

# THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

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.

## “THE GOOD OLD DAYS.”

By MAGDALEN MAEVE WEALE, M.A.

“We are ahead with the dawning, and the suns that are not yet high.”—*O'Shaughnessy*.

Most catch-phrases are open to objection, and this one of the “good old days” should, more than most others, fail to find favour with women. If readers of the “Catholic Citizen” were given the choice of existing in 1221 or in 1921, we have little doubt as to the result of that choice. False idealisation of the Medieval Age still, however, finds staunch supporters among Catholics, and even among some Catholic women, and a spirit that sighs for the return of the “Ages of Faith” lingers in many a convent. We wish that a place could be found in every convent library for Morton's translation of the “Ancren Riwele,” a work written, according to the latest theory\* for three Augustinian Canonesses living at Kilburn in the 12th century. We think that the study of this book would rouse feelings of gratitude in many a nun for the grace of existing in twentieth century Protestant England.

There is a tendency among Catholics to select from the history of Medievalism the lofty ideals of the great Medieval thinkers, such as St. Francis's ideal of poverty, or St. Thomas Aquinas's teaching on property, and to present these as a picture of Medieval life and

morals, without taking care to find out how far these ideals were accepted by contemporaries, and how many even attempted to put them into practice.

Again, Non-Catholics publish undeniable facts revealing the sordid side of Medieval life, both clerical and lay. These documents must be accepted, but their significance will depend on (1) how far the existing records of Medieval life represent the whole of that life, (2) the selection and arrangement of these documents, (3) the recognition of the fact that in such a document as the record of an Episcopal visitation, which would be largely remedial in aim, the evil would receive more attention than the good, and (4) a recognition on our part that the whole standard of Medieval life, including sensitiveness to pain, was much lower than our standard to-day.

Nothing, however, is to be gained, and much is to be lost, by denying uncontrovertible facts of history, or by cloaking them in silence. The reason which Blessed Thomas More assigned to the clergy of his day for their opposition to a vernacular edition of the Bible can only be justified, if at all, by its success. To own to unpalatable truths is to disarm criticism; to hide what Non-Catholics will eventually reveal is, apart from the moral aspect of the case, the very height of folly.

The writer of these notes looks forward hopefully to the time when Catholic and Non-Catholic will co-operate to produce as faithful

\* See “The Origin of the ‘Ancren Riwele.’” By Hope Emily Allen. Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, Vol. 33, New Series, Vol. 26, 1918, No. 18. For the Dominican theory see “Authorship of the ‘Ancren Riwele,’” by Revd. V. MacNabb, O.P., Modern Language Review, Vol. 11, No. 1, January, 1916.



a picture of Medieval life as is possible, the Catholic bringing to the task a sympathetic insight based on knowledge, the Non-Catholic contributing a more deeply critical spirit, which two things working together in the form of mutual criticism, which shall be received with gratitude rather than with abuse, shall at length bring the Truth within sight.

There is no real reason why this picture of harmonious co-operation should not become a reality, but first we Catholics must set our house in order and be willing to face facts. There must be an end to the spirit that denies or evades unpalatable truths, and juggling with words must cease. It is worse than useless to flaunt one sentence of Blessed Thomas More's words in the eyes of Non-Catholic controversialists, when a careful reading of the third and fourth books of his "Dyaloge" (1530), will reveal how slight is the evidence afforded by More's words against the tradition of the Protestant authorship of the first Middle English Bible; it is idle to pretend that jealousy of the Friars was the central point of the trouble between them and the Universities, when difficulties connected with Academic regulations played a large part in the quarrel; again, to assign the beginning of our social ills to the Reformation is to ignore "Piers Plowman" and the first book of "Utopia." To argue in this way is to drag Catholic scholarship in the dust, and to beget bitterness in Non-Catholic historians, whose valuable help we cannot afford to lose.

Let us not restrict ourselves to the Past and the Present, but let us also look to the Future. Though it is evident that the course of history shows the progress of man towards Virtue and Civilization, let us beware of content with our present age and avoid the sin of self-complacency. The last few years should teach us that immorality, greed and cruelty were not Medieval monopolies, and that, though we may have scotched the serpent of Intolerance, we have by no means killed it. The fact that to-day Protestant does not rack Catholic, or Catholic burn Protestant, does not mean that persecution is dead. When it is a question of an attack on the things we of to-day care so much about—military success, private property and profits, Empire—we persecute, with less brutality perhaps, but with as much self-

righteousness as any Medieval judge; and D.O.R.A. and E.P.A. are, in spite of their adaptation to modern standards of life, the lineal descendants of the Inquisition. Our treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the recent war, our present persecution of Communists, and the late regime in Ireland—truly Medieval in the sinister use of the word—should make us slow to throw stones at our Medieval forefathers.

When Catholic and Non-Catholic, working together, shall have given us as faithful a picture of Medieval life as is possible, let us take therefrom the good for our imitation, and set our eyes to the future, as most women are eager to do, remembering the words of a great Medievalist: "We shall do most good by looking onwards instead of backwards. We shall never make the best of our present world until we realise how false it is to hanker after the ideals of a dead past."\*

N.B.—Since these notes were written, an article by Mr. Egerton Beck has appeared in the August number of the MONTH, under the title: "Mr. G. G. Coulton and Monastic Morality."

One of the aims of the author is to vindicate the methods of Medieval dispensers of ecclesiastical justice, but the effect of his article can be no other than to deepen any misgiving that may exist.

Dr. Coulton's charge of undue leniency is merciful compared with the charges here unwittingly brought—the crude recognition of a double moral standard for men and women (contrast the punishments for men and women offenders, pp. 134—5), and, even after making due allowance for a lower civilization, the inconceivable brutality of the one Archbishop who could sentence a woman, among other penances, to be whipped twice round the cloister every Wednesday and Friday during the term of her life, and on all other days to be disciplined in choir, and of the other Archbishop who ordered a woman to be imprisoned for two years, and flogged every Friday of these two years.

Let it not be thought that we object to the

(continued on next page.)

\* "Friar's Lantern." By G. G. Coulton, 1906.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The Session which has just closed has been a very disappointing one to women. We deal with the unexpected defeat of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill in another column. The Equal Guardianship of Infants Bill, which has the overwhelming support of the women's societies, and which passed its second reading without a division, has been blocked by one member. To quote the 'Women's Leader': "The amendments stand, practically all of them, in one name, a name famous for reaction and antediluvian obstruction, famous for anti-feminism and anti-progression, and famous for nothing else—in the name of the "Honourable Member" for the City of London, Sir Frederick Banbury. Unfortunately, he is as persistent as he is pernicious: he is always in the House, and night after night he alone has successfully obstructed the rights of married women to the guardianship of their own children. . . . This old-fashioned man is a past master of forms, but he has managed to miss all the sense and spirit of the age. It would be very refreshing if his seat at the next election were to be filled with a different kind of person."

The Bill relating to Separation and Maintenance Orders, and The Children of Unmarried Parents' Bill, are also lost. Nevertheless we owe a debt of gratitude to Lady Astor, Major Farquharson, and all those members who worked so devotedly for these bills in which women reformers are interested.

As to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill we note the names of only two Catholic members in the last lists, Jeremiah McVeagh voting for, and Augustine Hailwood against the Bill.

We were glad to see that Mr. Forbes Lankester, who had brought before him a charge of indecent assault on a girl of eleven by her stepfather, on being reminded by Mr. Melville, prosecuting for the Commissioner of Police, that he had power to clear the court while he took the child's evidence said: "I should never use such a power, and if there

are women in the court I would rather they stayed. Their presence will give confidence to the child." That is the point of view of women, who press for women on juries in such cases; it is the only sensible, humane and really decent view. In this instance the case was remanded.

Mrs. Wintringham, widow of Mr. T. Wintringham, M.P. for Louth, has been adopted as Liberal Candidate in the bye-election occasioned by her husband's death. There seems a good chance that Lady Astor will soon have a woman colleague at Westminster. Other women candidates officially adopted by the political parties are: Mrs. Snowden, Miss Susan Lawrence, Dr. Ethel Bentham, Miss Bondfield and Mrs. Pearce, Labour; Mrs. Coombe Tennant, Coalition Liberal; Lady Barlow, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Mrs. Egerton Stuart Brown and Miss Billson, Independent Liberals.

Our Honorary Secretary, Miss Florence Barry, who was some months ago co-opted as advisory member to the Headquarters Committee of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance, will be made a full member of the Committee with a vote, in accordance with a decision of the Board of Officers of the I.W.S.A., as reported in Jus Suffragii.

"Opportunity," the Organ of the Federation of Women Civil Servants, publishes as a Supplement the debate in the House of Commons on Women in the Civil Service. It considers that substantial concessions have been obtained from the Government. We are promised an article on the subject for the next issue of "The Catholic Citizen."

(continued from preceding page)  
publication of this evidence, but we marvel that a Catholic can see in it a vindication of ecclesiastical justice, and that the author did not foresee the danger, which exists in controversy as in other activities, of being hoist with one's own petard.

We commend this article to the notice of any woman who may still cling to the myth of the "Good Old Days." M.M.W.



## THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

Office: 55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W., I. Tel. Museum 4181.

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## THE DEFEAT OF THE CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

### THE TRUE WRECKERS.

The defeat of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill is another proof of the futility of concentrating on a Private Members' Bill. Here was a Bill that had in the first place passed through the House of Lords, then through the Commons, again through the House of Lords, only to be wrecked at the last moment by the Commons, ostensibly because of amendments inserted by the Lords.

In case this impression should gain ground, the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene has issued a memorandum showing that the Bill was deliberately wrecked by a group of Members of the House of Commons, who are determined that girls under sixteen shall not be effectively protected against seduction.

As was anticipated, the clause which aroused the bitterest opposition was clause 2, which proposed to abolish the defence that the seducer had reasonable cause to believe that the girl was over sixteen. There is no need to defend that clause here, readers of the "Catholic Citizen" are well aware that if the protection which it is sought to give to young girls is to be effective, that defence in law must go. The memorandum alluded to states that as the group of members who were determined to retain that defence in law were defeated on a straight vote on this clause, they resorted to a notorious way of killing a Bill, that is by inserting a new clause of a purely wrecking character, concerning offences by women.

This clause, making "any act of gross indecency between female persons a misdemeanour," was rejected by the Lords. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Malmesbury and others

pointed out that this clause had been introduced without notice, without any consultation with the Law Officers, and without any other reason than that of stirring up controversy and wrecking the Bill.

The whole question of immorality between two people of mature age, where such conduct does not constitute a public scandal or nuisance, is highly complex, highly controversial, and exceedingly difficult. Whether one considers interference by the State justifiable or unjustifiable, desirable or undesirable, there can be no question that the subject was foreign to the Bill, and that it was introduced with a view to procuring the defeat of the Bill, the object of which was the protection of young girls. The wreckers have succeeded in their design.

To quote the memorandum again: "In an effort to save the Bill and promote agreement, Major Farquharson, who was in charge, accepted the clause. If he had not accepted, the Bill would have probably been wrecked that night, as the opponents would have declared it 'contentious' and held the Government to its pledge not to introduce any controversial Bills. The Bill was killed in the Commons by Mr. Macquiston, Sir Ernest Wild, Mr. Rawlison and a few others, and it was killed, not because the Lords declined to pass this new clause referring to women, but because those who were opposed to the protection of girls under sixteen deliberately wrecked the Bill by adding new, unconsidered and highly contentious matter into it."

As our readers are aware, the Bill represented the minimum that the societies

## International Notes.

*Jus Suffragii* reports that at the meeting of the Board of Officers held recently in Geneva it was agreed that the next congress of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance should be held in the spring of 1923, and the invitation of the Italian Auxiliary to hold the Congress in Rome was cordially accepted.

The Legislative Council of Bombay has passed a resolution giving the suffrage to women. Our congratulations to Indian women on this second great victory.

\* \* \* \*

*The Pretoria News* gives a full account of the ninth annual Conference of the Women's Enfranchisement Association. In the course of her presidential address Lady Steel said that the women of the Union had been working for ten years for their political freedom, and saw the women of Rhodesia, East Africa, and millions of Indian women enfranchised before them. The Women Citizens' Biennial Conference will be held in Cape Town next year, and it is hoped it will be composed of international representatives of enfranchised women who will hold meetings of protest against a Parliament which persistently refuses freedom to its women.

\* \* \* \*

Mrs. Alice Robertson, the Lady from Oklahoma, presided with all the insignia of authority as speaker, while the House of Representatives, at the request of President Harding and Secretary Hughes, passed a Bill authorising the sending of a United States Commission to Peru during the centennial celebration in that Republic. This is the first time a woman has presided in the one hundred and thirty-two years of the history of the House.

L. DE A.

## LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Hon. Sec.: Miss A. J. Musson, "Fair View West," Rainhill, Lanes.

A Public Meeting of Women Jurors will be held at 6, Lord Street, Liverpool, on Wednesday, October 12th, at 7-45 p.m. Speaker—Mrs. H. More-Nisbett, Sub-Inspector Women's Auxiliary Service (late Women's Police Service). It is hoped that all members will do their utmost to attend and bring their friends to hear one who has first hand knowledge of the need and importance of women jurors. We feel sure all will welcome this opportunity of hearing for the first time in Liverpool such a well known speaker and worker in the women's movement as Mrs. More-Nisbett.

interested in this question were prepared to accept, and the maximum that it was supposed could be wrung out of the Legislators. The fifty-eight national organizations (including, of course, the C.W.S.S., which would wish the age of consent to be higher than sixteen), had undertaken not to press for any amendment which might be considered controversial, on consideration of the Government's providing facilities for the Bill. The Government must be pressed to do, what it should have done before, adopt the Bill, give it an early place next Session, and use every means to ensure its passage into Law. That is what we have to press for now. L. DE ALBERTI.

## Important.

To Members and Friends,

As announced last month a determined effort will be made by means of a Xmas Sale to place the C.W.S.S. and CATHOLIC CITIZEN once more on a safe financial footing. A large room at the Central Hall has been booked for December 16th and 17th and a number of Catholic Societies are being invited to take stalls. Among those which have already accepted are: the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom, the Catholic Truth Society and the Catholic Women's Missionary League. The hire of the room is a very great expense, and the whole-hearted co-operation of every member and friend of the Society is essential if the venture is to be made a success. The Hon. Secretary appeals for immediate offers of personal service. There will be any amount of work to do at the office, and later numerous helpers will be wanted for the sale itself. Early promises of gifts in kind (see advertisement page) and donations of money will be doubly welcome. Preliminary expenses of postage and advertisement, etc., must be incurred, however strictly they are kept to the minimum, if the result is to be on an adequate scale.

One member has made us the handsome present of a motor-scooter, for which a purchaser is now sought.

Another way of helping is by making the Sale widely known and persuading people to come and buy their Xmas presents at it.

GABRIELLE JEFFERY,

Hon. Treasurer.



## AN INTERNATIONAL GATHERING.

The Women's International League provided its members with a most delightful holiday when it organised an international Summer-school at Salzburg for the first fortnight in August. It was a bold experiment: there were many difficulties, both material and political, to overcome, but in the end it proved a conspicuous success. To begin with it was truly an international gathering: many English, American and Austrians were there, some Germans, a few French, a good sprinkling of Scandinavians, one or two Mexicans, and a little group of Chinese and Japanese girl students from the States. Then a number of distinguished foreigners came to lecture, notably Prof. Nicolai who is still shut out from his German University for his pacifist attitude during the war, and M. August Schvan, economist and rabid individualist, from Copenhagen, while from England came Dr. Lionel Taylor, Mr. Watkin Davies and Dr. Ethel Williams.

Again, the choice of the meeting place was most felicitous. Salzburg is an enchanting city, perhaps the most beautiful in Europe, lying on either side of the swift-flowing Salzach, crowned with an incomparable castle and surrounded with wooded hills. Finally the weather, often so treacherous in Austria, proved perfect, hot and cloudless, enabling us all to lead a gay, sauntering, out-of-door life and discuss the weightiest of problems over meals served in shady gardens. What more could any of us ask?

The serious part of our education in Internationalism consisted of two lectures each morning, delivered in French, English or German, at 9-30 and at 11, the first week dealing with the subject in its psychological aspects and the second in its political and historical. The only criticism one can make is that the lectures were usually too long and the time for questions and discussion invariably too short. The clamour for discussion however, proved so irresistible that endless subsidiary meetings had to be arranged and energetic young spirits even foregathered at 8 a.m. in order to exchange views and information from their respective countries. And everywhere there reigned the most perfect spirit of international amity. There was no chilliness, no

holding back: the students of allied and neutral and enemy states all met on an equality of friendship as though the terrible war had never been, and this was made all the easier by the warm welcome that the Austrians, indeed everyone one met in Salzburg, gave to their visitors of every nation.

Readers of the "Catholic Citizen" will, however, want to know something of the women personalities present. Miss Jane Addams, the President of the W.I.S., a little weary with her heavy labours gave the inaugural address and received an enthusiastic welcome whenever she appeared. Members of the League were delighted too to find Mrs. Swanwick once more among them, quite recovered from her severe illness, her fluent knowledge of German being of special value. The greatest linguistic triumph however fell to Frau Schreiber-Krieger, the most notable woman now in the Reichstag, who, in making an official presentation to Miss Addams from the German President, spoke brilliantly and consecutively in English, French and German. We also had with us Frau Hertska, a tragic figure who testified to Austria's sufferings in a fine speech. This was at a supplementary women's meeting called to discuss the desirability of women giving a definite pledge to refuse war work in case of another war—a proposal which was withdrawn—and it was instructive to note how the English and American delegates discussed the question in a detached manner on ethical grounds, whereas the German and Austrian women spoke bitterly from the depths of the suffering that war had brought upon them. It was one of the gatherings that helped us all to understand each other better.

What seemed to me an interesting feature of the school was the remarkably good speaking of a number of the younger women, mostly students. Swiss, Mexican, German and others who certainly give one hope of the best feminist influence in the coming years. A really remarkable speech, charmingly delivered, was contributed by one of the Chinese girl-students who appealed with real eloquence to European women to try and understand Chinese women and civilisation. A girl student from India gave an earnest little address on the ethical

teaching of Rabindranath Tagore. Fraulein Baer, of Munich, a youthful and attractive figure, proved a really brilliant interpreter in the three languages. If the Women's International League could see its way to acting as a connecting link not only for the older and experienced women of each country, but also in some special way for the enthusiastic girlhood whom it is so essential to draw into the peace movement, they would greatly increase their sphere of usefulness and, using the Summer school as a starting point, would have fully justified what all who took part in it regard as a delightful experiment.

V.M.C.

## Conference of Catholic Women on Birth Control Propaganda.

A conference, convened by the Public Service Committee of the Catholic Women's League, was held at the C.W.L. Office, in Victoria Street, on July 14th. The meeting was for women only. Among the Catholic Societies which sent representatives was the C.W.S.S., our delegates being Miss Barry and Miss Jeffery. Other members of the society were present, however, and took part in the discussion. Miss Margaret Fletcher took the chair, and Dr. Mary Kidd was the chief speaker.

It was unanimously resolved: "That the Catholic Women's League shall in the Autumn of 1921 call a Joint Conference of Christian bodies to discuss the desirability and possibility of taking combined action against Birth Control propaganda." It was also resolved to submit a resolution at the proposed Autumn conference, asking the Ministry of Health to issue orders that no Birth Control information shall be given at its health centres and clinics.

## The Westminster Bye-Election.

The women's organizations seized the opportunity of the Westminster Bye-Election to ask pledges of the various candidates in support of the reforms in which women are interested. The candidates were also asked

to receive a deputation from the societies. After receiving the answers of the candidates, and after a deputation had waited on General Nicholson and Colonel Applin, the following leaflet was issued to the electors by the N.U.S.E.C., the Women's Freedom League, etc.

### "WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER.

It is important to you what your Member thinks of women.

General Nicholson believes in giving women equality. He cares for their interests and will fight for the reforms they want. He takes every opportunity of making this known.

Mr. Lupton, though he was a friend to women's causes in the past, and says that he believes in equal franchise for women with men, has no time in this election to consider the matter or to receive a deputation.

Colonel Applin believes that the modern changes to women's position are wrong and contrary to nature. He was a strong opponent of Women's Suffrage, but now that women have the vote he thinks they should have it at twenty-one. He objects to . . . the raising of the age of consent, women police, and equal rights and responsibilities of mothers and fathers for their children. He is not likely to further any of the women's causes in Parliament.

Now, which of these men will be the best Member for the women of Westminster? . . ."

Miss Jeffery represented the C.W.S.S. on the deputations and promised to report the answers of the candidates, so that their views might be known.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS.

25th July—23rd August.

	£	s.	d.
Barry, Misses M. and E. . . . .	0	10	0
Beer, Mrs. . . . .	0	17	0
Coleman, Miss Marie . . . . .	1	1	0
Dorman, Miss A. L. P. . . . .	1	0	6
Lenn, Miss . . . . .	7	3	
Neill, Mrs. M. F. B. . . . .	2	2	8
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**WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.**

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Monday Evenings, at 7 p.m.

Minerva Cafe, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1.

- Oct 3rd. Speaker, Miss PEGGY WEBLING.  
 Subject, "The Dream in English Poetry."  
 October 10th. Speaker, Miss COSTIN.  
 Subject to be announced later.  
 October 17th. Speaker, Miss ELSIE MORTON.  
 Subject, "Women's Playtime."  
 October 24th. Speaker, Mrs. AYRTON GOULD.  
 Subject to be announced later.

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