her charge, and is regarded as a queen and worshipped by all. On the occasion of her lecture our Associate, Father Hicks-Gowar, took the chair; his name now appears among the chaplains wounded at the front. Members are asked to pray for his recovery, and for the safety of Mrs. and Miss Christitch.

We have received a copy of the Suffragette News Sheet, to be issued as occasion offers, price 1d. It is the official account of the activities of the Suffragettes of the W.S.P.U. An editorial, calling on Suffragists to join the society, asks whether women, seeing that the flower of the young and untried manhood of the nations have been swept away, are so feeble in spirit as to commence their healing work under the political domination of that older generation of men, who have been tried and found wanting?

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