

# THE WOMAN'S LEADER

## AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

#### Vital Statistics.

The birth-rate is the lowest since the war—the lowest on record with the exception of 1918. It is 17·8 per thousand, and the Registrar-General expects that the rate for 1927 will be 17·7. This gives England and Wales a lower figure than any civilized country except Sweden—lower than France, and considerably lower than the United States, where the large families of the immigrants still make up for the small or non-existent families of Anglo-Saxon stock. On the other hand, our rate of natural increase is still 6·2, and this without enough jobs, or decent houses, or milk or dentists to go round, and our death-rate is higher only than that of Holland, which shows 9·8 against our 11·8. France has a birth-rate of 18·8, a general death-rate of 17·5, and an infant mortality, due in chief to absence of drainage and the presence of manure-heaps, which brings her rate of natural increase down to 1·3. Of the factors which tend to swell our own death-rate, the increase in deaths from mechanically propelled vehicles is on the whole less depressing than that in suicides or in deaths from cancer—the last having reached 1,362 per million, the highest figure ever registered.

#### Women in Industry.

The Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories for 1926 states that further information has been collected as to the hours now actually being worked by women and young persons in different industries. According to reports from various parts of the country "there has been no change in the general basic week which remains at not more than 48 hours." The "five day week" which seems to be gaining in popularity, fits in with the 48 hour week, while a disinclination to begin work before 8 a.m. has also tended to reduce the number of hours worked. So general is the standard 48 hours week that it is sometimes assumed that this is the legal limit. There are, however, exceptions. In tailoring and dressmaking the 48 hour week is often exceeded, also in the hat trade, and in laundries. Meanwhile the practice of short breaks during working hours is spreading, as these are found to be conducive to increased efficiency.

#### The Nature of the Work and the Sex of the Worker.

Perhaps the most interesting section of this habitually interesting annual publication is the Report of the Senior Medical Inspector of Factories on industrial sickness and disease. Here we have a detailed and highly technical account, industry by industry, of the dangers to which workers are subjected in the course of their work. The bulk of these industries are necessary, staple industries, and it is clear that the dangers

incidental to them must be met and countered. That they are being met, to an increasing (if not yet to a satisfactory) extent by careful medical supervision, curative treatment, and best of all special safety precautions, is evident from the details of the report. Nor is there any evidence that women are in any of the instances quoted, peculiar sufferers from the conditions referred to. Industry takes its lamentable toll of damage from men and women alike. One feels once again after reading the whole section that the mere ruling out of one sex from an industrial sphere where conditions remain unchanged is a reactionary, negative, and lazy policy. The constructive line of approach is indicated by preoccupations of H.M. Senior Medical Inspector of Factories: by continuous observation of and experiment with the actual processes to make industry safe for the workers—safe for men and women alike.

#### The Young Offender.

An interesting correspondence in *The Times* has been evoked by some provocative remarks recently made by the Recorder of Manchester in his address to the Grand Jury on the handling or mishandling of juvenile offenders. In a leading article on Thursday, 11th August, it is pointed out that unfortunately in many parts of the country the methods of probation or Borstal adopted by Metropolitan Magistrates are not followed, and that benches of magistrates still adopt the mistaken practice of condemning first offenders to prison. The treatment of juvenile delinquency is still in its earliest experimental stages. In some places in the United States it is handed over entirely to experts who have devoted special attention to the psychology of delinquency and "behaviouristic problems". In this country valuable experiments are being carried on and Dr. Cyril Burt's recent book *The Young Delinquent* (referred to for holiday reading last week in Miss Spielman's list) is an indispensable possession for every magistrate or probation officer. Efforts are being made to improve the equipment of the probation officer and members of the Magistrates' Association are giving special attention to the study of the juvenile delinquent.

#### The Adoption of Children Act at Work.

Very interesting reports are reaching us of the ways in which the Adoption of Children Act—of which considerable use has already been made—is working. From Manchester comes an account of an interesting decision given by the City Stipendiary Magistrate in reference to an application for the rescinding of an affiliation order on the ground that the child concerned had been adopted by another person by permission of the Court. The magistrate decided that the Adoption Order did not remove the obligation under the Affiliation Order as, according to him, it merely defined the custody of the child, and did not affect any advantage that the child might obtain under an Affiliation Order. In his view—though we confess this would not have been ours, according to our reading of the Act—an order of bastardy was dissolved by reason of an order of adoption. The other case is of special interest in view of the plea which was put forward in these columns, that cases of adoption should at the discretion of the court be conducted in such a way that the real parents should not be informed of the name and address of the adopting parents. We were informed by the Government that they did not consider that there was any longer any need for secrecy in this respect, but that the matter would finally be decided in the Rules of Court. Our attention has now been drawn to a case in the High Court in which the judge heard the application in Chambers, a Guardian *ad litem* was appointed to inquire into the circumstances of the adopting parents, the real parents in the meantime not being made aware of the whereabouts of the children who had been adopted for about 18 months. The adoption was ratified and secrecy was maintained.

### Women and Intellect.

It is still widely believed that in sheer intellectual power and even setting geniuses aside, the mass of women are markedly inferior to men. Those who entertain the belief base their case on numbers, pointing out that even nowadays, after two generations of education, for one intellectually brilliant and successful woman there can be seen a hundred brilliant and successful men. The small minority who hope in this matter are left to make the most of training, environment, lack of opportunity after college has been left behind, the fact that almost everything takes time, and the rest of the obvious drags on the progress of women. Now sheer intellectual power, though much disliked and resented in this world, and exceedingly badly paid for, still not only creates and maintains civilization, but enjoys considerable prestige, so that all these excuses are a damp, unsatisfactory, unenriching sort of diet. It is therefore with peculiar pleasure that we record every scientific and academic success of women which shows that our minds are able to do valuable work even along the lines deliberately marked out to suit their own minds by men. This week we learn that thirty women will address the various sections of the British Association when it meets at Leeds, that Miss Doris Mackinnon, who is now Lecturer and Reader in Zoology at King's College, has been elected to the Chair of Zoology, and that Miss C. F. Elam has been awarded the Robert Hadfield Scholarship to the Second Empire Mining and Metallurgical Congress which is to take place in Canada.

### A New Usurpation!

The *Dental Surgeon* reports that recently one of three candidates for the post of assistant school dentist under the Northampton Education Committee was a woman. The local Medical Officer of Health opposed her application on the ground (a) that women were usurping men's positions, (b) that he did not consider that a woman could be the technical equal of a man. In reply to the second of these assertions the editors of the *Dental Surgeon* point out that there are in the profession of dentistry already many women "whose technical skill deserves the success which they have attained". To the first no reply is possible, other than the suggestion that the present distribution of opportunities as between the sexes is not a matter of divine ordination, of natural right, of legal establishment, or of proved maximum efficacy, and that being so, there can be no question of usurpation.

### Unequal Pay for Equal Work.

It is with regret inflamed by bitterness that we read the following items in the new Post Office Wage award published at the end of last week. "*London counter clerks and telegraphists: The following weekly basic scale of pay: Males on entry 10s., rising to 72s. 6d.; females on entry 10s., rising to 47s. . . . London Telegraphists Group.—A weekly base scale for males on entry 10s., rising to 70s.; for females 10s., rising to 46s.*" An old story, but a deplorable one!

### A Woman Minister Overseas.

The pioneer woman minister in the Congregational Church of South Australia does not appear to encounter the difficulties which are sometimes quoted as an insuperable bar to the ministry of women in Great Britain. Her name is Mrs. Kiek, and she has recently explained to a representative of the Australian Press that there is no need to worry about the clash of home life with public duties. "Only those women," she considers, "who really feel they have a vocation are going to want to keep their work. . . . it all depends on the husband. I could never do what I have to get done if it was not for my husband's help and faith and support. . . . When the children were small, of course, I did very little. But then I do not think that period of withdrawal matters at all in a woman's career." Indeed, from all accounts Mr. and Mrs. Kiek appear to have solved the joint problem of home and ministerial life with satisfaction to one another and to the members of their flock.

### Good News from Canada.

According to a report in *John Bull*, the Canadian Government has appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the possibilities and social and economic effects of Family Endowment.

### Indian Women and the Mining Industry.

The Government of India appears to be waking up to the conviction that the conditions of labour in some of the Indian coal and salt mines are comparable to those which prevailed

in Great Britain prior to the first Coal Mines Act of 1844. At any rate, it is now announced that regulations will be issued under the Indian Mines Act for the exclusion of women from the coal mines of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, the Central Provinces, and the salt mines of the Punjab. The prohibition is to operate gradually over a period of seven years. We cannot, of course, look with equanimity upon the reports which led up to this decision, of women, sometimes with babies strapped to their backs, working underground for a stretch of twelve hours per day, nor obstinately set our face against such regulation as has been proposed on the doctrinal ground that it violates the principle of pure sex equality. But we feel that here, as in the case of other dangerous and disagreeable industries elsewhere, legislators may be tempted to assume that men are in no need of protection from similar exploitation. Twelve hours is, of course, too long for anyone, man or woman, to remain in an underground working. We feel, too, that the statutory regulation of industry is apt to be somewhat indiscriminating in its application to women, as the attempt to include a prohibition of women's pit-brow work in the British Coal Mines Act of 1911 showed. That is not to say that the present regulations are either inadequate in their application to men or indiscriminating in their application to women. They may be—but we do not at present know enough about their details or about the conditions which prompted them, to say so. It is rather to indicate two dangers, and to enunciate a principle upon which protective legislation should move where possible, if those dangers are to be avoided: the principle that restrictions should refer to the nature of the work rather than to the sex of the worker.

### A Woman's Verdict on India.

The Indian Press appears, and not unnaturally, to be bitterly resentful of Miss Mayo's book, *Mother India*, reviewed in our columns a fortnight ago. Such criticism has now culminated in a resolution tabled by Mr. A. Rangaswami Tyengar, secretary to the Swaraj Party, for discussion in the Legislative Assembly. The resolution "recommends the Government to take necessary action under the law in respect of the publication, *Mother India*, by Miss Katherine Mayo, as it contains grossly libellous statements calculated to promote class hatred." It will be remembered that Miss Mayo's book contains a burning indictment of the child marriage system as practised by the Hindus, and of the whole treatment of the question of sex and maternity, of which child marriage is one aspect. It is a little difficult at this stage to understand what action the Government could properly take in the matter. The only action that we can conceive as suitable is either the public refutation by those concerned of the facts which Miss Mayo has disclosed to the world, or the immediate and complete reform of the system which she has so ably denounced.

### A Pioneer Woman Scientist.

The late Mrs. G. M. Whipple, whose death was announced last week, became as far back as 1854 the assistant of her father, Robert Beckley, at Kew Observatory. She was largely responsible for the technical work of heliograph photographs taken in sun spot investigations and was thus one of the pioneers of women in scientific pursuits. She married Mr. George Whipple, who afterwards became superintendent of the Observatory. It must never be forgotten that the present position of women owes much to such quiet pioneer efforts of women who sought no publicity but who blazed the trail for those who followed.

### Mrs. Adrian Stokes, A.R.W.S.

By the death last Saturday of Marianne Stokes, this country loses one of its foremost women artists. British by adoption, Hungarian by birth, it is with Hungary that Mrs. Stokes' principal work is associated. With her appreciation of vivid colour and the unusually wide sweep of her almost mystical imagination, she interpreted Hungarian peasant life to the British Public. Her death brings to an end the long partnership of art between her and her husband, both of whom in their very different spheres were supreme masters of their craft.

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

### THE YOUNG PERSON IN INDUSTRY.

The Annual Report of H.M. Chief Inspector of Factories, just published for the year 1926,<sup>1</sup> contains ten pages of peculiar interest comprising a report by Dr. Hilda Martindale (H.M. Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories) on the young person in industry. It is a matter, she says, to which particular attention has been given by the women Inspectors during the past year.

The first matter of consideration is that of numbers. Are there more or less industrially employed young persons than formerly? The consensus of opinion appears to be that on the whole there are less—in spite of the continued introduction of skill-saving machinery which puts a premium on the labour of children between 14 and 16. Two other generalizations recorded in this connection are: First, that it is extremely difficult to find young persons who are prepared to apprentice themselves to skilled trades; second, that insufficient consideration is given to the business of fitting young persons into the right jobs, in spite of the fact that any trouble taken in this respect amply repays both employer and employed. Urgent recommendations are therefore made that foremen and forewomen should be better educated in the business of intelligent selection.

The next matter of consideration is that of hours of work in relation to health. Here it transpires that "young persons of all ages are generally employed under ordinary circumstances during the same hours as the adults working in the same department" and that "little distinction is made by employers between the young person of 14-16 years and those between 16-18 years." Thus, the standard week of 48 hours for adults is also the standard week for young persons. In the matter of overtime, too, young persons appear to take their proportionate share with adults. Such overtime is in no sense illegal. In addition, Dr. Martindale reminds us that to the standard 48 hour week, plus incidental overtime, must be added time spent in transit to and from the factory. In London this is often "not less than one hour each way".

As to the effect of these long hours on health, the report has nothing very definite to say. Young persons are not, at any rate, much subject to injury in connection with dangerous trades. For instance, during the past year, only eleven boys and four girls were notified as suffering from industrial poisoning. On the whole, the special safety regulations operating in dangerous trades seem to be pretty effective. Nor does it appear that young persons are being unduly pressed beyond their strength in the matter of heavy manual work or weight lifting. On the contrary, most of the industrial tasks performed by young persons: chocolate wrapping, laying-on at printing machines, assembling and packing small objects, etc., create the problem of lack of physical exercise rather than physical over-strain, and one woman Inspector gives the verdict that "Girls who are employed on such light sedentary work must need more opportunities for exercise in their free time than they have at present. Boys whose work is, on the whole, much more active, are far better provided with games and clubs". In this connection we find another woman Inspector insisting upon the importance of increased attention to the posture of the young factory worker, and deprecating the present neglect of this aspect of welfare work by employers and supervisors. But the section ends on a hopeful note: "Fortunately the physical conditions of girls is more and more receiving attention, and they are being encouraged to take their share in outdoor exercise instead of spending all their free time in home duties."

In the matter of industrial accidents, conditions are more disquieting than in the matter of injury to health. In 1926 no less than 17,517 accidents were recorded for boys, resulting in 51 deaths, while girls suffered 5,757 accidents, including 6 deaths. This evil is, in the opinion of several Inspectors, intensified by lack of adequate training for machine work and by general ignorance of the functions and operations of machinery. Better training, more adequate explanation and warning and constant supervision are all cited as necessary. At present, in some firms it is a matter of chance whether a boy or girl is properly instructed and competent to take charge of the machine allotted to him or her. One such case is quoted, of a boy of 14 allotted to a power press on the first day of employment, and in the course of the next two weeks put on to seven different kinds of presses. "From his own statements (after the accident) it was clear that he understood neither the dangers nor the safeguards at these machines."

The last section of the report deals with the psychological aspect of child labour: "The effect of industry on the mind of

the young person." The matter is touched very lightly. Many welfare workers appear to consider repetition work as detrimental, and regard it as one of their principal tasks to secure changes of work. An interesting example is given of a welfare supervisor who observed that girls engaged in extremely monotonous work employed all their off-times in the same stooping posture, absorbed in crochet. They never joined the other girls in games or talk—seeming to desire to perpetuate the monotonous atmosphere of their work. In this case, the institution of dinner hour dancing was found to be the solution. In other cases, of course, vocational classes or even general educational efforts are instituted by the more enterprising firms, and attempts are made to dovetail a little intellectual or technical variety into the monotonous stretch of the working day.

Well—on the whole, and apart, perhaps, from the short section on industrial accidents, Dr. Martindale has nothing very terrible or startling to report concerning the position of young persons in industry. Read as a sequel to Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's *Life of Lord Shaftesbury* or to the Royal Commission of 1833, or indeed to any of the early nineteenth century inquiries into child labour, we seem to have put our industrial house into fair order. At any rate, whatever happens, happens in the limelight of expert inspection, and continuous efforts are being made for the improvement of the young person's health and environment. Compared with the past, we may well preen ourselves upon the present.

But when we compare not the ages of man but the classes of man our complacency fades. Which of us (we speak as a middle-class organ) would tolerate an eight hours industrial working day—with overtime—for our own fourteen-year-old children? We are reminded of our visit to a set of tableaux, performed a few months ago, in a North-country University Settlement. Its brightest feature was a "Peter Pan" scene arranged (as we at first supposed) by a group of school children. But the warden of the Settlement had occasion to "put us wise" on the matter. The rehearsal of that scene, she explained, was rather difficult because "Wendy" happened to be working overtime. "Wendy," whom we had mistaken for a twelve-year-old school child, was, in fact, a fourteen-year-old factory machinist. Peter Pan, too, in his early teens had already "grown up" to the struggle for economic survival and the accompanying dangers of economic independence.

We felt then, and still feel, that the solution of this problem of child labour lies not with the factory Inspectorate, nor with any department of the Home Office, but with the Board of Education. But apparently Lord Eustace Percy does not think so.

### THE HOUSING PROBLEM.

By G. W. CURRIE.  
VII.

The sympathy of the Bishop of London with the movement for better housing throughout his diocese has never been in doubt. It is indeed most definitely on record. Speaking to his Diocesan Conference his lordship laid it down that it was the duty of the Church to put a plaster on the conscience of the nation. As Chairman of the Commission on Housing appointed by the Church Assembly the Bishop formally signed and published a report dated 28th October, 1925. This is a remarkably well-informed document: and the committee who prepared it speak with knowledge. It included, amongst the clergy, the Bishop of Woolwich and Prebendary Thicknesse, and amongst the laity Lord Daryngton, Chairman of the Church Army, and for long a pillar of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons, Sir Wyndham Deedes, of the Oxford House at Bethnal Green, Mrs. Corfield, a leading member of the Mother's Union, and Mrs. Creighton. It would be idle for the most hardened defender of "things as they are" to suggest that the Church Assembly's committee does not speak with knowledge and authority. Our readers should buy this report (Price 4d. at the S.P.C.K., 9 Northumberland Avenue, W.C. 2), and read it for themselves. It quotes with approval the fact that a landlord in Oldham was fined £250, plus £25 of costs, for infringing the Rent Restriction Act. Why do not local authorities in London stir up more cases of this kind? It quotes with approval the evidence tendered by the President of the British Medical Association that "we are guarding intact the very preservers of tuberculosis by the exclusion of air and sunlight, which cost nothing, and maintain in our midst a soil which can breed more tuberculosis in a week than sanatoria can cure in a year." This most responsible of witnesses went on to ask "How can

<sup>1</sup> Cmd. 2903. 2s. 6d. net.

purity, morality, modesty, or even decency survive such conditions?" We would repeat the question and we would specially address it to the City Councils of Westminster, Chelsea, and Kensington. The report finds that an economic rent "is beyond the capacity of the average weekly wage earner to-day."

"How is the gulf between the economic rent and the rent an average working man can reasonably be expected to pay to be bridged over. This is the problem we have to solve. The speculating builder cannot be expected to face the inevitable loss and the alternative to private enterprise is public provision." Of unhealthy areas it says "it may be costly to transform them, but it is more costly to keep them." If the local authorities of Westminster and Chelsea were more under the influence of the spirit underlying and inspiring this report they would pursue a more vigorous policy. No one suggests that they do absolutely nothing, but we do not hesitate to say that they should do more—a great deal more. With this report before them and with the Bishop's prescription as a plaster upon their conscience they cannot plead that they do not realize what the Bishop of London thinks about slums. We are glad to hear that since the Westminster Survey Group's report was published several congregations in Westminster have had the document explained to them from the pulpit.

The Roman Catholic Bishop in Chelsea has been equally outspoken. *The Catholic Times* refers to Chelsea as "one of the most scandalous cases of bad housing in the whole country. The conditions which his lordship denounced to the local authorities are amongst the worst that can be found anywhere and they are allowed to continue in one of the wealthiest boroughs in London where even the usual plea of congested space cannot be urged in mitigation. In a most expensive area of London where a great number of immense Victorian houses are untenanted through the impossibility of finding people rich enough to live in them, there are large areas covered either with the debris of ramshackle houses which have in many cases become derelict or with squalid cottages which are admittedly infested with vermin and unfit for human habitation. . . . The whole question of slums is a political issue . . . it involves . . . the moral obligation of shareholders to see that their private interests are not pursued in ways which involve the degradation of human life. . . ." Excellently put. We merely ask to what shareholders does the writer refer? and, why are slums in Chelsea a political issue? Only one political party—the Conservative Party—is represented on Chelsea Borough Council. The Chairman of that party—Mr. John Davidson, M.P.—declares that Councils "have full power to deal with and remedy these unhappy conditions." In view of all this, we can only ask the Mayor of Chelsea how the Chelsea Housing Association can publish such reports and how the *Morning Post*—the chosen newspaper of the Conservative Party—finds them supported by the facts of the case. We await an answer.

### THE ONCOMING GENERATION.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, of Brooklyn, New York, speaking in this country last month of the youth of his own land said "I see in America a fine spirit of adventure for the things that are really worth while." What can we say of the spirit of youth in the British Commonwealth of Nations?

I am sometimes inclined to fear that the hand of my own generation is too unwilling to leave go the reins, that some of my contemporaries have not faith enough to trust the light that ushers in the new day. Mrs. Benson, Archbishop Benson's widow, in the later years of her life, urged those who had come to middle life to "Hand on the torch generously. I know what you want to say, for I want to say it myself. Hold the torch a little more to the right." No, no, not like that, we did not hold it so. Don't say these things. Hand on the torch generously."

I shall never forget the girl of twenty-four who said to me, "Your generation does not trust us, we want to help, but it must be in our own way." Should there not be started here, as in America, "A Guild of the Self-Shelvers," or "The Ready Not To Do-ites," whose members desire to leave the front of the stage for Youth, and to retire willingly to the middle distance or the background, where they find the youth of both sexes seek for the help and encouragement of the Self-Shelved.

"The things that are really worth while." Yes, that is the open secret. The oncoming generation has a new sense of values, on this side of the Atlantic as on that, and the tidal waters of The Seven Seas take up the self-same refrain, "The things that are really worth while." EVA M. MACNAGHTEN.

<sup>1</sup> Contributed by the Women's International League, 55 Gower Street, W.C.

### A WOMAN DEPUTY SPEAKER.

FROM A CORRESPONDENT.

English people are usually accustomed to think of India as a politically benighted country, and so, indeed, it is in many ways. In a country where the vast majority of the whole population is still illiterate and where the education of girls is still strongly opposed by most men and more women, political consciousness, as we know it in England, has hardly been awakened. And yet it is India which has recently led the world in being the first country to appoint a woman as Deputy Speaker (or Deputy President, as this official is called in India) of a legislative body. Of course, one swallow does not make a summer—especially in India, where, as a matter of fact, swallows depart before the summer, being unable to stand the heat—and there are still many parts of the country where even the few educated women have no vote and cannot sit in the legislative bodies, but one must admit that a useful beginning has been made.

The woman thus chosen is an Indian lady named Dr. Muthulakshmi Ammal, who is a well-known woman doctor in Madras. She is just over forty years of age and is, of course, married, in accordance with the Hindu belief that the soul of an unmarried woman is surely lost. Her husband, also a Hindu, is Professor of Anatomy at the Madras Medical College, so they make a distinguished pair. Mrs. Muthulakshmi had the advantage, so rare in India, of being born in an educated household, for her father was an officer in the educational service of the Maharajah of Pudukotah, a small native state not far from Madras. The little girl early showed that she was a child of parts, and her delighted father encouraged her to study and coached her himself for matriculation. When she had passed this she became a student at the Maharajah's College in Pudukotah, and distinguished herself there so much that she was awarded a State scholarship to the Madras Medical College in July, 1907, when she was twenty-one years old. She spent five years there, and took her medical degrees with such distinction that she obtained the coveted post of House Surgeon at the Government Maternity Hospital. After some years of experience there, she took up private practice.

She rapidly became one of the foremost women doctors in Madras (thus following in the footsteps of the famous Dr. Mary Scharlieb, whose name is so well known in England) and a couple of years ago was selected by the Government of India to go for a year to England, to study the diseases of women and children there at Government expense. On her way back to India in the next year, she attended, as one of the eight delegates from India, the International Women Suffrage Alliance Congress in Paris. This had the effect, not of making her a militant suffragist, but of turning her thoughts more than ever in the direction of social work, in which there is such a tremendous field of service in India. And when the Government of Madras was on the look-out for some distinguished but also hard-working and useful woman to nominate as a member of the Legislative Council, and asked the advice of the various women's organizations in the Madras Presidency, they all agreed in recommending Mrs. Muthulakshmi.

So she became the first woman member of any legislative body in India. And so much impressed were her colleagues by her capacity and her fairness that, in her very first session, she was unanimously elected to the difficult post of Deputy President (corresponding with the Deputy Speaker in the House of Commons).

She is making a great financial sacrifice in taking up political work. Members of the Legislative Council get paid by the Government just enough to cover their expenses while the session is on, and the post of Deputy President has a small salary attached, but, of course, a popular and efficient woman doctor can command almost any fees in Madras, and it may be readily understood that it was only with the very gravest reluctance that Dr. Muthulakshmi agreed to accept nomination as an M.L.C. But she felt that she could probably serve her suffering sisters better by voicing their needs in the Council than by attending them personally in illness, and in this she was undoubtedly right. An Indian woman can do far more in this great cause than can any Englishwoman, however devoted, and all of us who have the well-being of Indian womanhood at heart are immensely cheered and strengthened by the thought of Dr. Muthulakshmi and of what good work she will be able to do in her new position.

### THE NORMAL AND THE ABNORMAL CHILD.<sup>1</sup>

Dame Mary Scharlieb writes with her usual wisdom about the child and its environment. She is one who has used every experience in an extremely long working life not only to increase her knowledge, but to strengthen her sympathy. Those who have taken child patients to her know how she sets them at ease first by the respect with which she treats them (respect is not too strong a word), and then by her quick understanding of their feelings. She seems to have the power of getting nearer to them in a brief interview than many who spend their lives with children, and who are closer to childhood themselves by some scores of years. (The age of the spirit of course is not a matter of years.)

In her last book she uses this ever fresh understanding and the knowledge she has gained in all the interviews, to give some good advice to parents. Her book is not intended as a scientific treatise but as a practical guide. It has an introduction by Mr. R. F. Graham-Campbell who reminds us that Dame Mary's experience is not only as a doctor but as a Magistrate. Sitting in one of the Juvenile Courts in London she has had special opportunities of studying many difficult questions connected with delinquent and neglected children. If only more parents could be given the knowledge that is contained in this book, and placed in conditions in which they could use it there need be no such cases.

Interesting as are the chapters at the beginning of Dame Mary's book that treat of the normal child, and important as are those at the end that treat of the true mental deficient, the intermediate ones that deal with less definite cases are perhaps the most valuable of all. She distinguishes between the nervous, backward, or difficult child "in whose make-up there is some degree of asymmetry or warping", possibly due to accident, or environment; and the really abnormal child. The latter lacks something which cannot be put into him by any human action. The duty of his parents and his teachers is not to attempt the impossible but to find out what is there and to strengthen and educate that. The nervous, backward child on the other hand does not really lack anything, he only lacks the power of using what he has got. His parents and teachers have to try and help him by environment and by suggestion. Suggestion, as Dame Mary points out, is all round us, pressing upon us like the atmosphere in which we live. We can no more escape from it than we can from that. But parents have a great power of making and changing the atmosphere for their children. That is indeed their chief business.

Parents who read this book will find help in carrying it out. In such pages as those which treat of the discipline of ordinary life they may themselves find inspiring suggestion. The whole book is full of humanity and freshness. I. B. O'MALLEY.

### ANOTHER QUEER TALE.<sup>2</sup>

Miss Sylvia Townsend Warner's latest production, *Mr. Fortune's Maggot*, is an elegant little tale, to whose elegance the publisher and the printer no less than the author have contributed. One surmises that if Stella Benson and David Garnett had never written, or if its predecessor, *Lolly Willowes*, had been less loudly acclaimed, this newest venture would have been other than it is. This is, of course, no necessary dispraise. Has it not been authoritatively said that Shakespeare owes something of his form to Marlowe? Nevertheless, there are moments in *Mr. Fortune's Maggot* when the reader is conscious that Miss Warner is, as it were, feeling for her style, and grasping it not always with that unerring skill which eliminates all sense of effort. But when criticism is exhausted we are still left with a pleasant story—the story of a missionary who undertook a solitary mission to a sun-enchanted island of the Pacific for the conversion of its care-free islanders, but who was himself converted. From what, by what, and to what he was converted the reader may be left to ascertain as best he may from the scanty outlines of Miss Townsend Warner's tale. But if enlightenment on these points never comes to him he may nevertheless count his effort of reading not ill spent. The island of Fanua is a very pleasant haven for a two hours' sojourn, and the missionary overseas (like the curate of our own countryside) has become by hallowed tradition the focus of all that is whimsical and absurd. Someday, perhaps Miss Townsend Warner will write us an equally good story about a mother-in-law. M. D. S.

<sup>1</sup> *The Psychology of Childhood*, by Mary Scharlieb, D.B.E., M.D., M.S., J.P.

<sup>2</sup> *Mr. Fortune's Maggot*, by Sylvia Townsend Warner. (Chatto and Windus, 7s. net.)

### THE NEW HEDONISM.

Mrs. Bertrand Russell has set herself an impossible task.<sup>1</sup> She has attempted no less than an inquiry into the springs of human happiness and a synthesis of the conditions best calculated to give them free play. She admits that, as Stevenson would say: "Some like drink, in a pint pot. Some like to think. Some not." But she believes that humanity in the mass is the vehicle of certain instincts and desires, of which the most peremptory are the need of food and drink, activity, sex, and parenthood. These desires, she considers, have been inhibited in the past, owing to the operation of certain inept social arrangements evolved under the sanction of animistic superstitions of which, in her opinion, the Christian religion is the worst offender. Remove the superstitions, reorientate the social arrangements which deny us food and drink, the free exercise of our capacity, sex-expression, and parenthood—and we shall be happy. It is so absurdly simple. "Men and women, you have not only a right to such happiness, but the means to this happiness lie ready to your hand. Are they so simple that you must forever pass them by?" With these comfortable words Mrs. Russell closes her case.

It is not a bad case. Looking at the world as we know it, can we deny that everywhere life is starved of its potential abundance by the mal-adjustments, deliberately imposed or unconsciously evolved, of our social heritage? Here a whole class may be chained to the sordid preoccupations of a losing struggle for existence—minds atrophied, bodies deformed. There, where the laws of man bind fast in permanent unholy matrimony those whom God has long since put asunder, unhappiness may brood and fester, or break out sporadically in unsatisfying dissipation of mind or body. Of how much human happiness are we robbed year by year in the form of buried human talent? Indeed, many a discontented wife in the home, many an unsatisfied spinster in the office, many a disgruntled mechanic at the bench, may be cited as monuments which mark the place where it lies buried. There is certainly a very good case to be made out for the better exploitation of the sources of human happiness in so far as these may be universally recognized; and doubtless a few of them can be.

But do not let us be over-optimistic in the exuberant company of Mrs. Russell. Happiness is a more elusive and inconstant nymph than she would have us believe. Can we say: Lo there, lo here is happiness? Assuredly not—as J. S. Mill found out at a very early age. And J. S. Mill was nurtured from birth in an atmosphere of hedonism and not like the bulk of our nineteenth century intellectual revolutionaries, "in the damnable fetters of the Thirty-nine Articles." "I had never, indeed, (he writes), wavered in the conviction that happiness is the test of all rules of conduct and the end of life. But I never thought that this end was only to be attained by not making it the direct end. . . . Ask yourself whether you are happy, and you cease to be so. The only chance is to treat not happiness but some end external to it, as the purpose of life. . . ." Well—Mill may have been right or wrong. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating; and certainly the gusto with which some people eat what would appear, by Mrs. Russell's test, to be bitter and monotonous pudding, is a complicating factor which suggests closer investigation along the lines laid down by Mill.

Or possibly along the lines laid down by Jesus Christ himself. For though Mrs. Russell boldly declares herself unable to come to terms with any form of Christian teaching, it is clear that she has only the haziest idea of what that teaching is. "Jesus Christ," she remarks in the course of an incidental argument, forbids Peter to strike a blow "because of a certainty of rising again." But that was not why Peter was forbidden to strike his blow. He was forbidden to strike because "all they that take with the sword shall perish with the sword"—in other words, because of certain inevitable reactions, or cumulative results attaching to certain types of action or attitudes of mind. In this body of teaching with which Mrs. Russell is unable to come to terms, we find an insistence upon the *dynamics* of human conduct and an indication of cumulative effects which no other body of teaching contains in the same degree and which Mrs. Russell herself wholly ignores in her attempted synthesis of a happy society. And yet it is perhaps the aspect of Christianity which is most universally in accordance with everyday human experience—in spite of the fact that the forms of our social system seem to embody the confident, crude belief that it is

<sup>1</sup> *The Right to be Happy*, by Dora Russell. (Routledge, 5s.)

possible to draw the sword and not perish by the sword: to touch pitch and remain undefiled.

But Mrs. Russell must not think that we are ungrateful for her vigorous and challenging thesis. Always her style is a joy to us, and there is a certain refreshment in the contemplation of the spontaneous and untrammelled system of existence which she advocates. It leaves, as it were, a pleasant taste in the mouth, even after it has been chewed and rejected on grounds which are themselves connected with the promotion of human happiness. Undoubtedly her book makes us think—argumentatively with our friends or our foes, and in solitary moments, with ourselves.

M. D. S.

### THE WOMAN'S LEADER AND THE BUSY HOUSEKEEPER.

In the early part of the week, I have occasion to travel ten miles by train from where I live to the city, and at one of the stations a young woman usually enters into my compartment. She sits in one corner, and setting her shopping bag down, draws from the back of her purse bag a little paper. From my seat I have on more than one occasion caught sight of the big black letters which spell the title of the paper—THE WOMAN'S LEADER. I became curious—yes, I confess I became very curious, as I saw this little person so interested in her paper, which she never seemed to be without. Occasionally I could see she was amused and at other times serious, what on earth could she find to be amused about in a paper with that title? I had never seen it displayed in any book shop or on any paper stand and so I continued to wonder.

One day we were alone and as she had read all the paper and was about to fold it up, I asked her if she would mind telling me if I could get that paper in town—our town.

She brightened up at once, and handed me her copy, pointing out the address where I could get a copy. I took it down in my notebook and began to question her.

She told me how much she looked forward to getting THE WOMAN'S LEADER, which she received by post every Friday. The train was the only place she got time to read it in peace.

It is most amusing at times, she told me, when the Editor interjects her remarks which are always to the point and often delightfully sarcastic or funny. A speech by anyone which hits at women in any way gives her pen a great opportunity and it never fails in itsadroitness to hit the target.

The articles are always interesting and reasonable, and the parliamentary news is put in a nutshell and saves wading through a lot of newspaper padding to get at the real thing. It keeps one in touch with what the best minds in the women's world are thinking, and she would feel lost if she had to do without her little paper.

Now there will be two busy housekeepers who will read THE WOMAN'S LEADER in that morning shoppers' train.

OLIVE JOHNSON.

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### WOMEN AND SCIENCE.

We reprint the following article, which appeared in *The Daily Telegraph* a short time ago:—

A notable feature of this year's meeting of the British Association at Leeds, from 31st August to 7th September, is that nearly half the scientists attending will be women. "The number of women scientists is certainly increasing," the secretary of the Association told a Press representative yesterday. "When the association was founded in 1831, and for some years afterwards, women were not admitted to join in the discussions. Now there is no sex bar, and women not only take part in the discussions, but are also equally eligible with men for office."

The secretary gave an account of woman's long struggle to obtain from the association privileges equal to those enjoyed by men. It began, he said, almost immediately after Viscount Milton, who was the first president, addressed the first meeting in 1831 simply as "gentlemen." By 1832 the matter had become a burning question. Canon William Buckland, the second president, commenting on it, wrote in a letter, dated that year, "Everybody whom I spoke to on the subject agreed that if the meeting is to be of scientific utility ladies ought not to attend the reading of papers—especially in a place like Oxford—as it would at once turn the thing into a sort of Albemarle-dilettanti movement."

The admission of women to scientific meetings was frowned upon generally by early supporters of the association. The administration did not, however, altogether practise what it preached as to regulating women's attendances, for in 1838 it was noted at the Natural History Section by a distinguished scientist: "There were not above fifty people in the room and almost no ladies—ladies were precluded from attending the section of botany and zoology on account of the nature of some of the papers belonging to the latter division." Sir John Herschel, in a letter to his wife in 1838, wrote: "Sedgwick (the Rev. Adam Sedgwick, of Cambridge), in his talk on Saturday, said that the ladies present were so numerous and so beautiful that it seemed to him as if every sunbeam that had entered the windows in the roof (it is all windows) had deposited there an angel. Babbage, who was sitting by me, began counting the panes, but his calculation failing, he asked me for an estimate of the number. 'I cannot guess,' was my answer, 'but if what Sedgwick says be true, you will admit that for every little pane there is a great pleasure.'" "Women," added the secretary, "were not admitted by purchased ticket until 1843, when a special 'ladies ticket' was introduced, but this was not to the taste of some of the recipients. In 1869 some of the women presented a memorial to the council asking that their tickets should be similar to those issued to other members. The memorial also demanded an answer to the question whether women were eligible for election to the sectional committees, the general committee, and other offices. In 1876 the council adopted a report of a committee which stated that 'it does not appear to have been the practice of the association to admit ladies to election as officers or upon committees, and it does not appear that any case has been made out for altering the practice.'

"The council's objection finally disappeared by default. In 1913 Miss Ethel Sargent sat as first sectional president of her sex, and in the following year the council welcomed Miss E. R. Saunders, of Newnham College, as one of its members. This year the Duchess of Atholl is president of the education section, and women are reading papers on a variety of subjects such as psychology, education, botany, zoology, agriculture, anthropology, economics, physiology, and geography."

### WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM.

Miss Sheepshanks has been appointed Secretary of the W.I.L. at Geneva, and will begin her work in September of this year. Her valuable international experience qualifies Miss Sheepshanks in an unusual degree for this post. She was at one time Secretary of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance and editor of its monthly organ *Jus Suffragii*. She is an admirable linguist, and has personal knowledge of many countries in which she has travelled. Our best wishes follow Miss Sheepshanks in this important new undertaking.

### NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

President: Miss ELEANOR RATHBONE, C.C., J.P. Hon. Treasurer: Miss MACADAM.  
Parliamentary and General Secretary: Mrs. HUBBARD.  
Office: 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.  
Telephone: Victoria 6188.

#### RECEPTION TO DAME EDITH LYTTELTON.

The Reception to Dame Edith Lyttelton, which was provisionally announced a week or two ago, has now been definitely fixed for Monday, 10th October, at the Caxton Hall. At Dame Edith's request it has been decided that the Reception shall be preceded by a Conference of representatives of organizations interested, which will give an opportunity for discussion of matters raised at the Assembly of the League. We are also very pleased to be able to announce that Mrs. Moss (Substitute-Delegate for Australia) has consented to be one of the guests of honour at the Reception.

#### SUMMER SCHOOL, 1928.

The Executive Committee at its last meeting decided to arrange for a Summer School at Oxford next year, with an important section for those who we hope will by then be the newly enfranchised women under 30. Those who have attended earlier schools held at St. Hilda's College will be delighted to hear that we have been able to make provisional arrangements for next year's school to be held there during the first fortnight of September.

#### HEADQUARTERS IN AUGUST.

Though the staff is diminished, there is no lack of work at Headquarters. The two promised handbooks, one of *Civic Health and Welfare*, by Miss Caton and Miss Berry, the other *Social Insurance*, by Miss Evelyn Martelli, are now in the press, and publication is expected before the end of September. These two books will form the first of the new Sign-Post Series which is to be issued under the auspices of the N.U.S.E.C. by Messrs. P. S. King and Sons. An appropriate cover has been designed as a gift to the Union by Mrs. Braddell.

#### EQUAL FRANCHISE.

A list of the constituencies with the women's organizations in each constituency is now being completed for the autumn campaign. As the N.U.S.E.C. has already a list of M.P.s who are against or uncertain on Equal Franchise, this will greatly facilitate progress. An additional organizer whose work will be entirely devoted to Equal Franchise is to be appointed in September.

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### TRAINING IN HAND EMBROIDERY AND DRESSMAKING.

The L.C.C. will try an interesting experiment this autumn in establishing classes in hand embroidery and high class dressmaking for girls between 16 and 19 who have left secondary or central schools. It is hoped to attract girls with artistic tastes who aim at a business career. The full time course will cover a year and will include English subjects, science and art as applied to the trade with physical exercises in addition to the technical instruction. The head mistress is to have the help of a consultative committee of experts, most of whom hold important positions in West End firms. The fees are £9 for girls from London, Kent or Middlesex. The admirable opportunities offered for young people in day trade schools are not well enough known. Girls were formerly restricted to the most limited of so-called women's occupations, but the range has become much wider in recent years and is now such as to attract ambitious girls of talent whose parents cannot afford to give them professional training.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

#### EDINBURGH CORPORATION PROVISIONAL ORDERS.

In connection with the campaign which the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, and other organizations have been carrying out in Edinburgh against certain clauses in the Provisional Orders, to which we have referred several times in these columns, the following letter has been published and has been commented on widely in the Scottish Press:—

TO THE EDITOR.

The Medical Officer of Health in this year's report alludes to those who desire a continuance of the present voluntary system of dealing with venereal disease as not understanding the difficulties of the doctors engaged in its administration. He says his demand for compulsory powers is based on the fact that "the health official views this question purely from the standpoint of preventive medicine."

Those who oppose this demand equally realize that "venereal disease is a menace to the health of the nation," but they also realize that this trouble must be looked at from more angles than one, and that underlying the origin of the disease is the moral issue, or rather the immoral and anti-social actions of members of the community. They cannot agree that "the problem should be discussed from any one standpoint to the exclusion of all others" if these diseases are to be combated and successfully prevented.

Moreover, they have before them the experience of those countries which have adopted the compulsory system. Their records compare most unfavourably with those of Great Britain and Holland, where the voluntary system is operating, and it is because they are convinced by this experience that the introduction of compulsory methods in any form will entirely wreck the good work that is now going on in the country, and will lead to concealment and ultimately to a further spread of venereal disease, that they steadfastly oppose, and will continue to oppose, the demand of the M.O.H.

It is stated that "public opinion shrinks from discussing this question as it would any other infectious malady." Surely the question was investigated from every possible point of view by the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases which recommended the adoption of voluntary methods and the establishment of free confidential treatment centres? We hold that if, and when, a change is made in the present system it should only be as the considered finding of another Royal Commission.—  
We are, etc.,

FRANCES H. SIMSON,  
President, Edinburgh Society for Equal  
Citizenship.  
M. MILNE ROBERTSON and  
AMIEE E. GIBBS,  
Joint Hon. Secretaries, Edinburgh Society  
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MARY BURY,  
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